



ST PAUL'S ANGLICAN CHURCH

Burwood

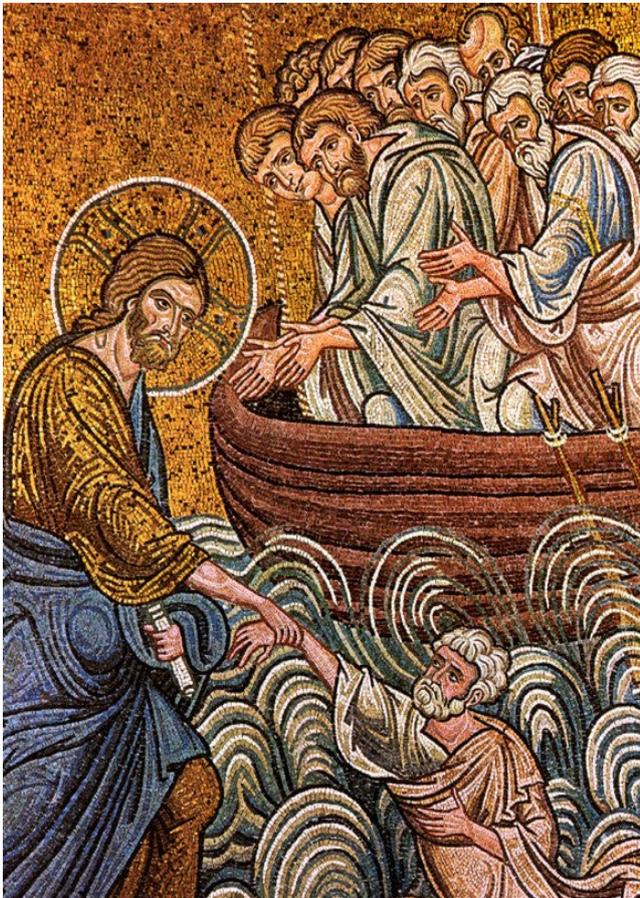
Welcome to worship

Sunday 7th August 2022

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

8.00am	Said Eucharist
9.30am	Choral Eucharist (with the St Paul's Choir)
10.30am	Midweek Eucharist on every Wednesday

WELCOME TO ST PAUL'S. We are glad that you have come to worship God with us today. If you are a visitor from another parish, or worshipping with us for the first time, please introduce yourself to our parish priest, Fr James Collins, or to anyone wearing a name badge.



Included in this issue ...

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- ≈ Pope Francis says 'door is open' to his retirement amid 85-year-old's worsening health p.32

And Much More...

Things you may



First Aid

First aid kits are located on the wall of the kitchen in the Large Hall behind the church and in the choir vestry.



Name badges

Name badges help make St Paul's an inclusive community. If you need a new name badge, fill in the form inside the pew sheet, send it to the parish office, and one will be made and left in church for you.



Toilets

Toilets are available at the entrance to the parish hall, which is located behind the church.

? ? Still got questions?

Ask a member of the clergy or anyone who's wearing a name badge. We're here to help.

In case we need to evacuate



As you take your place in your pew, please make yourself aware of the route to the nearest emergency exit. Should there be a fire, leave quickly, turn right, and assemble by the roundabout on Burwood Road.

Getting inside

People needing wheelchair access can enter St Paul's most conveniently by the south door.

Switch it to silent !



Please turn your mobile phone off or on to silent before the service starts. It'll save you much embarrassment later on.

Children are welcome at St Paul's



Children are welcome in church at any service. There is a selection of children's books and toys at the back of the church near the font and there are also kids' activity sheets and pencils available at the back of the church where the pew sheets and prayer books are.

Children's Church runs during Term Time. Meet at the back of the church at the beginning of the 9.30am Eucharist.

Please feel free to bring your children to the altar rail to receive a blessing, or to receive Communion if they have been admitted to the sacrament.

Photos



Please do not take photos inside the church or during the services of worship without permission.

Acknowledgement of the Wangal people of the Eora Nation

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land upon which we meet, the Wangal People of the Eora Nation, and pay our respects to their elders, past, present, and emerging; and we pray that God will unite us all in the knowledge of his Son, in whom all things were created, in heaven and on earth.

Welcome! We are glad that you have found us!

We affirm that through God's redeeming love for all, we are one in Christ. We respect the inherent and valuable contributions each member makes to the Body of Christ. We celebrate our diversity and recognize the sacred worth and dignity of all persons of any age, gender, gender identity, gender expression, race, ethnic origin, economic reality, family status, sexual orientation, diverse ability, or social status. We believe that through Christ we are being included and welcomed by God and one another. As we journey towards inclusion, we proclaim this welcome to all God's people, especially to those who have known the pain of exclusion and discrimination within the church, affirming that no one is excluded or condemned. We invite all persons to journey with us as we discover the call of God on our lives through the ministries of St. Paul's Anglican Church, Burwood. To that end, St. Paul's Anglican Church commits to the welcome and inclusion of all persons as children of God and declares itself to be a welcoming community of faith.

Bible Readings for Today	Year C	Bible Readings for next Sunday
Isaiah 1.1,10-20	The First Reading	Isaiah 5.1-7
Ps 50.1-8,23-24	The Psalm	Ps 80.1-2,8-19
Hebrews 11.1-3,8-16 (17-28)	The Epistle	Hebrews 11.29-12.2
Luke 12.32-40	The Gospel	Luke 12.49-59

Everyone is invited to join us at Communion

There is a wide diversity in how Anglicans prefer to receive the bread and wine at Holy Communion; some stand, others kneel, most receive the wafer in the hand, a few wish to have it put on the tongue. Most like to guide the Chalice to their lips, others like to take it into their hands, while others prefer not to touch it at all. None of these variations really matter but simply reflect Anglican diversity.

For health reasons and out of concern for other worshippers, we ask you not to dip your bread into the wine. If you are uncomfortable receiving from the Common Cup the practice in our Parish is to receive the bread only.

Judging by the number of people who do it, many must imagine that not receiving the Chalice to the lips but dipping the wafer or bread into the cup (called intinction) is a more hygienic way of receiving the Sacrament. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Apart from the obvious fact that the wine they are dipping into has already been in contact with the lips of others, with all the best intentions

in the world, the fingers of those who dip often come in contact with the wine. Disease can spread more easily through the hands than through the lips, making this method the most unhygienic. In addition, the Prayer Book directs that all consecrated wine must be consumed before it leaves the Church, meaning that someone, usually the Chalice Assistant or the Celebrant, has to drink the left-over wine that has had multiple contacts with hands.

In order to protect others it is perhaps understandable to want to dip if one has sore lips or has a cold, but the consensus of the Church is that taking only the bread is fully participating in Communion.

THANK YOU

~ **To** the Parishioner who has very kindly given a new Lavabo Bowl and Cruet for the Sanctuary as well as new Candles for our Church Services.

~ **To** those who have worked so hard to keep the gardens looking lovely

~ **To** Lee who cleans for us every week.

News from St Paul's ...

Welcome to St Paul's!

My Dear Friends,

We are very glad to be able to welcome you to worship with us at St Paul's.

The following services will be offered:

- Sunday 8:00am Said Eucharist
- Sunday 9:30am Choral Eucharist with choir
- Wednesday 10:30am mid-week Eucharist

I am truly grateful to all those who, over the past months, have helped us to remain connected to God and to each other through this pandemic. Thank you for your loving Service of God and of God's people at St Paul's and beyond.

I hold you and our community, nation, and world in my prayers.

May God's peace sustain and surround you at this time.

Fr James



Flowers as a Memorial

Decorating our church with flowers is one way to remember a loved one or in thanksgiving for a special event. If you would like to give flowers in memory of a loved one, or as an offering of thanksgiving please contact Judith Laurence the week prior to the date

at judealaurence@gmail.com or on 0438041726 and contact Caroline in the parish office at

office@stpaulsbuwood.org.au to arrange the wording of the memorial notice in the pew bulletin.



burwood **¢**ommunity **¢**hoir
@ St Paul's

The Burwood Community Choir was formed in the latter part of 2019. The Choir is open to anyone and everyone who wants to join with others in song. You do not have to have any special musical expertise; just love to sing.

There are no auditions for the choir and no membership fees. If people are able to make a donation to help with expenses then that is most acceptable but it is not a requirement for participation in the choir.



The choir rehearses in the main hall at the back of St Paul's Anglican Church located at 205-207 Burwood Rd, Burwood. We meet during school term times. In 2022, rehearsals will be on Tuesdays from 5.30-6.30pm. Our Music Director and Conductor is Mrs Karen Carey. If you can't have fun with Karen at the helm, you just can't have fun!

During rehearsals we do some warm-up exercises and learn a variety of songs that will become a program for a performance at the end of the school term. In spite of COVID, we have managed to deliver two performances (2019 and 2020) and lead a rousing evening of favourite Christmas Carols with full audience participation at the end of 2021.

St Paul's provides help and support for the organisation and running of the choir. Donations from audiences at our performances help to support the St Paul's "Pantry" which provides groceries and food items to those experiencing hardship in our community. So you are not only singing for fun but helping those in need at the same time.

BCC started 2022 rehearsals on 15 March 2022. If you want a little "taste" of our efforts we are on You Tube – <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=INlAyo-ToO0> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORW-sUdXWCY>

Come and join us in song and friendship. We are looking forward to meeting you.

If you need further information email Barbara Stone (Choir Director).
barbarastoneam@gmail.com



Trading Table



The Trading Table made \$37.65 last Sunday (includes sale of the Epistle). There is still some of the last Epistle (Lent to Easter) available, in case you missed out, for the very reasonable price of \$7.

We look forward to serving you with our jams/chutneys (see below for the varieties), plants etc.

Butters

Lemon, Lemon & Lime

Chutneys/Pickles

Pawpaw Chutney, Green Pawpaw Chutney, Crab Apple Sauce, Pear & Apple Chutney, Choko Chutney, Quince & Apple Sauce

Jams

Golden Passionfruit Jam/Sauce, Cherry Guava Jelly, Crab Apple Jelly, Apple Cherry Guava Jelly, Choko & Ginger Jam, Quince & Apple Jam/Sauce, Spiced Nectarine Jam, Spiced Peach & Nectarine Jam, Chunky Fig & Vanilla Jam, Spiced Fig & Apple Jam, Pineapple Jam, PawPaw, Pineapple and Ginger Jam, Guava Jam, Guava and Ginger Jam

Marmalades

Lime, Mojito Lime, Lemon, Meyer Lemon & Rum, Orange, Orange/ Rum & Raisin, Orange & Rum, Orange/ Coriander & Ginger, Orange & Cranberry, Orange/Lemon/Ginger, Lemon & Ginger, Lemon /Ginger & Gin, Orange & Passion fruit Jelly, Citrus (various combinations of citrus fruit), Chai Spiced Grapefruit, Mandarin , Orange/Grapefruit & Ginger

Plants

The plants are going into hibernation as the weather gets colder.

Books, DVD's & CD's available at \$1 each

I have some beautiful hand knitted wool garments. Beanies, children's, baby all for sale.

Thank you for your support

A Message from The Rector

My Dear Friends,

I sincerely hope that you are all well.

I assure you of my love and prayers as we live through these challenging times. I thank God for each of you and I pray that God will bless you and keep you.

What God is doing at St. Paul's is amazing. As so many Churches and Dioceses struggle, become inward-looking, and are dying, we are growing in faith and hope and love and we are also swimming against the tide in that we are incredibly generous to those in need (and this need will only grow) and despite the pandemic, inclement weather, war, and a struggling economy, we are actually seeing new people link up and become a part of our community of faith. We have so much to be thankful for. Thanks be to God.

All the way through the pandemic, that has now been impacting on the global community and each of our lives for over two and a half years, I have sought to keep everyone safe, calm, connected to God, and connected to each other. We have done really well in achieving all of these goals and, given that the pandemic will be impacting on our lives for probably an equivalent

period of time, we will do all that we can to continue to achieve these goals.

Despite the pandemic, we carry on in faith and hope and love and try to care for everyone and keep everyone safe.

The Orchestral Masses for the Sesquicentenary Celebrations and our Feast of Dedication were magnificent as is our worship of God week by week, month by month, year by year. We are truly blessed so that we might be a blessing to our community and world.

The impact of the pandemic on our community:

Conditions are deteriorating daily in Sydney as case numbers climb – but they are relatively easy to measure: the impact on people's financial and psychological health will be enormous and long-lasting.

We are seeing a surge in demand for the Parish Pantry and we will continue to help everyone who comes to the Parish Pantry for help.

Looking to the future:

As opposed to over 70% of Parishes in the Diocese, we are growing. People may look on us as old but God often chooses those who are more mature to undertake great things and what might look foolish and weak to the world, as Jesus appeared to be, is how God's strength is manifest.

We have God and we have each other and that is enough.

God has called us all together to:

1. Maintain our beautiful and soul-stirring worship;
2. Maintain and restore our beautiful grounds and buildings;
3. Welcome and care for all – be they Parishioners or not;
4. Increase the numerical and financial health of the Parish; and
5. Increase the spiritual health of the Parish.

All of this is to ensure that St. Paul's will remain a liturgical, sacramental, pastoral, outward-looking, and caring Parish for centuries to come and I hope that you will give generously of your time, talents, and financial resources so that all of this can be achieved.

We are seeking to ensure that St. Paul's will remain a place where all are cared for, particularly those in need, and we are most grateful to you for your support for all that St. Paul's does to "seek the welfare of the city where God has set us, and to pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." (Jeremiah 29: 7)

The impact of the pandemic on the Parish:

The extended nature of the pandemic has put significant pressure on the Parish's finances as costs increase every year due to rising inflation. On current projections our deficit this year will be around \$80,000 to \$100,000 and this can't be allowed to happen as the Parish must make a surplus every year. Remaining financially viable is crucial in ensuring that the Parish will remain a liturgical, sacramental, pastoral, outward-looking, and caring Parish. There is nothing to trim from the budget so we need to increase our giving.

I ask you to make your financial donations either via electronic fund transfer or by cheque or by cash.

The St. Paul's bank account details are:

Account name: St Pauls Anglican Church Burwood

BSB#: 032062

A/C #: 250028

In response to God's grace, love, and mercy we are seeing an outpouring of generosity and graciousness within the Parish with so many giving of themselves in love to God and to God's people here at St. Paul's and beyond. Thanks be to God.

We give thanks to God for the amazing generosity of our Parishioners. Thanks be to God

Many people volunteer their time to run the Parish Pantry (which sees more and more people coming for help each week) and we have a dedicated team of gardeners who ensure that our grounds and gardens are so beautiful and welcoming. Thanks be to God.

Our worship of God each week is enriched through the gift of talents that our Bell Ringers, our Choir, our Organists, our Sacristan and Servers, our Flower Arrangers, those who prepare our Intercessions, those who read, those who welcome, and all who serve and participate in the Services give so that we might worship God in the beauty of holiness. Thanks be to God.

Our Ministry Team serve God and this Parish remarkably well and we are blessed to have such a competent and loving team of faithful people who guide and lead us in worship, mission, pastoral care, and prayer. Thanks be to God.

Our Wardens and Parish Council serve God and the Parish wonderfully as we see, by God's grace, an extraordinary period of growth and renewal at St. Paul's. Thanks be to God.

I extend my thanks to all who give so generously of their time, their talents, and their finances to see God's kingdom of justice, peace, and love grow here at St. Paul's and beyond.

Please hold the Parish, Ministry Team, Parish Council, Wardens, and me in your prayers as we trust God to guide and lead us and to protect and provide for us as we journey on in faith and hope and love.

In the midst of these disruptions and challenges, we will continue to keep everyone safe, calm, connected to God, and connected to each other. We will continue to love God and our neighbour. We will continue to upgrade our facilities (recent projects include the new sandstone floor and mosaic in the Bell Tower Porch, solar panels on the Hall, new curtains in the Hall, fire

security for the Church, a cool room for the Parish Pantry, more kneelers for the Church, and more bags for the Parish Pantry, all made possible by the amazing generosity of our Parishioners and community towards the Parish and Parish Pantry). We will continue to care for all who are struggling and come for help from the Parish Pantry.

Final Prayer:

Please be sure of my prayers for you and your families and friends as we live through these disrupted times.

We know that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord so we need not fear anything in life or death – certainly not the pandemic. It is a matter of following the appropriate health advice and getting on with life despite the disruption and challenges.

We turn to God in prayer:

*In darkness and in light,
in trouble and in joy,
help us, heavenly Father,
to trust your love,
to serve your purpose,
and to praise your holy name;
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

I believe that part of what God has in store is that, by God's grace, we ensure that St. Paul's will remain a liturgical, sacramental, pastoral, outward-looking, and caring Parish for centuries to come and I thank you most sincerely for your part in this wonderful journey that God has called us to share.

May you know God's peace at this time.

With my love and prayers.

Peace,

Fr. James.

Fire Protection System in the Church

St. Paul's has been awarded a NSW Heritage grant of \$41,000.00 to help meet half of the cost of a state of the art fire protection system in the Church.

We need to raise the other \$20,000 to match this grant to ensure that St. Paul's is protected from any risk of fire.

This state of the art system includes fire brigade monitoring that will not be set off by candles burning and using incense in our Services.

Donations can be made to the National Trust Account which are tax deductible.

Cheques can be made out to:

National Trust of Australia (NSW)
St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

Or

Direct Credit to the above name with bank account details:

Westpac

BSB: 032-044

Account number: 742 926

Branch: 275 George Street, Sydney
NSW

Please contact Pam for more details or place a donation in an envelope and label with National Trust donation and include your name for your receipt and an address to post it to. Thank you.

We are seeking to ensure that the entire precinct (that is, the Church, the Rectory, the Hall, and the grounds) is refurbished and maintained to the highest standard and your help is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Requests for Prayer

Praying for the needs of our world and its people is both a responsibility and a privilege. In our services on Wednesday and Sunday we pray by name for those who have asked for our prayers.

If you would like us to pray for yourself or a friend or loved one we now have a book at the back of the church where names can be added to our parish prayer list. Please ask the newcomers if you cannot see where it is. The page will be turned and the list will be completely renewed every three months, beginning June, Sept, Dec, March.

Likewise, let us know when someone's name should be removed or placed in the faithful departed.

**For General & Offertory
Donations**

please use this account details:

Account Name: St Pauls Anglican
Church

BSB: 032 062

Account #: 250028

**For Parish Pantry
AND For Community Choir
Donations**

please use this account details:

Account Name: Parish Pantry

BSB: 032 062

Account #: 812238

Please clearly mark whether it is for
the Parish Pantry or the
Community Choir.

Thank you for your generosity.

Offertory -

**Collection given at St Paul's this week
and other donations:**

≈ Offertory:\$4160

≈ Parish Pantry.\$420

≈ Trading Table:\$500

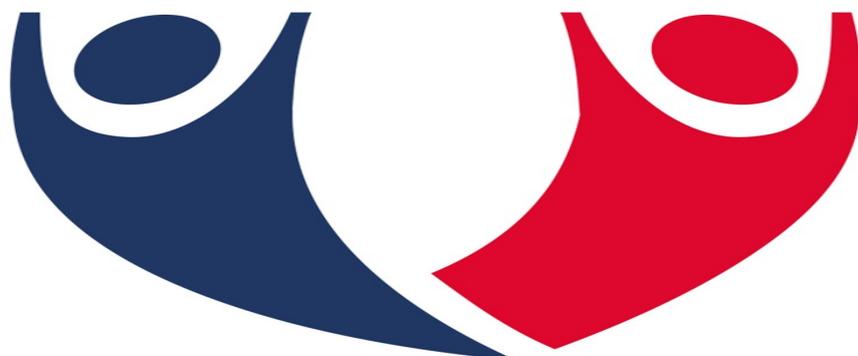
≈ National Trust Acct:\$10

TOTAL OF GIVING:\$5090

Thank you for responding to God's
generous love.



Official Logo for NSW Volunteer Referral Service



**the centre for
volunteering**
member 20/21

Donations and Bequests

Over the years the parish has benefited from the generosity of parishioners, not only when they have been active members of the parish, but also at the time of their death. Parishioners are invited to remember the parish in their wills by making a bequest as a thank offering to God and to ensure that generations to come will enjoy worship and fellowship in well maintained buildings.

Those wishing to make a bequest are invited to do so using these or a similar form of words: " I bequeath the sum of \$..... to the Rector and Wardens of the Anglican parish of St Paul, Burwood, to be used at their absolute discretion for the charitable purposes of the parish."

Donations with Tax Deductibility - National Trust Account

If you would like to make a donation to the Parish for the upkeep and maintenance of the Heritage building it can be done through the National Trust.

Cheques can be made out to:

National Trust of Australia (NSW) St Paul's Anglican Church Burwood

Or

Direct Credit to the above name with bank account details: Westpac

BSB: 032-044

Account number: 742 926

Branch: 275 George Street Sydney NSW

Please contact Pam for more details or place a donation in an envelope and label with National Trust donation and include your name for your receipt and an address to post it to. Thank you.

PARISH PANTRY

Parish Pantry is open on Tuesdays and Thursdays from
9.30am-11.30am.

With the current cost of living and food shortages, we are now
spending in excess of \$600 per week.

Hands and Feet supply us with fruit and vegetables. But this costs us
\$200 per week. Our thanks to the community Choir who are now
picking up the tab for this.



Food

- Long Life Full Cream Milk
- Pasta Sauce
- Breakfast Cereals
- Rice and Couscous
- Instant Noodles
- Harvest Meals (Tinned)
- Meals in a Box (Sun Rice)
- Spreads—Peanut Butter, Jam
- Tin Food— Corn Beef, SPAM, Tuna, Sardines, Vegetables, Fruit, Soup
- Sweet and Savoury Biscuits
- Sugar, Salt, Cooking Oil



Health

- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Toilet Paper
- Disposable Razor
- Bars of Soap
- Toothpaste
- Moisturiser



Clean

- Laundry Powder
- Dishwashing liquid
- Chux / Sponges /Scours
- Paper Towel



Given events in Ukraine we pray for Peace

A prayer for peace (APBA p 202)

God of the nations,
whose sovereign rule brings justice and peace, have
mercy on our broken and divided world. Shed abroad
your peace in the hearts of all and banish from them the spirit that makes for
war, that all races and peoples may learn to live as members of one family
and in obedience to your law, through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



St Paul's Coat of Arm

Shield — The Shield of Faith which St Paul exhorts us to carry (Ephesians 6:16)

Pallium — The shield is in three sections using the heraldic charge of a Pall or Pallium, a symbol traditionally associated with an ecclesiastical vestment.

The three sections represent the Holy Trinity.

“Faith, Hope, Love” — These are the three Theological Virtues taken from St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians (1 Corinthians 13:13):

“And now faith, hope and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.”

Dove — Symbolising the Holy Spirit and Peace

Cross — The symbol of our Faith

Book and Sword — The symbols of St Paul

Colour Red — Liturgical colour for Martyrs (Paul); The Holy Spirit (Fire); and the Blood of Christ

Colour Blue — Representing the Water of Life (Baptism) and the liturgical colour for Mary Mother of our Lord

St Paul's Church Archive Search

The archives at St Paul's are very comprehensive and we are asked regularly for baptism, wedding and funeral searches. This is very time consuming in many cases.

We have decided to have a search fee imposed on these. It will be \$150 per search and could include a copy of documents.

READ, LEARN AND DIGEST ...

Four exceptional school leaders announced as the next Fellows

Investigating a new approach to reframing empowered leadership in an increasingly challenging and complex school context

The Menzies Foundation with key partner Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER) are delighted to announce the Menzies School Leader Fellowships have been awarded to four innovative Principals across Australian government, Catholic and independent schools.

“This recruitment process was the first national intake for the Fellowship and we have been overwhelmed with the reception from school leaders across Australia. I am delighted to announce the recipients of the 2022 Menzies School Leader Fellowship and the Collier School Leader Fellowship” said Menzies Foundation CEO Liz Gillies.

Congratulations to the successful candidates:

Carolyn Blanden – Principal, Warakirri College, Fairfield and Blacktown, NSW

Anne Stout – Principal, Port Melbourne Secondary College, VIC

Anthony Boys – Principal, Marist Catholic College North Shore, NSW

Nick Lovering – Principal, Katherine High School, NT

With thanks to the ongoing partnership with the Collier Charitable Fund, Anne Stout has been awarded the Collier School Leader Fellowship to undertake the School Leader Fellowship.

“Collier Charitable Fund is committed to continuing the legacies of Alice, Annette and Edith Collier by striving to improve the lives of Australians. The education sector is a specific interest area of the Fund and we are delighted to welcome Anne Stout, Principal, Port Melbourne Secondary College, Victoria to the program and we wish her all the best.” said Wendy Lewis, Collier Charitable Fund.

Powered by the Menzies Foundation the two-year, \$150,000, leadership development initiative seeks to harness cross-sector expertise to understand how to build a pipeline of talented school leaders, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to successfully adapt to and take on the challenges and complexities of the role. Unlike typical leadership development initiatives, there is an explicit focus on increasing the skills and capabilities of leaders to build collective efficacy.

The Fellowship is led by a multi-sector collaboration comprised of school leaders, corporate and philanthropic partners, supported by an outstanding Advisory Board.

We need to talk like Australians if we want to reach them

- by Nils von Kalm

When I was a young Christian I was taught that the most important pre-occupation for believers was the Great Commission. It was to go out and bring as many people to faith as possible. Evangelism was the number one task for the committed Christian.

It was a few years after that, influenced by people like Reverend John Smith and Martin Luther King, that the social demands of the gospel became equally as important to me. As I remember someone saying back then, the greatest command is not to preach the Gospel, important though that is, it is to love God and neighbour.

At the time though, I didn't see much of that in the church. A major reason for that was the theology that many of us grew up with. It was an "escapist" theology that basically said that Jesus was coming back soon, the earth will be destroyed and we will all be taken away to heaven. As a result, issues like social justice and care for the environment – while good things to do – were nowhere near as important as people's eternal destinies.

One of the aspects of the Anglican liturgy I like is that we pray the Lord's Prayer every week in church. As I have grown older, I appreciate more the repetitive ritual of the liturgy. And what could be more beneficial than every week praying the very way that Jesus taught us? In my work

of aid and development, the request that God's kingdom come on earth as in heaven is a reminder of why I do what I do and of the hope we share, that we can actually play a part in bringing in the reign of God – the reign of love, peace, justice and joy – right here on earth. It's not about having to wait to go to a place in the sky when we die.

Unfortunately, much of the church in Australia is not known for living out that message, either in word or in deed.

In 2020, the Barna research group in the United States released information about the perceptions of the church by the general public. It revealed that a large percentage of unchurched people have negative views of the church, thinking that local churches are judgmental, hypocritical, irrelevant, disconnected from real issues in the community, and known more for what they are against.

That hits quite close to home. It does so because I'm confident that the same could be said of the Australian situation in many cases.

The most recent census results show clearly that adherence to the Christian faith is in serious decline. I don't think that's a real surprise to anyone, the Census is stating what has been the reality for some decades.

So, why is it that the church seems to have done such a bad job at bringing the best news in history to our society? Why is it that so many people respect Jesus but can't stand the church? What have we done wrong?

Firstly, there is much we have done and continue to do right. As the Centre for Public Christianity stated some years ago in their series *For The Love Of God*, Christians have been at the forefront of some of the greatest social progress in history. For instance, the abolitionist movement was almost entirely Christian, and the civil rights movement in the US was based on the teachings of Jesus, particularly the Sermon on the Mount. Additionally, the birth of universities, hospitals and charities was predominantly led by Christians.

I have also seen an encouraging trend over the last 35 years or so in the Australian church. I have seen more of an emphasis on caring for people who are marginalised, poor and generally underprivileged. More

Christians are realising the social implications of the gospel, that caring for the poor and the environment are central gospel concerns.

Despite this, there is much work to do. It's the people who walk their talk who are the most respected by Australians. And when much of the church is more concerned with its own rights, fear of what it calls persecution, or a longing for the days when our churches were full, than it is about loving our neighbours, we are not following the Jesus of the gospels, the Jesus who said that all the Law and the Prophets is summed up in the command to love God and neighbour, and to do unto others as we would want them to do for us.

How can we rectify this? Many years ago, Reverend John Smith wrote that the church in Australia hasn't had a distinctive faith language that is understood by the average Australian. Almost 35 years later, I would say that is still the case as we continue to copy either the American mega-church model or a British model that is hundreds of years old.

There is still a huge gap between secular Australia and the church. The church is not just seen as irrelevant, it is hardly even considered by the majority of people.

More than ever, Australia needs to hear a message of good news, a message that speaks to the heart of where we are at. In one of the wealthiest countries in the world, that has some of the highest rates of loneliness, depression, anxiety and suicide, Jesus' words that life does not consist in the abundance of possessions speak to the heart of Australia. So to does his question, "What does it profit you if you gain the whole world but lose your very sense of self?". Jesus is more relevant than ever in 21st century Australia. But the church is seen as so irrelevant. Something is not adding up.

How do we present a God that Australians can take seriously? If Jesus is who he says he is, then he is central to all of life. So, let's talk more from our pulpits about economics, politics, sexuality, the cost of living and its effects on people of low income, the effects of a changing climate, and the war in Ukraine. Let's talk about what Jesus has to say to those issues.

These are all central gospel issues because they go straight to the heart of God's concern for people. And let's do this by quoting people who are outside the church. Let's speak the language of the people. Acts 17 is a great example for us. St Paul, when in Athens, quotes one of their own poets in a song written to Zeus. By doing so, he convinced many of them.

Many churches are of course doing this and doing it very well. It is the churches that are outward looking and speak to the heart of where Australians are at that are respected. May we be more like those churches, and be followers of the Christ who speaks to the hearts of all people no matter who and where they are.

Nils von Kalm is a Melbourne writer who focuses on the links between Christian faith and culture.

Australian agronomist Tony Rinaudo is turning African deserts into forests - *By Nicola Heath*

By the side of a road in a desert in Niger, Tony Rinaudo had the eureka moment that would change not only his life but the lives of millions of people in West Africa and beyond.

Mr Rinaudo – who at the time had spent more than two years in the West African country attempting to halt the devastating creep of desertification and "failing miserably" – looked around as he let air out of his tyres so he could proceed on the sandy road.

It was a dispiriting sight.

"[There was] barely a tree on the horizon. I thought to myself, how many millions of dollars, how many hundreds of staff would you need, how many decades would it take to have any sort of decent impact on this desolate landscape?"

In the early 1980s, Niger was "a landscape on the point of ecological collapse," Mr Rinaudo tells ABC RN's Soul Search.

Farmers had cut down existing native forests decades earlier, leaving a denuded landscape sandblasted by 70 kilometre per hour winds and ravaged by high soil surface temperatures and apocalyptic dust storms.

"Because there was a lack of diversity, there were no natural predators to insect pests," Mr Rinaudo says. "Even in the years when you did get rain, you'd have an explosion of locusts and caterpillars."

Food and water were scarce as drought dried up the wells and devastated crop yields.

It was a desperate situation, Mr Rinaudo says, as men left the villages looking for work and food to send home to A roadside epiphany

Gazing out at the barren terrain, Mr Rinaudo considered giving up and leaving Africa.

"It was one of those low points in my life," he says.

Two years into his land restoration project in Niger, Mr Rinaudo had yet to see any success. Expensive tree planting programs failed time after time.

"I was feeling very discouraged because I knew full well that most people weren't interested at all," he says. "In fact, they actually called me the crazy white farmer."

He could see their point. "Here they were, often short of food, very, very poor, and here's this crazy white guy coming in and telling them they should be planting trees on their precious farmland."

On the desolate road, Mr Rinaudo, a devout Christian, said a prayer and soon after, noticed "a useless looking bush" nearby. He walked over to take a closer look.

"In that instant, everything changed," he says. "I realised, no, it's not a bush, it's not an agricultural weed – it's a tree, and it's been cut down."

Nigerien farmers typically slashed the small shoots that grew from tree stumps, but Mr Rinaudo realised in that moment these "suckers" offered the answer he was looking for.

"Everything that we needed was literally at our feet," he says. "I realised then I didn't need to plant trees, we weren't fighting the Sahara Desert, I didn't need a multi-million budget – we just needed to work with nature

instead of fighting it and destroying it."

What is FMNR?

Mr Rinaudo is at pains to point out that growing trees from stumps – what he called farmer managed natural regeneration (FMNR) – is not new.

It's a centuries-old method of cultivation practised around the world.

The key to FMNR's success is its simplicity. Mr Rinaudo quotes permaculture founder Bill Mollison, who said "though the problems of the world are increasingly complex, the solutions remain embarrassingly simple."

"I love that," Mr Rinaudo says, who has become known as the "forest maker" for his work re-greening degraded land around the world.

FMNR has three basic principles.

First is the use of dormant tree stumps – an "underground forest" – to regenerate land rather than planting seeds or seedlings.

The second is pruning to encourage growth and give the trees a desirable form.

"All we're doing in FMNR is ... selecting the stems we want to grow into full tree stature [and] culling out the excess because there might be 20 or 30 of these stems all competing for the same light and nutrients and water," Mr Rinaudo explains. "You need to reduce that competition."

The third principle is community involvement.

To succeed, it must be "farmer-managed" and "community-owned, not Tony-managed," says Mr Rinaudo. "The demand had to come from the farmers."

However, convincing local farmers to grow trees on their farmland was no easy task.

"Initially, there was a lot of reluctance," he says. "The forefathers of the farmers I knew were the pioneers who cleared the bush. They were the heroes who created farmland for the next generation."

The idea that the farmers' forebears had made mistakes wasn't a popular one. "People pushed back," Mr Rinaudo says.

Nor were people keen to break with tradition and try something new. "Nobody wants to be different, particularly in a traditional society – you can face ostracism and ridicule."

Mr Rinaudo eventually locked in around 10 volunteers willing to try his seemingly hare-brained scheme.

After some setbacks, the concept gained supporters as people saw its benefits.

The new trees provided animal fodder and extra wood for fuel, served as windbreaks, and added organic matter to the soil, improving its quality.

These pioneering farmers "formed the nucleus for what became this massive movement across the country," Mr Rinaudo says.

Twenty years after Mr Rinaudo's roadside epiphany, the FMNR movement restored 5 million hectares of agroforest in Niger – all "without planting a single tree."

It is a low-cost and accessible method to counter deforestation and land degradation, significant issues threatening the survival of rural communities around the globe.

Between 1990 and 2015, 129 million hectares of forest were destroyed worldwide. By 2010, global biodiversity shrank by 34 per cent.

FMNR is practised today by communities in 25 countries across Africa and Asia.

The approach is building climate resilience and adaptability among rural communities and improving economic outcomes and food security through higher productivity.

"When I go back into these communities, I see ... this upward spiral of restoration [and] relative prosperity," Mr Rinaudo says.

"The green is significant, but the biggest change I see is the restoration of hope."

Faith and climate change

Underpinning Mr Rinaudo's lifelong dedication to land restoration is his Christian faith.

He says that his experience in Niger reinforced that God provides everything we need for life.

"It's been a wonderful journey," he says. "I'm still on that journey, still learning, and still dependent on God to reveal his secrets in nature as we try to solve some of the world's greatest problems."

But Mr Rinaudo believes humanity has a long way to go to address the impacts of climate change.

"I don't think we will be able to tackle climate change until we admit our guilt for the overconsumption of fossil fuels [and] the refusal to abandon them when we know very clearly that the world's life support systems have been destroyed," he says.

"We're still stubbornly refusing to change our ways. If we don't repent, there will be no change."

Despite this, Mr Rinaudo is optimistic about the future.

"The situation in Niger in the 1980s truly was hopeless. People were literally starving, people were leaving their country, children were dying," he says.

"If the poorest people in the world, the most marginalised, the ones with the least resources and technical knowledge can forge such a transformation, what should we be able to do with a problem of our own making? Surely, we could do it very quickly if we have the will to do it. So, I have lots of hope."

Archbishop Welby to stay in post until 2026 — ‘if people are happy’

- by *HATTIE WILLIAMS*

THE Archbishop of Canterbury has said that he plans to stay in post until he reaches retirement age in four years — health-permitting, and if “people are happy” with his leadership.

In an interview with *The Times* on Saturday ahead of the Lambeth Conference, which begins on Wednesday, Archbishop Welby said: “It’s not about me, it’s what’s best for the Church. I will certainly take advice, and if my health is good and people are happy that I’m still there, then I’ll still be there.” It was not about what “pleases” him, he said, but “a decision that would be arrived at in prayer, thoughtful consultation with others, family, colleagues, friends”.

Archbishop Welby, who is 66, was confirmed Archbishop in St Paul’s Cathedral in 2013 (*News*, 1 February 2013). By the time he is 70, in 2026, he will have been in post for 13 years — the same length of time as Archbishop Michael Ramsey (1961–1974). His immediate predecessors, Lord Williams (2002–2013) and Lord Carey (1991–2002), were each in post for 11 years.

Earlier this month, the General Synod approved a motion to increase from one to five representatives from the Anglican Communion on the Crown Nominations Commission (CNC) for Canterbury (*News*, 9 July). This was a “reasonable” step, Archbishop Welby said in the interview.

He also spoke about his experience of depression (*News*, 12 October 2017) and the “tough” aspects of the job, including his role as spiritual leader of the Anglican Communion. “Every stimulating job is gruelling and will have tough moments,” he said. “But I am still enjoying myself enormously. It’s such a privilege to do this job. I never take it for granted.”

His wish that sexuality does not dominate the agenda of the Lambeth Conference (*News*, 1 April) is already under threat. A row erupted this week over the inclusion of a call on Human Dignity, which reaffirmed the

Lambeth Resolution 1.10, and included the line: “It is the mind of the Anglican Communion as a whole that same gender marriage is not permissible.”

This is now being revised by a drafting group.

The Primates of Rwanda, Nigeria, and Uganda are refusing to attend the conference in protest at the decisions of western members of the Communion to agree to bless same-sex unions in church (News, 10 June). Archbishop Welby said: “We will miss them. We regret very much they won’t be there.”

Speaking about his candid criticism of the UK-Rwanda deportation policy earlier this year (News, 18 April), he said: “The idea that I shouldn’t be political is a nonsense.” On the current leadership race for No.10, he said that the country needed “leadership that will give hope, particularly . . . to the poorest. . . But I’m not commenting further on where that might come from.”

All you need is love: The theology of “Thor: Love and Thunder”

- By Joel Hodge

Thor: Love and Thunder takes the Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) into questions of faith for the first time in a sustained manner. While The Eternals moved the franchise into metaphysics, the latest Thor movie depicts the usually faith-shy MCU as willing to engage more explicitly with religion itself.

It may seem strange that it has taken the hugely successful MCU this long to engage with faith and religion in such a way, especially given some of its most prominent characters are gods, sorcerers, and witches. While it’s true that some of its television series — such as Daredevil, Ms. Marvel, and Moon Knight — show the hero struggling with or exploring their faith, Marvel has tended to tread carefully in its films.

In some respects, Thor: Love and Thunder follows the established Marvel action formula; but this film uniquely centres on the loss of faith and what is worth believing in and living for. Both the main protagonist, Thor, and

the villain, Gorr, face their own crisis of faith and meaning. Thor feels a deep emptiness and purposeless, while Gorr loses his faith in the gods, one of whom insults him at the loss of his daughter. The film critiques a naïve form of religiosity, while also delving into different metaphysical positions such as nihilism and belief in the afterlife.

Gorr's faith at the beginning of the film is a credulous one, expressed by subservient devotion and sacrifice to self-centred gods. This kind of faith is caricatured. The film makes clear that one must reject this kind of faith to grow personally and spiritually. One must become an atheist.

The unavoidable upshot is that the gods of the MCU are ontologically and morally dubious. The gods believe that humans are subject to the gods' own wants and ends — as the god Rapu intimates (and which looks to be the motivation behind Zeus's desire to challenge the superheroes in future films). These gods, moreover, are not to be equated with the eternal God of monotheism, who creates and sustains all finite being: by contrast, the gods are themselves finite, for they can be killed, and they are fiercely protective of their power and position. Hence Gorr becomes the “God Butcher”, intent on destroying the gods for their selfishness and capriciousness.

But this is not where the question of faith ends for Thor: one must find a deeper faith that makes us “worthy” of our life, humanity, and each other. Worthiness and love are the answers that Thor uses to give meaning to Jane Foster (a.k.a., “Mighty Thor”) and Gorr when they are at their most desperate. In both cases, Thor puts love into practice and reconciles with his former lover and his enemy.

Though the film flirts with nihilism, it is ultimately shown to run against the grain of the MCU. For the MCU is built around belief in heroism and love. And this is the ultimate message of Thor: Love and Thunder: that love is the ultimate source of meaning and purpose. Thor expresses this in the climactic scene with Gorr, when he tells his adversary that both of them are really looking for love and that life is only worth living with love. Love is often reduced by Hollywood to romanticism. That is certainly present in the film, but not overdone — instead, Thor: Love and Thunder

shows love is more bound up with self-sacrifice and selfless care of others, especially the weak or powerless.

Alienated love

In his review for *The New Yorker*, Richard Brody called *Thor: Love and Thunder* “implicitly Christian”. It is in the film’s promotion of goodness, love, and reconciliation that this is most clearly shown. It is consistent with the metaphysics of the MCU, most notably in *The Eternals*. No archaic mythology promotes love in the way Christianity does, by placing it at the heart of human and divine life. The statement from the New Testament — “God is love; whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them” (1 John 4:16) — is a singular one in religious history and culture. Ancient politics and religion, across various cultures, were not motivated by or undertaken in the name of a universal or divine love, but rather for honour, conquest, power, wealth or vengeance.

This Christian perspective is particularly evident in the reconciliation between Thor and Gorr. Once the film moves beyond the obligatory fight between good-and-evil, it moves into new territory for the MCU: Thor helps Gorr realise that love is really at the heart of his search for revenge. Both Thor and Gorr have been seeking this love in different ways throughout the film, but have missed it. In this way, their story is the story of all imperfect human beings. (It is hardly coincidental that the word “sin” connotes “missing the mark”). Because they miss the mark of love, Thor wallows in emptiness and meaninglessness (seeking but denying himself friendship) and Gorr in hurt and resentment (seeking revenge for his beloved daughter). Alienated love is at the heart of Gorr’s villainy. Gorr recognises Thor’s love for Jane as similar to his own love for his daughter. As such, Gorr entrusts his (resurrected) daughter to Thor. Rather than destroying in the name of his daughter, Gorr now gives over what is most precious to him. He does so in response to Thor’s attempt at reconciliation — a Christian instinct to love one’s enemy and not just fight him. (A similar instinct is at work in *Doctor Strange in the Multiverse of Madness*, where Wanda is saved from her self-centred search for love.)

Thor recognises the natural desire for love that is at the heart of the human search for meaning and purpose. According to Christian theology, this natural desire is really a desire for God whose being is love and is the source of all love and being. Only this source, who exists beyond time and space and whose life is complete love, can ultimately fulfill the deep yearning that all humans have. While this latter point is not explicit, it is hinted at in the developing metaphysics of the Marvel universe, which harkens back to Captain America's quip about Loki in the first Avengers film: "There's only one God, ma'am, and I'm pretty sure He doesn't dress like that".

Eternal reward

This begins to explain why Richard Brody characterises the MCU's faith as that of a "white male Christian hegemony" (which, nevertheless, is welcoming of diversity). Christianity is no longer politically hegemonic in the West, so I suspect Brody is gesturing to Christianity's remaining philosophical and cultural power, at least in the popular imagination. Admittedly, the MCU is replete with white men. But in the case of this film, Thor is not the main or only hero. In fact, the real hero of *Thor: Love and Thunder* is Jane Foster, who makes the (Christian) sacrifice of self. Significantly, she does so as a mortal who, in contrast to the "immortal" Thor, uses the last of her own diminishing energy to save Thor himself rather than fight her own cancer. Jane's sacrifice makes her "worthy", as is demonstrated in the post-credits scene when she enters the afterlife, Valhalla, the eternal reward of the good and heroic.

While such eternal reward is mocked at the beginning of the film, it is justified in the end. There is a sense that we need to believe in something more: that the just and good will be rewarded — not in some banal economic sense, but because goodness accords with the deepest law or rhythm of the universe. It gives hope and substance to our faith in goodness. The kidnapped children in the film needed such faith to keep their hopes alive; they told stories of the goodness and heroism of Thor to maintain their spirits.

Ultimately, there must be a metaphysical explanation for Marvel's faith in heroism, goodness, and love. The MCU wants and needs to be something more than its formulaic action stories built on redemptive violence and militarism. If goodness is more than mere power, then we are left with some important questions: Where does it come from? Why is it a better path than self-centredness and evil? Why does it appeal to our conscience? Why do love and goodness accord with our deepest yearnings and search for fulfilment — to our nature and telos?

The MCU does not offer relativist or subjective answers to these questions, though it is metaphysically vague in its proclamation of heroic love. There are symbolic hints of the “metaphysical beyond” — such as Eternity's altar and the scenes of the afterlife, which suggest a deeper structure and purpose in the universe beyond that of the capricious gods.

Nevertheless, Jane/“Mighty Thor” demonstrates what Marvel understands by the heroic love that provides the philosophical substance of its films: the sacrifice of the self for others. This is the martyr's sacrifice, which stands in contrast to the sacrifice that the gods demanded from humans (and to which Thor alludes in terms of the child sacrifice practiced in Nordic religion). In traditional religions, humans sacrificed others to appease the gods, while the hero sacrifices him- or herself for others. It is the latter form of sacrifice — exemplified by Jesus — that was popularised by Christianity in the West and retains its cultural power to this day.

Metaphysics and meaning

Brody's critique of *Thor: Love and Thunder* begs the question: What alternative is there to Christian metaphysics in the West? The alternatives to Christian metaphysics offered in the film (by the self-professed atheist director) are a mythology of self-centred gods and a resentful, injured nihilism.

Yet, as Thor points out, the nihilist — Gorr — is really looking for something more. That something more remains bound up, mysteriously and paradoxically, with self-sacrificial love. The MCU appeals to Christian tropes because they work for people trying to make the best of their

lives with ordinary heroism, hope, and faith in love. In doing this, the MCU stands in a successful line of Christian-influenced pop culture such as Star Wars, Man of Steel and the Justice League, the Narnia Chronicles, and the Harry Potter series.

I suspect that, beyond the symbolic violence, the MCU audience is drawn to tales of heroic love, which have deeply human and Christian resonances. In a positive sense, Thor: Love and Thunder finds its meaning in precisely that love.

Joel Hodge is Senior Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Australian Catholic University, and the author of *Violence in the Name of God: The Militant Jihadist Response to Modernity*.

Pope Francis says ‘door is open’ to his retirement amid 85-year-old’s worsening health - *By Rob Harris*

London: Pope Francis has acknowledged that his ailing health may force him to retire early as head of the Catholic church after he struggled with a week-long Canadian pilgrimage because of strained knee ligaments.

The 85-year-old pontiff’s six-day trip, which came to an end on Saturday, featured several moments when he was clearly in pain as he manoeuvred getting up and down from chairs.

Francis would be only the third pope in history to retire, but the second in a row. The resignation of Pope Benedict in 2013, saying his health no longer allowed him to carry the burden of his office, caught the church’s power structure off guard.

“I think at my age and with these limitations, I have to save [my energy] to be able to serve the church, or on the contrary, think about the possibility of stepping aside,” Francis told journalists on Saturday.

He made the comments on his flight back to Rome from Canada, but stressed that for the moment he intends to continue in his duties and would be guided by God as to when or if he steps down.

“It’s not strange. It’s not a catastrophe. You can change the pope,” he told several news agencies while sitting in an airplane wheelchair during a

45-minute news conference.

“The door [to retiring] is open - it is a normal option. But until today I have not knocked on that door. I have not felt the need to think about this possibility - that is not to say that in two days’ time I might not start thinking about it.”

Speculation has swirled throughout Rome in recent months that Francis could soon follow his predecessor, Benedict XVI, and resign because of ill health at some point in the near future. He was also 85 when he retired.

A papal visit to Lebanon in May was postponed just weeks before it was due to take place. A scheduled visit by Pope Francis in July to the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan was also cancelled so he could continue laser and magnetic therapy on his knee.

Several Vatican news outlets have published unsubstantiated rumours that Francis, who in July last year underwent surgery to have a left section of his colon removed, is in fact suffering from cancer. This has not been confirmed by the Vatican.

Francis ruled out having surgery on his knee, saying it would not necessarily help and noting “there are still traces” from the effects of having undergone more than six hours of anaesthesia to remove 33 centimetres of his large intestine.

“I’ll try to continue to do the trips and be close to people because I think it’s away of servicing, being close. But more than this, I can’t say,” he said.

His use of a wheelchair, walker and cane to get around has sharply limited his program, and ability to mingle with crowds.

In a few months, Francis will be in office longer than his predecessor and he marks 10 years in the position in March next year.

Some within the church believe he has already begun planning his successor. That theory gained momentum recently when he made the unconventional decision to host a consistory on August 27 to create 20 new cardinals.

Sixteen of the new cardinals are not yet 80 years old, so in the event of a conclave - an assembly of cardinals for the election of a pope - they will be able to vote for Francis' successor. Voting at conclaves was limited to cardinals younger than 80 as a way of building in term-limits and preventing the elderly from having to travel to Rome.

On August 28, he will travel to L'Aquila for the Perdonanza Celestina festival, during which he will visit the cathedral that hosts the tomb of Celestine V, a hermit pope who resigned in 1294 after just five months in the job.

"It's very odd to have a consistory in August. There's no reason that he needs to call this [event] three months in advance and then go to L'Aquila in the middle of it," Robert Mickens, the editor of *La Croix*, a Catholic daily newspaper, said recently.

He added it was a "very good possibility" the pope could resign.

Francis said at the start of his papacy he would like to see the resignation of a pope becoming normal, describing Benedict's decision to step down as "courageous".

Garma Festival will zero in what Australia could be if it embraces the Uluru Statement

- *By Stan Grant*

To fly into east Arnhem Land is to enter a distinct realm of time and place. There are eternal rhythms here. It is Yolngu land.

People are connected through ancestry and story and ritual. Place asks where you are more than who you are. To be clearer, who you are is where you are.

It is the same for me at home on Wiradjuri country in central and south-western New South Wales.

In these places — in the hundreds of nations on this continent — what we call Australia dissolves into something more abiding, less temporal than modern concepts of nations. And yet another Australia is revealed. An Australia we may glimpse from time to time but have not realised.

The Garma Festival brings this Australia-to-be into view.

At hand is the question of the Uluru Statement from the Heart, and the Albanese government's promises of a referendum to enshrine a First Nations "voice" in the Constitution.

It asks us to marry different conceptions of sovereignty — a sovereignty of place or a sovereignty of order, of contract, of laws.

The voice poses an existential question for Australia: can a nation founded on Western liberal notions of democracy hold the aspirations of a people whose constitution is written on the land itself?

This place — Yolngu land — presents a profound dilemma: being or belonging? What is a society? What is it to be human?

A potentially dangerous idea

From Plato and Aristotle the West has wrestled with the idea of being.

The German philosopher Martin Heidegger said that "being is the most universal and emptiest of concepts" — it is "veiled in darkness".

Hegel saw being as the "indeterminate immediate". We are in a process of becoming, driven by the engine of history. A potentially dangerous idea where history becomes a "slaughter bench" and "being" is devoured in the totalitarian state.

To some, philosophical ideas of "being" may be just opaque or esoteric word games. At its most basic, of course we know what "being" is. We think we can recognise what is commonly human.

But as Heidegger would tell us, it is not that simple. It asks how do we recognise each other? Who belongs? How do we order society? How do we incorporate difference? Indeed, can we?

Again, from the Athenians we get democracy and the polis. Modernity has been marked by the struggle for peace. To govern over difference or diversity.

Thomas Hobbes saw our state of nature as a war of all against all, civilised and pacified by the sovereign.

To John Locke, a social contract divided the personal from the public. Religion, for instance, from the state. Society would be constitutionally governed, as he put it, by established, settled, known law.

Western modernity, its notions of "being", landed on Indigenous people. The many distinct peoples of this land were rendered "British subjects". Yet Indigenous "belonging" persisted and resisted. Court cases reaching back to the 19th century contested the sovereignty of the Crown.

Protest, petition and political activism has never ceased.

The Uluru Statement comes at a critical moment

Landmark High Court decisions in the Mabo case and more recently *Love v the Commonwealth* — which ruled an Aboriginal person cannot be alien to this land even if not holding Australian citizenship — have tested and reset the boundaries of Indigenous belonging even if not sovereignty itself.

The law stops at the water's edge, leaving to parliament to resolve questions of First Nations political standing in modern Australia.

Australia remains a land with no treaties, no constitutional recognition of the place of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

The Uluru Statement from the Heart, in this context, is a significant — although certainly not the only — First Nations response to this dilemma of "being" and "belonging".

At a practical level its proponents call it a roadmap to more innovative and representative democracy: a voice to speak to parliament; treaty to reach just political, legal, economic agreements; and truth: a reckoning with history.

Yet it resonates beyond that. The Uluru Statement lands at a critical moment for democracy.

The 21st century has already been cast as a battle between autocracy and democracy. There are threats from without and within.

Democracies are increasingly contested as voices suppressed or silenced seek to be heard. Across gender, sexuality, race, faith and economic lines, the social contract is frayed.

The late political scientist Sheldon Wolin would call this "transgressive". As Wolin pointed out, democracy itself was born in transgressive acts: revolutions in the United States and France.

Transgression, he said, is "the means by which the demos makes itself political".

As a society we are living in a hyper, identity driven, political age.

Wolin defined democracy as "a project concerned with the political potentialities of ordinary citizens". Yet democracy rings hollow for many citizens who don't feel heard.

Democracies were founded on boundaries: what was kept out and what was let in.

Boundaries are more porous in a globalised world where technology connects us in ways unimaginable to the 17th and 18th century thinkers who dreamed up modernity.

Modern democracies are pluralistic, both a strength and a weakness.

This isn't just about diversity, but difference

The 20th century German thinker Jurgen Habermas called modernity an "unfinished project".

Morality, truth and reason are no longer centred. Habermas identified the likes of Martin Heidegger as ushering in a subjective age - a late 20th century post-modernity — where there is no common agreement on what binds us.

This where reason and modernity, the individualism that sits at the heart of liberalism, was always going to lead us.

Modernity, said Habermas, "sees itself cast back upon itself without any possibility of escape". He looked to reason itself as a corrective to "an age torn asunder".

The Canadian philosopher Charles Taylor spoke of the "social imaginary" — a story we tell ourselves, comprehensible to all.

Where is that social imaginary today?

This is an age of contested rights or, as Hannah Arendt put it, the right to have rights. Who decides?

Judith Shklar in the 1950s identified liberalism's lost moral centre. She wanted to open up the space to other voices. Shklar was writing before the Twitter age, where voices shout.

All of this has played out this week in the furore over a group of Manly rugby league players citing religious objection to wearing the rainbow colours on their jerseys to recognise the LGBTIQ+ community.

What is inclusion? Who is included? Faith versus pride. These issues now appear intractable. It causes hurt. Some are seen to win, others to lose. This is not merely about diversity, it is about difference.

Diversity is easier. As Sheldon Wolin said: "Diversity is blandly democratic; it recognises mere unlikeness."

Difference, he said, "poses serious difficulty for democracy"; democracy seeks to avoid the dilemma of difference by levelling everyone.

It offers instead inclusion, but inclusion, as we are seeing, is not enough for marginalised groups who seek to be recognised not just for their "unlikeness" but their unique identities.

Democracy, Wolin said, "in the late modern world cannot be a complete political system".

A great opportunity

We are capable of creating new patterns of commonality. The Uluru Statement offers a restorative democracy.

Those who dismiss it as fundamentally illiberal do so because it confers rights on one specific group — First Nations people — over others.

They ignore the contested nature of modern democracies and the restorative dimensions of recognising First Nations people in a constitution that for too long in Australia's history did not count them.

At a time when democracy is under siege, here is an attempt to thread the needle between diversity and difference and, not just as Wolin would have put it, recognise the nation.

Its "transgression" is its opportunity.

It asks us to think about that space between "being" and "belonging".

That's the big idea at Garma, in a place that always was and always will be Yolngu land.

Stan Grant is the ABC's international affairs analyst and presents China Tonight on Monday at 9:35pm on ABC TV, and Tuesday at 8pm on the ABC News Channel, and a co-presenter of Q+A on Thursday at 8.30pm.

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Reflections
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BGM

≈ Isaiah 1.1, 10-20; Psalm 50.1-8, 23-24;
Hebrews 11.1-3, 8-16 (17-28); Luke 12.32-40

St Luke writes that Jesus tells us to be alert. But alert for what? The answer is for the coming of the master. So we should not be wasting our time doing things that do not prepare for that arrival. We should be profligate in loving others as we love ourselves. That is what Jesus wants us to do.

≈ Jesus Christ, King of love, help me to prepare for your coming by loving others as you would want. May love of others become a central characteristic of my life.

≈ Give thanks for the work and witness of the Church of the Province of South-East Asia.

Text: Robert McLean © Anglican Board of Mission, 2022

ABM Anglican Board of Mission - Australia
Working for Love, Hope & Justice



Royal School of Church Music
AUSTRALIA
New South Wales Branch



A must-book event for all with an interest in church music!

MIDWINTER DINNER

Friday, 12 August 2022

Choral Evensong at 6 pm before Dinner
St Paul's Church, 205 Burwood Rd, Burwood

Speaker: Assoc. Prof. Stuart Piggin

Winner of the 2019 Australian Christian book of the year award

\$79 per head (B.Y.O.) <https://trybooking.com/CBDWC>

Telephone Assistance: Gerald Hayes (02) 9150 5219

http://rscmaustralia.org.au/calendar?event_id=52



Movement for the Ordination of Women Australia
30th Anniversary Conference 2022:
Unfinished Business

It's thirty years since Anglican women were ordained priests in Australia. But there are still dioceses which limit or refuse to acknowledge women's ordained ministry.

NOW IS THE TIME FOR ALL TO BE ONE IN CHRIST JESUS

Speakers:

- ◆ Dr Julia Baird
- ◆ Professor Eileen Baldry AO
- ◆ The Rev'd Val Graydon
- ◆ Ms Anne Hywood
- ◆ The Rev'd Karen Kime
- ◆ The Rev'd Canon Professor Dorothy Lee
- ◆ The Hon Keith Mason AC QC
- ◆ The Rev'd Dr Lesley McLean
- ◆ The Rev'd Dr Colleen O'Reilly AM
- ◆ Dr Gwenneth Roberts
- ◆ Dr Jacqueline Service
- ◆ The Rev'd Elisa Helen Waterhouse CSC.

Location: Christ Church St Laurence, 812 George Street, Sydney.

Date: 16th to the 18th of September, 2022

Programme and registration details: mowatch.com.au

For other enquiries and to be included on the conference mailing list

email Elaine Lindsay at secretary@mowatch.com.au

INTERCESSIONS – Sunday 7th August 2022

Pentecost 9 Year C

[PRESIDER] Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ has promised that you will hear us when we ask in faith: receive the prayers we offer.

Guide with your wisdom all world leaders, presidents, prime ministers and monarchs, especially Elizabeth our Queen and Anthony our Prime Minister, that all may live in peace and mutual trust, sharing the resources of the earth. Deliver the people of Ukraine from the invader, that peace may be restored and evil overturned. God bless the people of Russia and Ukraine that they may live together again as neighbours.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Through your apostolic Church, send out the light and truth of your gospel to bring all people to know you, love you and follow you.

Anoint and bless all bishops on this, the last day of the Lambeth Conference. Bless and empower with your Spirit Justin of Canterbury, Geoffrey our Primate, Kanishka our Archbishop, Michael our Bishop, James our rector and those on the ministry team. Today we uphold before you the Church of the Province of the West Indies and its Primate, Howard Gregory. May they commend your truth by their example, teaching, and prayerful lives.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We commend to your care, merciful God, all who are in sorrow, sickness, depression and discouragement; those who are dying, all prisoners and captives, the homeless, those who live in fear, in abusive situations and those who have no one to love them or care for them. May they come to know your presence and your peace. Sustain and strengthen all carers, doctors, nurses, physios, chaplains and pastoral workers. We bring to you those in our parish and beyond, for whom we have been asked to pray: Fr James; Joyce Bannister; Barry Brandy; John Burns; Rosemary B and Theo B; Robyn Collins; June Cameron; Roger Davidson; Elsie Dunnam; Vince Foster; Malcolm Green; Selina Harman; Helen; Fr Robin Hutcheon; Leonora Jacqueline; Enid Kell; Lily; David Morgan; Graham Norman; Alister Palmer; Sally Palmer; Michelle Phillips; Gaye Rand; Scott; Fran Sellers; Diane Smith; Peter Sorensen; Sylvia; Daphne Storey; Jean Storey and Bob Woods.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

We commend to you the recently departed and we continue to trust in your merciful keeping those whose year's mind occurs at this time: Phyllis Hendry; Linda Eckstein; Joyce Lee; Shirley Benn; Milton Swan; Peter Kroger; Joyce Harvey and Florence Dobbins.

We praise you for all your servants whose lives have honoured Christ, those who have died in faith, those whose faith is known only to you, and for those who have died unknown, unloved and alone. Enfold them in your love where sorrow and sighing shall be no more.

Father, hear our prayer, **through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

[PRESIDER] Almighty God, you have promised to hear our prayers.

Grant that what we have asked in faith we may by your grace receive, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

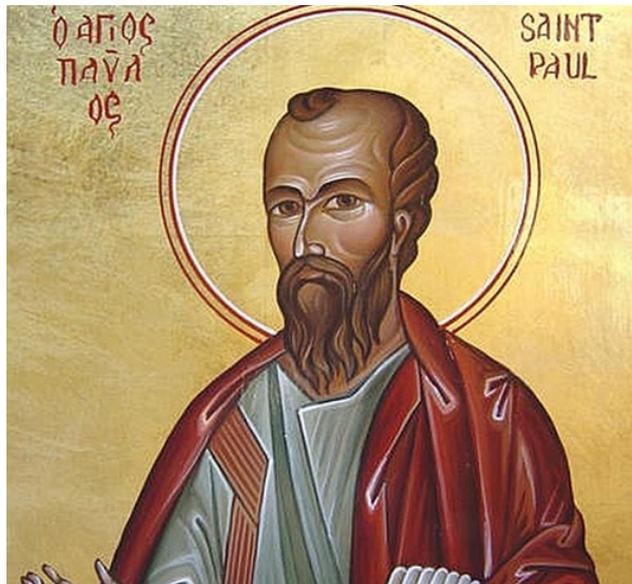
The Week Ahead...

Midweek communion - It is held every **Wednesday at 10.30am** in the Chapel of our Lord's Passion.

Commemorations noted in the Lectionary this week

- ≈ Monday 8th August - Dominic, priest and Friar (d.1221)
- ≈ Tuesday 9th August - Mary Summer, founder of the Mothers' Union (d.1921)
- ≈ Wednesday 10th August - Laurence, Deacon and Martyr at Rome (d.258)
- ≈ Thursday 11th August - Clare of Assisi (d.1252)
- John Henry Newman, Cardinal and theologian (d.1890)
- ≈ Saturday 13th August - Jeremy Taylor, Bishop and Spiritual Writer (d.1667)

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Honorary Priest Fr Jim Pettigrew

Lay Minister Ms Rosemary King

Director of Music Mr David Russell

Parish Organist Michael Deasey FRSCM

Organ Scholar Bailey Yeates

Captain of the Bell Tower Mrs Pam Brock

Sacristan Mr Brian Luhr OAM OGS

Rector's Warden Dr Jane Carrick – 0418 399 664

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Mrs Pam Brock – 9747 3619

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