



# Kairos



## News in and around Camberwell Uniting Church

Volume 10 Number 1

April 2017

### Minister's Musings

Dear Friends in God's family,



In preparing for our Lenten Study series this year I've gone back to the beginning. That is, back to Genesis chapter 1 where creation is celebrated in majestic verse. It's also where so many less than authentic justifications have arisen for human mistreatment of our world. The concept for us in lent is to reflect on our living in the light of the gospel. I've always had a fascination with nature, love exploring it, making art with it, taking photos, etc. But I know it's also seen as a source of wealth, power, resource and food and shelter. In short, it's our home, the context of all our living.

*"So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." – Genesis 1:27-28*

God commissions people to steward the earth's resources. A consequence we see in Genesis of being created in God's image is that we are to "have dominion over...the earth". As we exercise dominion over the created world, we do it knowing that we mirror God. We are not the originals, but the images, and our duty is to use the original, that is God, as our pattern not ourselves.

So the use of the words, *subdue* and *dominion*, in Genesis chapter 1 don't give us permission to run roughshod over any part of creation. Quite the opposite; we are to act as if we ourselves had the same relationship of love with creation that God does. Subduing the earth includes harnessing its various resources as well

as its creatures is not a license to abuse them, but a contract from God to care for them.

Today we have become especially aware of how pursuit of human self-interest threatens the natural environment. We were meant to tend and care for the garden of this planet. Creation is for our use, but not *only* for our use. Remembering that the air, water, land, plants, and animals are good, reminds us that we are meant to sustain and preserve the environment. Our work can either preserve or destroy the clean air, water and land, the biodiversity, the ecosystems and even the climate with which God has blessed this creation. Dominion is not the authority to work *against* God's creation, but the ability to work *for* it.

This is not a matter of us needing to be a shade of green! Not politics or ideology. This is a matter of how we treat our home and how we look after the relationships between all the inhabitants who share the same home. It's just as much about the gospel imperative to 'love our neighbour' and to care for the vulnerable and those with no voice. The biblical view of humanity reminds us that we are dust and will return to it, 'frail like summers flowers' and not in fact the centre of all things. The farmer and poet Wendel Berry reminds us,

*"...the care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our hope."*

May this year hope the hope of renewal, in ourselves, our community and in our world.

Grace and Peace,

Ian

# Easter Services

Celebrate with us

## Messy Church Easter:

- April 2: 4-6 pm

## Palm Sunday Procession:

- April 9: 10 am -OLV garden

## Maundy Thursday:

- April 13: Lord's Supper 7:30 pm

## Good Friday:

- 9:45 am service & 11:15 am Ecumenical witness walk - from OLV

**Easter Day: April 16: 10 am celebration**

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## Celebration

### From the editor

Hello, and welcome to the first edition of Kairos for 2017.

This edition sits really well with the sub-title of our magazine – “News in and around Camberwell”. It showcases the active involvement of a couple of members of our congregation in matters close to their hearts, and whose commitment is both inspiring and rewarding.

So the net result is a local theme & an African connection, and I hope you will be as interested by the articles as I am. I also hope you find the contrast between the stories of people who, as refugees, have made it to Australia, and the article which details the extreme difficulties being experienced by those still hoping to reach and settle here equally different and disturbing.

There is also an article recounting the visit to our Church by Louisa Gibbs, great granddaughter of Padre James Gault, whose service to the Church as a Minister and as a military Chaplain

**April 2017**

in the First World War is commemorated in a stained glass window at our Church, which was first featured in Kairos in December 2015.

Louisa visited with her mother Anne and one of her sons, Henry, and was made most welcome. It was a most exciting start to the year. Having discovered a further family connection with our Church as a consequence of her being a daughter-in-law of the late Reverend Bob Catford, Louisa also made the most of her time, meeting and speaking those who knew, or had a connection with members of her family.

Subsequent discussions with Louisa both as part of her visit and exchanges after her return home have also revealed that Louisa has uncovered a quite unique and significant WW1 ANZAC connection in Africa. Whilst the story maybe a stretch of the charter of this magazine, it is included as a supplement to this edition mainly due to the proximity to ANZAC Day, but also as it had considerable impact on a personal level and up to the top levels of those charged with administering and preserving Australia's memory of those who served in the Great War.

I hope you will find it as impressive as I did. Louisa has done the memory of her great grandfather proud.

There are also many reports regarding the activities of the many groups that make up the fabric and life of our Church.

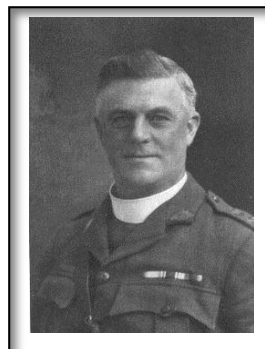
I hope you enjoy this edition of Kairos. No “fake news” here.

**Ed**

## Visit by Louisa Gibbs and her Family to Camberwell Uniting



### Background Story



Readers may recall that the December 2015 edition of Kairos featured an article on Padre James Gault, whose service to the Church as a Minister and as a military Chaplain in the First World War is commemorated in a stained glass window at our Church.

The Padre's window was featured at that time as a consequence of the Church Office receiving an enquiry from his great granddaughter Louisa

Gibbs, who is currently living and working in Senegal, Africa, as to whether the window was still in place. We were able to reply that the window still in place, but there was also a baptismal font in his memory also still in use.

The article on the Padre resonated with many people in our church community, who had a family, school or other connection with the family, or in Ruth Akie's case, who had a copy of his precious Stunt Book which helped so many young servicemen in the cold, wet mud and mayhem of the Western Front in France in WW 1.

Readers might also recall that Louisa indicated that she and her family hoped they might be able to visit and attend a church service at Christmas 2015. This did not happen, as Louisa advised us at the end of January 2106 that whilst they did visit Australia, they were based at Yea as her father-in-law (Rev Bob Catford) had passed away and they needed to dedicate time to his affairs whilst they were in the country.

So, unfortunately Louisa and her family didn't get the chance to set aside time then to come and visit the window. "Next trip!" she said.



### **A 2017 Happy New Year Surprise**

And Louisa was as good as her word.



Those who attended the Sunday Service on 22 January were rewarded with the attendance of Louisa Gibbs, her mother Anne, and her middle son Henry, nursing three injured fingers, courtesy of Melbourne, not Africa.

Louisa's husband, Andrew (Catford), and their two sons, unfortunately had to depart already on their flight back to Senegal.

Rev Tony Duncan kindly allowed Louisa to address the congregation about herself, her family and the search for her family's past, tracking down, in particular, the extraordinary life and times and ultimately the memorial window dedicated to her great grandfather.

Typically the Camberwell congregation responded to her presence most warmly and with great interest. There was much sharing of stories, many personal connections confirmed, and many photos of the family under the window

taken for posterity. It was a proud moment for our Church and for the family of the Padre.



### **Later during that visit..**

Before Louisa left on her trip home, she and I caught up and shared our common interests as well as some extra information that I had come across during the search for the connection between The Padre and our Church.

Louisa also took the opportunity to fill in some gaps in her family tree that I had put together. I know (from watching too much TV I suppose) that detectives are very suspicious of coincidences. I am fascinated by them. So imagine my delight when Louisa fills in the names of her two sons who were on their way home with their father to Africa – Felix and Jasper. Perhaps not the most common of combinations of First Names, but what do you know, at our Messy Church we have two brothers, Jasper and Felix Ross, sons of Alison and Ben, grandsons of Alex and David Stewart. As Reverend Brown says, "It's a small world, after all".

Upon her return, Louisa forwarded me the results following her staging of the second ANZAC Day Service in Senegal (in April 2016). What she uncovered was quite extraordinary, and the story is a credit to her ability, her sense of history and respect for the memory of those who would eventually fall under the spiritual guidance and care of her great grandfather during WW 1.

Her story is reproduced in a supplement to this edition of Kairos, together with some other points of interest surrounding her visit to Australia at the start of 2017.





### Later still...

At the start of March this year I received a lovely message from Louisa's mother Anne, very appreciative of receiving the package of information about Padre Gault's work and life to add to their family collection.

She wondered whether I would be interested in the writings of her grandmother Edith, the Padre's wife, whose "everyday talks" were published in The Spectator. Of course I said "yes", so this family's story, as being told through this magazine, may not be not finished yet.

Anne continued: *"I did enjoy my visit to your church with Louisa and Henry. We were made to feel most welcome and were so pleased that there had been such interest in the Padre's work. So lovely to see the window and the font in your attractive church."*

I am sure you will share my feelings that it was our pleasure to meet and share stories, and a sense of a special moment in time with three wonderful descendants of a most remarkable Padre at our Church.

SE

### Vale, Jack Clarke

In the early hours of the morning of 13 December 2016, our friend Jack Clarke died peacefully at Epworth Freemasons Hospital in East Melbourne. In May earlier that year, he had reached the age of 95.

A funeral for Jack was held at Camberwell Uniting Church on 19 December 2016, and the statement that "the Church was overflowing" with mourners is an understatement in terms of the family and friends who turned out to pay tribute to the man, but also to the depth of their respect and admiration for the person who was known to everyone as 'Jack' Clarke.

Not only was it a warm day, but the people and physical resources of the Camberwell Uniting Church were stretched to the limit on that day as well.

Many of our congregation were not able to hear the eulogy, some because they were working in the kitchen, hall, and in the narthex acting as ushers and furniture movers.

For those of you who were not able to attend the service, or were not able to hear it on the day, it is reproduced below (with a couple of minor edits to fill in some gaps).

**April 2017**

The Eulogy was delivered by John Castles, AM, a Fellow of Queen's College, Past President of the Royal Australian Institute of Architects, Chairman Standards Australia, Past President of Queen's College Council, and long- time personal friend.

### John (Jack) William Clarke OAM 1921 – 2016



We all share inevitable sadness at Jack's death, but draw comfort from the good fortune, that we knew him and that we were influenced by such a remarkable man.

Following the news of Jack's death tributes quickly flowed – a man of complete integrity, the highest standards, strong moral fibre, generosity of spirit, irreplaceable and an extraordinary human being whose influence will remain for years to come. Jack was respected, loved and in fact revered – he was unique, the Mr. Chips of Queen's.

Such expressions must bring comfort to you Elaine and to Jenny, Kate, Peter and David and to your families. Each of you will have your own special and treasured memories of your Jack. To you we extend our condolences.

It was a real compliment to be asked to speak today. To do justice to such a wonderful man, who lived for 95 years, in just a few minutes, is a challenge.

When Elaine brought Jack to meet her family in Wagga in December 1953, I was fortunate to meet him, not knowing that in a little over 10 years our lives would become entwined in and through Queen's College. My memory from then is of a tall erect and commanding figure with kindly yet penetrating eyes, well-polished shoes and a crop of perfectly groomed shiny black hair (Brylcream was favoured in those days).

Jack wrote that he was fortunate to have had the loving care and nurturing of wonderful parents. Jack, the son of a Methodist Minister, was born in Tasmania in 1921. When the family moved to Melbourne he attended Wesley College and on leaving school he joined the Bank of NSW (now Westpac). In 1941 he enlisted in the Australian army and then later the British army. After distinguished service Captain Clarke worked in the London office of the bank before returning to Melbourne.

In 1951 Jack enrolled in the University of Melbourne and as a non-Resident of Queen's.

He graduated in Arts with diplomas in Psychology, Social Studies and Education.

The church, the great depression, war service and service in India, his broad education and related experience helped shape his strong personal characteristics. When in 1964 Jack was appointed Vice Master of Queen's College, it was a position for which he was ideally suited and which defined his career.

He had a deep interest in people; he was inclusive and accepting of all. He had a generosity of spirit and maintained the highest of principles; he had great empathy and understanding. He was neither proud nor arrogant but he always maintained a dignified presence. His fairness and consistency, his understanding and personal qualities commanded respect from all. Jack could always see the other side of any argument and always see the good in an individual.

First and foremost Jack was a dedicated and loving husband and father. It is from this and because of this that Jack was the outstanding figure we knew. He spoke frequently about family, talking proudly of achievements and informing me of their comings and goings (considerable in Peter's case).

A visit to Jack's office in the Vice Master's home would invariably end up with family hospitality. His office was ordered in a very personal way – surprisingly he was able to find things. The Clarke household was always welcoming – a buzz of activity, homework, laughter, the kettle on, Elaine ironing or marking school assignments. As well as the four youngsters there were family pets including a rabbit (which caused me a lot of trouble – a story for another time).

Jack made a massive contribution to Queen's on so many fronts, but his principal focus was on students: their welfare and their wellbeing. He was always approachable, tireless and energetic. In some ways Jack seemed to be both omniscient and omnipresent.

One evening a student had broken in to the Ormond clock tower. He received a request to meet with Jack in his office early the next morning and was somewhat amazed at Jack's knowledge of the crime. He was understandably reprimanded. As he left Jack's office still shaking his head in disbelief Jack said "By the way here is your room key; you left it at the scene of the crime".

Jack had a sophisticated sense of humour. The morning after an evening of student celebration,

Jack approached a student and suggested that his conduct the previous evening had been obstreperous. "How could that be" was the response "I can't even spell the word". Even Jack's firm but understanding expression showed some amusement, I am told.

In 1988 Jack was the guest of honour at the annual Wyvern dinner (Wyverns are former members of Queen's College). Jack gave an excellent address, outlining what had changed and what had been achieved, modestly illustrating his contribution in those years 1964 – 1988.

In his 25 years as Vice Master, Jack worked with three Masters, but it was the two decades of constructive partnership with Owen Parnaby which saw the management of considerable social change and growth in the College including the introduction of co-education in 1973 (a subject upon which Jack and I differed). With quiet understanding and perception these changes were guided to great effect. (During all this time he received the most wonderful support from his wife Elaine as they lived in the Vice-Master's residence on the western side of the College with their four children).

Music was ever present for the Clarkes. Elaine taught music at Merton Hall and conducted the chapel choir. Jack loved singing as anyone who stood near him at a choral event will know. How fitting it was that during the 1988 dinner a humorous recital was performed, written by the then Master Dr George Scott, who with Elaine, Jenny and Ian Manning sang the verses.

Jack concluded his address by reminiscing about the life he and Elaine, together with their young family had shared with the many students at Queen's and in their home. He expressed his love and gratitude to Elaine for her unfailing support. He continued "...it has been a great privilege to watch the development of so many students progressing through their courses and then to follow their careers".

He maintained friendships with an amazing array of Wyverns. The standing ovation at the end of his address was an eloquent expression of the love and respect felt by those who were in the packed Eakins Hall that night. This spontaneous expression of affection and esteem was reinforced in 2010 at the "Jack's Back" Wyvern dinner– never to be forgotten by those there.

Paper cuttings relating to students, the College and the College community and the many contacts he made attest to his continuing interest and concern for the College at large. His influence on student lives was legendary, as was

his influence on the lives of all those with whom he made contact immeasurable.

In 'retirement', now with white hair perfectly groomed, Jack was invited to be Acting Warden at Graduate House, Acting Vice Master at Ormond College, both Dean and Acting Warden of Trinity, Acting Master at his old College Queen's and Project Officer at Glenn College Latrobe University. This was a positive endorsement of his standing and the respect he commanded.

In 1990 he was awarded a medal in the Order of Australia for services to youth and the community.

A great love of his was the Welsh Choir. Jack loved singing and with many of the choir, he and Elaine enjoyed several overseas trips.

On one occasion an interviewer referred to Jack as a 'Committed Christian', a title which didn't rest comfortably with him. Though he remained loyal to his traditional links with the Methodist, later Uniting, Church he brought challenging intellectual enquiry to his faith. JW, as I often called him, strongly believed in, and lived by the basic ideals of Christianity. He had noted these as, 'love your neighbour', 'be a good Samaritan', 'do unto others as you would have them do unto you'.

It is extremely rare for an individual to be held in such esteem, and command the respect Jack did from young and old alike. Jack has left each of us a rich legacy of memories, and by example a challenge. Jack was a great friend.

After a life so richly and honourably lived he takes with him our thanks for all he has done, our lasting gratitude for his influence on us, our love and our blessings.

May he rest in peace.

## Yarra Yarra Presbytery

The Presbytery held its first meeting for the year on 25<sup>th</sup> February at East Doncaster.

The meeting discussed the priorities for the Presbytery in its work – the tasks we currently carry out – those we think we could give up and those where we should place a stronger emphasis. At the end of the meeting the Chairperson thanked all those who had served on the various committees for 2016 and up till the February meeting.

Those elected to the committees for 2017 were then commissioned. Max Harris has joined the

**April 2017**

Presbytery Resourcing Committee and Ian was elected and I was re-elected to the Pastoral Relations Committee.

**Ruth Crawley**

## Messy Church Reports *Messy Church Reports*



The Messy Christmas celebration was held on **24 December, 2016.**

"Journey to Bethlehem" was a great gathering activity for our Christmas Eve Messy Church, and involved a series of two minute snapshots of the Christmas story.

Dinner was next – and what better on a hot evening than BBQ sausages in bread with sauce and salad. Followed by ice-cream in cones and sprinkles and watermelon.

Then on to activities. Dipping a cone in green icing and decorating with mini M&Ms to resemble a Christmas tree, painting the characters from the Nativity scene and pasting them on cardboard to complete the story.



There were also tubs of different material (wheat, straw and sand) in which sheep and other items were found and placed on the green blocks resembling the fields, and Christmas decorations were made from pieces of felt stitched together, and attempts were made to sew the three wise men on the front. In the fellowship room there was decorating of the Christmas tree to take in to Church.

Some people arrived early for the Carol Service and came in to see Messy Church in action. It was also great to have a family come with 2 young children who saw the advertisement in the local paper, thanks to Helen Martin.

In **February 2017**, the theme was "Secret Agent Mission" (The Parable of the Lost Coin- Luke 15:1-10)

The Gathering Activity was making a necklace out of gold coins, then threaded on a plastic string to wear around your neck. Not many



necklaces lasted because they were chocolate coins and were eaten - naturally!



The idea was to be a secret agent with black hat and glasses etc. Margery gave the briefing – an important lady had lost a valuable stone from her necklace in this church. Everyone had to remember the secret code and ask everyone a question and see if they could reply.

There were invisible ink clues, messages written back to front in a mirror, and a message in maze of patterns which led to finding coins in the garden, the hall, and in the sand tray.

**March 2017** saw us combine Messy Church with the **World Day of Prayer**

World Day of Prayer is celebrated every year-around the world on the first Friday in March (or the nearest day

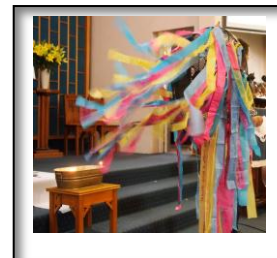


possible). Each year women from a different country write the service. This time it was from the Philippines. In our region, it was Camberwell Uniting Church's turn to host the service. The committee agreed to combine it with our Messy Church for March, on a Sunday afternoon, followed by afternoon tea.

Before the church service (or celebration time in Messy Church format) there were activities centred on the Philippines, and the stories from some of the women were displayed in the church.

After being welcomed at the entrance of our church, people could collect streamers and write short prayer on them which was for the Philippines. Later the streamers were attached to a fan in the church, to symbolize cyclones experienced in the Philippines. The prayers on the streamers were blown to the Philippines.

Climate change was a key theme – a sand tray represented land slowly sinking as tides rise. We made little houses and put them on the sand but as the water rose the houses sank - much like what is happening in parts of the Philippines.



Rice is the staple diet there and its supply is also affected by climate change. Workers who collect the rice are exploited and paid very poorly.

We sang several hymns, then the stories of three Phillipino women were read out by three women from different churches involved in the WDP.

Afternoon tea (High Tea) was delicious. Thanks to all the churches who contributed: Camberwell Salvation Army, Camberwell Baptist, St Dunstan's, St Johns, OLV and Camberwell Uniting Church.

**Fiona Ensor**

### **CASS – Camberwell Asylum Seekers Support**

By the time you are reading this our first major fundraising effort for the year, a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon with a musical program provided by the Melbourne Singers followed by High Tea, will have been held on March 26<sup>th</sup>. This function was as successful as our previous PSAs, raising \$1, 775.90.

In addition we continue to be very grateful for the support of the congregation in their Silver for Asylum Seekers collections, and the food and toiletry donations each week. We are very proud to report that between us, i.e. Highfield Road and Camberwell Road congregations, we were able to give \$1,120 worth of Christmas vouchers to the Lentara clients. A further \$1,848 from our fundraising was forwarded to Lentara.

The bi-monthly meetings of the group are continuing except for December. Our most recent meeting was at Highfield Road UC to acknowledge the partnership we have created with that congregation. St John's continues with offers to participate in the maintenance of Illoura. There has been recent work to overcome water damage in the downstairs lounge room. The ground floor front balcony has been resecured.

Mohammed's last report was that 2 men had moved into Illoura, a further two were expected to follow shortly after, and the other 3 places

were being advertised through the asylum seeker agencies.

At our February meeting we received reports on addresses by Hugh de Kretser (Highfield Road) and Julian Bernstein (Stonnington). Both speakers are tireless advocates for asylum seekers and reinforced the tremendous need that exists, and the importance of our efforts in supporting the work of those who are in the front line as advocates.

The next meeting of CASS will be at the Camberwell church on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

**Margaret Watters**

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### **‘The Atheist in the Woods’**

*I am indebted to **Margaret Bexley** for the following exquisite morality tale:*

An atheist was walking through the woods.

“What majestic trees! What powerful rivers! What beautiful animals!” he said to himself. Suddenly, he heard a rustling in the bushes behind him.

He turned to look ..... and saw a seven foot grizzly bear charging towards him.

He ran as fast as he could along the path.

He looked over his shoulder and saw that the bear was closing in on him....

He looked over his shoulder again and the bear was even closer..... and then ..... he tripped and fell.

Rolling over to pick himself up, he found the bear was right on top of him .....reaching towards him with its left paw.....and raising the right paw to strike.....

At that instant the atheist cried out “Oh my God!!”

Time stopped....

The bear froze....

The forest was silent....

And a bright light shone upon the man, and a voice came out of the sky....

“You deny my existence for all these years, you teach others that I don’t exist, and even credit creation to cosmic accident .....

Do you expect me to help you out of this predicament?.....

Am I to count you now as a believer?”

The atheist looked directly into the light ..... “It would be hypocritical of me to suddenly ask you to treat me as a Christian now, ..... but perhaps you could make the BEAR a Christian?”

..... a pause .....

“Very well,” said the voice ....

The light went out.

The sounds of the forest resumed, the bear dropped its right arm, brought both paws together, bowed its head and spoke .....

“Lord, bless this food, which I am about receive. Amen.”

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### **Choir of Hard Knocks 2017**

As many of you know I have been a volunteer with the choir for ten years.

We travelled to Canberra for Australia Day celebrations and were part of the entertainment for Australia of the Year awards on the 25th of January.

The next day, Australia Day, we sang at the National Flag Raising and Citizenship Ceremony - attended by the Governor General Sir Peter Cosgrove and the Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and his wife Lucy.

One of our members was very keen to ask Mr Turnbull to solve his personal problems, as shown in the photo I took. Mr Turnbull shook my hand and offered help for our choir.



It was great to be part of such a special occasion

*Note:* The dots on Mr and Mrs Turnbull’s faces were from an aboriginal ceremony.

**Ruth Akie**

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**From the BOONDALL BULLETIN  
A CHURCH of CHRIST (in Queensland)  
"The Church by the side of the road."**

WOW! Look at this Mathematics  
(Use the letters of the alphabet to help you)

If H-A-R-D-W-O-R-K  
is  $8+1+18+4+23+15+18+11$  =98%  
and:

K-N-O-W-L-E-D-G-E  
is  $11+14+15+23+12+5+4+7+5$  =96%

but

A-T-T-I-T-U-D-E  
is  $1+20+20+9+20+21+4+5$  =100%

So will DISCIPLINE (work it out)  
Then, look how far the love of God will take you

L-O-V-E-O-F-G-O-D  
is  $12+15+22+5+15+6+7+15+4$  =101%  
Therefore, one can conclude with mathematical  
certainty that: while [Hard Work](#) and [Knowledge](#)  
will get you close and [Attitude](#) will get you there,  
it's the [Love of God](#) that will put you over the  
top!!!

QED. *Many thanks for Lois Grenfell for  
providing us with this irrefutable proof, thanks to  
Minister of the Boondall Church of Christ, the  
Rev. Allan Male, who also happens to be Lois's  
cousin's husband. Too clever Lois. (PS.  
Unbelievably, Discipline also = 100%)*  
.....

**Celebrating Mass among the  
Unwelcome  
By Fr Peter Carrucan**

A Christmas day celebration at  
a detention centre provides an  
insight into the difficult lives of  
asylum seekers in Australia.



We are running late. There are  
strict instructions from security:  
'You have 1 hour: 3 to 4pm.'

But we are late. At the reception desk it takes  
time to process visitors. One of the group has  
her name missing from the authorised list.

The manager comes out from his office. 'Her  
name is not on the list, see for yourself.'

The manager calms down once he sees an  
email from my phone with the name on the list  
that was given to them.

'That's alright. Now, what about the food?' he  
asks.

**April 2017**

'Yes, there it is on the bench', I say.

'But, there is no permission for you to bring it in.'

'It's Christmas day and we are visiting our  
friends, how could we come without food?'

'Alright, just this once you can bring it in', he  
says. 'Remember you have to be finished by  
4pm.'

Sitting behind the reception desk is a very tall  
man. He is in riot gear, and it wouldn't surprise  
us if he is wearing a gun. My thought: Surely  
he's not here to be our security officer? As it  
turns out, he is.

Wherever we go, he comes along, finally sitting  
behind the tiny group of Christians celebrating  
the Mass on Christmas Day. Is it to intimidate  
us? There is, as well, another officer, who  
stands by the door, making sure only those  
whose names that are on his list come in. Are  
we such a subversive group that we need this  
kind of supervision? Not even in prison is there  
such surveillance.

There aren't many residents at the Mass. It is  
celebrated in a classroom because there is no  
room anywhere else. Just like the Gospel story.  
The symbolism is not lost on us.

Aren't there more to come?' I ask the guard at  
the door.

'Yes', he says, 'but they decided not to come.'

I decide not to believe him. It's happened  
before and I know from other occasions that  
those waiting to come wait in vain for an officer  
to escort them to the Mass.

We tell the story of the birth of Jesus in English,  
Vietnamese & Tamil. For those in this place of  
detention it is a message of hope. Mass ends,  
the visitors set out the generous supply of food.  
The young ones have made sure that the food is  
what the residents like. They had travelled far to  
buy food appropriate for those who come.  
The tall guard sidles up to me. 'You have 5  
minutes', he says.  
.....

**Recent New Members of our  
congregation**

Some of you will have noticed Cywel Asek and  
his friend Napoleon sitting near the back of the  
church on Sundays recently. Elizabeth and I feel  
privileged to have got to know them a little better  
when they came to our place for dinner recently.  
Cywel is a resident in Illoura and he and

Napoleon are from The Cameroons in Central West Africa.

The Cameroon is not a country that we in Australia hear much about. But our visitors were able to give us the following background.

After World War I, the territory now known as Cameroon was divided between France and the United Kingdom as League of Nations mandates. Subsequently the smaller English speaking territory joined the larger French speaking territory to become the Republic of Cameroon.

For a time Cameroon enjoyed relatively high political and social stability. This permitted the development of agriculture, roads, railways, and large petroleum and timber industries. Nevertheless, large numbers of Cameroonians live in poverty as subsistence farmers. Since 1982 power has been firmly in the hands of the authoritarian president, Paul Biya and his Cameroon People's Democratic Movement Party.

However the English-speaking territories have grown increasingly alienated from the government. Politicians and civil society in English-speaking regions have called for greater decentralization and even complete separation or independence from the former French-governed territories

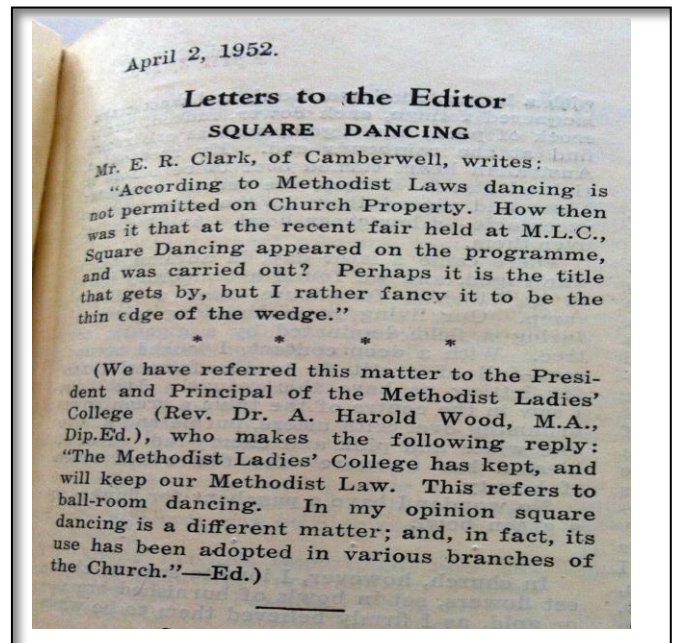
Cywel was the farm manager of a large Cocoa growing estate and is married with two children. Napoleon is also married with two children and worked for an NGO promoting social justice and human rights. They along with another representative of their country came to Australia in February 2016 to attend a conference on Certification for Agricultural products hosted by the Department of Agriculture and Water Resources - Federal Government.

While they were at the conference conflict broke out between the two-language communities with the Government determined to brutally crush the English-speaking resistance movement. Many of Cywel and Napoleon's friends have been incarcerated and some killed.

The Australian Government has given them temporary protection (with no financial assistance but with the right to seek employment while here). However they greatly miss their wives and children and worry for their safety. While they appreciate the protection that they currently have, they are lonely and are looking forward to returning home when it is safe for them to do so. In the meantime please extend your friendship.

To take advantage of the work right, both men have completed a Certificate in Individual Support (Ageing, Home and Community), but have not been successful in obtaining employment at this stage.

**Eric McKay**



**From the Methodist Spectator**



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**Rev. Ian Brown** 0439 931 080  
**Church Office:** Tuesday & Friday  
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**Messy Church:**

<https://www.facebook.com/camberwellmessychurch>

**Kairos** is the Greek word meaning "time", that is, those times which are turning points demanding decision while the opportunity remains. Although it refers primarily to the coming of Christ it may also refer to the present time in the life of our congregation.

Editor: Stuart Ensor