

# THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IN MELBOURNE NEWS

## FEBRUARY – APRIL 2017

Dear Members and Friends,

Five years ago, after a lot of study, I came up with this contemplation on Passiontide and Easter. No poet, I warmed to play with the fire of inspired thinkers and people of action –

“Looking towards Easter,  
With the immovable image of Crucifixion  
Between us and the New Dawn,  
Reminded by Frankl that one way  
Of finding meaning in life is  
“To actualize the highest value,  
To fulfil the deepest meaning,  
The meaning of (inescapable) suffering”.

Hear also from those who were there,  
That God died at Auschwitz.  
Nietzsche’s ‘madman’ cried, decades before:  
“God is dead. ....And we have killed him.”

Then we find ourselves with the Beloved Disciple  
And the Women  
And the Roman soldier  
Beneath the cross  
At the sunset of hope,  
Together,  
Witnessing inescapable suffering of a world  
Of dimmed imagination, grown dark.

Watching and waiting, with Hammar skjold,  
Who, “at some moment did answer  
Yes To Someone – or Something—and from that  
hour  
Was certain that existence is meaningful and that,  
.....life, in self-surrender, had a goal”.

Theresa, Saint of the Gutter,  
Heard “the call within the call”  
And worked in a Morning Light of Love  
In places of forgotten suffering.

And Jung immediately replied: “I do not have to  
believe (in God). I know.”

Walking towards Easter,  
Through the Night to the Dawn  
Standing with others, beyond the cross. “

Cheryl Nekvapil -- lit for a moment in the spark of  
Dag Hammar skjold and his verses in “Markings”

### IN THE NEXT THREE MONTHS:

A number of different priests will be working in the  
congregation as you can see in the programme –  
take time to spot the events and which priest is  
where!

### 11.30am SUNDAY TALKS

**5<sup>th</sup> & 12<sup>th</sup> February: “What Shines Through” by Elke Baublies.** Looking at how we as humans became wise in regard to religious activity of any kind during our childhood and especially during puberty and beyond. How did we grow and what were the impulses we started out with in our lives, and where are they now, have they changed, etc.? Jesus grew in wisdom and understanding so we will look at that parallel.

**26<sup>th</sup> February: “A Glimpse into the Nature of Prayer” by Darryl Coonan.** A topic that can always be revisited and remind us of our spiritual conversations.

**12<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> March: “Raising of Lazarus” and “John 13:34” by Cheryl Nekvapil.** The turning point towards the crucifixion and the new commandment draw us into the unfolding events of Holy Week that still challenge us today as we anticipate Easter.

**2<sup>nd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> April: “Preparing for Easter” and “Easter Today” – conversation with Veronika Plantener.** Taking time for Easter in the cycle of the Christian Year, as we experience it ourselves.

### FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

**The Sunday Service for Children** will still be held at 11.15am, but this year the aim is to celebrate it in the rhythm of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month AND when there is a FESTIVAL, unless instead a **Community Service** (which all ages can attend) is scheduled. So, this all works out that The Sunday Service for Children is on 19<sup>th</sup> February, 9<sup>th</sup> March which is Palm Sunday, and **an exception, 9am** on Easter Day, 16<sup>th</sup> April. And there is a Community Service : 10am Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> March – read the programme; that will help to make this all clear.

### FESTIVALS for Everyone

**11.30am Palm Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> April**  
(after The Sunday Service for Children)

**3pm Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April – GOOD FRIDAY** “Sayings from the Cross” with piano music played by Danae Killian echoing the words.

**9am Easter Day Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> April**

**A Baptism will be held at 11.30am on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> April** for baby Elly Gutierrez; come and join in blessing this soul who has come so recently to earth. She lives with her parents Nicole and Raziel in Castlemaine. We can make them very welcome.

**The Christian Community in Melbourne, 319 Auburn Road, East Hawthorn 3123**  
**Email:theccmelbourne@gmail.com phone: 03 9029 2769 mobile: 0458124088**

## YOUTH ACTIVITIES

The older youth-- 18 yrs to young adults (with exceptions) -- have **a retreat** planned for 3rd - 5th February at Rye. They will be camping and working with the theme of the International Conference, **"Playing with Fire"**, with Veronika Plantener.

**A youth meeting will be held on Sunday 29th January from 1pm - 3pm, at the church** to plan for the March Trivia Night and to open up the stage for 2017.

We also need to begin thinking of a theme and making a draft plan for the annual Australian National Youth Conference being held here in Melbourne in the first week of October 2017. The New Zealanders need plenty of forward notice if they are to come. And we will get the message out there so that participants can set the time aside in their diaries for that event.

At last count Catherine, Freya, Tahlia, Max, Elanor and Mignon will be going to **the International Conference, "Playing With Fire" 2nd - 6th June 2017 in the Netherlands**. One or two others are still thinking about jumping in too – into the conference, not into the fire! Ivalo (Canberra) and Claudia (Sydney, Newcastle) are also going. That makes a group of 8 with Lisa Devine as the accompanying priest. Further planning for this group will be part of future Youth Meetings.

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March; 6pm – 9pm, for everyone**

**TRIVIA NIGHT & OPEN STAGE**  
(including dinner)  
**'wit and lack of it will all be**  
**fair game and in demand'**

**Cost \$10/person, \$20/family and**  
**generous donations invited.**  
**Funds raised will go toward the youth**  
**trip to Europe and toward the church**

## CONFIRMATION PREPARATION

**The Confirmation Camp** for this brightly shining 2017 Group **will be held here in Melbourne, at the church, from Friday morning 5th May to Sunday afternoon 7th May**. One confirmer from Adelaide will join the group and be confirmed with them on Sunday 7th May at 10am. It has happened in the past that the Confirmation is a part of the Camp. Martin Samson will celebrate the Confirmation for Shou, Michael, Benjamin, Tara and Elijah.

There will be an Australia Council Meeting happening here also on 5th & 6th May.  
Dates for Confirmation Preparation Sessions are:

- ✚ **Friday 24th February 5pm - 8pm** with Darryl Coonan;
- ✚ **Saturday 11th March 6pm - 9pm -- Trivia and Open Stage Night at the Church** -- hosted by Youth. Come as families and be in it to win, lose, be entertained, whatever!
- ✚ **Friday 24th March 5pm - 8pm** with Cheryl
- ✚ **Sunday 16th April 6am sunrise at the Shrine of Remembrance, followed by breakfast and Sunday Service for Children at the church**
- ✚ **Friday 21st April 5pm - 8pm** with Cheryl
- ✚ **Friday 5th - Sunday 7th May -- Confirmation Camp with**
- ✚ **Confirmation 10am Sunday 7th May**

## URIEL EVENTS

**Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March: 3pm – 5pm: URIEL EVENT:**  
**"Being human in the age of technological development"** Members of the Moral Technologies initiative (Inga Muribo, Matthew Hardie, Stefan Nekvapil, Rose Nekvapil and others) will explore their current understanding of technology and of being human at this point in history. Listen and enter into dialogue around the questions, issues and possibilities of new technologies that concern us all.

Last year they invited Nicanor Perlas from the Phillipines to speak on the development of Artificial Intelligence. This year Orland Bishop from Los Angeles will be the key note speaker at the 4-day conferences here in Melbourne (see below). In 2018 Yeshayahu Ben-Aharon (Israel) will speak on **Moral Technologies and Cognitive Yoga: Technological Singularity and the Making of a New Etheric Body & Individuality**.

**Thursday 6<sup>th</sup> April: 7pm – 9pm : The Technological Age of Human Life – Lecture by Orland Bishop** founder and director of Shade Tree Multicultural Foundation in Los Angeles, U.S.A. See flyer. Orland will explore the nature of technology, morality and the agreements that shape our relationships, our societies and our future(s), and investigate the consciousness and creativity needed to meet the challenges and opportunities in this technological age.

*Supported by the Ligma Kirpe Trust and Anthroposphical Society in Victoria.*

**5pm Friday 28<sup>th</sup> April – 1pm Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> April – "PLAYING WITH FIRE" – Retreat at Riverdale, Yarra Valley.** Martin Samson, Cheryl Nekvapil and others will contemplate fire and its living symbolism in spiritual life and a Christian path. The Act of Consecration of Man and Close of Day Services are integral to the programme. See flyer..

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**LIBRARY BOOKS** – please return books you've finished with to the library so that others can read them too! And if you have books to donate to the Library, that would add to the resource we have for everyone to enjoy.

**THE CONGREGATIONAL COMMITTEE** will hold a retreat at the church from 5pm, Friday 27<sup>th</sup> January– 5pm, Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> January to review the past year and look for direction into 2017 and beyond. Significant topics to be canvassed are what is the Spirit saying to our congregation?, painting the church, identifying our focus themes for 2017, finances, preparing for the AGM in May, our duties and obligations to authorities earthly and spiritual and to the congregation and the wider Christian Community. New committee members are needed so speak to one of us if you can step onto the Committee at the AGM, or we may be tapping some of you on the shoulder – the one that you put to the wheel!

Our meetings together and with the congregation bring impulses and pictures for how we are as a community. The angels are listening. For example, it was remarkable how, after the Sunday Community Meeting end of October 2016 when a \$10 - \$15,000 deficit was predicted for our year's finances, there was a huge shift that happened. In fact, we managed to end the year with income and expenses balancing – the deficit was vanquished by generosity and unanticipated donations. This year, look for another shift: the painting of the church.

With love and gratitude,

*Robin Jaworski (Chair), Kate Graves (Treasurer),  
Matthew Bond (Australia Council Rep), Margie  
Woodgate (Secretary), Rebecca Maxwell, Cheryl  
Nekvapil.*

**VOLUNTEERS** do so much creatively in our community: servers for the Sacrament, musicians, gardeners, lawn mowers, cleaners and dish washers, food providers, newsheet and programme editors, printers and distributors, committee members, contact list keeper, gallery curator, small maintenance jobs, vestry and vestments care, ironing, providing bread, grape juice and candles, presenting festivals and performances, conversationalists, networking and care for other,; banking and book-keeping, transporting, hosting guests, fundraising-- the challenge is for you to notice anything else that's been missed!

**SERVERS ARE TRULY NEEDED** – we need more people to serve for The Sunday Service for Children and for The Act of Consecration of Man as older members retire from serving. If you're still in

your youth, if you are still feeling a novice in the congregation, if you are nimble in step and want to try something new, this is a very constructive move to make in contributing to the essential life of the congregation.

**FINANCIAL NOTES** – Every donation given to The Christian Community in Melbourne sustains the building, the sacrament celebrations, activities and our priests. We need to raise about \$90,000 per year to meet our budget – providing for our vision that we strive for – which we did all achieve in 2016. This will be reported on at the AGM in May.

Monthly contributions directly into the community account, donations in the bowl and special donations are what provide our income. And it is at the discretion of you all, members and friends. Remuneration for outreach work by the priests also flows into our accounts.

In the past 3 years we have been able to save up some financial reserves, and also will draw on them when necessary such as for painting the church. This has been possible because we received each year a generous bequest – in 2014 from Ligsma Kirpe, in 2015 from Brian Butler (from New Zealand) and in 2016 from Peggy Macpherson. This is such a visible expression of how the 'dead' continue to work with us, guiding us on as we remember them and do our best to honour their bequest.

If you are moved and able to leave a bequest to The Christian Community in Melbourne in your will, it really would make a great impact into the future in the life of the congregation – as we have experienced recently. Thank you, thank you, for your financial support – we need it. We are at the same time all beneficiaries of what we give in community in this way.

**The Christian Community in Australia, Melb Inc,**  
**BSB No. 033 057, Account No. 134713.**

Enquiries: treasurer Kate Graves 03 9428 8908







## AND MORE

### A 3 King's Play in Germany

Every year at Epiphany, the students of the Hamburg Seminary of The Christian Community put on a 3 Kings play and do a small tour of 11 performances around the communities and schools (including a Biodynamic farm) of the Hamburg region. This year I was invited to play the part of Joseph.

The play consists only of singing, with no dialogue. The audience sits in quiet anticipation before the play begins. The distant singing can then be heard coming from afar, gradually drawing nearer. Joseph and Mary with the child, slowly, walk through the room to the candle lit stage then the singers appear.

Before each performance, costumes needed ironing, hoods needed refitting, make-up applied, and sometimes costume repairs were required. Once everyone was dressed and ready, we would listen to a reading of the birth story from Matthew's Gospel, say a verse together and the singing would begin.

Every time I heard the story from Matthew, I experienced again, the sense of intense drama that surrounded this birth and imagined the sense of wonder, awe and perhaps even shock, that Joseph may have felt as these strangers appeared out of nowhere to kneel before his own son and offer their gifts. I thought of the questions that may have arisen in his mind; Who are these people? Who is this child of mine? What does all this mean for my life? What

am I meant to do with this experience?

In Matthew's story, it is often through dreams that the spiritual world offers its answers or requests, only after much inner searching and disturbance on the part of the dreamer. The Magi are directed in a dream not to return to Herod to bring him news of the birth. Then Joseph is told in a dream to take Mary and the child far away into a foreign country. The spiritual world sends the message to the dreamer, but this only the offer. The dreamer then has to act on it, or not, as the case may be. Was it an easy decision for Joseph to follow what he heard in the dream? Was it a given, that the Kings would return home by other routes?

Matthew's story is full of drama and tumult. The heavy dread of the figure of Herod hangs over the whole picture. But in the midst of this heaviness, these fears and difficult destinies, come helpful messages from the spiritual world.

Before each performance of the 3 Kings play, the pre-performance nerves and disquiet started to creep in. It can feel very weighty to stand in these roles and to try and live into these ancient stories. You can feel terribly unworthy! But somehow, you put one foot in front of the other and the next thing you know, you are standing there, singing in front of an audience and performing as intended.

Where can we, in our own lives, in the middle of the disquiet and tumultuous nature of today's world create the space in which to listen, to hear the messages that come from the spiritual world? And then, how do we find the courage to take the steps that we have been asked to take?

Some kind of meditative or prayer based practice becomes crucial. We can try to create the space where the divine has a chance to speak, even if only for a few minutes everyday. Then out of this space, something new can come: a new idea; a fresh way of looking at a situation; an adjustment in our feelings. But then, no matter how inspired I've become, how full of idealism I feel, it is up to me what happens next and whether I take on this new "role" or not. It depends on me whether or not I take those difficult first steps on the next part of the journey. We never know for sure what is going to come of our actions. To simply take the next step is courage and faith.

With warmest greetings,  
Michael Young  
from the Hamburg Seminary for The Christian Community.

*Michael is now living in Hamburg with his wife Emily and two young children and studying at the seminary. Did you know it's now possible to sponsor Michael's studies with even just a few dollars? Please visit [www.gofundme.com/mickstudyhamburg](http://www.gofundme.com/mickstudyhamburg)*