



# PIPELINE

DECEMBER 2008

The Newsletter of the Wellspring Community Inc • An Australian Community inspired by the Iona Community

## Sharing Our Journeys

### THE TRUTH WILL SET YOU FREE, BUT FAITH COULD GET YOU ARRESTED

*"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples; and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:31-32*

On Sunday 13 July I walked on to railway tracks at Carrington coal terminal in Newcastle to protest the government's pathetic response to climate change. I was there as part of a mass nonviolent direct action protest, one of 57 people to be arrested over two days.

I was driven there by the Holy Spirit.

Newcastle is the world's largest coal port. 102 millions of tonnes of coal pass through every year, which when burnt send 265 million tonnes of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. That is almost half Australia's entire domestic emissions.

In the face of overwhelming scientific evidence about human-accelerated climate change, the Prime Minister has declared this to be Australia's greatest moral, social and political test. But both the federal and NSW governments are failing this test, hindered by short-term electoral fear and unable to break away from the old way of government kickbacks and protection for political donors. Newcastle's coal port is currently

under expansion to double its capacity.

Faced with this situation, the people must act. History has shown that major social and political transformation requires ordinary people willing to take nonviolent direct action and suffer the consequences, to rouse the conscience of the nation.

When I walked on to the railway tracks and sat down on a platform on the coal train that our presence had stopped, I was aware that I was keeping faith with a great tradition of non-violent direct action that dates back at least as far as the Hebrew midwives who refused to slaughter male babies while in captivity in Egypt.

There are times when living in discipleship to Jesus Christ requires us to disobey the law. The black church in the American South understood this, as did the churches of South Africa during apartheid and the base Christian communities under dictatorship in Latin America.

Of course, the vast majority of the world's civil disobedience actions have been performed by people of other faiths and of no faith. Here in Australia, the notion of 'religious

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*The Truth Will Set You Free . . . continued*

obedience' has not caught on as in the USA, and such actions have been left mainly to non-religious peace and environmental activists.

Their brave but nonviolent interventions stopped the damming of Franklin River twenty-five years ago, protected the Great Barrier Reef from mining and oil exploration, and saved countless hectares of old growth forests from logging. Today, few Australians would look back on those campaigns with regret, even if they were angry at the 'dirty protestors' at the time.

Ironically, these non-religious people have taken inspiration from the likes of Gandhi, Tutu and King, whose deep religious convictions led them to lead lives of radical nonviolence.

The church has perhaps been too keen to preserve respectability, too ready to ascribe the best intentions to political leaders, or simply too afraid to believe 'the truth is really true', as Daniel Berrigan says.

But the life and teaching of Jesus does not give us much comfort if that is the case. Jesus, a serial law-breaker, declared that it is the peacemakers who are blessed, that we must take up our cross to follow him, that we must lose our lives in order to save them. He told us to love our enemies, include the outcasts, and put our bodies on the line to declare the in-breaking of the kingdom of God.

As Gandhi put it, non-cooperation with evil is as much a duty as cooperation with good.

Media reporting of protests tends to emphasise the idea of violence and chaos. Some activists, to be sure, equally thrive on notions of conflict. But in Newcastle as in other climate change-related actions, the protestors remained impressively calm in the face of police provocation, and worked hard to ensure that their



*Protest group in Newcastle*

actions were consistent with the ends they sought.

When I was being released from the police holding cell, one officer joked that I now had my own barbeque story, something to one-up my mates. This attempt to denigrate activists as 'thrill seekers' is all too common among the public as well, part of a society-wide attempt to discredit those who prick their conscience.

Nonviolent direct action is not thrill-seeking, it is a profound act of prayer.

The peaceful protest in Newcastle caused that week's coal exports to drop by 18%, but the flow-on effect is much broader. All around the world a ripple of change is spreading, giving hope that just maybe, creation can be restored through acts of faith.

Climate change requires a fundamental rethink of the ways in which I live and work, produce and consume, relate to other people, to God and to creation. Media reports of 'rent-seeking' behaviour favouring big polluting industries – and governments caving in to them – shows how hard the task ahead is.

In a world in which a political solution to climate change seems unlikely, more and more Christians will find themselves called to acts of 'religious obedience', confident that with faith we can move mountains.

*Justin Whelan*

## *Pilgrimage Reflection*

We gathered together  
At the Redhead Lagoon.  
Nicole welcomed us  
To the Awabakal land.  
We read a poem of 'Australian Light  
Australian Trees'.  
The spirits heard us  
God heard us  
Our eyes were opened.  
We saw much beauty.  
Doug read the legend  
Of how coal was formed.  
We shared an Agape meal.  
We walked to the ocean.  
We marvelled at God's creation

*Peggy Harman*



## Letter from the Leader

As we approach this special Christian time of the year again we are reminded that Jesus was born into an ordinary family, in human terms. Immediately he tipped expectations of how he would arrive on this earth on its head. The House of David may have been 'Big Boys' in the past but time changes many things.

How often do we tip expectations of how we should act as Christians on their head? What expectations will we upset this Christmas? How will we identify with a poor family in a different way this year? How will we make our way through the froth, food, drink, decorations, gifts, and share genuine hospitality and love with family, friends and strangers? Reconciliation has another dimension at this time of year when you hear of how many families end up in conflict as they have forgotten why people get together at all. Jealousy, loneliness, grudges, can come out as there may have been no worthwhile contact



Mary Gilchrist

during the year to keep the bond strong.

Hospitality is one of our special charisma and the homeless and helpless are all around us. We forget that a home is a right not an asset. Recently in exploring retirement village living I found that you sign away your right to invite anyone to stay for a period without getting permission from the

management. This includes Christian non-profit organisations.

"After the birth of Christ God is now where we live - in our kitchens, at our tables, in our wounds and in each other's faces.

"This is hard to believe and always has been. When Jesus was on earth, virtually no one believed he was the Messiah, precisely because he was so ordinary, so unlike what they imagined God to be. They had expected a superstar, a king, someone who would turn the world rightly upside down. Preaching meekness and gentleness, Jesus didn't live up to those expectations." (Ronald Rolheiser – DAYBREAKS)

On behalf of Jill and myself I wish you all the joys and blessings of this Christmas season and pray that we may all become as humble as little children (Mt 18:3-4) and come to a deeper understanding of what it is to be a 'nobody'.

Mary Gilchrist

## The Editor Speaks

Welcome to our last *Pipeline* for 2008. The editing team this year was born of one teleconference and hundreds of emails. I'd like to thank my fellow editors for 2008, Bonita Frank and Fiona Cockington, and would especially like to wish Fiona well as she journeys onwards from her time in the Wellspring Community.

The theme of this edition is 'Sharing our journeys.' Journeying is about being prepared to leave what is familiar and comfortable behind in order to learn, to be challenged, to tell new stories. I hope you will find encouragement in these stories for your own future journeying, wherever it may take you.

It's traditional in the first editor's letter to share a little about yourself. I'll keep this brief, as I've already shared quite a lot in *Pipeline* this year! I've grown up in the Catholic tradition but am deeply drawn to all things ecumenical. My paid work is as a lawyer and in my spare time I'm a writer. I've chanted at Taizé, volunteered at Iona, drunk beer at the Greenbelt festival and walked the Camino de Santiago in Spain. My desire to connect to the Wellspring Community stems out of the question, 'What does it mean, for me as an Australian woman, in this time and place, to name my story as Christian?' I believe that the Wellspring Community can and

should be a prophetic justice-seeking community that is open to all.



Michelle Coram on her Camino pilgrimage



*The Editor Speaks continued . . .*

The planning is well underway for the national gathering which will be in Canberra from March 11-15. The program is diverse and full and I hope many of you will be able to attend. I'm especially excited that Trish Watts will be leading us in worship over the five days.

All of us now embark on the Advent journey to Christmas. The season of Advent presents something of a challenge to those of us who live lives of frantic busyness. Advent is about being patient, still, trusting and open to change.



Best wishes to you and your families for Christmas and 2009.

*Michelle Coram*

**John Bell writes:**

*You keep us waiting.*

*You the God of all time,*

*Want us to wait*

*For the right time in which to*

*Discover*

*Who we are, where we are to go,*

*Who will be with us, and what we must do.*

*So thank you ... for the waiting time.*

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## *Wellspring Community Urban Pilgrimage: Journeying Together*

The elements of earth, foliage and twigs gathered from our Castlereagh site; sand from many of the beaches of the east coast, as well as the heart of our continent; and flowers of the Australian bush; all were spread around the Christ candle, on a small table in the middle of the room. These symbols provided the focus of our indoor 'campfire' as we gathered to reflect on the indigenous history of our land. The previous evening we had marvelled at the graceful movement of the Aboriginal women dancers as they brought a taste of their traditional culture to share with us.

constantly acting in what we believe is in the best interests of the First Australians. Much of her hurt has come from the failure of the decision makers in the church, as well as the wider community, to hear the simple requests of her people. Listen first, was her heartfelt cry.

The recurring message of our four days in Western Sydney was the plea to listen to the voices of the dispossessed rather than to act in our usual paternalistic way. The Wellspring Community's Urban Pilgrimage was a wake up call from those who were missing out on the benefits of our affluent society, and



*The Aboriginal Women Dancers*

Pearl Wymarra, an Indigenous leader in the Uniting Church's Congress, began our Saturday morning session by declaring that the Jesus story works for her, and has guided her through many difficult times, both personally and professionally. Pearl, originally from Cape York in the far north, but resident in Penrith for the past 30 years, challenged us to give more time and space to listen to the voices of Indigenous people, rather than

to hear from those who had dedicated their lives to working alongside these victims of materialism.

We heard from leaders of several church agencies in Sydney and Melbourne who work alongside those who are experiencing social, economic and cultural deprivation, and who live on the fringes of our wealthy society. We also visited the main Mount DrUITT shopping area, to observe, meet and talk with those on

the streets, and to contact some of the servants of the agencies attempting to provide assistance.

Rita Tobin, a member of the Catholic parish at Emerton, has been a volunteer for over 30 years at the remarkable Holy Family Centre. Among her many roles she has taught school scripture, taken families on their first ever beach holiday, assisted in literacy and job skill courses, and supported the priests at the various mass centres. But most of the government funding has dried up in these tight financial times!

Robyn Reeves at the Wilmot Cyber Café provides a safe place for young people to gather after school, access the internet for their assignments, and communicate via email, while having a coffee or milkshake. At present the Café is providing barista training for a



*Wilmot Cyber Café*

group of adolescents, to give them job skills for future employment. Funding is provided by a variety of church and community agencies.

Gloria Matthews, a respected indigenous Elder, spoke of her work with the Mount Druitt Reconciliation Group which meets weekly. It organises an annual walk through the suburban streets to remind the general community of the goal of a better deal for her people and equality for all Australians. Western Sydney has the highest concentration of indigenous people in any urban centre in the country.

Annette is the coordinator of Burnside NEWPIN, a support program for mothers who are struggling to care for their young children. Most have been referred by DOCS or the Children's Courts, and many have previously had children removed, because they were considered to be incapable of caring for them. They are given parenting skills and take part in play therapy. A nearby centre is available for fathers in a similar situation. The success of this trial program, which is based on a model developed in the UK, has resulted in similar centres being opened in other suburbs and interstate.



*Eugene Stockton explaining the aboriginal rock carving.*

The exposure program organised for the four days by Anne McPherson and others included visits to the Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, the Mt Druitt Learning Ground, the Caroline Chisholm Centre of St Vincent de Paul, and time to explore Aboriginal cultural sites in the area with anthropologist Fr Eugene Stockton.

On Sunday morning we worshipped with local church communities, experiencing the different styles of Tongan Uniting, Coptic Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Indigenous liturgies. Sharing our reports afterwards was a great time of attempting to relate our faith to the daily life of God's people in this part of the vast conurbation that is Western Sydney.

*Doug Hewitt*

## *Visit to Learning Ground*

On a warm afternoon, we were welcomed to Learning Ground, sited next to the Bidwell Uniting Church, with an acknowledgement of the Dharrug people and all our ancestors – white people included. Margaret Bell greeted us with the words 'we greet you with respect and affection with an open heart'. These words summed up the philosophy of Learning Ground. It is a kind of school where teaching and learning is reciprocal, and involves facilitators, mentors and participants. Participants are men, women and children from 8 to 80 years from differing communities and backgrounds. Learning Ground provides an Enablers' program where excursions, music, gardening, dance and much support are provided.

Winsome Matthews told us of the 'little fellow' on our shoulder, the chip, the 'ego':

*He is the one who says 'you're not capable, don't smile, you can't do it, you don't need to be here, you can do other things.'... name the chip on your shoulder – now knock him off your shoulder. And the other side as well!*

The Learning Ground 'syllabus' is based on the seasons, on creating relationships, on forming social custodianships, and encourages people to understand 'who they are' through giving proper recognition to people and the land. It aims to enable all to experience an Aboriginal sense of 'being' which in turn gives a

sense of belonging and of place. The group aims for social participatory democracy where people connect through courage and faith.

It is important to acknowledge the risks that parents and grandparents took to get us to where we are today. Different people involved in Learning Ground told us of their journeys, and their search for 'reality'. How many people, we were asked, have to alter themselves (for safety reasons) in order 'to be'? People are asked to identify a totem for themselves for a totem, through what it represents, helps us understand how to live – it gives energy and value.

*Helen Weavers*

## Split

After the play  
we talk about people we know  
who live with schizophrenia,  
a conversation that may  
never have happened  
but for the duo on stage  
who held us  
through the schisms of a mind  
in freefall.

Shrouded in theatre darkness  
we too were drenched  
by the storm of his logic  
raging across his mindscape,  
even as genius floated pure and free  
above his chalked circles of delusion.

He stands there under the lights  
and tears himself up,  
his face serene then twisted  
as it lands in tatters on the black stage floor.

His mother, split between concern  
and angry disengagement, clings  
to funny, joyous moments of exchange  
as she scrubs his mental entrails  
off her lounge room walls  
where ducks in ceramic form  
preserve our sanity.  
No-one questions their mad annual flights  
across continents and oceans  
in order to prolong their species.

This warm, exciting mind  
exact a penalty on itself and those  
who still remain in close proximity.  
Not because it wants to;  
he's simply that one in a hundred.

And I think of Chris,  
of conversations gifted with humour  
and serious teasing,  
of wrangles over the next pack of ciggies  
and how many he would smoke.  
They got him through the week he said.  
Life was hell  
those days before his payment came,  
tough for me who tried to reason with him,  
tortuous for him  
whose thoughts exhausted all my  
'common' sense.

It is we 'of sound mind'  
who are called to be their witnesses.  
We are here to celebrate and sustain  
each  
One in a Hundred.

## Book Launch - by Jenny Jarvis

*'an ample bed - poems to celebrate birth death and rebirth';*

by Gillian Gehrig Hunt

Gillian Hunt's book of poems, *an ample bed*, was recently launched by Jenny Jarvis. In launching Gillian's book, Jenny said:

'Let me start with a quote. P.G. Wodehouse said, "I may as well tell you that if you are going about the place thinking things pretty, you will never make a modern poet. Be poignant, man, be poignant!"

'That is what many of the poems in this book are – poignant.

'It appears to me that producing this book of poems has been much the same process as having a baby. This baby, however, has had a very long gestation and many of Gillian's friends gathered here tonight have shared its journey. We are gathered here tonight for the birth.

'This book has been born out of:  
sadness and loss;  
joy and celebration;  
the complex emotions of family  
life;  
an appreciation of beauty in many  
forms;  
a strong sense of social justice;  
care and concern for the addicted  
and the marginalised with whom  
Gillian worked for so long at the  
Wellspring [in Canberra];  
the ability to be creative – and we  
have seen this displayed in a variety of ways.



*Gillian signing her book for her mother,  
Betty Gehrig. Photo Nick Jaffer*

'The birth process can sometimes be long and painful but once over that is soon forgotten. So tonight we rejoice and I present to you *an ample bed*.

*For information on how to purchase Gillian's book you can email her at  
gillieh@bigpond.net.au*

## NEWBORN

Morning stretches across a sleepy sky  
her head still streaked  
with membranes of white cloud  
damply covering her newness,  
mysterious as a birthing caul.

She has pushed herself  
through the passage of night  
and is in no hurry now.

She uncurls her toes and opens her  
fingers,  
folds of pink and gold,  
transparent in their multiple  
perfection.

Her horizontal world is as curved and  
smooth  
as the unbroken waters of a bay  
cradled in the arms of the shore.

Slowly she lifts her lids.  
Instinct bids her view  
with indigo eyes  
the world she has chosen to inhabit.

The length of this new dawn is  
known:  
her secret, the sum of all her days.

*Poems by Gillian Hunt*



# A Celtic Pilgrimage

A recent three-week 'Celtic Pilgrimage' organised by the NSW Ecumenical Council took a group, including three Wellspring members, the Hewitts and myself, to Ireland, Scotland and Northern England. We travelled in the footsteps of the Celtic saints while meeting and hearing about the work of contemporary saints and communities.

Over the past few years I've been delighted to learn a whole new history of the Christian Church, of a period that was previously called the Dark Ages. The Celtic saints we learned about on our trip were mostly from the 6th and 7th centuries, including St Patrick and St Kevin in Ireland, St Kentigern in Scotland, and St Aidan and St Cuthbert in England.

First, we visited the Corrymeela Community in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela was founded over 40 years ago on Ray Davey's vision of reconciliation and Christian community. The hope was that Corrymeela would become known as 'the Open Village', open to all people of good will who are willing to meet each other, to learn from each other and to work together for the good of all. It is also open to all kinds of new ventures and experiments in fellowship, study and worship; to all kinds of people from industry, the professions, agriculture and commerce. Like the Iona Community's Camas on the Isle of Mull, young people from different faith backgrounds and different locations come here to meet, talk and form closer relationships, with the aim of breaking down the barriers and prejudices that have existed in N. Ireland for a long time.

In Dublin we visited the Irish School of Ecumenics, Ireland's Centre

for Reconciliation Studies. While Dr Geraldine Smythe explained ecumenical theory, our discussions ended with a note on healing and the need to tell our stories as part of the healing process, not only in Ireland but world wide. Her point was that while much is understood, the churches are often slow to follow up. We left Ireland realising that that island has much to offer the world of its knowledge of and resources for reconciliation and healing.

We crossed to Scotland to visit the Isle of Iona. Iona is the birthplace of Christianity in northern Britain, for from here saints set out to take the word of God to pagan peoples, particularly in Scotland. We met with some of the staff and volunteers of the Iona Community, worshipped in the Abbey and enjoyed the beauty of the island.

The Iona Community today remains committed to 'rebuilding the common life' through working for social, economic and political justice, striving for the renewal of the church with an ecumenical emphasis, and exploring new more inclusive approaches to worship, all based on the bringing together of spirituality and action.

In Glasgow we visited the Iona Community office where we met Neil Paynter (editor for Wild Goose Publication). In Edinburgh we met with Peter Millar, in good spirits



*Corrymeela*

despite the death of his mum a week earlier. Peter brought with him his friend Colin Douglas, just returned and who spoke to us about his six-month stay in Palestine. (See 'And None Shall Make Them Afraid' by Peter Millar, on the Wellspring website under Interact / Archives / December 2007).

Then it was on to England to visit Lindisfarne and the Community of Aidan and Hilda. Curiously while learning about this community's 'new' ways of doing and being church (an 'Emerging Church') and its efforts to establish a monastic style Rule for living, we were also learning about the earlier saints: Aidan, Hilda, Cuthbert, and Wilfrid; learning about the Synod of Whitby and the way in which this Synod changed the direction of the native British church. Aidan, known for his gentleness, holiness and love, was the Irish monk who came to Lindisfarne from Iona in 635, after the first mission of the Celtic Church to the English had failed. Hilda, Aidan's great friend, was a Saxon who founded a monastery for men and women at Whitby, from which a stream of leaders evangelised much of England.

We were sightseers as well as pilgrims – we saw our share of cities, castles, cathedrals, ruined monasteries and ancient sites – each time gaining an even deeper appreciation of the love, the passion, the dangers faced, yet unshakable faith of these saints of the early church. They travelled incredible distances – on foot mostly (while we travelled in comfortable air-conditioned plane or bus or ferry) – to spread the Word of God to pagan peoples. Yet one of the most interesting facts about mission



*A Celtic Pilgrimage continued . . .*

work in Britain is that there were no martyrs. The British were able to absorb and merge this new faith into their current belief systems and make of it something especially their own. It was not imposed on them. That came later after the Roman Church gained ascendancy and imposed a more rigid, centralised, hierarchical system upon the native Celtic believers.

But what of us modern day saints and pilgrims? Learning from the past, we have begun to build bridges and to understand that many ways, thoughts and actions are part of our Godly world. We seek reconciliation with all our brothers and sisters of every faith and nation. For travellers on this Pilgrimage, we had slowly begun to share our stories and to find the Christ in each other. If there is an overarching theme to our journey, it is that we need to listen and tell our stories, patiently and lovingly, so that healing may come about.

*Bonita Frank*

## *A Street Meditation*

*As pilgrims we expect to find in our journey some holy places in which there is recognisable evidence of God's presence.*

*We bring a contemplative attentiveness, looking for some communication from God in the places we enter.*

*We bring preparedness to care, and willingness to know what God might be asking of us.*

*We look for the fingerprints and footprints of God in our path believing that God is present in every human life with the intent to create, restore and bring us to oneness with each other and with God.*

*Alex Nelson*

*(excerpt from street meditation, Urban Pilgrimage)*

## *Spirituality in a Shopping Centre?*

The pilgrimage participants were invited to walk around the Mt Druitt shopping centre to see if any recognisable evidence of God's presence could be detected. To do this we had to put aside the usual temptations such a place presents.

For me the sense of spirituality came from remembering that we humans are created by God. First there was the huge variety of race, size and shape of the many people there. No two were exactly alike. All were unique individuals. There was a group of young Sudanese men, while another group of Asian women were practicing Christmas carols under the awning of a building because they had no where else to meet! A family sat outside the Department of Housing with suitcases and a variety of bags – were they homeless? Had they just been thrown out of their home?

Then, looking around all the shops and stalls, I realized the incredible variety of skills and inventiveness of the human race, all given to us by our God of Love. This also reminded me of the desperate needs of millions of people around the world and the greed and lust for power which causes so much suffering and death. In view of all this so many of the goods and services offered in the shopping centre seemed unnecessary and wasteful.

How can we divert the skills and intelligence of the human race to solving the world-wide problems and what part can we as individuals and groups play in bringing about an end to so much pain and suffering? We all have gifts. How can we use them in positive ways?

*Keith Weavers*

### **IN REPLY... The Art of Discernment**

My thanks to Margaret Allen for reviewing my short book 'Creating for Life' in the last edition of *Pipeline*. I am concerned though that my Wellspring friends might be somewhat puzzled and bewildered at this point by the book's content. ...

In response to Margaret's frustration to 'tell me more about that idea' or ideas, I am pleased to foreshadow to all Wellspringers that my work in progress (a prolonged work in the extreme), 'Peacing it Together – a colourful life', will reveal all my thoughts. ...

Today I find it extremely amusing that today's orthodox churches, and the Wellspring Community for that matter, still want to play 'denominations' with a pretence of espousing 'ecumenical games' as an adjunct. Holding endless ecumenical discussions and forums seems madness when we are all fully aware that Jesus, our good friend, was so decidedly 'inclusive'. Yes, we all need community, but Jesus' whole world was 'his community'. He was the lover of all humankind and creation, certainly not the exclusive father of any one particular 'box' of belief or believers. ...

*Col's reply is too long to reproduce here. His full article will appear on the Wellspring website.*

## *A journey to Campfire in the Heart*

Our journey to Campfire in the Heart was both a physical and spiritual journey. Driving through the vast and seemingly empty outback made us aware of the resourcefulness of the indigenous people who have lived and cared for the land for generations, living lightly on it.

David and Sue Woods welcomed us warmly (it was hot). Any doubts they may have had of two aged Wellspringers coming to help were well hidden.

Our introduction was an hour of meditation, a good start to be still and collect and centre ourselves after days of traveling. Morning prayer set the



*Labyrinth at Campfires in the Heart*

tone for each day. Work, community meals, Wednesday nights around the campfire to which many local folk and visitors come, food shared, stories told, faith shared, concerns for the Arrernte people were expressed. David and Sue are very involved with the Arrernte as well as the local Alice Springs community.

David's cooking damper on the coals, this being eaten with butter and syrup, brought back childhood memories for me.

Some impressions: brilliant stars, which showed the glory of God; hospitality, which was more than shelter; shared tasks; a freak storm; dust, wind, heat, flies, ants; but most of all, two people who have committed themselves to community, care and openness, embracing all who come.

After living for five weeks as part of the Community of Campfire in the Heart, sharing in day to day tasks of work and worship it is difficult to assess the many experiences we encountered. We are still processing

these. Allan and I would encourage Wellspring members and friends to make the journey to this community – not just as guests, but to get dirty and sweaty sharing in the community of the heart where joys and griefs can come together to be healed.

David and Sue Woods are two unique people who have committed their lives to community. They give a new meaning to faith and hospitality in a gentle Christ like way.

*June McLaren*

*For more information about Campfire in the Heart go to:*

*<http://www.campfireintheheart.com.au/>*



*The Campfire*

## *A Sacred Path*

An aspect of our journeying in prayer at Campfire in the Heart in recent months has been the installation of a labyrinth, a Sacred Path. This project has been a long time in the dreaming and is finally ready for walking.

The 11 Circle Chartres Cathedral design we have followed is 20 metres in diameter. The centre is 4 metres, accommodating individuals and giving room for a small group to gather. The path has been located a little above the surrounding land to keep it safe from flooding on the few occasions that we have rain. It is made of a beautiful red base that gives it a very authentic Central Australian feel. The paths are located with the use of natural variant coloured sandstone rocks set into the base. When it rained recently the yellow, orange, red and

white sandstone rocks looked like jewels on a crown.

The labyrinth is set in the midst of some remnant ironwood trees that initially seemed to stand far apart from each other with little sense of relationship. Now they are on the perimeter of this lovely space and offer a feeling of enclosure. We plan further plantings to bring a greater integration with the landscape and shade for summer walking.

We first walked the Path on 29th October as a part of our Campfire Reflection. We lit a small fire in the centre to guide us on our way. It was beautiful to walk with the glow of the fire illuminating our path. There were around 10 of us walking in silence. We took our own time and

on arriving in the centre, waited for others to complete their walk.

For a time we kept silent, then sang a song and shared briefly what the walk had meant for us. For each person it was totally different, just as our life journeys are totally different, but we were united with each other and we supported each other by the act of walking the Sacred Path.

**The Sacred Path** adds to other aspects of life at Campfire in the Heart where we live in the **Sacred Landscape** of Central Australia and seek to offer people the opportunity to come and rest in the wilderness. We are delighted with this small beginning and we invite you to come and walk the Sacred Path if you are in Alice.

*Sue and David Woods*

# Thoughts from Jill Robertson: What do you love? How do you love? Who do you love?

What do you love?

What do you look forward to most at Christmas time?

Is it the atmosphere of warmth and generosity? Is it the delight of children who feel the magic of the season?

Is it the one time of year that you hear from your friends and catch up on a year's news?

Is it the considering and buying of presents for the important people in your life? How many people could you help this year?

It is true that giving is a source of happiness, sometimes even more than receiving, although most of us would have to admit that it is a delight to receive as well. Being a gracious receiver of other people's carefully chosen gifts for you can be a challenge can't it?

Do you love the church activities at Christmas? The special music, the children's programs to help them hear the true meaning of Christmas? Do you love telling that story yourself?

Take some time to sit down and really think about what it is you love about Christmas. Don't fall into the negativity trap. There is plenty to celebrate, so think about how you can put your heart and soul into enjoying some of the special things that Christmas brings.



How do you love?

How will you go about being the person you want to be this Christmas?

Will it mean challenging the presumption that you will be doing the same things as you have always done?

Can you think of something you would like to do differently this year? Who can you confide in to support you in your decision?

If you have a certain amount of money to spend this Christmas, how will you spend it? How many people could benefit from your willingness to give? Which charities might you give to?

Given that we are celebrating the incarnation, what implications will this have on the way you see Christmas? What message did Jesus bring through his teaching that you really want to follow? Some of his teaching was far from easy to follow, so which areas will you try to work on this Christmas season and beyond?

Take some time to offer yourself again to God and allow the time for God to show you how you can best use your time, energy, talents and money this Christmas to spread the love of God.

*Gracious God*

*I am yours and you are mine.*

*Thank you for coming into the world to show us how to live.*

*I ask that I will be aware of your guidance every day in the time up to and around Christmas this year.*

*And then grant me the grace to follow your guidance.*

*Amen*

Who do you love?

Love is a word that gets bandied about at Christmas more than at any other time of year. Yet, when it comes to how we celebrate Christmas we cannot separate that from thinking about the people we hope to be with.

All people think about their family members at Christmas. We celebrate being with the ones that are physically able to be with us. We miss the ones from whom we are separated. We wonder about the lives of those people we see in the shops, at community functions, at church or at work. To think that God came into the world for ALL these people is mind boggling.

Yet, all people are drawn into the need to give and receive love and acceptance at Christmas time.

It is the God in us that needs to show the love that is part of our very being, whether we acknowledge it or not. We love because God first loved us. Everybody loves because God first loved them. Thank God for a time of year when we can openly reach out to those we love and show them our appreciation.

Can you think of special messages of love you can give to each person you will be giving a gift to?

Challenge yourself to make that gift tag a love tag this year.

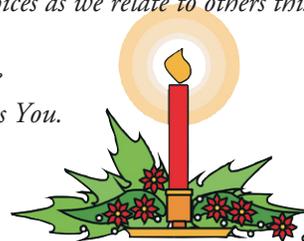
*Loving God,*

*We thank you for the people who come into our circle of knowing and loving.*

*Help us to consciously be your hands, feet and voices as we relate to others this Christmas.*

*May we be as loving as You.*

*Amen*



## Blessing

The world has given up hoping  
and maybe we have too.

In this advent  
be blessed with courage to hear the  
call of faith -  
to believe that love is being shaped  
right now  
in the womb-space of a waiting world  
and to live as though the miracle of  
hope's birth  
is waiting only for our yes

*Cheryl Lawrie*  
*www.holdthisspace.org*

## Generous God

You know we can get a bit critical  
about the way Christmas gets out  
of hand these days with so much  
commercialism.

Help us to celebrate with a generous  
heart and to find ways of bringing  
your love to others at this special time  
of year.

*Amen*

## Vale: Richard Hain Pidgeon

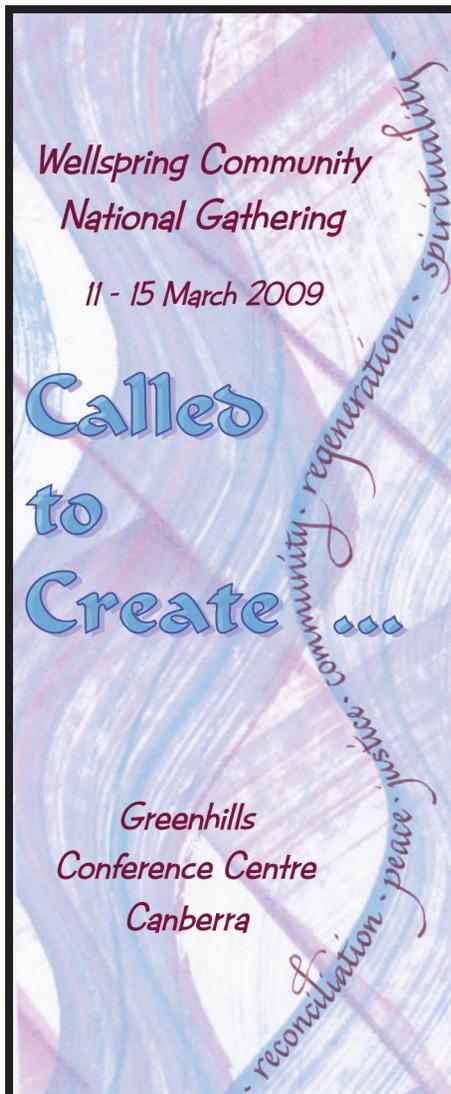
13/2/26 – 25/9/08

Dick Pidgeon, a Friend of Wellspring (Day 30 Victoria: North and East), is survived by his wife Shirley and four of their five children. He will be missed by Cheryl Laurence the only other 'Wellspringer' in Bairnsdale 'on' the Gippsland Lakes some 280 km east of Melbourne.

Dick, a graduate of Ridley Theological College in Parkville and of Melbourne University, held many positions in the Anglican Church which he combined with service to the local community and the wider Church with Chaplaincies ranging from the Police to the Order of St Luke.

In retirement, while Canon Dick and Shirley resided at Clifton Waters Village, he continued in locum work until struck down by sudden illness, pneumonia linked to an aggressive cancer condition. This active, involved retiree, a man of many parts will be missed by a wide cross-section of the local community and many from further afield.

Wellspring has lost a friend and the family a husband, father and friend. May the mystery of our God be sufficient for both the grief and love that will be the memory of Canon Dick Pidgeon.



## National Gathering - Called To Create

11th to 15th March, 2009

Canberra, Greenhills Conference Centre

You are warmly invited to join us for the biennial National Gathering of the Wellspring Community. We start with the evening meal at 6pm on Wednesday and finish with lunch on Sunday.

Our theme for the Gathering is "Called to Create..."

### Day 1 - Wednesday evening 11th March

Called to create community - with Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

### Day 2 - Thursday morning 12th March

Called to create a reconciling community - with Christine King

### Day 3 - Friday morning 13th March

Called to create a just and peaceful community - with Mark Zirnsak

### Day 4 - Saturday 14th March

Called to regeneration - with our younger generations

### Day 5 - Sunday morning 15th March

Called to continue creating community - with Katalina Tahaafe-Williams

### Every Day

Called to create worship with Trisha Watts

We welcome anyone who would like to share in the life of our community for the first time during the Gathering. Families with young children are very welcome too.

Older Members and Friends - why not invite a younger person to accompany you this time?

For more information go to [www.wellspringcommunity.org.au](http://www.wellspringcommunity.org.au)  
or contact Mary Gilchrist  
[marygilchrist@wellspringcommunity.org.au](mailto:marygilchrist@wellspringcommunity.org.au) or 02 9825 2197

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## NEXT ISSUE:

Pipeline theme for March 2009 is 'a more perfect unity'.

Editor for this issue is Bonita Frank. Please have your material to Bonita by Friday 23 January 2009 (bonitafrank@hotmail.com; PO Box 903 Spit Junction NSW 2088; 02 9960 5795)

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