

BULLETIN

Welcome to the Bulletin

From David: Looking for the truth.

One of my favourite TV shows was an Australian original concept - *myth busters*. It first went to air on SBS in 2003. I really liked the idea of taking a popular myth and subjecting it to some rigorous scientific and at times rather crazy testing. It was science and it was entertaining. **But there was a deeper purpose to it – using science to investigate and reveal truth.**

I think we need a new TV show called – *conspiracy busters*.

Seriously, we really do need a forum with a popular format for examining some of the more outrageous and misleading conspiracies which, when repeated often enough, take on the illusion of truth.

Sowing and spreading a conspiracy is not a new phenomenon and nor is it unique to American politics. It's been a political tool for centuries and its primary purpose is to feed pre-existing fears, doubts and prejudices. Some conspiracies refuse to die and every few decades, get rejuvenated for political ends. Hitler, for example, shamelessly and with horrendous consequences, exploited several conspiracies from the middle-ages regarding Judaism and Gypsies. Religions have been pretty good at it too, and right from the beginning. For millennia, women had to live with the idea that Eve was responsible for corrupting and tempting Adam and bringing about the 'fall' of humankind. Thank God, that conspiracy has at last been exposed!

There have been quite a few conspiracies circulating in recent months. I won't repeat any of them, as that would be feeding the very thing that many people are keen to starve. Some of them are obviously bizarre and you have to wonder how on earth they began life, whether they started out as a joke. Some of them tap into familiar prejudices and feed themselves. Some people suggest we ought not take them seriously. **But my sense of it all is that they are neither harmless nor benign. They are indeed a cancer on the truth of things.**

It doesn't help when getting to the facts of a thing turns out to be such an impossible task. Look at how long it took to get access to correspondence between the Queen and the Governor General concerning the dismissal of a Labor Prime Minister in 1975. A matter of significant national interest which took 45 years to see the light of day. And then, as if to illustrate the great challenge facing democracies around the world, an interesting article appeared in the Age this week. It reported that the current prime minister has responded to

only 7.5% of valid requests for FOI (Freedom of Information) within the statutory period. When facts are withheld, the truth cannot be told. Without facts, conspiracy theories are born and given more oxygen than they deserve. In so many ways, FOI legislation is important legislation since it enshrines the right to look for the truth – in theory at least. Reminds me of that text in John's Gospel – *the truth will set you free.*

Shalom David

CYBER CHURCH via ZOOM: Sunday 22nd November 2020 at 10.30am

Bible Readings: Mark 13: 1 - 13

This Sunday is the last Sunday before we embark on the season of advent which begins on the 29th November. Yes, it's Christmas already - what happened to 2020; where did it go? So, this Sunday as we emerge from lockdown like butterflies from a cocoon, experiencing life as if for the first time again, we will hear several personal stories of what 'emerging' has been like. Hopefully, a meaningful segue to Advent.

An invitation will arrive in your inbox around 9.45 am for anyone who feels like a chat – the 'waiting room' will be open from that time.

If you have not joined before please send David your email so that an invitation can be sent to your inbox: saints163@bigpond.com

BIBLE STUDY/Discussion Group via ZOOM - Wednesday 25th November: 7.30 – 8.30 pm.

The Ark of the Covenant. Emerging out of last week's session on Grace there is a bit of interest in looking at just what was the Ark of the Covenant. So, if the topic interests you, come and join the group..

Interested? Then please join us. If you are not already on the list and would like to join, just send David your email address and he will add you to the distribution list: saints163@bigpond.com

PROGRESSIVE CHRISTIAN NETWORK VIC. TODAY Sunday 22nd November 3.30 to 4.40pm

TOPIC: 'Being Black Fella's Young Fella in Neo-Colonial Australia'

SPEAKER: Rev Glenn Loughrey. Glen will explore the following themes from his recent book "On Being Blackfella's Young Fella". Glen is a Wiradjuri Man and Anglian Priest at St Oswald's Anglican Church, Glen Iris. Glen is passionate about treaty, sovereignty and self-determination for First Nations peoples.

This meeting will be followed by the AGM from 4.40 to 5pm Zoom Meeting link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82793544335?pwd=Y2xteWhQaUE5M2VCcEJtbGtPeWRyUT09>

Meeting ID: 827 9354 4335 Passcode: 764602

This coming Wednesday the Church Council will meet. Next week's Bulletin will report on this, especially taking into account the expected relaxation of Covid regulations by the Premier tonight (22nd Nov.).

The University of Melbourne will premiere online THE 2020 NARRM ORATION. at 6pm (AEDT) Thursday 26 November. Register [here](#). FREE
<https://about.unimelb.edu.au/reconciliation/engagement/the-narrm-oration>

How Indigenous people and knowledge can save Australia's environmental and social unravelling.

Australia is in the midst of both environmental and social crises. With the highest rate of biodiversity loss on earth, the country is facing an ever-increasing barrage of massive catastrophic wildfires that wreak untold environmental damage and its First Peoples are among the most disadvantaged and disaffected demographic. In the 2020 Narrm Oration, Associate Professor Fletcher will argue that many of Australia's current environmental problems can be traced to the impact of British invasion and the violent and devastating effects this has had on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Embedding the Aboriginal world view and notion of Country into mainstream Australia has the potential to benefit the lives and livelihoods of all Australians and our Country.



Presenter: Michael-Shawn Fletcher *Associate Professor* is a descendant of the Wiradjuri and a geographer interested in the long-term interactions between humans, climate, disturbance, vegetation and landscapes in the southern hemisphere with a particular emphasis on how Indigenous burning has shaped the Australian landscape. He is Director of Research Capability at the Indigenous Knowledge Institute, Assistant Dean (Indigenous) in the Faculty of Science at the University of Melbourne, and a panel member of the Australian Research Council College of Experts.



Keeping Children Safe

Last Friday November 20th was International Children's Day. The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania makes the following commitment:

All children who are involved in any of the Uniting Church's activities, services, events or programs have a right to feel and be safe. The Uniting Church in Australia is committed to provide safe environments where children are cared for, respected, nurtured and sustained.

- We have zero tolerance of all forms of child abuse and will do all in our power to safeguard children from abuse.
- The Church commits itself to the creation and maintenance of a child-safe culture to ensure the care, protection and safety of all children engaging with the Church in any of its entities.
- Abuse thrives on secrecy. To prevent child abuse across the Church, we are committed to providing clear leadership and open and transparent governance to combat secrecy.
- The Church clearly affirms its commitment to upholding the law. This includes the requirement to report abuse to the appropriate authorities.

<https://ucavictas.org.au/keepingchildrensafe/>

Christmas Concert & Singalong at Home!

presented by Elwood Community Choir, led by Jeannie Marsh

in collaboration with Holy Trinity Balaclava and Elwood

7.00 – 8.00pm Friday 4th December 2020

on **ZOOM**

As we near the end of this crazy year, it's time to
celebrate the Christmas season through joyful song!



Elwood Community Choir has continued to sing every week since April via Zoom. It has kept our 40 singers connected, and lifted our spirits through the power of music. Being an "online choir" has also opened doors to creativity, and new vocal possibilities.

At this concert we will share recordings made by the choir during lock-down, using nothing but our iPhones and a sense of fun!

PLUS

We will lead a **SINGALONG** of
Christmas Carols and Christmas songs

this is a free event

Please email christmastreefest@hotmail.com by **1st December** to register. You will be sent the Zoom link, and singalong word-sheets.

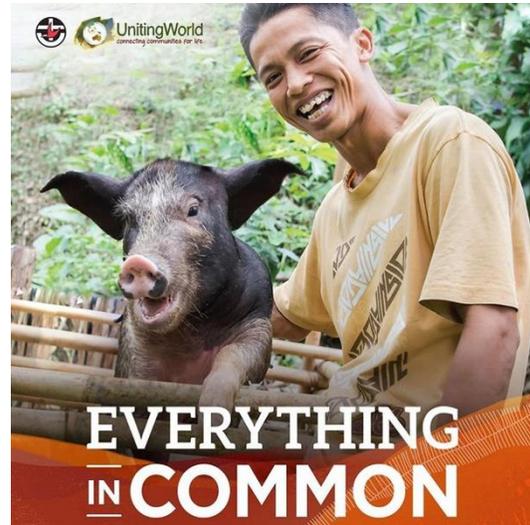


As we gather in our various places via Zoom, we acknowledge the *Yaluk-ut Weelam Clan of the Boon Wurrung People* as the traditional custodians of this land on which our church building stands. We give thanks for their commitment to nurturing this land over many generations. We honour the sacred stories that belong to this land. We pay our respect to Elders past, present and for those emerging who will lead their communities into the future. We commit ourselves to empowering children to continue the journey of reconciliation on this land.



Christmas is coming

Target's annual Christmas appeal supporting UnitingCare Australia is up and running. Giving to the Appeal will help make Christmas a better day for thousands of people and families who might otherwise go without.



A world of difference

UnitingWorld's Christmas catalogue of ethical gifts has a huge range of presents that fight poverty and build hope.

JOIN US IN PRAYER FOR:

- The people of South Australia as they try to keep themselves and the rest of us safe by observing a six-day lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- For a world free of gender based violence.

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