

e-Tree



An online magazine for the congregations within the Parramatta Mission, Uniting Church in Australia. Number 2: April 2016.

Welcome to the second edition of **e-Tree**. Our desire is to keep you aware of what is happening in the life of our congregations and the wider church. **e-Tree** will be published four times per year.

What a line-up!

We have now left the seasons of Lent and Easter behind. We know that Easter has been the primary Christian festival – more so than Christmas – from the beginning. In a manner of speaking we can say Christians are an Easter people.

The period into which we have now entered is one which attracts a number of significant days in the Christian calendar. Well might we say – “what a line-up!”. It can be useful to think of them together as they follow on from Easter and from each other.

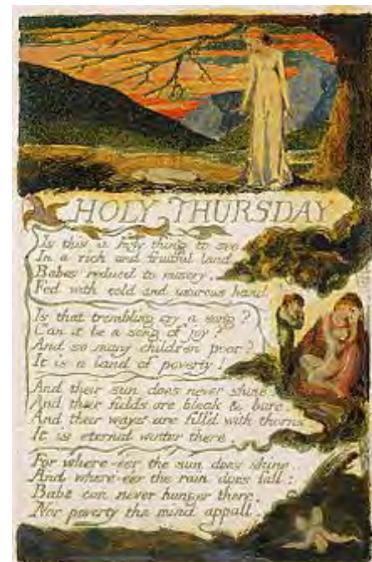
Ascension Day

First day of the rank is Ascension Day. It falls on the 39th day after Easter Sunday – and it has in the past been known as ‘Holy Thursday’. This year Ascension Day falls on the 5th May.

The word “ascension” comes from a Latin root which means “to lift up”, “ascend”. Only Luke tells us about the risen Jesus being raised heavenward. He tells us twice for good measure as if to ram the point home: see, Luke 24:5—53 and Acts 1:9-11.

We hardly seem to notice Ascension Day in contemporary Australia. In some countries like Austria, Belgium, Denmark and France it is a public holiday. There used to be all sorts of customs associated with Ascension Day in the past – including the blessing of beans and grapes (!). Some churches use to have the figure of Christ lifted up above the altar through a hole in the roof (while the devil sometimes was also lowered). On many churches centuries ago there would have been a painting of the ascending Jesus on the dome.

Ascension Day has attracted occasional works of great music and art. There is William Blake’s poem “Holy Thursday” (1794) –



Johann Sebastian Bach composed his *Ascension Oratorio* in 1724. Check out:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W_NTmsZ8Wtk

The 16th century painting by Dosso Dossi can be viewed at:

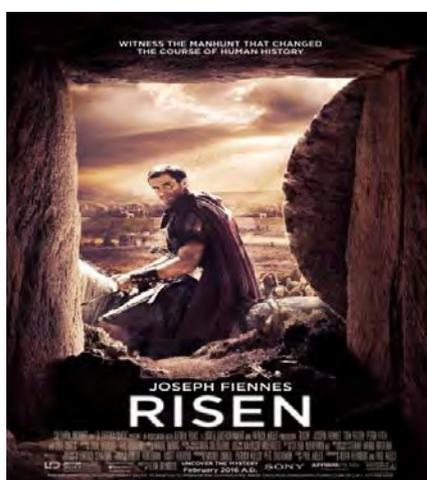
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ascension_of_Jesus#/media/File:Dosso_Dossi_022.jpg

The ascension was painted by many great artists through century. One more modern version is the 1958 painting by Salvador Dali.



For movie buffs there is a rather subdued ascension scene in the 2016 movie, *Risen*, starring Joseph Fiennes. Jesus delivers his final address to the disciples with the rising sun behind him.

<http://www.risen-movie.com/>



Ascension Day may come and go without our noticing but it is rather important for Christian believing. It is one of those episodes in the telling of the Jesus story where faith's claim to his divinity breaks through – the other occasions being the narratives to with his birth, his baptism, the transfiguration, the crucifixion and the resurrection. In one sense the ascension marks the return of Jesus to God. The ascension of the risen Christ also “lifts” him out of a particular time and place – first century Palestine – and makes him available to all time and place. That is where its critical importance for us lies.

One recent hymn on the ascension is by Michael Earl, the minister of Bowral. It is sung to the tune Leoni.

Now in this middle time,
expectant and unsure,
Lord Jesus, shall your love remain
forevermore?
Will mercy still be shared,
the kingdom still arrive,
the broken hearted made anew,
the dead, alive?

For with us you have been,
your presence, God's own will,
we pray now in your absence you'll
be present still.

Available to all, no bounds of time
and space, the living hope for all
who look upon your face.

We wait, we wait, to go,
your witnesses to be,
the pilgrim people of the new
community.

But only in your power,
your love and joy to share,
will we the church with power,
your love and joy declare.

We raise our eyes to see
you disappear from sight,
restored to God's right hand, you
reign in power and might.
But relocate our hearts, that
though we live in you, the suffering
world would be the sphere we
witness to.

Michael Earl ©

For children, see:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s+bible+ascension+cartoon+youtub&&view=detail&mid=67AA3F4E11CEA0F0782667AA3F4E11CEA0F07826&FORM=VRDGAR>



<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s+bible+ascension+cartoon+youtub&&view=detail&mid=F2EF3052A5446B58EBA8F2EF3052A5446B58EBA8&rvsmid=A81C>



Pentecost

One week later it is Pentecost Sunday. Sometimes this Sunday is likened to the church's birthday. Sometimes the service will have readings by people in different languages. And sometimes children act out the coming of the Spirit with symbols

of flame and making sounds of gushing winds.

The word Pentecost means "fifty days" after Easter. It celebrates the coming of the Holy Spirit. The story is to be found at Acts 2:1-40.

It is, of course, in many ways a reversal of the story of the Tower of Babel (Genesis 11:1-9) when humankind was divided through its many languages. For the Christian faith the coming of the Spirit breaks down barriers between cultures, race and language. The gospel is heard in people's own mother tongue.

One of the primary purposes of the Spirit in the Christian faith is elicit the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God, the Creator, is Abba.

The word for spirit in the Hebrew language is feminine. The Canadian songwriter, Gordon Light, made use of this feminine form in order to capture the presence of the Spirit in Scripture from creation through to Christ in his song, "She Flies On" ("She comes sailing on the wind").

For children: see



<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s+bible+pentecost+cartoon+youtub&view=detail&mid=AB4466A987929D4C65B2AB4466A987929D4C65B2&FORM=VIRE>



<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s+bible+pentecost+cartoon+youtube&view=detail&mid=D7C3A3DE0044853EAFD2D7C3A3DE0044853EAFD2&FORM=VIRE>



<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s+bible+pentecost+cartoon+youtube&&view=detail&mid=52BF0817154606B2945752BF0817154606B29457&rvsmid=D7C3A3DE0044853EAFD2D7C3A3DE0044853EAFD2&fsscr=0&FORM=VDFSRV>

Trinity Sunday

And to round off this line-up we have Trinity Sunday. The word Trinity is not to be found in the Bible; it is derived from the Latin word *trinitas*, meaning the number three, a triad. It is used to describe the three-fold nature of God experienced in and through the Christian tradition: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Sometimes that formula is expressed as God the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer.

The first recorded use of the work came about in 170AD. Its author on this occasion was Theophilus of Antioch (who used it describe "God, His Word and His wisdom").

It has often been a difficult doctrine for us to understand. And, in some ways, that is how it should be: it is talking about the innermost relationships within the Godhead (which must always retain a sense of mystery). It is also true that other faiths, like Islam and Judaism, which proclaim One God as well are perplexed

by our talk of God being "three-in-one". The maths just doesn't seem right!!

One way of explain the Trinity is to focus on the word 'person'. The Trinity is said to be made up of 'three persons'. BUT the word 'person' is not being used in the way that you and I are individual persons with a mind and physical being. Here the word 'person' comes from the Latin *persona*. It refers to the 'character' in a drama. In the classical world only males acted in plays; in order to portray which character they were playing (the *persona*) they put a mask over their face. You can sometimes see this use of *persona* at the top of the cast of characters (the *dramatis personae*) in the programme for a Shakespearean play.

So, maybe it is helpful, to think of the three as three "characters' of God.

For children, see:

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=children%27s++cartoon+trinity+youtube&&view=detail&mid=482D1ABF9BCE677FC40F482D1ABF9BCE677FC40F&rvsmid=482D1ABF9BC>



We have lift off!

[373594-ascension-day-sonnet.mp3](#)

Ascension

We saw his light break through the cloud
of glory
Whilst we were rooted still in time and
place
As earth became a part of Heaven's story
And heaven opened to his human face.
We saw him go and yet we were not
parted
He took us with him to the heart of things
The heart that broke for all the broken-
hearted
Is whole and Heaven-centred now, and
sings,
Sings in the strength that rises out of
weakness,
Sings through the clouds that veil him
from our sight,
Whilst we ourselves become his clouds of
witness
And sing the waning darkness into light,
His light in us, and ours in him concealed,
Which all creation waits to see revealed .

Malcolm Guite (C)

<https://malcolmguite.wordpress.com/author/malcolmguite/>



Malcolm Guite is a poet and singer-songwriter living in Cambridge. He is a priest, chaplain, teacher and author of various essays and articles and a book about contemporary Christianity.

He also plays in Cambridge rock band Mystery Train, and lectures widely in England and United States on poetry and theology.

Meet the People! (1).

Introducing Col Gray, now 80, started attending Leigh Memorial with his mother, Ivy, when he was just 5 years old. He is the longest continuously serving member of the congregation. As a boy, Col was a member of the 'OKs' or 'Order of Knights and as a young man in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he was a popular leader of the MYF (Methodist Youth Fellowship), along with his late wife, Faye. As a teenager, Col was co-opted onto many Leigh Memorial committees by Gloster Udy and along with Meredith O'Reilly, he was the youngest (and last) Methodist Circuit Steward for Parramatta. He was also a church trustee and a member of the Quarterly Meeting. Between the 1960s - 1990s, Col led various congregation groups and was Chairman of the Fete committee during many of the renowned Leigh Memorial Fetes of the 1970s and 80s. He was also a member of the Parramatta Mission Board and has supported multiple Parramatta Mission fundraising initiatives.

Col began his working life as a fruiterer in Parramatta, before commencing a successful 40 year career as a small business owner. Col is proud of his great, great, great grandfather, who was the convict Joseph Gray, transported to Parramatta in 1820 for stealing a watch before becoming the town's top shoemaker. Col's grandchildren: Rebecca, Callum, Emma and Charlotte, represent

the 5th generation of the Gray family to belong to the congregation.



1. What are some of your earliest memories of your time at Leigh?

My earliest memory of being at Leigh Memorial was starting Sunday School when I was 5 years old. It was the year after my father passed away and my mother also began attending regularly at that time. My first teachers were young Miss. Hilda Porter and Old Mrs. Ferguson and our classes were held at the rear of the old Macquarie Hall. The first Sunday School leaders I remember were Mr. Calderbank and Stan Kell, and the first Ministers I recall were Rev. Peacock and Rev. Holland. One of my favourite Sunday School picnics was when we all caught a train and travelled to Cronulla Beach for the day.

2. Back in those days how did Leigh 'compare' with other churches you knew?

I don't recall us comparing ourselves much with other local churches, although we were aware of the other denominations in

Parramatta and their locations, numbers and some of their activities. I recall that the Baptists had a church on the corner of Barrack Lane and George Street and were very active in the community. I recall that the Ministers from the all the Parramatta churches gathered at regular times for a Ministers' 'Fraternal' meeting.

3. In the course of your life at Leigh what are the two or three things that stand out most when you thought the church was reflecting the way of Christ most vividly?

The first Billy Graham crusade to Australia in 1959 caused a lot of excitement in the church and the community. Leigh Memorial was the training venue for all the young Methodists in the area who were participating, and the training sessions filled the whole church. People even had to sit on the stairs leading up to the pulpit. The Alan Walker 'Newness NSW' crusade of 1971 in Parramatta was also a big evangelical event. After rallies at the old David Jones car park site near the river, Leigh Memorial hosted suppers in what became known as the 'coffee shop'. When Gloster Udy came in 1973, he did a lot of dynamic things, such as starting Lifeline and Hope Hostel.

4. What would you like to see happen over the next couple of decades?

I think we need Ministers who are in touch with what people really want and need in a church, and who can strongly build up children's and young people's participation. For a long time at Leigh, we have lost our young people after they leave high school and they end up going to other churches.

5. What are your favourite couple of hymns? can you say why you selected those?

My two favourites are O For a Thousand Tongues and Blessed Assurance. I like them because they are very powerful in tune and words and give me inspiration and reassurance. They remind me of my Methodist beginnings and have also been sung in church and at various special occasions in my family for a long time.

6. Have you got a favourite biblical story? Why that one?

When I was boy, my favourite story was David and Goliath. I liked the theme of someone small being mighty with the help of God.



Christ and Cultures Gathering

I wonder how many of us have experienced culture shock. In these days where overseas travel has become quite commonplace, we can, perhaps, understand a little of what it means to find oneself in places where the sights, sounds, smells are all different; the quality of light, the buildings, the landscape, and, not least, the language. It adds to the excitement of a holiday. Then we go home, maybe regretfully, and relax in our own accustomed surroundings.

It is a different thing altogether to leave behind the familiar, to pull up the roots that have grown in home soil, and set them down in very different ground. That is the experience of very many people in Australia, where 25% of the population

was born overseas. In Sydney, in Parramatta, we see the evidence all around us and most of us delight in it. We warm to the idea of hospitality, of welcoming people and helping them settle and feel at home. The Uniting Church takes pride in calling itself a multicultural church. We are getting a bit better at learning how to greet people in their own language and to hearing a bit about where they have come from. We may sometimes sing something in another language or hear the Bible read in words we can't understand while a translation is put onto the screen. But is this enough? While we do this we remain in our own place, welcoming people into that, but not allowing ourselves to be changed, to grow, because we don't need to.



Multiculturalism has limits, because, while it is a rich and colourful term that is about getting along with others from different cultures and learning something about the differences, it does not step across the cultural space in between. That is why the term "Cross-cultural" has come into being. We are invited to cross over the space, just as Christ's cross hangs over the world, breaking through our barriers, so we can meet in a shared space where we are all present to learn, especially those of us who come from the majority culture.

The Christ and cultures gathering has been such a space. Here, hopefully, most of us Anglo/Celtic people come to listen and to learn from the understandings of people who bring a different approach to Scripture. It is a continuing revelation of how we all take what we have learned, maybe from childhood, as being the way things really are. At the last gathering, Levon Kardashian, a man from Lebanon of Armenian heritage talked about the parable of the Good Samaritan from a Middle Eastern perspective. To hear that for Jewish people the shocking thing about the behaviour of the priest and the Levite was not related to their concern for becoming unclean, ritually impure, was to set aside all my long-held understandings. Levon explained that ritual impurity was not an issue: these men were returning from Jerusalem to Jericho and had performed their religious duties. The people who heard the parable would have recognized this. They would also have been shocked because the primary duty for any Jew was to help any other Jew in trouble, regardless of blood, danger, or whatever. The failure of the priest and the Levite to care for a fellow Jew was to break a deeply held commitment under God. The care of the Samaritan is thus put into a different perspective.

This is one little example of what we can learn and how our horizons can be expanded as we gather cross-culturally and set aside assumptions in our readiness to give space to the other, space that belongs to all, that is not inherited but offers belonging equally.

Mary Pearson



Christ and Cultures Gathering

Check out the website for

<http://ccgathering.org/>

Each month prayers are also posted for a region / country in the world. **For May the prayers are for Greece.**

Over the last few years Greece has been in the news on a regular basis. For some time we would here of emergency budgets, political stand-offs with the European Union, runs on the banks, protests in the streets and frequent changes of government. The reality of Greek indebtedness to German political and economic clout reminded citizens of the damages they had sustained during the Nazi invasion and occupation 70 years before. Would Greece remain within the European Union or be left to find its own way in the company of the drachma rather than the Euro? How difficult to imagine a collapsed state in the light of its classical legacy and its role of being the origins of democracy.

Now all that seems to be in the background – though Greek debt remains high and its people vulnerable. Now the focus falls, firstly, on the Greek islands. For so long they have been the destination of choice for millions of tourists and those on Aegean Sea cruises. The islands of Cos and Lesbos are among those which lie close to the Turkish mainland. They have become the much sought-after destination for refugees from Syria and further afield seeking to establish a foothold, however tenuous in Europe. To the north of the country lies the second focus – the razor

wire of Macedonia which prevents refugees entry into the rest of Europe.

For Christians, of course, Greece is of some importance. The books of the New Testament were originally written in Greek. Several of Paul's epistles were directed to churches in what we would now regard as Greek cities – Philippi, Corinth and Thessaloniki. Paul's address to the unknown God took place in the Athenian agora or marketplace.

Our expression of faith owes much to this presently troubled country – so much so that words like church are derived from (κυριακος), kyriarkos, belonging to the Lord) and the Eucharist comes from the Greek to give thanks (εύχαριστω),(eucharisteo).

Prayers for those who seek to help:

Sometimes the scale of things seem so large;
Sometimes the crisis rolls in
Like wave after wave
And we feel so small:
Our resources are limited;
Choices need to be made,
Quotas are set.

The politics are complex,
Lines are drawn in the ground,
And some will win and some will lose.
Good God, it is not fair!

We pray for those agencies
Which seek to help the otherwise helpless;
For the work begun by Father Efstratios
Dimou, Papa Stratis,
And the organisation

Agkalia (Embrace)

Which he founded on the island of Lesbos;



"The local people tell them to come to us for help. We give them food, water, milk for the babies, shoes, clothes. They can stay here too: We have blankets, mattresses on the floor."

We give you thanks,
good and gracious God,
For the work done by the Greek people To
help the lives of others:

We give you thanks for all those churches
Which can look back in time
To when the Christian faith
Passed through Syria
and present-day Turkey
And made its landfall in Europe, in Philippi:

We pray for their work in bearing witness
To Christ in troubled and perplexing times,
When Christ himself can come, incognito,
In the guise of a stranger, a refugee,
In need of God's gift of hospitality,

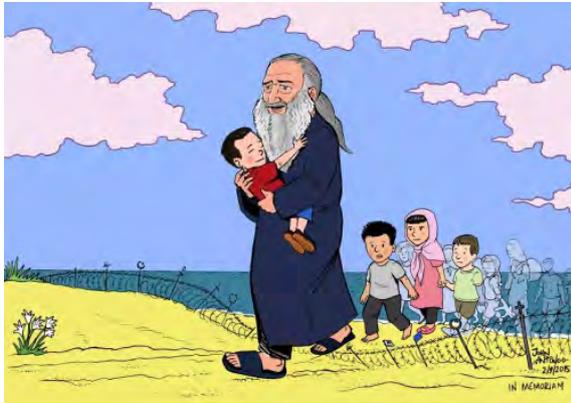
Amen.

On Papa Stratis, see:

<http://tracks.unhcr.org/2015/07/a-good-samaritan-in-greece/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GtE-zfIOKyA>

<http://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=Papa+Stratis&view=detail&mid=DE8F0EF8FBFFEB5D11C9DE8F0EF8FBFFEB5D11C9&FORM=VIRE>



'You must understand that these people come fleeing bullets.'

'You will never ask if they are Christians or not, to give them food.'*

'Our life is very short, extremely short, so let's fulfill it by doing good deeds'

'The screaming that comes from a mother's mouth watching her kid lying dead it's exactly the same. Doesn't matter if she's from Pakistan, Syria, Greece..'

Papa Stratis's final post on Facebook was: 'God is love, without asterisks.'

Lest We Forget

As another ANZAC day approaches, the World War I Roll of Honour in Leigh Memorial church and its 108 names loom over us as reminders of one of the bloodiest conflicts in human history. The names listed represent many things. They recall a generation of Parramatta men who returned from the war changed and battered – and a generation of young Methodists whose faith in God was challenged in unimaginable ways. They, and the

multitude of similar rolls and memorials dotted throughout Australia, encapsulate the scale of the war's impact and the grief which scarred congregations and communities for years to come. Moreover, they identify the loss of innocence suffered by a society which had, for four years, witnessed the path to victory become steadily more scattered with the bodies of its youngest and most brave.

Names on the Leigh Memorial Roll represent such hope and courage, and include men from a variety of social classes, levels of education, family pedigrees and Parramatta-based occupations. Some belonged to long-standing Leigh Memorial families with prestigious associations, while others belonged to the throng of congregation members who lived and worked without fanfare or recognition. All, including the four young men of the congregation who died, nonetheless once walked the same Leigh Memorial aisles, knelt at the same communion rail and strolled along the same tree-lined Parramatta paths in the company of their friends. Their collective experience of ordinary life, the visible and/or invisible scars which they carried home from war and their war service records, have therefore become part of the congregation's collective memory for over a century.



Such memories and associations are also bound to the three First World War memorial windows inside Leigh Memorial, which were installed along with the Roll of Honour in 1923.

Created by Sydney stained-glass studio, Frederick Ashwin & Co., they include a window titled 'Courage' (depicting a knight in medieval armour holding a shield emblazoned with a lion), a window titled 'Victory' (depicting a knight in medieval armour holding a laurel wreath) and a central window listing the four from the congregation who served and died 'For King and Country': Stephen J. Booth, J. Morris Hunt, James A. Tamsett and Alfred 'Clive' Wooster.

politicians James and William Byrnes in memory of their parents, James and Frances. Both sets of windows are distinct in terms of colourization and style, but with sufficient commonalities to make them identifiable as Ashwin's work.

The official unveiling and dedication of the WWI windows and Roll at Leigh Memorial took place on Wednesday 15 August, 1923. The *Argus* newspaper described those presiding as Mr. Albert Bruntnell (the Methodist State Minister



In her book, *Stained Glass Pioneers of Sydney* (2015), Karla Whitmore notes that all three windows were created in the same style as Ashwin's windows for the Holy Trinity church in Hobart, Tasmania in 1925 and rely on similarly muted colours highlighted by gold, red and white and enhanced by the use of stippling. Interestingly, the Ashwin studio had also designed the 1885 triptych and rose windows on the gallery level of Leigh Memorial nearly forty years before. These were commissioned by wealthy local mill owners and

for Education), Major-General Sir Charles Rosenthal (a war hero and gifted Methodist musician, who regularly participated in Leigh Memorial Choir cantatas of the era), Major-General Cox (another hero of the Great War), Rev.

Johnstone, Rev. Andrews (the incumbent Minister) and Rev. Green, the Army's Senior Chaplain. Returned WWI soldiers formed a guard of honour for the official party in the church and participated in all aspects of the program. The 'Last Post'

was played by bugler, J.W. Wile.

The service itself was a solemn one, during which Albert Bruntnell acknowledged that "great controversy has taken place in some parts of the world as to the righteousness of the church identifying itself with war." This, he claimed, could be clarified by pointing out that "any clash between individuals or families, or sections, or organisations, or nations" required the church to "identify itself with...righteousness." The broader tone of the event was equally solicitous and each speaker referred to both the noble, brave and heroic dead and the correctness of the church in honouring them.

Ashwin's windows at Leigh Memorial certainly captured the spirit of "righteousness" to which Albert Bruntnell referred, while also displaying an attention to creative detail and beauty of design which would become the source of fascination for stained glass enthusiasts throughout Australia. As works of art intended to depict war as inextricably bound to popular, chivalric ideals of Christendom and Empire – in addition to the natural transcendence of 'God, King and Country', they achieved both their goal and widespread public approval.

In the aftermath of the conflict however, it was evident that there had been only superficial glory, and that any righteousness had been marked by searing futility. The suffering of servicemen, chaplains, doctors and nurses who survived the war was so great, that they would never be the same again - and nor would Australian society or the church itself. In fact, during the soul-searching aftermath of WWI, a number of Methodist leaders

and Ministers who had initially promoted conscription from their pulpits and encouraged young men to

sign-up (including Victoria's Rev. Hubert Palmer Phillips), eventually turned their energies to campaigning for peace. Hay's young Minister, Rev. B. Linden Webb, had from the outset protested the war and declared it un-Christian, choosing to leave the church twice and sell fruit and vegetables for a living instead of participating in its hypocrisy.

Such men's commitment to the cause of peace was also largely prompted by their close pastoral dealings with returned soldiers who had experienced the after-effects of gassing, shell-shock and physical trauma, including the loss of sight or limbs. It was clear that despite the Empire-soaked, pro-war rhetoric adopted by Leigh Memorial's war-time Minister, Rev. T.B.Holmes (also Army Chaplain for the Liverpool District) and most Methodist leaders of the time, including Rev. James Colwell (who replicated the words of Prime Minister Fisher in 1915 by pledging Australian Methodism's allegiance to Britain: "We are with you to the last man and to the last shilling"), the language of pacifism was building.



Moreover, as the toll of injured, dead and missing in Europe and the Middle East began to rise, and in deference to congregations who were suffering various human casualties, the church's official rhetoric necessarily became

more moderate. Leaders and clergy could not ignore the fact that congregations were suffering and that those requiring pastoral support had barely recovered from their experience of the Great War when they were confronted by the Great Depression in 1929 and the Second World War in 1939. These successive events created a fatiguing situation for the church and its people, as they struggled to come to terms with over 30 straight years of large scale family, community and international trauma.

The Leigh Memorial congregation was no different. It emerged from the war having suffered the loss of four young parishioners, the diminishing of its political and commercial influence in Parramatta and the stalling of its repayments on considerably high property debts. Through the experience of losing members in battle, including brave young Light Horseman Clive Wooster, the congregation also struggled against the tide of anti-German/ anti-foreign sentiment which was sweeping the community. Members looked to the church's leadership for moral guidance on such matters while also grieving with the families of the fallen, but the church was too pre-occupied with public posturing on issues of varying significance to be of much help. It was a confronting time for all involved, and in the lead-up to the installation of the Ashwin windows and Roll of Honour in 1923, the Leigh Memorial congregation's thoughts naturally turned to their own four boys who had been lost in the war and to the overwhelming social and medical issues facing those who had returned.

During such moments, they must have recalled the smiling faces of Stephen,

Morris, James and the youngest of the group: Clive. He enlisted at the age of 18, as one of five Wooster brothers who went to fight while their doting Mum and Dad waited for them at home in Harris Park. Four of the brothers would return, but Clive, by then 21, did not come back. He was fatally injured in Palestine in 1917 and buried at a military cemetery in Beersheba. Correspondence between his mother and the Australian War Department reveals her efforts to get overdue answers on her son's cause of death, including his place of burial and the whereabouts of his personal effects. She also requested permission to install a memorial plaque at his gravesite. Hers was a mighty battle of motherly devotion against the worst aspects of military bureaucracy, and like many others, she did not receive most of the answers that she sought. In fact, while Mrs. Wooster lived to see Clive's name gracing the Leigh Memorial window, the town's War Memorial at Prince Alfred Square and a page in the *Cumberland Argus' War Book*, she never again experienced peace. Lest We Forget.

Elizabeth de Réland



This article acknowledges the following resources: Cumberland Argus 'War' book: *Parramatta District Soldiers in the Great War: 1914 – 1919* (1921); National Archives & AWM websites, including WWI service records and WWI chaplaincy data; Leigh Memorial archival files; *Our Church* book (Parramatta Mission, 2010); Don Wright and Eric Clancy *The Methodists* (Allen & Unwin Sydney, 1993); Karla Whitmore, *Stained Glass Pioneers of Sydney* (UTC Press, 2015).

Did you know

The phrase "Lest we forget" comes from an 1897 poem by Rudyard Kipling called "Recessional". For a reflection on the use of words which came into our common usage through war, see:

<http://theconversation.com/lest-we-forget-lest-anzac-and-the-language-of-remembrance-40367>

Meeting the People (2).

In Conversation With Moses Vedamuthu

We sat outside at Jamie Oliver's in Centenary Square one morning. It was a chance to have a conversation and get to know the well-named Moses better. The obvious biblical link is matched by his Tamil surname which brings together words meaning "scripture" and "pearl". To round off the picture further, this Moses was born on Christmas Eve!

Moses took me by surprise. I had expected him to be a Tamil who came from the southern part of India. And it is true he lived for many years in Chennai (Madras). He was actually born in Yangon (Rangoon) in Myanmar (Burma). He was baptized as an infant there growing was raised as a Roman Catholic.



As indeed I was too as a child, Moses was an 'altar boy'. He would carry the cross and hand over the elements to the priest during communion.

Moses recalls how his family were involved in church activities. His brother was a leader of a church committee. He remembered that there was a time when sometimes Hindus and Muslims would also come to church. In due course, due to politics and war, the family made their way to Chennai.

The life of faith took a different trajectory in India. He was greatly attracted by the way in which a pastor, Sam Sundaram, "talked about God's message".

<http://www.acaprayerhouse.org.in/new-to-aca/pastor-m-k-sam-sundaram.html> .

Moses was now leaving behind his

family's Roman Catholicism and was indeed "re-baptized" into the Apostolic Christian Assembly. There were then three services a day (6:00 am; 9:30 am; and 6:00 pm) and they were always "fully crowded". His family were happy at his transition; for Moses this new assembly appeared to be more biblical, supportive and encouraging. Moses became a part of their outreach team and every second Saturday would head out to a nearby rural area. He would also assist in the providing of food to "gypsies".



Moses is from the Udayar caste. He was in the importing /exporting business in Chennai. Eventually he made his way to Australia on a business visa. It would take right through to 2014 before he was able to secure residency. (In the course of this long time he was comforted by a verse from Matthew, "I am with you"). Coming to Australia had "shocked" his family – but it had also been a childhood dream and a source of "God's blessing". Moses has always felt a call to be responsible for others and set up the Tania Educational and Charitable Trust, which sponsors 3 "kids" to go to high school. On his arrival in this country Moses was living in Strathfield. He made his church home, initially at South Sydney Uniting. The contrast with his apostolic church in Chennai could not have been greater. Moses used to sit in the back seat: he felt like he needed to learn more English; he

felt like a child again; he was touched by the help and support of a number of people at South Sydney; he helped out in "Naomi's recycling workshop"

<http://www.southsydneyuniting.org.au>



Over the years Moses has developed his own spiritual practice. Prayer lies at the heart of it (in the morning and the evening) – alongside of which he reads every day from the books of Proverbs, Psalms and the gospel of Matthew. Sometimes he feels a particular closeness to God. The book of Job is "in my heart". It speaks to him of resilience.

Moses reads and prays mostly in Tamil. It is his "language of the heart" rather than English, "the language I get by in".

Moses has been coming to Leigh for the past two years. He now lives in Marsden Street in Parramatta. He would like to be better equipped for speaking to people about what happens in different churches (denominations). Recently he greatly enjoyed being invited to join with SPOW (Single People of Worth) at the Merrylands Club.

Lenten Bible Studies at Leigh Memorial Church 2016

(Luke Chapters 22, 23 and 24)

The Rev. Dr. Clive Pearson conducted a pair of Lenten Bible Studies at Leigh this year. Each was presented on a Wednesday

morning and again the following Saturday morning.

Study No.1 centred on the lead up to and ensuing events of the crucifixion of Jesus (Luke Chapters



As we have come to expect with Clive's teaching about the Bible, part of his approach was to have us try to put ourselves in the position of the original hearers. In this case the initial circulation of Luke's Gospel involved an oral telling i.e. "re-remembering the way to the cross", rather than being able to "look it up". So Clive asked Easter study participants to re-tell from memory the Passion narrative.

Clive's challenge to us included:-

- What did we recall of the Good Friday-Easter story according to Luke's Gospel?
- How much of what we re-remembered came exclusively from Luke's Gospel?

- What details were not reported in Luke's Gospel that Matthew and Mark had included in theirs?
- How many trials did Jesus face? [4: before "the council of the elders of the people, both the chief priests and the teachers of the law" (Luke 22: 66-71), Pilate (Luke 23:1-7), Herod (Luke 23: 7-11), Pilate (Luke 23: 11-25)];
- Who were the accusers, what were the accusations and who were the witnesses?
- Was Jesus proclaimed innocent or guilty at all four trials? Why was Jesus crucified and who was responsible?

Study No2 focused our attention on the Resurrection of Jesus and His post-resurrection appearances (Luke Chapter 24).

For the second study Clive gave us four tasks in course of the study. These were:

- Task 1. The importance of Easter- imagine you are being interviewed by someone who did not attend the first week's study. What are the previous key take-away points you recall?
- Task 2. Compare Resurrection Narratives. In a small group use your memory to recall as many episodes / stories in the gospels about the resurrection of Jesus.
- Task 3. Now compare your list from Luke with what you find in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John.

- Task 4. Evaluate. How does Luke's gospel differ from the other 3 gospels and why?

Jesus' resurrection was the single most important event in all of human history which no-one was expecting. The imprimatur of God was upon Him as the anointed Messiah and Saviour of the world.

Luke explains it this way. Luke's resurrection narrative includes eye witness accounts from the women who visited Jesus' tomb to anoint His body expecting to see it there and wondering as they approached the scene who was going to roll the stone away from the tomb?" (Luke 24:1-12). Two men "gleaming like lightning" inside Jesus' open tomb proclaimed to the women "why do you look for living among the dead? He is not here He is risen". (Luke 24:5-6a). Luke writes of two sad disciples walking to Emmaus disappointed that Jesus was not the hoped for deliverer of Israel from the Romans. Jesus Himself draws alongside of them, joins the conversation and proceeds to explain to them from ancient Scriptures how the Christ would die and be raised again to life the third day. He admonishes them for their, "slowness of heart to believe" all that the Scriptures had predicted of God's promised Messiah. "Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter His glory? And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, He explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning Himself." (Luke 24:25-27) Jesus consents to dine with them and was revealed to the assembled disciples after He had broken bread with them at table. He then disappeared from them. (Luke 24:13-27). Jesus again appears

to His disciples although as Luke recounts, they were "disbelieving and still wondering" (Luke 24:36-49). Luke states that they were assembled in a locked room for fear of the Jews. Jesus appeared to them in that locked room and standing among them said "Peace be with you". Not a ghost, writes Luke, as they had assumed in their fright but the living risen Jesus Christ- touching Him to see for them-selves and sharing a meal with Him. Their bewilderment and fear then turned to joy and amazement.

Luke emphasises that prophecy about the risen Christ had been fulfilled. He reiterates Jesus' words the disciples "This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms," Jesus continued," This is what is written:

The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised: but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." (Luke 24: 36-49).

Luke's gospel concludes with scene at Bethany and the ascension of Jesus to heaven. Luke writes "then they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. And they stayed continually in the temple, praising God" (Luke 24:50-53)

Clive's challenge to us:

- What role do the women play in connecting the crucifixion, burial and resurrection?

- Why do you think Luke says the disciples were “disbelieving and still wondering?”
- Why were the two disciples sad?
- What was the ‘role’ of Jesus in the above episodes?
- Who else in Scripture was ‘carried up into heaven’?

Darlene and Neil McGrath

Parramatta Mission Library

Did you know that Parramatta Mission has a library for the use of members of the congregations, staff and Volunteers? Its contents are mainly books, with at least one video tape. Most are “Christian” with a small number of books that are about spirituality that is not specifically Christian.

As well, a small number of biographies of people who have had some Christian involvement, but for whom Christianity seems to have become less explicitly part of their lives.

Most of the Library is stored in the room at the bottom of the tower of Leigh Memorial Church, with a little overflowing to “secondary storage” in another part of the building.

The books are sorted into the following categories:

- Aboriginal (Aboriginal culture and some history of interaction with people of European)
- Biblical Studies (Commentaries, Bible study guide booklets);
- Children (for children)
- Fiction (some classics and some “Christian Mills and Boon”)
- History (and Geography – Church history and a tourist guide to the Holy Land).
- Pastoral Care (and some other books relevant to church leaders;
- Personal Spiritual Growth;
- Sociology (and Psychology, mainly with a Christian perspective)
- Worship (prayer books, hymn books and some books of choruses)
- There are also a few books that don’t fit these categories including a facsimile edition of “On the Origin of Species” by Charles Darwin, so that interested people can read it for themselves.

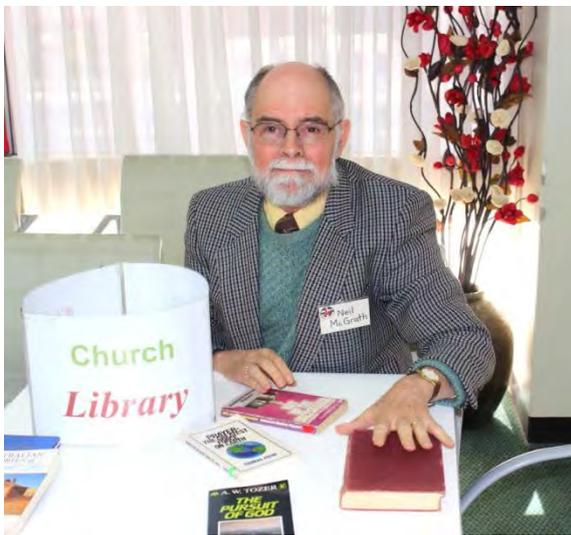
Books purchased during 2015 included: Journeying : a beginner’s guide to the Bible by Michael Trainor, Through Ecological Eyes by Robert Barry Leal, A trinitarian primer by Neil Ormerod and New Day Dawning: Steps to recovery after a relationship breakdown.

In preparation for the first of the planned Public Lectures in 2016, Faith and Dementia, Clive Pearson has bought the following books on behalf of the Parramatta Mission library:

- Speaking Our Minds: What It Is Like to Have Alzheimer, Lisa Snyder, 2009
- First Steps to Living with Dementia, Simon Atkins, 2013;
- Where two worlds touch : a spiritual journey through Alzheimer’s Disease, Jade Christine

On most Sundays a selection of books from the library is available in the “Coffee Shop” during “Take 10” (the morning tea time after the 9:30 Service at Leigh

Memorial). It would be good if one or two interested people from the other congregations became assistant librarians for their congregation and it would be good to have an understudy from the 9:30 congregation. Loans are registered in an exercise book. A partial catalogue has been produced and is being updated. There is also a diagram showing the layout of the shelving. If you are interested, the Ministers or leaders committees of the congregations can contact me to arrange for me to contact you to explain the operation in more detail.



Neil McGrath,

Hon. Librarian, Leigh Memorial Church,
Parramatta Mission

Relations with Other Faiths

Through March and April the Thornleigh and Normanhurst Uniting Churches combined to host a series of evening panels on getting to know your neighbour better. The neighbour in this instance belonged to another faith. Clive Pearson was asked to speak on what Christians believe and do on both occasions. At the first forum the other speakers were Buddhist and Sikh; at the second the

forum was made up of the Abrahamic traditions and so included Jewish and Muslim.

The first address Clive gave was in Holy Week. Instead of the stock religious services of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday Clive was asked to speak for 25 minutes on what Christians believe in the presence of the religious other. That is a tough ask!



For an edited version of that paper, see: <http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/resources/papers-a-statements>

The second address differed in some respects. It was designed to give an account of Christian believing in the presence of the other two Abrahamic faiths. The nature of this discussion is rather different because there are important links between and among these three faiths and critical differences.

Clive observed that all three lay claim to the worship and service of one God and particular figures from their respective faiths are to be found in each other's Scriptures: Abraham, Isaac, while Jesus or Isa is to be found in both the Qu'ran and

the Hadith. And yet that label is also not without potential difficulties. The way in which Abraham functions in the three faiths is not the same; Islam traces its descent through Ishmael rather than Isaac; in Christian theology the person and ministry of Jesus Christ is more foundational than the role of Abraham – and indeed Moses is invoked more frequently by New Testament writers than is Abraham. In Islam Abraham is, of course, secondary to Muhammad.

Then there is the evident tension and risk of supersessionism by which and through which one faith may be said to fulfil and replace a previous one. Right from the outset that has been a particular problem for the Christian faith which sought to understand the significance of the birth, ministry, death and resurrection of Christ in scriptural categories taken from the Hebrew Bible. That Christians should appropriate the Hebrew Scriptures under the name of the Old Testament indicates, the very least, rival interpretations of the same texts. By way of comparison the Qu’ran rarely cites a text from the Hebrew or Christian Bibles.

Now with the emergence of a significant Muslim body resident in Australia calls into question the Christian faith’s commitment to what is called the finality of Christ – which, at this point in time in our history, can be summed up in the following way: nothing else needs to be revealed and be made known for the purposes of salvation. Christ is sufficient. From a Muslim perspective Jesus is a revered prophet and attracts such descriptions as the prophet of love, the breath of God, the miracle of God’s Word and even the seal of the Israelite prophets. But it is Muhammad who is God’s final messenger. Jesus preceded him in prophetic line-up of prophethood going

back to Adam; in the circumstances the Qu’ran and subsequent Islamic teachings can be understood as seeking to be a “corrective faith”.

These timely reminders serve as a point of entry into a much larger question which faces the Abrahamic faiths. It is put in a rather deceptively simple way: “Do we worship the same God?”



In the course of the lecture Clive outlined the areas of Christian which cause most difference of opinion. They can be summarised as follows:

(i). The Bible:

The Bible is regarded by Christians to be the Word of God. That claim might suggest that the Bible is similar to the Qu’ran which Muslims regard as the Word of God. But there are differences: over the course of the past several centuries various method of historical, literary and other forms of critical enquiry have arisen in the history of the Christian faith: it is now recognized that there is what we might call a ‘humanity’ about the Bible in the sense that it is both “a gift of God and a human product”. It is subject to critical enquiry and the phrase, the Word of God, is also applied to Christ and to the proclamation of the gospel. By way of comparison the Qu’ran is “the book” and the Word of God. For Christians the Bible is like a witness to the revelation of God in Christ Jesus.

(ii). The doctrine of God

The God whom Christians confess is further revealed or identified in particular ways which separate Christian believing from the other Abrahamic faiths, Judaism and Islam. Like them it believes in a God who is creator.

And yet the Christian faith found it necessary to think through what was the relationship between the one whom Jesus called Abba, Father, the risen Christ, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It took several centuries for this to happen but eventually emerged the doctrine of the Trinity – which Graeme Garrett who used to teach down in Canberra called the Christian name of God.

For outside observers the Trinity can look like what is called –tritheism’ – that is 3 Gods, not 1. But the Christian faith has always insisted in one God in three persons. Now the word person here is not the same as I am a person, you are a person, in any modern sense. The word person is taken from ancient Greek and is applied to the actor in a drama: the word *persona* refers to the mask the actor would wear in order to portray another character.

(iii). Jesus Christ

What separates a Christian understanding of God from its Jewish and Muslim equivalents is the claims we make about Jesus of Nazareth. Now it is true that over the last 75 years we have recovered a much greater sense of the Jewishness of Jesus which is partly a consequence of the Holocaust and its horrors – and partly due to deepening interest in his humanity. Jesus was a Jew; during the rise of Nazism in Germany, around about 1938, Dietrich Bonhoeffer argued that if the Jews were to be driven out of Europe, then so must Jesus be.

For much of Christian history Jesus was presented as the Son, the second person of the Trinity. It is now sometimes said that through his life and ministry Jesus presents the human face of God. It is arguably the case Christians seek to witness to the reality of God made known through Jesus while Muslims testify to the reality of God revealed through the Qu’ran.

It is also true that Qu’ran has stories to do with Jesus, a prophet in a line of prophets; His name is indeed referred to 25 times in the Qu’ran. The Qu’ran accepts that Jesus was born of Mary, taught his disciples, performed miracles, ‘healed the blind and the lepers, and .. raise(d) the dead by God’s leave” (Qu’ran 3:49) and that he ascended into heaven. There are also many stories to do with Jesus in the subsequent Islamic teaching called the Hadith which can mean a report, an account, a tale or even a tradition - and also in the writings of the Sufi mystics. The Hadith are inclined to see Jesus in close association with the poor and demonstrating poverty and humility. There are few parables. For the Sufis Jesus could be like a “prophet of the interior life” who was committed to purity, submission and holiness.



The Christian faith nevertheless makes special claims about Jesus of Nazareth – namely that not only was he crucified, but he was resurrected. Neither of these claims are accepted by Islam. There are two things which flow from this

confession. The first is that a Christian understanding of God must, at some deep level, be coloured and informed by the life, death and resurrection of Christ Jesus. It is not enough simply to say God is creator; the character and purpose of God is also revealed, mediated through Christ. The other side to this coin is that the Christian faith assumes that Jesus is more than a prophet, though that is a familiar title used of him, especially in the gospel of Luke. Being more than a prophet Jesus is reckoned to be the Son of God, indeed it later became said that he had two natures – the human and the divine. Islam does not accept the divinity of Christ. "There is no God but Allah, alone without partner". That reference to there being no partner is clearly a rejection of Jesus being the Son of God in the Christian sense of that term.

For a report on the forum, see:

<http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/about/news/561-forum-builds-understanding>

For further information on resources, links and guidelines, see the website for the Uniting Church Assembly's Relations with Other Faith working group.

<http://www.assembly.uca.org.au/rof/>

Finishing Off with a Song

For the younger at heart

[Top 40 Christian Songs 2016 - YouTube](http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWvahZRxLnLMSWeULnub0CCeQzvxGM8hB)
www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWvahZRxLnLMSWeULnub0CCeQzvxGM8hB

Christian Music: Praise and Worship Songs Chart | Billboard

www.billboard.com/charts/christian-songs

This week's most **popular Christian songs**, ... **Christian/Gospel** ... May 14, **2016**.

[Ascension Day Songs and Hymns Playlist - YouTube](#)

www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLDcNxsEvjauq9BUY2NsePVaMp-O6yEIU7

12/04/2016 · This is a playlist of classic **Christian Ascension Day songs and hymns** with beautiful modernized contemporary arrangements that celebrate the **ascension** of Jesus.

For the more 'mature' of heart.

[10/01/2016, Songs of Praise - BBC One](#)
bbc.com/programmes/b06wqph8

The **Songs of Praise** Gospel Choir competition is launched. ... Sally Magnusson meets local hero George Parsonage, who has saved hundreds of people from the river Clyde.

[27/03/2016, Songs of Praise - BBC One](#)
www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0764kkj

27/03/2016 · For Easter Sunday, Pam Rhodes goes behind the scenes at a community Passion play in Poole to discover how it is changing people's lives.

Music:

For some 'serious' Christian music lovers of choirs

<http://fapc.org/worship/music-fine-arts#in-performance>

.....and a Sermon Series

Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church, New York:

Spring Season: "For the Bible Tells Me So".

<http://fapc.org/worship/sermons>

May 1, 2016: A Psalm for All Seasons | Nora Tubbs Tisdale

April 24, 2016: Loving Life | M. Craig Barnes

April 17, 2016: God's People Sing the Blues | Scott Black Johnston

April 10, 2016: Consider the Lilies | Scott Black Johnston

April 03, 2016: So In Love | Kate Dunn

Not a good week for

Western Sydney Wanderers and the Parramatta Eels.

