

INTERACT

Quarterly



Endeavour Hills Uniting Church Mission Statement

The Endeavour Hills Uniting Church...
a worshipping, nurturing, learning community...
an open door, reaching out to show Christ's face to all.
'Together We Grow.'



ENDEAVOUR HILLS UNITING CHURCH

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The Endeavour Hills Uniting Church web site maintenance is overseen by Church Council. Please send all correspondence etc. to the Secretary, Judy Hopkins.

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Please note:

The views in the articles included in this publication are not necessarily those held by the Endeavour Hills Uniting Church.



WORD FROM THE MINISTER

"NEW LIFE IN CHRIST"

It is a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon as I write this article, sitting outside soaking up the warmth of the sun with not a breath of wind anywhere. Shinduk's cello students are playing scales in the background, new lemons are growing on the nearby



tree and across the road are people walking their dog and cars are driving by—a very peaceful moment made better in the knowledge that an assessment paper was submitted last night and a cup of steaming coffee sits beside me. I marvelled at the changing of seasons and thanked God spring was finally here.

The writer of Ecclesiastes says to everything there is a season (Ecclesiastes 3:1). God knows how long winter should last and when springtime should come. Terry Covey reflects on this time of the year. He writes that winter and spring are in a wrestling match, each struggling for control. Though winter does all that it can to maintain its grip, spring eventually wins out. The same is true spiritually. The Apostle Paul tells us that there is a great spiritual battle going on inside each of us. This battle is between our old nature (winter) and our new nature (spring). At times it may seem that the old nature will never loosen its grip; but through Christ, the new nature can win!

Though you and I may not be able to control the weather outdoors, we can have a lot of influence over what happens inside of our spirit. "Throw off your old evil nature" Paul tells us. "Do not let winter keep its control. Instead, allow the springtime of your relationship with Christ to blossom."

God bless you all!

Robin Yang.

A PRAYER FOR LIFE

When life gets tough,
when the day is long,
and the night seems to last forever,
REST IN ME.

When the way is unclear
and the pathways many,
take my hand, and trust in me,
WALK WITH ME.

When the pain is great,
and the storms of life rage.
and everything seems to be crumbling away,
STAY WITH ME.

When the seasons turn
and the day renewed,
and you see the new light appear,
GROW IN ME.

In every moment, in every day
whether awake or sleeping,
alone or in communities,
LIVE IN ME.

Rev. Dick Johnston

Permission granted to copy.

This is a poem that we all need, to always have near us as we continue through life,
to remind us that we are never alone on the journey.

Contributed by Olive Morland

CALLING GOD

Many people pray. It's safe to say that at any given second millions of prayers are being uttered around the world in a huge variety of languages. The book of 1 Kings reports Solomon in conversation with God (August 19 and 26, Revised Common Lectionary). Most of the psalms are prayers in one form or another. How does God keep it all straight?

Ah, that's thinking in human terms. Who are we to assume that God literally has ears with which to listen to all of this noise?

Yet, what if God used human technology? Perhaps God is fully up to date with things like voicemail. What might that really be like?



Imagine turning your heart and thoughts heavenward only to be told "I'm sorry, all of our angels are busy helping other sinners at the moment. However, your prayer is important to us and will be answered in the order it was received." Not too bad if your request was for Aunt Helga to have a nice vacation next month, but pretty disconcerting if you were crying out with regard to a plane that is about to crash.

Why stop there? Perhaps you could bypass the impersonal "please hold" response and hear something like: "To speak with Gabriel, press 1; for Michael, press 2; for a directory of other angels, press 3. If you'd like to hear David sing a psalm while you wait, please press 4. To find out if a loved one has been assigned to heaven, press 5. If no response, try area code 666."

There might even be a short disclaimer: "Due to the high volume of calls, we are unable to provide responses to questions regarding

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Calling God

dinosaurs, creation, the location of Noah's ark, or other data-based questions. Please wait until you get here to explore those inquiries."

If all this seems too much, an online service allows you to send God an e-mail. But be prepared to pay – at least one online site charges \$1 per prayer.

On the other hand, any and all of us can pray at any time, in any way that works for us. And it doesn't cost a thing.

DON'T FUSS

The pastor began the meeting by reading from Luke 12:25-26: "Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life? Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?"

One of the women started to cry. "If only you knew," she said. "We're having trouble with our mortgage, and Gene's been laid off, and things are really tough. I was crying in my office not half an hour ago; now you remind me that, no matter what, God is somehow with me, caring for me."

How simple are those words and yet, at the same time, how difficult to live by. Often people will say "consider the lilies" but we can be too busy to do that. Yet when we do stop and open ourselves to God's presence, we can indeed be amazed at how close that presence really is, and the effect it can have in our lives.





Jeremiah was a strong prophet. He reported the situation as he saw it. Because of idolatry and sin, people had turned away from God. Although he was a sensitive man and loved his people, he was moved to warn them of a coming catastrophe if they did not return to a right relationship with the Lord. Their situation was so bad that not even the best ointment or balm from Gilead could heal them. He lamented, “Is there no medicine in Gilead, no doctors? Why then have my people not been healed?”

The Lord’s answer to Jeremiah was, “My people do one evil thing after another, and do not acknowledge me as their God”. The healing needed is spiritual. They need medicine for the soul. The healing is in their own hands.

How the world needs today to listen to Jeremiah. Modern living, modern idols, have meant total rejection of God. Life’s values and direction are upside down, evidence of fatal illness at the heart of things. “Is there balm in Gilead?” As individual disciples of our Lord and as his Church we are called to mission, like Jeremiah.

Reflection

The lovely African-American spiritual points the way forward:

Sometimes I feel discouraged and think my work’s in vain.
But then the Holy Spirit revives my soul again...
If you cannot preach like Peter, if you cannot pray like Paul,
You can tell the love of Jesus and say, “He died for all.”...
Don’t ever feel discouraged for Jesus is your friend;
And if you lack for knowledge, He’ll never refuse to lend.
There is a balm in Gilead to make the wounded whole;
There is a balm in Gilead to heal the sin-sick soul.

Bill Pugh

FAMILY HISTORY

Why would you ever contemplate writing up one's family history? I pondered this for over 20 years and realised that no one else was going to step forward, so it was me or no-one.

Being the only male descendent in two generations of the Serpell family, the pressure increases when only you seem to have an accumulation of old documents, photos, paintings, eulogies and written and verbal stories about the dear departed.

Well I finally got my get up and enlisted a friend, Mrs Kate Habgood, to facilitate my writing letters to my unborn great grandchildren!

I had in my possession, the handwritten journal updated almost daily by Thomas, my great grandfather who, at sixteen, came with his family from England to Melbourne in 1850 by sailing ship as a steerage [very budget class] passenger. The Uniting Church Historical Society brought to my notice a eulogy issued following the death of Thomas, who was a long time Methodist lay preacher in Hawthorn.

The Victorian State Library staff directed me to speeches recorded in Architect journals, which my grandfather, Charles, had produced in his role as President of both the Victorian and Australian Institute of Architects during the Great Depression.

By the time I had reproduced some considerable number of quotes, I got to know a lot more about my grandfather than I had imagined.

Reflection: I have now had printed twenty -five copies of the history of four generations with a copy heading to the State Library.

I have quoted Thomas' admonition in his memoirs: "If my words and my example have influenced you for the good, it will be a ground for rejoicing. Live the Christ life. Serve faithfully your father's God and may the blessing of your heavenly Father rest upon you all your days".

Geoff Serpell





So goes the song in praise of beauty—wonderful displays in our gardens, special gifts for celebrations, decorative vases in homes.

In a corner of our garden beside the laundry grows a tiny rose bush in splendid isolation, except for a rosemary herb bush just near. Such delicate green leaves.

It would be so easy to neglect it as not important. Yet twice a year it produces the most beautiful roses, colours of orange, yellow and pink, so delicately formed into a display of blooms surely no artist could paint.

In 1 Peter 4:10 Christians are challenged to be good stewards of the manifold grace of God. The word manifold or varied could also have in it the idea of many coloured. What a wonderful concept!

God's Grace is varied, manifold, many coloured, free and undeserved, available at all times and in all seasons. As our little rose flowers, it reminds me of an Almighty Creator, whose presence is there all the time, sometimes hidden, sometimes unseen, but ready to display his creative presence in the small and the big. What is our response to this overwhelming gift?

Reflection: This Ernest Dugmores hymn expresses it well.

Almighty Father of all things that be,
Our life, our work, we consecrate to thee.
Whose heavens declare thy glory from above,
Whose earth below is witness to thy love.

Bill Pugh

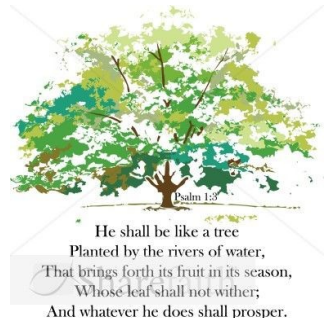
SINGING GOD'S SONG

The song “We Shall Not Be Moved” – or, in its Spanish version, “No Nos Moverán” – is reminiscent of Psalm 1. “Just like a tree standing by the water, we shall not be moved,” goes the song, echoing Psalm 1:3: “They are like trees planted by streams of water, which yield their fruit in its season, and their leaves do not wither. In all that they do, they prosper.”

Psalm 1 introduces the whole book, and in some scholars’ eyes it sets the tone for the volume. The psalmist tells us that there are two ways to go – the way of the righteous or the way of the wicked. The first can lead us to life in God’s presence, the second to perishing.

This does not speak of punishment so much as it speaks of simple reality. Like directions on the highway, if you take a wrong turn you end up in the wrong place—not punishment, just reality.

The song “We Shall Not Be Moved” conjures up a similar sense. It began its life in English in North Carolina, sung by striking workers. Translated into Spanish it became very popular in Spain. However, the song was seen as being too political and was banned from public singing there for over 40 years.



In 1979 U.S. folksinger Joan Baez sang the song in Spain on a television show, the first person who dared to sing it. The reaction was varied, but most people in the audience were simply in shock. How could she do this? How could she proclaim this message that had been banned for so long?

There are times when we are called to proclaim God’s message – however unpopular it might be. There are times when we are called to dare a public outcry and proclaim a message of righteousness, truth, and justice in the face of opposition.

It can be scary. It can be dangerous. On the other hand, it can be the path that leads to righteousness, too.

BELL HEARD AROUND THE WORLD?



September 21st is known in some circles as the International Day of Peace. It dates back to 1981 when the United Nations declared that the third Tuesday of September, traditionally the start of the sessions for the General Assembly, as a day to focus on peace and to request ceasefires around the world. The date was later fixed at September 21. The observance begins with the Secretary-General ringing a bell at the United Nations.

While it is not observed everywhere, the day still stands as a time to request those at war to stop for 24 hours and reflect on what they are doing and why.

As individuals we may not be at war, but we can still use this day to focus on peace: march, pray, write a letter, sing a song, or do something loving for someone you do not like. All of these gestures can create a sense of peace.



Who are the VIPs in your church? All of us really. But I think Jesus would have a special place for the children. He was cross with the disciples who tried to stop mothers and their kids bothering him.

Someone once said children should be seen and not heard. But Jesus took little ones into his arms and blessed them. They were really special to his Father in the kingdom of Heaven.

Children in church are really missionaries in training. It is important to talk to them, listen to them and value them. The children's message needs relevance, good presentation and lively presentation.

Mums and dads and the rest of the congregation will be listening, so the message is for them too. Also, the children can invite and influence friends to join them, as they go out to live the messages of the gospel at school and in the community.

They will grow up and take their place in the community. They are the church of tomorrow.

How ministers and teachers and the rest of us encourage their growth in the faith is a huge responsibility. Preparation of our children's part of the service is not the responsibility of the minister alone. There are many resources, and indeed talented people, in our local churches who can help.

Reflection:

The authors of TIS 229 understood the love Jesus had for children:

*Jesus loves me this I know,
And the Bible tells me so.*

The rest of that hymn underlines Jesus' ministry to children and reinforces our responsibility for their nurture.

Bill Pugh



It's a winter's day. My phone beeps at me, and I note with slight alarm a message from Vic Emergency. "Damaging winds" are forecast for my "watch area" later in the day.

I look outside, where indeed it is gusty, but it is also sunny, warmish for winter, and the air is filled with children's playtime voices during morning recess at the nearby primary school.

As a child, I used to love windy days. They seemed somehow more exciting, invigorating. Even a storm, rolling in on the wind from a distance, can seem majestic, awesome.

There are times, however, when apprehension can strike. Sitting in a plane that was rocking noticeably in heavy winds whilst still at its terminal awaiting departure; observing basin water ominously sloshing by itself in a buffeted high rise tower; being tossed by huge, storm-raised waves at sea are amongst my quite minor but scarier wind experiences and contrast dramatically with far worse ones experienced by others.

In John 3:8 we read, "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear its sound, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit."

I can identify with this linking of wind and Spirit. I breathe deeply, resolving not to over-stress over my SMS warning, and instead enjoy the energizing movement of the Spirit around me.

Reflection

Breathe on me, breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love as thou dost love and do as thou wouldst do. Edwin Hatch, 1835-89

QUOTES AND COMMENTS

If you really want the last word in an argument, try saying, "I guess you're right."

Unknown

An enemy is a person whose story we have not heard.

Gene Knudsen Hoffman

One day a young child asked, "Grandma, do you know how you and God are alike?"

Polishing her halo the Grandmother asked, "No, how are we alike?"

The child replied: "You're both old."

Source unknown

People don't notice whether it's winter or summer when they're happy.

Anton Chekhov

A man can no more diminish God's glory by refusing to worship Him than a lunatic can put out the sun by scribbling the word darkness on the walls of his cell.

C.S. Lewis

An onion can make people cry but there's never been a vegetable that can make people laugh.

Will Rogers

The violets in the mountains have broken the rocks.

Tennessee Williams

Lying on his deathbed a man asked to be joined by his pastor, bank manager, and lawyer.

"When I die," he said, "I wish to be buried with all of my money." He then gave each of them \$50,000 and asked them to throw the money on top of his coffin just before he was to be buried.

Shortly afterward the man died, and was buried within the week. At the wake the three men were talking, and the pastor made a confession.

"I have to tell you, friends, that after prayer and consideration I felt I could not throw away such a large sum of money. I put half in the grave, but I kept the rest for the church, mind you not for myself."

In a similar spirit of confession, the bank manager said, "Well to be candid, I didn't throw all of my money in, either. With the current economic situation, I knew my bank needed money or we might go under, so I also threw in half and kept the rest back."

The lawyer gave both a very indignant look. "I am absolutely appalled with your dishonesty. I want you to know that I threw in a cheque for the entire amount".

Source unknown

CLUB UNITING

Welcomes you to the

CHOCOLATE FACTORY

If you love chocolate you won't
want to miss this.

Narre Warren North
Uniting Church

Saturday the 8th of September

7 to 9 pm

Gold coin donation

B.Y.O.

Chocolate supper
to share

Please let Phil know if you would like
to attend at rbpm@bigpond.com



Contributions to Interact

Any material you may have to be included in Interact may be sent in one of two ways:

- 1.e-mail (preferred method) to interact@ehuc.org.au putting “Interact” in the subject line
- 2.leave in the green Interact folder which is located on the stand to the right of the kitchen window.

Your contributions of up to **450 words** are very welcome, ***BUT please include your name, phone number &/or email address in case it is necessary to contact you.*** Material should be submitted by **12 noon** on the deadline date indicated below:

Issue	Deadline	Publication Date
Summer	18th November 2018	2nd December 2018