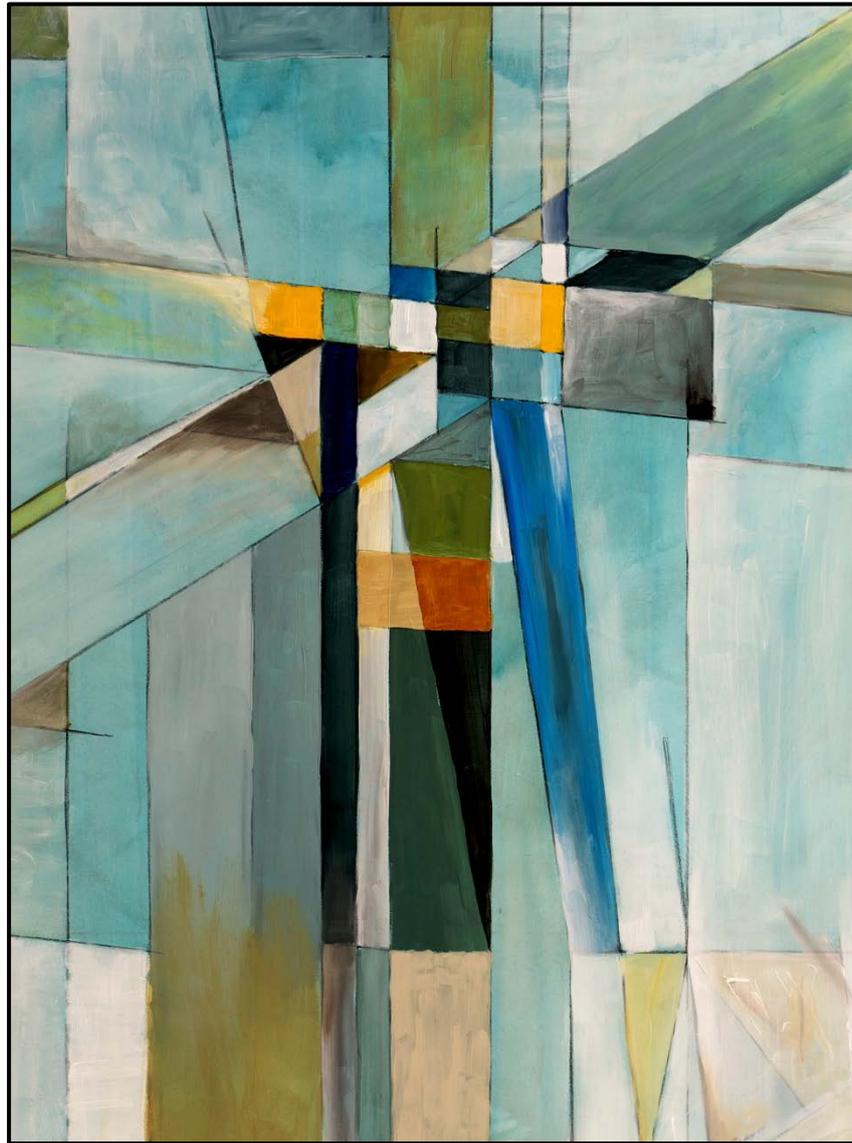


Ruminations



Saltbush - Uniting the Scattered Community



Life

Autumn 2019

Ruminations is brought to you as part of **Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community**. The Rural Ministry Unit, as part of Uniting Mission and Education within the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT, oversees this work as an encouragement to all rural Christian communities and their leaders, irrespective of size or location. You are encouraged to share this issue of Ruminations with others.

Rev. Mark Faulkner
Director of Rural and Remote Ministry Initiatives
Uniting Mission and Education.

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Mel Macarthur is a Uniting Church Minister who lives in the Blue Mountains. Mel's focus has long been on pilgrimage.

Gereldine Leonard is a Uniting Church Minister who lives in Nagambie, Victoria. Gereldine is interested in smaller, relational Christian communities and supports both Ruminations and Saltbush.

Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Raine Elizabeth Raine is currently in placement at Tuggeranong Uniting Church in the Canberra Region Presbytery. She passionately believes that the Church should be a place of joy, life and transformation.

Myra Cowell and Wendy Frazier are from Finley Uniting Church; southern NSW.

Editor's Introduction

Welcome to Ruminations 2019
and this Autumn edition with the theme of

Life!

In this season of Lent, that period of reflection before Easter, recalling the life, death and new life of Christ, the theme "Life" seems appropriate.

Life is always entwined with death. The two are interwoven like knotted strings. Not just the physical and not just the human, but everything. Rivers, glaciers, oceans, suns, stars, galaxies, organisations, communities, churches, towns, homes, country. Trees, grasses, whales, ants, children, old men and women are all touched by life and death, interwoven and always present.

In the Gospel accounts of the crucifixion and the resurrection we see fear, anger, disappointment, absence, grief and brokenness. We see doubt, disbelief, questioning, hope and expectation. From this place and experience grows the community of the Christian church.

The Australian rural landscape and its people well know the fine line between life and death and this edition of Ruminations has some very personal reflections on this theme from different perspectives.

This might be the first time you have received Ruminations or perhaps you have received it many times before, but it is my goal that through these pages we can all be encouraged in our place as part of a broad Christian church and within the Uniting Church as our Christian community.

I've been encouraged by the requests for more copies of Ruminations or by those who want to add their names to receive first copies. Each edition is available in post and online at **Issuu Saltbush Ruminations**. I'm always happy to talk and discuss Ruminations, rural ministry or the reality of the Christian community in our Australian context so please feel free to be in touch.

Peace to you all.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mark" followed by a horizontal flourish and a period.

Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we find ourselves, and recognise their continuing connection to country; land, water, air, life and community. We pay our respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures and to elders both past and present.



A word from the Moderator

Rev. Simon Hansford

Moderator of the Synod of NSW & ACT.

As we walk this Lenten path with Jesus, to the cross and the life beyond, the ashes and dust of the church's season seem truly appropriate in rural Australia.

Most of us have friends and family who have been fighting fires or caring for those who have been enduring them. Those of us in the west of our state taste the dust in everything, as we wait for the hope and refreshment offered when it rains. As the drought tightens its grip with the added weight of our changing climate, we know that this will be a tough time for our communities and congregations.

So, does our faith have anything to say? The hymn writer, Brian Wren, sings it this way:

*Dust and ashes touch our face,
mark our failure and our falling.
Holy Spirit, come,
walk with us tomorrow,
take us as disciples,
washed and wakened by your calling.*

*Take us by the hand and lead us,
lead us through the desert sands,
bring us living water,
Holy Spirit, come.*

The truth of Lent and Easter is that we are never abandoned, never forgotten by God. The forty days we walk to Jerusalem remind us of those things we need to hold on to, and those things we need to release, to refuse. We may also need to assume a new challenge.

The cross asserts that Jesus is always present in our worst moments. The resurrection proclaims that the worst moment is not the last one; God's hope is more – hopeful, healing, forgiving and true.

May our crucified and risen Lord bless each of you in your journey into Easter, with the community of God's presence and each other every step of the way.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon". Below the signature is a single, thick, horizontal line that tapers at both ends.

Pondering our Theme - Life

Rev. Gereldine Leonard

Nagambie, Victoria

I wonder if your family is like mine? When we get together we like to play games. Games like Scrabble are taken very seriously. The competition is fierce and the respect usually given to senior members of the family is put aside before the game begins. Other games like charades are simply hilarious and very noisy, though that could be a definition of normal in my family.

It strikes me that things like charades, where no words are possible, can be very helpful in conveying big ideas. In this issue of Ruminations, we are talking about life. Most of us, I suspect have a biological view of the meaning of this word. In a strange way life is seen as the absence of death, but that is not its meaning theologically speaking.

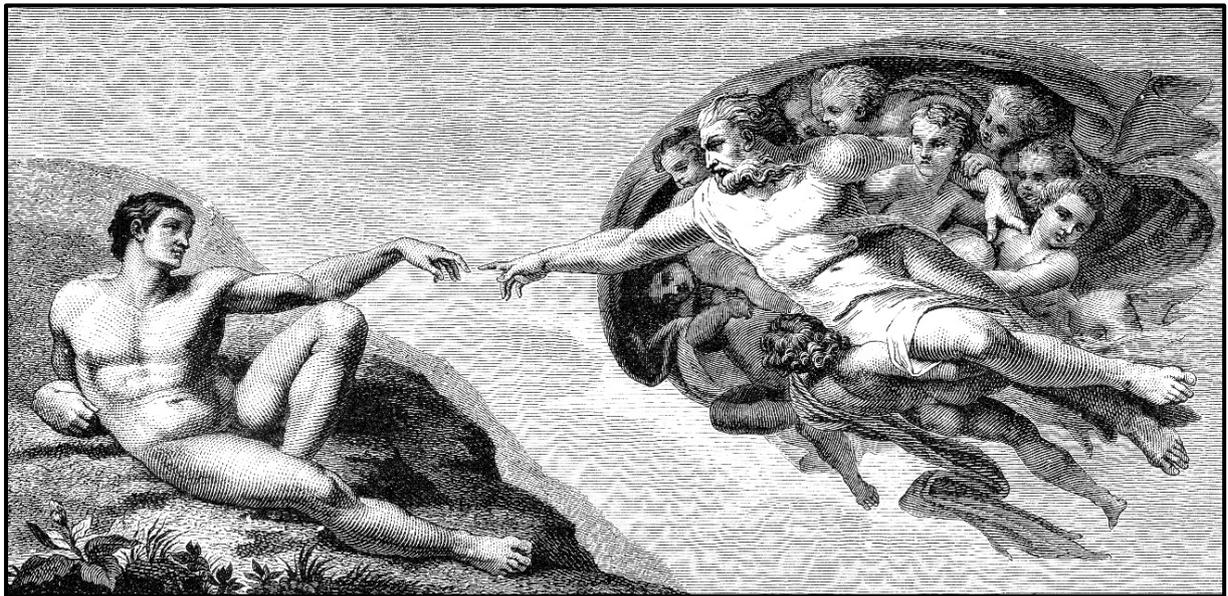
Before we start speaking theologically here's a challenge. Ask someone, without speaking, to show you the meaning of the word alive or lively. You can throw in death if you like, but my guess is that death will be easy to pick - easier than life or liveliness anyway, and not half as much fun.

In God talk life is not about biology. When the Biblical writers speak about life what they are talking about is relationship with God and the word that most describes that life is vitality or liveliness. Was your charade helpful? Were the actions full of energy and vigour? I hope so, because that's the image I want to

convey when speaking about our relationship with God. It brings vitality.

In Genesis 1, the first act of creation is to make visible the light the *doxa*, the glory of God and then what follows describes what happens when God is present – things are separated and given their own place and purpose within that relationship.

Genesis 2 is even more specific – something of God's own self is given in relationship. Humans are as lifeless as clay until God-breathed. Life is carried on the breath of God. I have not found anything better to show this than Michelangelo's painting. God arrives with power, reaches out to the listless human and life, vitality, is given.



Skipping forward to the gospel of Jesus according to John, we can see these same life-giving characteristic in Jesus. John invites us to see that the life, the liveliness, the vitality that comes to us

from relationship with God now comes to us through Jesus. All of the gospels give the assurance that vitality, liveliness, comes to us in Jesus and in lives lived, as he lived - for the sake of others, for the good and the well-being of others.

In the same sense death, in big picture Biblical terms describes what it is to be out of relationship with God - heaven and hell, if you will. Again images may speak louder and more vividly than words. Let me recommend a film called "What Dreams May Come" where the saving grace of love is explored and the images of heaven and hell are vivid.

This vivacity, this vitality, this liveliness then is the measure we can use to assess our common life. It should be our aim. This is what we gifted with and called to be.

My story...

Pastor Jack Harradine

Living Desert Indigenous Faith Community, Broken Hill.



I come from an aboriginal community in South Australia, Point Pearce, surrounded by poverty, like everyone else in the community. I'm from the Narungga Tribe. It's a close community. I was surrounded by lots of social problems, violence and alcohol. I'm the eldest of 7 children from a broken family.; My father died when I was young. I spent a lot of my childhood in different boy's homes. But life is life.

I went to Sunday School on the community, but as a teenager I began drinking, drugs, crime, became an alcoholic. I was a very violent man and people were afraid of me. My ambition in life

was to live to 30 and I was doing a good job at not even reaching that goal. Now I'm going on 63. I have 13 grandchildren and I love every bit of it and I thank God that he didn't give me my own way and let me die before 30.

When I was about 26 or 27 my wife, Lill, gave me an ultimatum to go to rehab or to lose my family, so I chose rehab. I went to a rehab centre run by Aboriginal Christians. I knew I was related to nearly every person who worked there and I knew their backgrounds too which was similar to mine, but I witnessed the change in their lives and I wanted a bit of what they had and they had Christ.

When I finished my time in rehab and went home, not long after that, a group of Aboriginal Christians came to Point Pearce to do mission. I was dragged along to that meeting unwillingly, but I went anyway, and on the first night of the mission both my wife and I committed our lives to the Lord.

Since then our lives have never been the same. The Lord called us out of our darkness and I went to Sydney to train with the Church Army. So we've travelled Australia living in cars, sleeping on the side of river banks, in old churches, cabins, sheds and tents, spreading the Gospel, because we believe that the Gospel changes lives. We believe in the risen Christ and the life God gives which is why I'm still here today at nearly 63. We believe in the power of the Holy Spirit to transform darkness to light. We believe in a God who is merciful and patient and loving. And our hope is that our people will hear the Gospel and will receive light and life.

About the Living Desert Faith Community

My wife Lill and I were doing itinerant ministry to rural and remote aboriginal communities and the last place we were living was in Murrin Bridge after Ceduna on the west coast of South Australia. We were invited to go to Murrin Bridge and I wasn't impressed, but my wife fell in love with it and we felt that God wanted us to go there. After a couple of years there I was talking to Rev. Neville Naden from the Anglican Church from the Living Desert Community in Broken Hill. I was asked to go to Broken Hill to the Living Desert Community.

It is a faith community that is shared between Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and Bush Church Aid Society which is Anglican. Together they support this ministry. It's an outreach primarily to the Aboriginal community in Broken Hill, Wilcannia and Menindee.

There are not many people there, it's a small faith community, both white and black people and we worship together, fellowship together and pray together. We don't see colour in our community. We are just brothers and sisters in Christ and we seek to reach those people who are on the fringes of society, just as Jesus did. Christ centred.

We all play a little role, a little tiny bit, in bringing light and life. Just one person might help another. Our witness plays a big part.

Reflection on life coming from the desert and life from death.



We have to come out of the darkness into the light to find life. That's where it begins for me. When you have new life in Christ your eyes are opened, just as Jesus opened the eyes of the blind.

I'm seeing in young people and in old people things I couldn't see before I was a Christian. I can see the damage that is being done in people's lives. Our children are the ones left alone, neglected, suffering and abused.

The desert in spring time when its blooming is the prettiest place on earth. Out of the bareness the desert blooms and is alive. Something touches it and the flowers come. I've stood on some beautiful mountain tops but you can't compare it to the blooming desert. That's what happens to people's lives and to my live. A dry barren place and suddenly it was like the desert bloomed inside of me. I met Christ in the desert and it was a spring to life.



My story...

Myra Cowell and Wendy Frazier
Finley Uniting Church



Myra Cowell (80 this year) and Wendy Frazier (59) share some of their personal story of moving from death to life, a journey which is intimately connected to the story of Finley Uniting Church.

Myra

In January four years ago I was feeling exhausted as I finished the 9.00am service at Tocumwal and I still had the 11.00am service in front of me. We didn't have many Lay Preachers at the time and the couple we did have were away for the holidays. Summer is a difficult season for me. I find my energy levels are very

limited and I had three weeks with two services each Sunday. Another hot day was on its way. As I walked from the church at Tocumwal I said a prayer: God I can't keep going like this - I need help!

At Finley, on that same morning, a new person arrived at the service, introduced herself and said "I am Wendy an accredited Uniting Church Lay Preacher." I said, "Thank you God!" Since then we have all been truly blessed by Wendy's ministry. She has sustained me in my low times with her wisdom and insight and she has celebrated with me in times of joy. I am still saying: "Thank you God!"

Wendy

My husband Lew and I moved from being in 7 days a week business in Cootamundra to buy a house in Finley. I felt God was telling me to go back to the UCA and for a while I did not agree, but on the morning that Myra spoke of I listened. I had been accredited as a Lay Preacher in 1992. The Bible the congregation gave me at the time has the inscription Matthew 5:15 and 16.

No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

Who am I to argue with that? Since coming back to the UCA I have redone the Lay preacher training with Myra as my mentor. Her wisdom and the support of Finley worship Centre is humbling. Last year Lew and I built a playroom at our home and called it The House of Doors, because it was built out of old doors! We have a piano, artist's supplies, coffee & tea and a

water cooler. It is a good place to sit and chat or pray and it is a good place for all sorts of people to gather. Myra has been a great encouragement to me and we have travelled together, practically and spiritually over the past few years. We have been through a lot together. In have been stretched and Myra's friendship has been valuable to me and her trust in me has been humbling.



Myra and Wendy

Although small, Finley Congregation is always open to the movement of God's Holy Spirit and its mission has always been through hospitality. For more than 20 years people from the community have gathered for Bee Hive (BYO craft) and weekly Bible study. Then there is crazy whist, a friendship morning and

hymn singing where people from other denominations and people from the wider community can share what is happening in their lives. Each group has its own following and friendships grow.

Supporting the community has always been important to our congregation and since 2018, with \$5000 from the Moderator's Drought Fund and a \$2000 donation from Mansfield Uniting Church we have purchased \$200 Murray Goulburn vouchers and given them to farmers in the area. We have received many thank you notes saying things like, "this is the real Jesus living among us." The drought continues and with zero water allocation for irrigation we have just applied for, and received a further \$5000 to distribute to farmers.

Some people might think our congregation is in decline, but that's not how we see it. It is not about numbers it is about people. Some of our members have died or moved into care but someone new is always arriving and the House of Doors is beginning to play a part, acting as a gathering place for some very interesting and gifted people.

Twice a month we take Communion to Finley Regional Care and then share morning tea with the residents. Not so long ago we presided at the funeral of one of our Regional Care members and afterwards Wendy reached out to her daughter. After enjoying the hospitality of the House of Doors, she is now part of Finley Worship Centre and has started Lay Preacher training. God's double blessing to Myra's original prayer for help.

Psalm 133:1 (NIV) How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity.

My story...

Mel Macarthur

Blue Mountains, NSW.



It is November, 2004. I am cycling on the road up Mount Victoria Pass, one of the steepest and longest climbs in New South Wales. I am feeling very fit and in a few months' time will undertake another long bicycle ride to Central Australia. Uluru is beckoning me once again. The cyst at the side of my neck will need to be removed before I go. It is becoming a little awkward turning my head side to side. Mental note: I will make an appointment to see the GP soon and have it removed.

A few days later and the GP is taking a prolonged look at the cyst. "A blood test seems in order," she says. I think no more about it. I have a defence of my thesis to think about.

A few more days elapse. I am back at the GP surgery to arrange for the removal of the cyst, a couple of days off the bike perhaps, no great interruption to the schedule.

"I'm sending you to a haematologist" she says, "you have lymphoma ...it's treatable". Not quite what I was expecting, but not entirely surprising either. Five years as a chaplain to an oncology ward and a hospice meant that I never entertained the idea that I was bullet proof. I had never seen cancer as something that only happened to other people. In fact, I rather thought that this was a likely scenario for me. What did surprise me, however, was how well I felt for someone with a life-threatening illness. I had mainly ministered to people in advanced stages of cancer, people who definitely looked as though life was ebbing away. How could I be so fit and feeling so well when, as the haematologist put it, I was "life threateningly ill"?

Over the ensuing four months I was given six administrations of the strangely named CHOP chemotherapy. This was an utterly miserable time: a time bearable only because the haematologist expressed the opinion that I could respond to the treatment and regain my physical and mental health. The chemotherapy had depleted my body and clouded my mind. Without this expression of optimism from the haematologist, I probably would have declined treatment. Walking in wilderness areas, pursuing doctoral research (an ongoing hobby of mine) and active participation are pursuits that enrich my life. Having them taken from me by the illness I would have found intolerable.

In 2010 I relapsed (ironically while cycling to Alice Springs). This was déjà vu. The treatment was a bone marrow transplant requiring three weeks in hospital. Currently, I am still in remission.

I am sometimes asked what it is like to be a cancer patient. I say sometimes, because many people want to see me as their idea

of a cancer patient. I have at times had to define myself to people. Here is a generalised conversation.

Person: Isn't it wonderful that they have saved your life.

Mel: I really don't know, because no one has saved my life; I am going to die (a real conversation stopper, so further explanation is required). My life has been extended. For that I am grateful, but I put that qualification on it. I need to have in the forefront of my mind that I am mortal. I need this to establish priorities in my life. I set two year plans nowadays. Would you like to hear the latest one?

The 'bucket' list is another topic of conversation.

Person: What is life like post cancer. I guess there have been big changes?

Mel: Not really, life post cancer is pretty much the same as life pre cancer. (This often ushers in bewilderment).

Person: You are not suggesting that cancer has had little impact on your life are you?

Mel: Certainly not. Cancer has given me the most miserable experiences of my life, by far. When I had chemotherapy I lost much of my mental alertness. That was a terrifying experience. Trying to read and not remembering the content of the previous paragraph and wondering if that capacity would return was hideous. I rely much in life on the power of my will. That ebbed away with my mental functioning. At times death seemed a much more acceptable option. Then again, the recovery of these faculties was nothing short of exhilarating. So the cancer

experience was profound. But it wasn't a game changer. Coming to faith for me, an event that happened when I was twenty or so was the game changer.

Person: OK, so what was the experience of cancer for you, if not a game changer? There must be something profound about the experience? (People I found are keen to hear the success stories, the 'battles', beating cancer etc.)

Mel: The profound aspect about the cancer experience for me was the reassurance that I was on the right path in life. It was a consolidating experience. That is a profound learning to have, through the time of trial that you are on the right path. If anything, the loss of faculties during that experience of chemotherapy, my intellectual abilities, my power of will, gave me a much deeper appreciation of them. It was not a game changer, but it was profound none the less. While my wonderful, usual activities, wilderness hiking and pilgrimages, the university research and my church activities were resumed, the focus of these activities changed. For instance, I no longer do conventional academic research. It bores the pants off me! I no longer do 'objective' research, where I as the author am not represented in the text. That is a huge change. Cancer brought that realisation about. It is what I call 'total learning'. It is exciting.

Person: You almost sound like you are recommending a good dose of lymphoma.

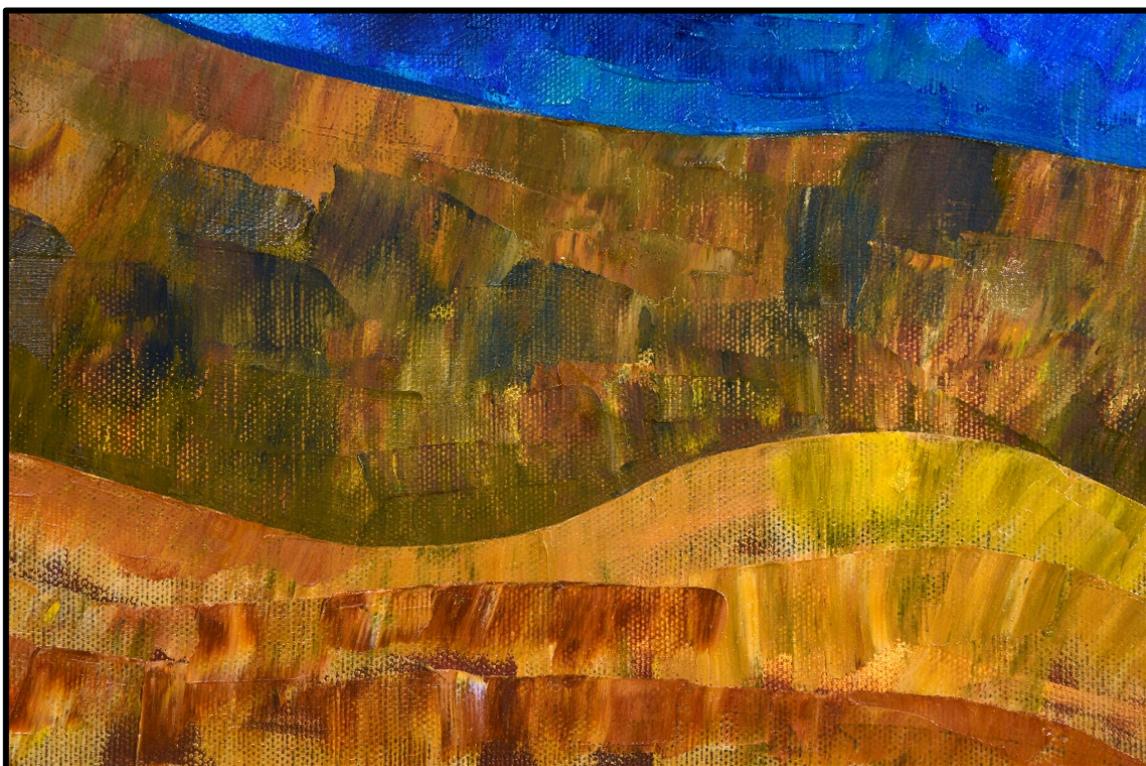
Mel: I am very happy to disillusion you on that score. Cancer was a miserable experience. A profoundly miserable experience! But, like other trials in life, in retrospect I look back on it and realise that there have been profound changes in emphasis that have

come about as a result. Cancer was definitely not the game changer, the wilderness, the university and the church still structure my life, but profound learning did come from the cancer experience.

Another topic that arises, is the future.

Person: So, what does the future hold for you?

Mel. If you mean how long might I expect to be a citizen of this planet, as the writer of Ecclesiastes would say, 'Who knows'. If you mean my activities, my latest research project will be designing a course for the university whereby students will be taken on pilgrimage in the Central Australian Desert, while reflecting on life using a method I designed called 'Autobiographical Drama'. These students will really earn their academic credit. I like that!



Experiencing the Word...

Rev. Dr Elizabeth Raine

Life, death and resurrection!

At Easter in churches all around the world, the resurrection will be the focus of their worship. What do we mean when we talk about resurrection? For many Christians, the celebration will be recalling the story a miraculous event from the past, along with the hope of a life beyond death. Others will view it as a myth, a story told primarily to inspire the faithful.

But, if this is all the resurrection is, it has little value for us beyond our lives as self-contained individuals. What if our celebration instead connected us with a living reality of what transformative resurrection life, lived out in community, looks like now? What if instead of focusing on a reward in heaven, we focused on the life that resurrection can bring us now?

This Easter, the writings of John and Luke remind us not only of the resurrection, but of the new life that awaits through resurrection.

Easter reminds us that God is present now, among us and that God is doing impossible things now, among us, and God is making morning miracles out of death's darkness now, among us.

Easter Sunday symbolises a day when life refuses to be contained and bursts forth in strange and unexpected ways, a day where

nothing is impossible, where hope cannot be extinguished and where love cannot be conquered.

The gospel we have been following since Advent, the Gospel of Luke, makes it clear that Christ's message and purpose was to bring good news to the poor, and freedom to those who are oppressed. Jesus' ministry was responsible for giving new life to many, and he exhorted his disciples to do the same. When we celebrate the life-giving, hopeful event that is the resurrection, do we see a vision of new possibilities, new realities, and new ways of renewing our commitment to share Christ's inclusive liberating life with all people? Do we readily understand this commitment applies to many issues such as refugees, poverty, war, other cultures, religions, races, gender discrimination and even sexual orientation? Do we stop and wonder what specific place of oppression God may be calling us to reach out to with resurrection life? Do we understand that to undergo the resurrection experienced is to be transformed?

Every community, whether a secular or faith community, wrestles with forces that are both life-giving and life-destroying. Life-destroying forces within us that we must confront include the temptation to exclude those who are different from or who disagree with us, the temptation to form closed groups, and the temptation to keep the hope that Christ's life offers to all to ourselves.

Life-destroying forces outside of us that we must confront include the temptation to ignore or disparage those in the dark places of our communities, to sit on the fence and remain silent when others are suffering or persecuted, and to close our doors to those who we think are not acceptable people.

When we embrace the true power of resurrection life, we embrace true transformation. We embrace a vision of new possibilities, new realities, and new ways of being for our churches, our communities, and our world. Instead of being limited by our fears and prejudices, we can open our minds to believe that unbelievable grace is possible. Instead of being limited by wanting to control things, we can release the hold fear has on our minds, and open our hearts to unbelievable hope. Instead of being limited by death and despair, we can open our lives to live and to love, in the light of Christ's liberating life.

This Easter, let us pray for life and resurrection to come amongst us.

May we feel the power of Jesus' life; may we be transformed by his story.

May we turn away from those things which would destroy or devalue life.

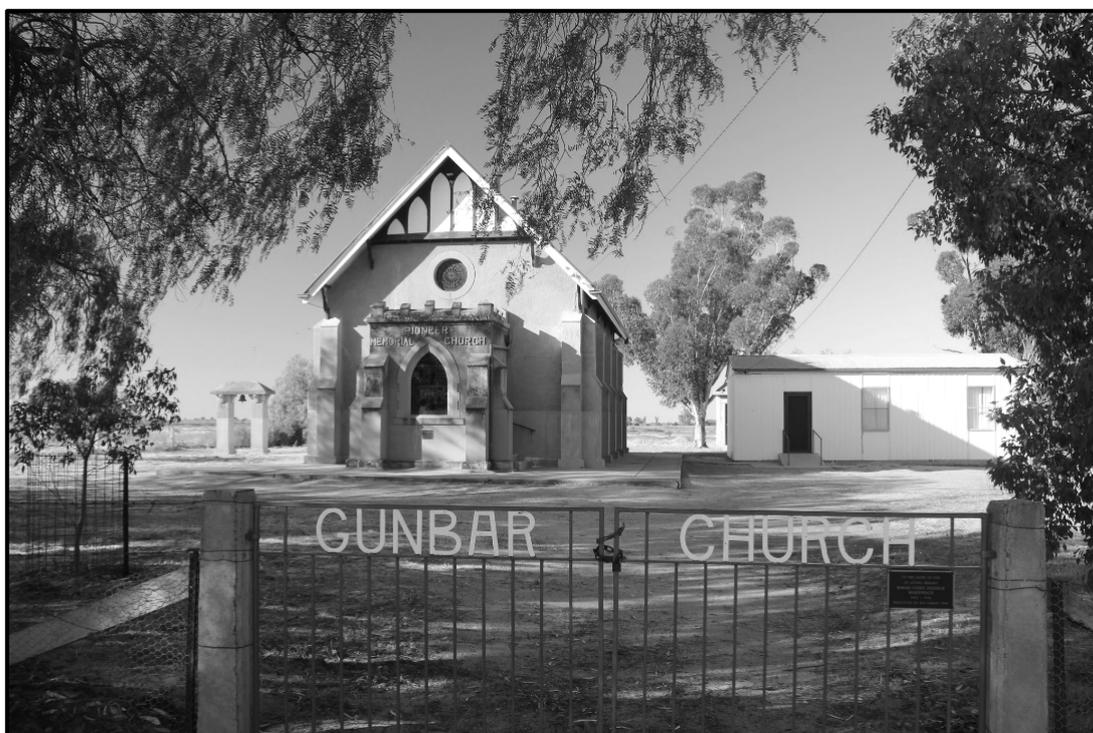
May resurrection happen again in us today, tomorrow, and the next day.

May our feet, like the disciples, continue to run faster than they have ever moved, as we reach out to others with the good news, saying like Mary did 'I have seen the Lord!' For he is among us, doing impossible things, and bringing life out of death's darkness.

News & Views...

Mobilising Ministry seeks to connect urban ministers, leaders & their congregations with rural congregations and their leaders as a way of encouraging the broader Uniting Church. Here we read of the recent experience of Northmead and Hillston – Gunbar - Goolgowi Uniting Churches.

Letters from Country and City!



Hillston, Gunbar and Goolgowi

Last weekend, 18,19, 20th January 9 members of the Northmead congregation drove to Hillston (1400ks return trip) in an extreme heatwave. It was a great 3 days of reconnecting with the Rev Niall Reid and meeting new friends. On Saturday our church council

met with Northmead and on Sunday Northmead led 2 worship services, one at Goolgowi and the other at Gunbar. During the Goolgowi service Niall was able to make a phone call to Northmead, also worshipping at the same time. It worked!

We heard from the worship leader AND the congregation! We exchanged greetings and Northmead sang us a blessing song. Now we feel really connected, and as Niall said this highlighted some possibilities. We can now plan the next steps we could begin to make.

I can see the benefits of being linked to a strong city church. Already we feel encouraged and inspired and supported and I hope, somehow, we can contribute something worthwhile into the partnership.

Jenny Rose

Northmead

I would like to confirm that the weekend trip to Hillston was a positive experience for the team that went from Northmead. Yes, it was a long round trip, but the benefit of presence, the opportunity to meet people and to hear their stories (even if briefly) face to face was seen as well worthwhile by members of the team.

I think there was a greater appreciation of the challenges facing the rural church and its leaders. I think it also helps us to begin to think differently about the Church and what that might look like. In the discussion with Church Council, the importance of

building relationships of trust was seen as crucial to the success in creating a strong ongoing partnership.

The phone call was a simple thing but it did demonstrate the possibilities that technology offers. The line on my speakerphone was remarkably clear and loud. One suggestion which can be implemented almost straight away is that we make the phone call during the service once a month and offer a prayer for each other. On the Thursday before we went our band recorded on my laptop the four songs for the services. That also worked very well and there was the suggestion that the band could practice and record some of the songs that worship leaders at Hillston would like to include in their services. We also talked about when it could be helpful for me to spend a couple of weeks in Hillston-Gunbar.

Rev. Niall Reid

Where are we up to with Saltbush?

Thanks to the support of a broad church Saltbush is now a team of two people with hopefully a third on the way soon.

We welcome Geoff Wellington who will be commissioned into the role of Scattered Community Minister as a Lay Pastor. Geoff has a strong rural background, is passionate about encouraging diverse ways of being church and has a long history of working through practical mission as part of the Uniting Church.



Saltbush – Uniting the Scattered Community, is not seeking to maintain the institution, but to encouragingly and creatively work across our borders, practices and traditions to encourage grounded missional relationship. Both Geoff and I are committed to this work and to working as a team within the wider church.

We are also seeking a full time, Online Scattered Community Minister who will be equally part of the Saltbush team. This role is to connect people over vast distances, to encourage them in their worship and gathering. It is also to encourage Uniting Christian communities and individuals who want to embrace the missional journey of change so as to connect more with those in their wider communities

Although each of us will have slightly different roles, we will be Ministers in equal standing committing ourselves to working as a team to encourage and connect willing communities irrespective of size or location.

As part of our work, we invite you to the next Saltbush – Scattered Community Gathering. We have decided to offer these in different places so as to make them easier for lay leaders and members of congregations to attend. You can choose either location and receive the same Saltbush experience!

**Scattered Community Gathering #1
Brucedale (Wagga)**

Saturday 31st. August, 9.30am –
Sunday 1st. September, 2pm.

All meals and refreshments are provided.

**Scattered Community Gathering #2
Tamworth**

Saturday 21st. September, 9.30am –
Sunday 22nd, 2pm.

All meals and refreshments are provided.

More information will be provided over the coming months.

Register online at Eventbrite:

Saltbush–Scattered Community Gathering

Please continue to be prayerful for Saltbush and thankful in the challenges before us as we continue to help shape Uniting Christian community for the future.

Remember I'm always happy to have conversations around Saltbush, faith and the reality of being church in our contemporary society and world.

Peace to you all.

Rev. Mark Faulkner

Director of Rural and Remote Ministry Initiatives



Please consider financially supporting Saltbush; either as individuals or as a congregation.

Your donation will be used directly for the work of supporting Saltbush and to encourage smaller, rural congregations.

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