

Experiences of Struggle and Hope



Instead of packing away the winter beanie and scarf, the thermals and gloves, those of us attending the Gathering will be wondering how cold it might be in Launceston at the end of the month. In our last edition of *'Pipeline'*, we read about special guest, Besta Peter. In this edition we feature Dr Patsy Cameron AM and our own Lisa Wriley. Patsy will address the Gathering and also take participants on a tour of the Gorge. Lisa's focus in her presentation will be to explore struggle and hope from her perspective as our Sustainability Contact Person and her background in community.

Gathering Guest Dr Patsy Cameron AM

Patsy Cameron's work in education and community was recognised with

the award of Officer of the Order of Australia (AM) in the Queen's Birthday Honours list this year. She has been a passionate advocate for Aboriginal education and for the promotion of cultural heritage and traditional practice. This work has been directed towards strengthening Aboriginal community and building a broader Tasmanian community that knows and cherishes its deep history stretching back some 40,000 years.

Patsy is co-chair of the QVMAG (Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery) Aboriginal Reference Group and a year ago announced that there would be a new, permanent display of Tasmania's deep history at QVMAG for the 2017 NAIDOC Week. This was a very short time frame but the display opened in time for NAIDOC

INSIDE this issue

- » EXPERIENCES OF STRUGGLE AND HOPE
Geoff Stevenson
Page 1
- » LEADER'S LETTER
Alex Scutt
Page 3
- » WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY
Geoff Stevenson
Page 4
- » PEACE AND JUSTICE
Candle-light Vigil
Joy Conner
Page 6
- GIVE PEACE A CHANCE
Doug Hewitt
Page 6
- » RECONCILIATION
2017 Uluru National Constitutional Convention Statement
Page 7
- » HEALING AND HOSPITALITY
Journeying From Addiction to Hope for a New Life
Linda Murray
Page 8
- » ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH
Jim Tulip
- » POETRY
Forgive by Jackie Sommerville
What was Dad Like Before the War by Jackie Sommerville
The Seed Of Hope by Linda Murray
- » MUSIC REVIEW
Songs by Dave Andrews
Geoff Stevenson
Page 9
- » BOOK REVIEWS
Blue Ribbons Bitter Bread
Janelle Macgregor
Page 10
Hope
Linda Murray
Page 11
- » ART REVIEW
Aleksander Gierymski
Janelle Macgregor
Page 11



Dr Patsy Cameron AM

Week (National Aborigines Day Observance Committee) in July this year. It is a unique display that tells stories of humans living in this land for millennia. The display is titled "The First Tasmanians: Our Story". It has been created in collaboration with Tasmanian Aboriginal scholars, artists and cultural custodians. The exhibition places scientific and historical research alongside the practices and perspectives of today's Tasmanian Aboriginal people to offer one of the most complete accounts of Tasmania's deep human history that has ever been attempted.

Patsy's extensive cultural knowledge, gained from years of stories and practice, and her academic qualifications in archaeology, geography and history place her well to guide the development of this exhibition. Her work has been hugely influential in improving the situation and condition of Aboriginal Tasmanians and in growing understanding and respect for Tasmania's deep human history in the wider community.

We hope you find the time to visit this extraordinary exhibition while you are in Tasmania.

Gathering Presenter - Lisa Wriley



Lisa Wriley

Lisa's faith has been her inspiration or 'leading' to leave the world better than when she arrived. She has a strong conviction that the earth is sacred and that we are called to live in a way that nurtures this complex web of life not destroy it - everything we do or don't do has an impact on everything else. Seeking right relationships between ourselves, the divine, each other and the earth guides her life - from her composting habits to her commitment to ethically made clothing. Lisa feels very privileged to have paid part time work with the Total Environment Centre in Sydney.

Lisa has a rare gift for working with communities, and an awesome commitment to recycling which has seen her travel all over Australia dressed as Bev the Bottle. Bev has been dedicated to achieving a container deposit scheme for used bottles and cans for over 5 years, and a big part of the win which has seen CDS legislation sweep across Australia. But Bev is just one way Lisa works to help people take action towards zero waste and greater resource efficiency.

She loves animating the campaign world with characters and creative sculptures, running random refund days, and connecting with other people who are passionate and active on litter and waste issues through stalls at community events.

With her background in Education for Sustainability, Lisa also helps schools

to set up Worm Tubs for their organic waste, and teaches composting skills at Kariong Eco Garden, and Central Coast schools. "Working with great volunteers and carting giant bottles around to MP's offices has been very memorable!"

Visiting Dunbarton

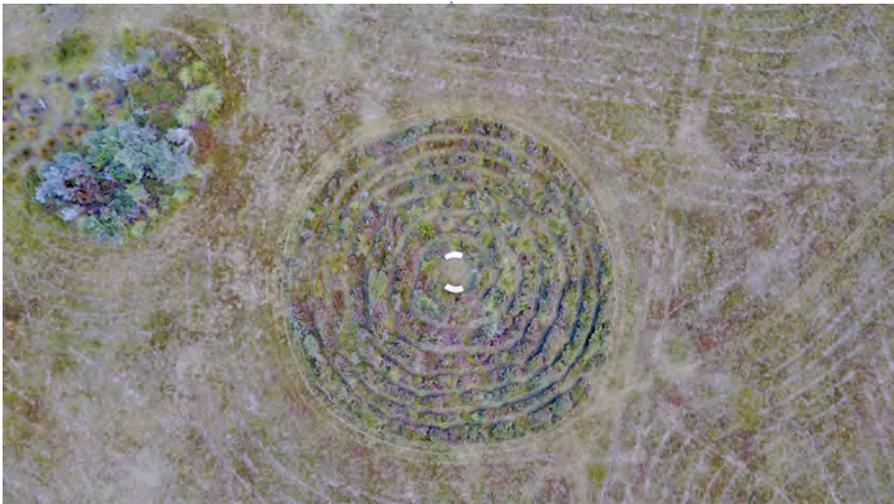
Gathering participants will also visit 'Dunbarton'. This aerial view of Peter and Lorraine Riggall's property shows a labyrinth and reflection pool, amidst their flora conservation project.

The property consists of 98 acres on the Little Forester River in North East Tasmania. The house was built in 1895. My husband Peter's parents bought the property in 1960. We took over Dunbarton in 2000 following the death of Peter's mother.

During a visit from a botanist we were advised to reduce the weed infestation on the property. We were also encouraged to leave some circles of vegetation for animal corridors. This allowed us to develop a wildflower labyrinth and reflective pool. This area has become popular with visitors. The labyrinth was blessed, by Rev. Peter Millar, on the 8th of March 2008. It is known as a Wellspring Labyrinth and Wellspring members and Friends are welcome to visit it, when in Northern Tasmania. As we had placed a covenant on the property we were able to obtain Government assistance to help with the eradication of weeds.



Dunbarton



Wildflower Labrynth at top left and Labrynth with reflective pool in centre.

Peter worked tirelessly to eradicate the weeds commencing with a variety of Holly that had invaded the natural bush areas.

The next weed that required attention was *Berberus Darwinii* which was a larger problem and is still being monitored today.

There are some rare native plant species on the property which have been recorded for the Herbarium at the Museum in Hobart.

A rare fern was discovered by a member of the Australian Native Plant Society in September 2016. We

have worked for 17 years to achieve the following:-

1. Weed eradication, which was our number one priority and monitoring still continues today.
2. Moving bushland back from buildings to reduce fire threat.
3. Maintenance of dams on the property to ensure adequate water supply in the drier months.
4. Monitoring and keeping records of the flora and fauna on the property.

We encourage visitors from various groups. Some have an interest in the flora and fauna on the property, while others enjoy the quietness and serenity that the property offers. We look forward to welcoming Wellspring folk to Dunbarton during the Gathering to learn of our 'experiences of struggle and hope' in our efforts to preserve and develop Dunbarton for the enjoyment of future generations.
Lorraine Riggall (Day 7)

Leader's Letter - September 2017



Leader's name

I am writing this in the week following August 6 – a day which brings a degree of ambivalence. In my tradition, many mark it as the Feast of the Transfiguration where we hear the story of Jesus climbing a mountain with his closest friends. On the mountain Jesus has a profound experience. There is a dazzling light and a cloud overshadowing them, they are terrified by the cloud, and a voice. The ambivalence of the date is that it also marks Hiroshima Day. On that day in 1945 it was not a mountain that someone climbed, but the cockpit of

a plane. In the war between America and Japan, the Americans had a secret weapon which they wanted to use. They had prepared three atomic bombs, one tested in New Mexico on July 16, one dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, and the third a few days later on Nagasaki. 150,000 people lay dead, others later died from the effects of atomic radiation, and 75,000 buildings were lost. As Bosco Peters in his liturgy blog has said of this day:

Here we have a new voice booming from heaven. Here too was brightness, brilliant as burning magnesium. Here too is a cloud that has come and has covered us all with shadow. Truly, under the shadow of this new cloud, we are right to feel afraid.

*Spiritual Memoir
Workshop*

I can remember the primal fear and horror I felt when I first saw pictures of that atomic bomb on an old television, some twenty years or so after the event, as a young child. I wonder where you were, and what you felt when you first saw that terrible mushroom cloud. I was left in no doubt that the world would never be the same again.

And so, on August 6 we pray for world peace. The date speaks to us to the victory of Christ's death over every evil, even of total annihilation by human evil. Put another way, the struggle against human evil continues,





even in the face of human capacity to destroy everything around us, and we do so because of Christ's victory over every evil.

As we prepare for our Gathering in Launceston, Tasmania, at the end of September, to share, listen and respond to experiences of struggle and hope, Lisa Wriley, our Contact Person for Sustainability, invites us to send photos from our state, representing struggles and hope from the point of view of the planet. She writes:

"I am collecting 20 images from each state (with a caption or one sentence to accompany each), which I will share for 20 seconds each, in a presentation. This is a Japanese process that was used in our Quaker Earthcare report to Yearly Meeting (recently in Adelaide) and I am adapting for Wellspring's theme - so 10 images representing struggle, 10 representing hope.

One or two images each (of struggle and hope) would be all I need ... I hope it is not too much to ask. I am hoping to collect the 20 images by the end of August."

Last Saturday 5 August, Stephanie guided 12 Victorian Wellspring folk through some exercises in the writing of spiritual memoir. We each took an object from a table of many beautiful things, we wrote freely about that object for a few minutes. Then we did a similar thing with a place that was special to us. We had the opportunity to share our writing with others. We explored something of what memoir was, and one of our members, Jim Houston, told us that he has just finished his own memoirs, to be published sometime very soon.

I spent three very enriching days in July in some beautiful New South

Wales late July weather meeting with folks in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Newcastle, and heard stories of struggle and hope in the work with asylum seekers by Joy Connor and others in the Blue Mountains; in Sydney of a renewed initiative by soon-to-be member of Wellspring Diane Speed to help create greater links between Wellspring and the Theological Reflection Commission of the NSW Ecumenical Council by sharing information about each other's activities; and in Newcastle of some rich stories of spiritual experiences in holy places such as Iona and how that has shaped and given lives new direction and energy.

As I was concluding the writing of this piece, I received an email about my forthcoming visit to Queensland from 31 August to 2 September during which I will meet with folks for lunch and attend the Abundant Justice Conference.

My hosts are likely to be Jo and Penny Inkpin at St Francis College, and Neil and Margaret Holm. I most unhesitatingly and gratefully accept their invitation and hospitality.

Worship and Spirituality

Struggle and Hope



The story we experience through the Hebrew Scriptures ebbs and flows

with the nuances of life and human activity. People rise high and stand tall in difficult and profound moments. They also find themselves falling to depths of despair and failure.

The people of God journey through the moments and movements of growth and maturity, of spiritual insight and openness to the Divine Presence in all its mystery and wonder. Then they watch as the next generation begins the same journey over again falling into similar temptations and failings, discovering this same wondrous and healing Presence of God in their midst. Each generation waxes and wanes through the epic journey of life lived.

The family story is realised within a matrix of communal, national and international activity. Geo-political dramas fill the pages with tension and excitement, uncertainty and hope within the struggle of families and cultures to find their place in the world before God and one another. There are stories of failure and defeat, the pathos of vulnerable people at the mercy of the powerful and wealthy. There are stories of miraculous intervention where the unbelievable and impossible materialises from nowhere; the stories of David and Goliath, Moses and Pharaoh.

The prophetic leaders cry into the pain and struggle of life as a pin-prick

of light in the darkness that promises some hope. The wisdom writers point to God as the One who holds us in unimaginable grace and love and will not let us go regardless of what happens to us. Jesus ventures into the places where life is lived and felt in all its rough, raw reality. He wanders into the impoverishment of peasants, poor, chronically ill or disabled, sinners, tax collectors, lepers and outcasts. He reaches out to people at the bottom of life for whom everything is too hard and draws them into a community of grace, hope and peace. He points us to God's Reign expressed in justice, love, mercy, hope and joy and invites us to live into the way of God.

I love these stories where life is messy and chaos often overwhelms order and rules and God bursts in with love, proclaiming a new way. I love these stories and find myself trying to locate their presence in my world, to view life through the lens of Jesus' way and find ways to emulate them, albeit less profoundly than I read in Jesus' stories.

Struggle and hope is the context of my life as well. I know life to be harsh and dark. I know life to be wondrous and awe-filled. I know all the shades in between. The context of ministry in Western Sydney has revealed the sheer terror and overwhelming pain of some people's experience. Funerals for those who have been murdered, young and old, through violent attacks and international terrorism, have left their mark upon my being. Sitting with people grieving the loss of those driven into the darkest places through mental illness and despair so unimaginable that life cannot be tolerated any longer and they sign out of this terrifying world.

I am also aware of the beautiful moments where resurrection life intrudes upon the Good Friday terror and blossoms into beauty and wonder. The joy of realisation that we are loved by One who creates all there is and knows us intimately – and still loves us

unconditionally! The discovery that I am forgiven despite being the wretch in the song who is also blind and lost but discover I see and am found in the heart of Divine grace.

I have seen the slow and rich transformation of people as they have lived within a community that cares and loves them and allows them to be and become.

I have been part of little congregations who are struggling to survive and live, who strive against one another and feel lost, alone and forgotten in a big world in which they are all but irrelevant.

I have watched as these little groups of faithful people discover that God's light still shines in and through them and if they can learn to love themselves others may enjoy that love and find new life. New life is fragile and risky but like the vulnerable and gentle smile of a new born radiates joy, hope and possibility.

In this I see God's Presence and know there is something more, something deeper, richer and more profound than I can comprehend and there is hope.

Much of what I do in my ministry placement and as Interim Chairperson of our Presbytery (the regional body of the Uniting Church) is to deal with the struggle of what it means to be the church, the people of God in this 21st century context of immense change.

I am aware of how profound the immensity of change in which we find ourselves at this time really is. There is confusion, anxiety and pain as our churches decline and we try harder and harder to wade against the raging torrents of revolution and transformative change all around us. Everything, it seems, is changing and the stress is paralysing for many congregations and individual leaders. We feel consumed in the struggle and overwhelmed by hopelessness at times. We wonder what will be and feel fear penetrate our bones. We

don't know what to do and cry out to God, much like the people in Egypt who felt the weight of oppressive forces drawing them down, down, down. God sometimes (often) seems silent before our desperate cries as nothing seems to change. We work harder doing what we know once worked but the downward spiral seems to rage on leaving us helpless before the world.

It is in the midst of this journey of struggle that I stop and look around. In the silence I hear the still, small voice, a gentle sound of love and hope. Sometimes the birdsong of the bush or the creek that flows gently over rapids near our home. Sometimes the song that touches my being, deep and rich. Sometimes I notice a light penetrate the dark places and watch as it brightens and reveals the beauty and wonder in the world around me. I see the flower in its wondrous, fragile beauty.

I am filled with awe at the vista that stretches out before me in beauty of God's world and rejoice. I know that God is! I know that God is around me, through me and with me. I know that despite everything God loves me and I am okay. All will be well. There is hope because there is God. The church will live and so will I. Love will sustain me and it grows and flourishes only as it is shared and lived and received and given.

This issue of Pipeline explores this rich and wondrous journey of struggle and hope where we live, work, play and serve. We may recognise ourselves in these stories or people we know in the pathos and wonder. We may also understand that struggle is the crucible of growth and adds shade and character to life. It is harsh and sometimes pushes us to the limit and we can only survive it with the love of others, a community of grace, and the hope of God's Spirit.

Geoff Stevenson (Day 20)

Peace and Justice

Candle-light Vigil sends messages to Iran



Peggy Goldsmith lights the candle of peace.

On Saturday night the 12th August, the Blue Mountains Community in Leura reached out to the grieving family of Hamed Shamshiripour in Iran. The church was full as the community gathered to express their grief at his tragic death on Manus Island. Like many others, Hamed had left his home in fear of persecution, torture and death, to find his way to a country he had heard was a place of freedom only to be told he would never be allowed to enter Australia. He couldn't go back to his homeland because Iran has banned the return of anyone who seeks asylum elsewhere. So, 31 year old Hamed was detained for four years and, during these years, he suffered serious mental illness. He never got the treatment he needed, or the safety he sought.

Candles were lit and placed under a framed photo of Hamed. Prayers and meditation framed the evening as people were given the space to share their feelings. Several poets read out their moving poetry, scripture was read and many people wrote messages that will be translated and sent to Hamed's family in Iran with the poetry and photos of the beautiful candlelit space. It was a time where people of different faiths, and none, could come together

to grieve for a young life lost and to gain courage to continue working for more compassionate government policies. As one of the organisers said "For me it was a healing experience, replacing despair and anger with joy and hope."

The vigil was organised by Blue Mountains Refugee Support Group and the Leura Uniting Church. Members of Wellspring were involved in organising the Vigil and in leading it. Joy Connor (Day 2)

Give Peace a Chance. Praying for Peace in Israel and Palestine.

In January 2017 a ground-breaking tour took place when Jews joined with Christians for a joint Jewish Christian group tour to Israel and Palestine. This was one of the outcomes from the continuing dialogue between members of the NSW Jewish Board of Deputies and the Relations with Other Faiths Committee of the Uniting Church in NSW/ACT. Ten people from each of the faiths spent two weeks travelling together on this challenging study tour. For many Jews in the group it was their first time in the Occupied Territories.

Since their return, members of the group have been reporting on the changes in attitude which have been an outcome of the tour. The Ecumenical Social Justice Network in Newcastle NSW is organising one of these report sessions on 22nd September as part of the local observance of the *World*

Week of Prayer for Peace in Palestine and Israel. Stewart Mills, one of the organisers of the study tour, and a former Wellspring Friend, will screen pictures to tell the story of the life-changing experience for the group.

Every year members of Christian Churches are invited to share in this World Week of Prayer for Peace, usually held in the fourth week of September. The invitation comes from church leaders in Jerusalem and this year it has particular significance because of the anniversaries of the history of occupation of the land of Palestine. When the leaders of 12 churches gathered in Bethlehem in June 2017 they endorsed an open letter from the National Coalition of Christian Organisations in Palestine. In part this letter states:

"As we meet this month in Bethlehem in occupied Palestine, we Palestinian Christians are still suffering from 100 years of injustice and oppression that have been inflicted on the Palestinian people. This began with the unjust and unlawful Balfour Declaration of 1917, intensified through the *Nakba of 1947*, when the State of Israel was founded and the consequent expulsion of refugees from the new nation, followed by the Israeli occupation of the West Bank including East Jerusalem and Gaza after the 1967 war. The result has been the fragmentation of our people and our land through policies of isolation, confiscation of land, and the building of Jewish-



Members of the Jewish/Christian study tour on a hill overlooking Jerusalem.

only settlements, and finally the Apartheid Wall.

A hundred years later and there is still no justice in our land! Discrimination and inequality, military occupation and systematic oppression, have become the rule. Today, we stand in front of an impasse and we have reached a deadlock. Despite all the promises, endless summits, UN resolutions, religious and lay leader's callings, Palestinians are still yearning for their freedom and independence, and seeking justice and equality. Humanly speaking – we have now reached the “moment of impossible”, as Emeritus Latin Catholic Patriarch Sabbah said recently.

We stand facing the impossible, but we have not lost hope, since as followers of the Risen One, we are the people of Hope. However, we need you, our fellow Christians, and we need you now more than ever. We need your costly solidarity. We need brave women and men who are willing to stand in the forefront. This is no time for shallow diplomacy Christians. In the words of St Paul:

We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed” (2 Cor. 4:8-9)

At the National Gathering, held at Collaroy in Sydney in 2013, we heard from Jan Sutch-Pickard about her time as an Ecumenical Accompanier in Israel/Palestine. Those present at the Gathering studied the public statement Kairos Palestine A Moment of Truth – A Word of Faith, Hope and Love from the Heart of Palestinian Suffering. (2009). Our Wellspring response was given the title Its Time for Palestine:

“For members of Wellspring Community gathered at Collaroy in April 2013, this is our kairos moment – our moment of truth. We are called to respond boldly to the deepening suffering of our sisters and brothers in Palestine under occupation by Israel. We stand in faithfulness and solidarity with Palestinians and Israelis who are working tirelessly for a peace based on justice. We believe it is necessary to challenge the deafening silence of most churches in the face of the

continuing injustice of dispossession and denial of basic human and political rights. We agree with the Kairos document that the occupation by Israel is ‘an evil and a sin’ (Kairos Palestine 4.2.1).

Once again in 2017 Christians around the globe are called to respond to the cry of Palestinian Christians to unite in peaceful actions to create a common international public witness. During the same week, on Thursday, 21 September, the International Day of Prayer for Peace is held and many gather on this date to pray for world peace. *Give Peace a Chance*, will be the fervent prayer of those concerned about the future of life for all who live in what many still call “The Holy Land.”

You are all invited to join in prayers and share our hopes for justice and peace. The World Week of Peace is yet another opportunity to remind the world about the unsolved conflict in Palestine and Israel and to show solidarity with peace-seeking people suffering under occupation.

Doug Hewitt



Reconciliation

2017 Uluru National Constitutional Convention Statement



We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart:

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent

and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did. According to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from “time immemorial”, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, or sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people.

Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. *This is the torment of our powerlessness.*

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a rightful place in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We will call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle.* It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-

making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We have base camp and start our trek across this vast country. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

[The Statement as we read it here comes originally from the Australian Broadcasting Commission]

Hospitality and Healing

Journeying from Addiction to Hope for a New Life

Bali is a place of contrasts, hustle and bustle, wide smiles and big beaches. Arriving late at night the colourful street life assails the senses and is very close to the taxi window as we speed down narrow streets filled with shops and bars for the influx of foreigners looking to spend and have a good time.

My son, Scott (a drug addict for over twenty years) and I were here for a very different reason; a Narcotics Anonymous Convention with fellow addicts who have chosen the difficult path to recovery through total rejection of all drugs, including alcohol, and wrestling with other less dangerous compulsions. We will join the other addicts in the hall and meeting rooms of the Puri Sarong hotel for a weekend of inspiration, laughter and tears. But above all else companionship in the on-going journey of rejecting old patterns that harmed self, relationships and the community.

My drug of choice has always been work and my busyness assuages my monkey mind and helps me to focus and lessen my anxiety and self-consciousness. In this environment only the alcohol I socially consume counts! I have been over a year clean of this addiction and therefore called sober, a recovering addict. But I question how successful I am at



mastering my other compulsions. I love control and always think my ideas for others' lives are best. I cling to the Serenity Prayer; *God grant me the courage to change the things I can, the serenity to accept the things I cannot change and the wisdom to know the difference.*

12 Step programmes have been successfully applied to so many addictions and they affirm so strongly my own faith in a spiritual dimension that is essential to a well-rounded life. For me this is found in my Christian faith and worship and also in God in Nature and all Life. The welcome, honesty and acceptance I find amongst these convention attendees is stronger than I experience in many churches.

Many of the Steps can be distilled into a belief and surrender to a higher power. *It is; I can't; it can.*

Accepting that in giving our all we gain everything and that service is a crucial element of recovery, resonates with the Gospel teachings

of Jesus. Universal truths such as "companionship is essential for any successful change", 'in making amends one accepts one's own guilt', and 'freedom from fear only comes when living Just for Today'.

I was amazed when I attended the English service at the local church how much synchronicity there was with the message of how past suffering could be turned to Hope. The parable of the Prodigal son was redolent with more layers of meaning. Reaching rock bottom to humbly return to a loving father, the son experiences an epiphany in the depths of despair. Father / God is so happy as he thought the boy lost, but he was found. This totally mirrored my own feelings as my son got straight and continues his recovery.

In the worship service, the Responsorial Psalm 103 resonated with promises of forgiveness and reassures me that all our transgressions will be removed.

The song of praise reinforced that from our suffering God will lead us,
You Raise Me Up:

*When I am down and, oh my soul
so weary,*

*When troubles come and my heart
burdened be,*

*Then, I am still and wait here in the
silence,*

*Until you come and sit awhile with
me.*

You raise me up, so I can stand on mountains,

You raise me up, to walk on stormy seas,

I am strong, when I am on your shoulders,

You raise me upto more than I can be.

I returned to the Convention to listen to the many testimonies of deep suffering

and degradation that had been turned to hope by membership of N.A.

The theme of the Convention was *One Promise Many Gifts*. The promise is Freedom from active Addiction and the Gifts of clarity, open mindedness, tolerance and so many more were obvious in those who attended; from people in their teens to their seventies all identifying as addicts suffering from the

disease of addiction and needing each other's help to stay clean and serene.

The beauty of our beachside setting and the on-going miracle of hope for a life free from addiction for my son calmed my spirit. I relaxed and felt a calmness after so many years of relentless fear for him and affirmed for me that all things are possible in God and my gratitude overflows.

Linda Murray (Day 29)



Forgive

by Jackie Sommerville

“You must forgive!” they say,
eyes gleaming, lips smiling,
smirking as they intensify my pain.
Self-righteous bigots
who have no idea of love
but perpetuate the abuse
couching their platitudes in
patronizing suggestions
of ‘how to love’, ‘how to forgive’

- For it is Christian to do so!
They do not know how I long to
love, to forgive
But instead am bound by chains of
their design.

What was Dad like before the War?

By Jackie Sommerville

Mum,
What was Dad like before the War?
Did he jump and dance and roll on
the floor?
Did he laugh and joke and smile a lot
more?
Tell me, what was Dad like before
the War?
Mum,
What was Dad like before the pain?
Before the anger, the sweating and
strain,
before the shouting and ... why has
he hit me again?

Ecumenical and Interfaith

NSW Wellspring folk have found that social and public issues provide common ground between people of different faiths. Sunday morning, August 6 from 11 to 12.30, saw a sizable gathering at Leura Uniting Church where modern Jewish music for prayer and intercession was

heard along with an educational element on new approaches to Studies of Religion in NSW senior years of Secondary Education. Both initiatives are not well known but are models for the future. Over 10,000 students each year take the optional Religious Studies exam. Jim Tulip (Day 3)

Tell me, what was Dad like before the pain?

Mum,

what was Dad like before the War?

You see, I didn't know what he was like before.

Mum, can't you remember that anymore?

Mum, ... why are you weeping?

Mum ...

The Seed of Hope

by Linda Murray

It lies black and dead in the palm of my hand,

A minute promise of possibilities,

Harvested from the decomposing head of a poppy.

My responsibility to plant it in good soil,

God's response; rain to nourish

and the light and warmth of the Sun.

Time to be still in the dark and wait.

The hard husk cracks and the essence emerges,

Struggling through the dirt to the light.

A verdant tiny shoot breaks the surface.

The miracle of Hope is born anew in my garden and my life.



Songs in the Key of BE - Dave Andrews

Dave Andrews is a Christian community worker. His website says: *'Dave, his wife Ange, and their family, have lived and worked in intentional communities with marginalised groups of people in Australia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Nepal for more than forty years. He now lives in a large joint household with his wife, children, grandchildren and others in an inner city community in Brisbane, Australia.'*

Dave is particularly interested in radical spirituality, incarnational community and the dynamics of personal and social transformation.'

I discovered Dave's music on his website and he describes it as Valley Songs (not Hillsongs). It is music that has grown out of the struggle of intentional Christian Community and ministry within some beautiful

and dark places. Dave lives and works in the way of Jesus and articulates his faith and hope in his songs.

In his song, *What Love Is This?* Dave reflects on the death of Jesus abandoned and assaulted but filled with love, kindness and sadness as the world closes in on him with violence and rejection. I hear and feel the presence and love of God with me in the struggles of life as I listen to Dave sing with his raspy, folk-style voice and accompanying guitar.

What Love Is This?

Strung out - naked - on the cross – assaulted by our age.

We see the cuts. We hear the cries. You suffer our disgrace.

Around your brows form lines of kindness. In your eyes there's care.

Down your cheeks flow tears of sadness. On your lips - a prayer.

What love is this - as strong as death - that lives life as it should?

What love is this – with its last breath - sets bad aside for good?

Love never looked so sorrowful. Love never looked so sore.

Love never looked so beautiful. Love never looked so pure.

Love never looked so remarkable.

Love never looked so great.

Love never looked so lovable. As it looks - upon your face.

As I listen to *In Everything There's Grace* I am filled with the hope that floods Dave life and ministry as he walks with Jesus and sings his faith into being. The images and joyful melody of this song always lifts me. It was a favourite at my previous church.

In Everything There's Grace

I see the sun come shining thru' drifts of drenching rain.

I see the rainbow rising, in everything, everything.

I hear the forest singing, the frogs in voice again.

I hear the chorus ringing, in everything, everything.

Chorus

In every morning, there is always hope.

In every night, there is peace.

In every moment, there is cause for joy.

In every thing, there is grace.

I smell the flowers blooming, the jasmine in the breeze.

I smell the fragrance bursting, in everything, everything.

I taste the fruit that's growing, the mango sweet to eat.

I taste the juice that's flowing, in everything, everything. *Chorus*

Bridge

Grace for living! Grace for love!

In everything there's grace enough! (x2)

I feel the air between my fingers, the earth beneath my feet.

I feel the ground of being, in everything, everything.

I feel the wave that's breaking, the tide inside of me.

I feel the heart that's beating, in everything, everything. *Chorus*

In every thing, In every thing,

In every thing, there is grace.

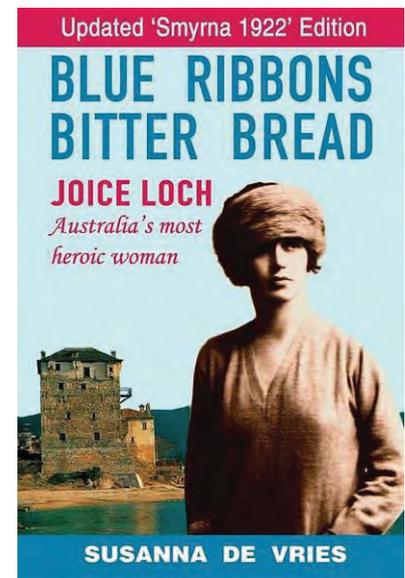
Dave's songs are free to use and you can download the mp3 files and music chart from his web site (<http://www.daveandrews.com.au/songs.html>) or buy them on CD. The music is rich and reflects the life of faith and hope.

Geoff Stevenson (Day 20)



Susanna de Vries, *Blue Ribbons Bitter Bread, Pargos, 2000, updated edition 2017*

Wikipedia describes Joice NanKivell Loch MBE (1887-1982), as “an



Australian author, journalist and humanitarian worker who worked with refugees in Poland, Greece and Romania after World War I and World War II”.

But this is an understated description of a woman who daring also took her to Ireland during the uprising and to Palestine where she purchased human breast milk to save the lives of newborns. Often amidst physical dangers and health menaces – from typhoid to malnutrition - Joice's accrued medical skills and entrepreneurial capabilities saved lives and gave fresh opportunities to refugees, especially women.

Susanna de Vries biography begins with Joice's birth in Queensland into a wealthy family. The family's fortunes changed and they successively battled to make a living in rural Victoria. Joice went to Melbourne in 1914 and gained employment as secretary to the Warden of Trinity College, Melbourne. She published her first book in 1916 and thereafter followed her love of writing. She married writer, Sydney Loch, and together they travelled, wrote.

The subjects of the greater part of Joice and Sidney's writings were the tragedies of the refugees amongst whom the couple worked for more than four decades. They devoted their lives, and the incomes from their writing, to the hunger and health, shelter and safety of peoples ravaged by

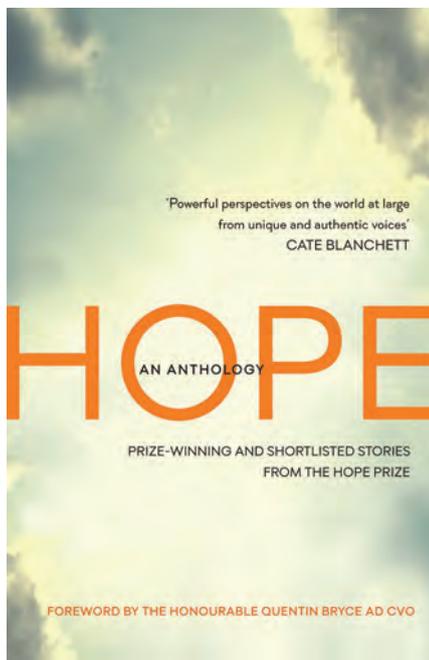
wars. They witnessed first-hand the to-and-fro for Polish peasants as a result of invasions by Germany, then Russia, then Germany, and the simultaneous neglect of Poland by the British; later, the banishment of Greeks from Turkey and the decimation of the Greece during World War II.

Of particular interest in Joice's story is the Loch's relationship with the Quakers and the broad-spectrum effort of the Society of Friends coming from Britain and the USA. While neither Sidney nor Joice acknowledged a religious belief or affiliation, most of their network and support came from the Friends.

Susanna De Vries presents a very readable biography of Joice Loch. It also depicts how the actions of one or two, or three or four, can offer hope to people whose lives have become debris washed up on the tide of political tempests.

Janelle Macgregor (Day 29)

Brotherhood of St Laurence, Hope, An Anthology, Simon and Schuster (Australia), 2016



Browsing the large print books at my library I discovered an anthology of short stories that had won prizes and commendations in the Hope Prize. I was amazed and thrilled that such

a competition exists to highlight the resilience and strength of those at the margins of our affluent Australian society. Notable judges have given their support, The Honourable Quentin Bryce, Cate Blanchette and Kate Grenville, and they affirm the importance of us allowing ourselves to be touched by the determination and resilience of the characters who inhabit these stories.

The writers are using fiction in the mode of the short story to highlight the humanity and variety of backgrounds of those who are faced with poverty and hence are disadvantaged and distanced from the main stream opportunities we take for granted. The themes range from coping with alcoholism, disability, unemployment, homelessness, and displacement, but always maintain the aspiration to make connection, a sense of home and belonging, sometimes with family. was moved by the realism in the characters and their stories; although they were penned by authors, they could easily have been the people I sang with in The Spirit of the Streets Choir or even my own son in his time of addiction and homelessness.

The Hope prize is offered by an organisation that seeks to make change in the lives of these, so often, invisible people. The Brotherhood of St Laurence estimates there are over 800,000 people in dire straits in Australia, they are optimistic that through intervention and campaigning they can help to bring a more just and compassionate society. These stories enable readers to gain empathy by understanding the harsh realities faced by so many, and hopefully this will increase our commitment to make a positive change and see all people as deserving our help and respect.

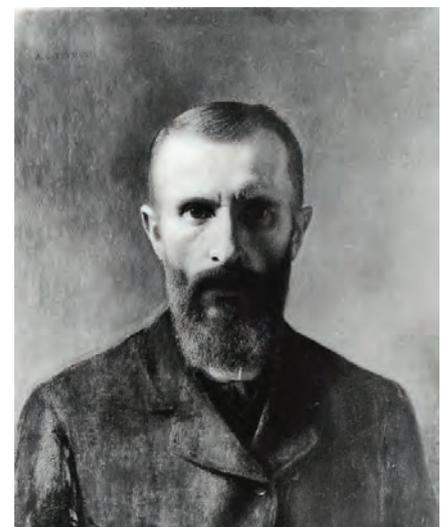
The story that impacted me the most was told from the perspective of an old dog who found his home on the lap of an old homeless man. In spite of challenges they survived and provided the comfort of touch and companionship for each other despite

the lack of assistance or hostility of others. The final paragraphs tell of the death of his master and the subsequent kindness of a restaurant worker who gives the dog a drink, food and a small shelter. But the dog ruminates that nobody did this for his master.

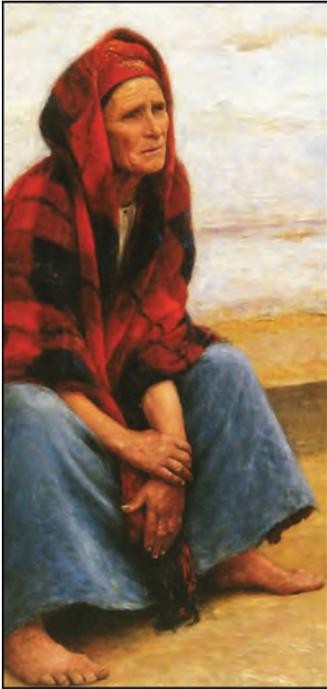
I commend this anthology as a reminder of the importance of hope and resilience and that we can all play a part in reaching out and recognising those with so little materially but who still have a human spirit with which we can connect and assist to grow whenever possible.

Linda Murray (Day 29)

ART REVIEW



Aleksander Gierymski was born in Warsaw, 30 January, 1850 and died in Rome, 6–8 March 1901. After finishing school, he studied drawing in Munich and, becoming a well-known artist in his lifetime, winning many awards and broad acclaim in Italy, France, Poland and Germany. His life was short and he spent his final years in a mental (sic) hospital. Away from home he painted less personal subjects, landscapes and seascapes. While he knew despair in his own life,



his paintings portrayed strength and dignity, even in his studies of peasant life in his Poland home.

This painting is a detail from a larger work, completed in 1895 and called Peasant Coffin. The blue coffin is child size and bears a very large white Christian cross. The woman sits alongside a man, a dog asleep in the dust in front of them. A wide space surrounds them, suggesting a cold, still, encircling silence.

Two aspects of this painting hold my attention. One is the tragedy it narrates. The other is the timelessness of this woman – this plain, barefoot woman could be as much Hebridean or middle-eastern as eastern European,

from a century long-since past or living today, bearing the sorrow of a lost child or the grief of a lost freedom. Her heartache is profound, yet she appears undiminished. Her nobbled hands and feet remain strong and her shoulders face the future, as if any at moment she will rise up and continue the tasks awaiting her attention.

I know this woman. She is warm and brave and resilient, and she laugh as contagiously as she weeps. She sits near me on the train and I see her face at church. She is my neighbour, and the stranger waves me on to a free parking bay in a busy carpark. I think you probably know this woman, too.

Janelle Macgregor (Day 29)



Frederick and Mary Ann Brussat are co-founders and co-directors of Spirituality and Practice: Resources for Spiritual Journeys. There is an amazing amount of information on this site – spiritual literacies, explorations of a range of ‘spiritualities’, courses, film reviews, books, art, elder spirituality, blogs and much more. The philosophy of the site’s Reverence Project is that “reverence is the spiritual path of radical respect, courtesy, civility, manners, awe, and amazement. A way of seeing and being in life, it is best learned through

example . . . and is a transformational practice both for individuals and societies”. One page worth reading is “Our Vision of Progressive Christian Spirituality” which suggests that a new style of Christianity is emerging in the 21st century based on progressive understanding of faith in a multifaith world (you’ll find it here).

<http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/practices/features/view/22301/our-vision-of-progressive-christian-spirituality>

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Deadline for material is Monday 20 November 2017. We welcome contributions on the theme ‘Christmas’ and other materials.

Send to: Janelle Macgregor at abbeypathways@gmail.com