

SCOTS' CHURCH MELBOURNE

FREE

THE LEAFLET



*150th Anniversary
Edition - 2024*



IN THIS ISSUE

RECOLLECTIONS | OUR STORY | SCOTS' TODAY



The SCOTS' CHURCH, MELBOURNE

LOCATIONS

The Scots' Church, Melbourne,
99 Russell Street (corner Collins Street), Melbourne
Assembly Hall, Werner Brodbeck Hall, Ground Floor,
156 Collins Street, Melbourne
Robert White Hall, First Floor,
156 Collins Street, Melbourne
St. Stephen's, Flemington and Kensington,
26 Norwood Street, Flemington.

WORSHIP SUNDAY:

9.30 am International Christian Church (English),
(www.icc-melbourne.org), Werner Brodbeck Hall
11.00 am International Christian Church (Indonesian)
Werner Brodbeck Hall
11.00 am Traditional Service, The Scots' Church
5.00 pm ScotsCity, Werner Brodbeck Hall
Sunday School – held during Sunday morning services
for the Traditional and International congregations

MINISTRY TEAM:

Senior Minister Rev Phil Campbell
Minister Pastoral Care Rev Litha Heshusius
Senior Assistant Minister Rev Justin Ang
Next Generations Minister Rev Dr Arthur Keefer
Director International Ministries ICC Dr Sen Sendjaya
Pastor St Stephen's Mr Lindsay Kliendienst

MUSIC MINISTRY:

Director of Music Mr Douglas Lawrence AM
Associate Organist Ms Jennifer Chou

EDITORIAL TEAM, THE LEAFLET:

Rosalie Strother, Phil Campbell & Philip Court
Thanks to Ashley Gardiner for editorial assistance in this issue.

Welcome to newsletter of
The Scots' Church Melbourne

THE LEAFLET



*150th Anniversary
Edition - 2024*

Issue No 1098 Spring 2024

Welcome to this special Anniversary Edition of The Leaflet, celebrating the 150th birthday of our majestic Scots' Church building. As usual, we hope you'll find it a fresh and enjoyable read, whether you're a regular member at Scots' or just passing through.

Scots' Church Melbourne certainly is full of history, and full of life. While you'll find the usual smattering of up-to-date articles and book reviews, this issue is particularly focused on our heritage, and features of the Scots' Church building. Along with tours of our stained-glass windows, flags, and architectural inspiration, you can read about some of our most famous occasions – weddings and funerals that stopped the nation.

More importantly, you'll hear from some of our long term (and newer) members about what it means to be part of the Scots' community; you'll find out about how we're celebrating this milestone, and go back to the beginning with newspaper reports of our opening in 1874.

In reality, Scots' Church has been a key part of the Australian Community for significantly longer than our current building. An earlier structure stood on the same corner, and before that our congregation made do with a temporary building, and even a shady spot on the river bank. We go all the way back to 1838; and we're still pressing on, following Jesus just like our forebears.

Interestingly, three famous Aussies who have been featured on our national banknotes have strong Scots' connections; Charles Kingsford Smith was married here, Dame Nellie Melba sang here, and her funeral was held here; and John Flynn was commissioned here for his pioneering work in the outback. But more than that, there's still room for you here... there are spare seats every Sunday, and we'd love to make you welcome.

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Search for **ScotsCast**, our weekly podcast, on Spotify or Apple.

Rosalie Strother, Phil Campbell, Philip Court - Editorial Team
Thanks to Ashley Gardiner for editorial assistance in this issue.

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MARKING A MILESTONE

This year marks the sesquicentenary of our magnificent Scots' Church building - one and a half centuries old, and still standing proudly at the corner of Russell and Collins Streets, in the heart of Melbourne. So what are we doing to mark the moment?

One hundred and fifty years is a milestone worth celebrating - and not just for our architecture. As a church community, we've loved and served our city faithfully as we've embodied the same mission, values, and message of saving grace of Jesus Christ that motivated our forebears to gather as a congregation back in 1838, and consolidate their commitment in stone in 1874. Both the building, and the mission, have stood the test of time.

And so, we celebrate - with this special anniversary issue of The Leaflet as a key part of honouring that heritage.

In the New Testament, the word "Church" translates the Greek *ekklesia*, which simply means "gathering" - a gathering of those loyal to the Lordship of Jesus. And in the early days in Melbourne, that's all there was. A small group, gathering on the banks of the Yarra. The centenary of the first riverside "gathering" that launched the Scots' Church community in Melbourne was marked in 1938, at a service led by interim minister Rev John MacKenzie.



As part of that centenary celebration, a detailed history was published in the Order of Service, detailing the steps that were involved in providing a suitable building for the growing congregation. The foundation stone of the first building on our current site was laid in pouring rain in January 1841, and that building opened in October of the same year. Surprisingly - at least to our thinking - the whole edifice was demolished and replaced by the current building only 33 years later.

Ministers Irving Hetherington and Peter Menzies led the way in designing the church, with Menzies particularly remembered as the one who influenced the committee to pursue architectural beauty rather than the austerity so common in Presbyterian architecture of the time.

Reed & Barnes were engaged as architects, with a brief to design a church to accommodate a congregation of up to 800 people. Tenders were called, and in January 1873, David Mitchell's quote of just under £20,000 was accepted. The foundation stone was laid on April 1st, 1873 - again in pouring rain.

While we honour architect Joseph Reed and builder David Mitchell as the key names behind the project, it's interesting to note that both men headed large and successful companies, with many employees. As a Melbourne entrepreneur, Mitchell's interests included large scale gold prospecting, construction, cattle farming, and the earliest attempts to mechanise milking, so it's unlikely he actually laid his hand on much of the construction process.

Even so, one local legend has it that on a visit to the work site, he brought along his young daughter Helen, and had her hoisted to the top of the growing spire as she sat in a wheelbarrow. Helen - having survived the adventure - went on to fame and fortune as perhaps Australia's best known singer, under the stage name Nellie Melba. Helen and her dad David both sang regularly in the Scots' Church choir, which continues to maintain superb musical standards today. (Her funeral, in 1931, which was held at Scots', was a "major national event" with a cortege that blocked the surrounding streets.)

The new church building opened on 29th November 1874, with a detailed report in Melbourne's *Argus* newspaper, which you'll find later in this edition of *The Leaflet*. Internal fittings cost £1350, the carved stone pulpit £350, and the pipe organ £1200, for a grand total cost of £22,900.

What's the equivalent in today's terms? It's hard to say. On his website, historian Thom Blake estimates a conversion to around \$4.5 million, which these days would hardly pay for a large house in the suburbs. In short, as an artefact of old, gold-rich Melbourne, it's an irreplaceable part of our city heritage.

So, how are we marking the sesquicentenary? Senior Minister Phil Campbell points to a range of initiatives. "We're working to mark the occasion by not just looking inwards and congratulating ourselves, but by looking outwards to the needs of our city," says Rev Campbell. "In a way, the best thing we can do to honour our heritage is to keep serving the Lord Jesus by loving the city."

With that in mind, our Scots' Church Minor Trusts are donating \$20,000 towards assisting older people in the community who are facing homelessness. "We're partnering with The Housing for the Aged Action Group," says Phil Campbell. "HAAG provides support for older people experiencing housing insecurity



Fiona York, executive officer of haag, receives news of the Scots' church donation from Rev Phil Campbell

or homelessness, and that's a demographic that increasingly turns to us at Scots' looking for help. Our partnership means we're helping in this growing area of need, and the staff at HAAG's Flinders Lane office are happy to direct our funds specifically to cases we refer."

We'll also be serving the city as we look back to our famous Sausage Sizzle days, with a Giant Free City Sausage Sizzle at lunch time on Wednesday 30 October, which should make quite a splash, before we hit our November anniversary month in earnest.

"We're preparing an excellent display of the Scots' story, which will occupy Westpac Foyer right through November," says Session Clerk Rosalie Strother. "We're preparing twelve large display panels with fascinating photos and information, and there'll be memorabilia and building plans on display too."

The display will be opened with a social function on Thursday evening November 7th, when we'll also switch on the new coloured floodlights at the Collins Street frontage of the building. "Space will be limited on the night," says Rosalie, "but we're doing our best to make the launch event accessible to as many as possible."

The official anniversary will be marked on the closest Sunday to our opening date, with a Thanksgiving Service on Sunday 24 November at 11am, followed by a light lunch and our second annual Scots' Proms Concert at 2 pm. "We're hoping for a huge crowd of Scots'community-members both past and present," says Phil Campbell.



Phil Campbell and exhibition designer Lieve Swart inspect the first display panel.

"There's plenty to thank God for, and a lot to celebrate". Scots' is a remarkable church; and it's no exaggeration to say we're "full of history and full of life." ■



MEETING THE NEED

Fiona York, from Melbourne's Housing Assistance Action Group, shares two real-life stories about how their organization is meeting needs around the city...

JOHN (AND MAX)

John* is in his early 60's and lived in a run-down private rental apartment for 14 years. His requests to have the leaking roof fixed were ignored and he was told to use another room in the house every time it rained. The flat was moldy and had peeling plaster. Then, he was issued with an eviction notice, as the apartment was to be demolished.

John was fearful of becoming homeless as he had bad experiences of emergency accommodation in the past. He also had a pet dog Max who had provided him with companionship for 10 years.

John visited HAAG's office in the city and spoke to the Home at Last intake team about his situation. He was eligible for public housing and so he was referred to an outreach worker for support. The outreach worker helped him to apply for priority housing, which was approved. It took about 18 months for John to receive an offer of public housing and when he moved into his new home, Home at Last assisted him with a new bed, fridge and household items for a fresh start.

"I'm starting to feel better about myself, getting into a routine and settling into my new home", says John. "And Max is welcome too."

PAULA

Paula is 78, and had been living with her husband in private rental accommodation. They were using their savings of around \$20,000 to pay rent as their combined Age Pension was insufficient. Following a fall that required hospitalisation Paula's husband was told their home would require disability modifications - he could not access the shower or manage the steps. Even though they had funding for the rails through his aged care package, the landlord refused to make the required changes. The couple feared they would be evicted if they raised the issue further with the landlord.

When Paula's husband passed away, Paula had to pay the rent alone, and she had used their savings for his funeral expenses. She moved in with her daughter, where she had to sleep on the couch and share a bathroom with seven other people in the already overcrowded house. She was facing homelessness, grieving for her husband, and her own health was failing.

Paula's daughter called HAAG's Home at Last Service, and Paula was helped through the process of applying for housing. After six months, she was offered a new one-bedroom unit in community housing close to her doctor and with public transport that allowed her to visit her family. Her health has improved, and she remains close to her daughter and grandchildren. ■

**Names have been changed, and consent was obtained to share these stories*



Back in 1874, the arrival of a brand new church in the heart of Melbourne was big news. Here's how it was reported in The Argus...

The Argus.

THE NEW SCOTS' CHURCH, COLLINS STREET

Of all the many classes of buildings which are being erected in and around the city, there are none which exhibit more the increased wealth of the community, and the improvement in the public taste, than places of worship. Whatever the religious tendencies of the age may be and notwithstanding the diminution in the number, at any rate of male, church goers, the various denominations seem to vie with each other in erecting handsome and costly structures.

The latest of these is the new Scots' Church at the corner of Collins and Russell streets and there can be little difference of opinion that for elegance of design and elaboration of detail its exterior surpasses that of any other similar edifice in Melbourne. The site is commanding, and the building is in every way worthy of it.

The principal material used is Barrabool-hill (Geelong) stone, which being of a neutral warm colour contrasts exceedingly well with the pure white New Zealand freestone plentifully employed in the dressings. The style of architecture is early English, and the general plan is cruciform.

Looking at the church from Collins Street on the right hand of the facade stands the tower with the main gable of the nave in the centre, and a porch and turret on the other side. The tower is at present only partly erected, but it will be finished with a spire carried to a height of 211ft, which, when completed, will be the most conspicuous elevation in the city.

The first four storeys are solid in character. Above these will be the belfry, having large louvre windows with pointed gables, surmounting which will be the parapet from which springs the spire. Its shape will be square, with the angles taken off and it is to be pierced with numerous gabled dormer windows. Three angles will be finished off with the graceful pinnacles of which there are so many about the church, and the fourth with the stair turret.



In the centre of the front or the main gable is a very large traceried window which lights the nave, whilst the wall above, following the rake of the roof, is relieved by an open arcade in white stone, which forms one of the most peculiar and pleasing features of the building, imparting, as it does, an air of lightness and beauty to the edifice.

The apex is surmounted by a cross which by the way, is much more freely used than is usually the case in Presbyterian churches, every gable being terminated by one. On the western side of the facade is an entrance porch approached by a flight of steps, and attached to an octagonal turret finished with a stone spire.

The side elevations are divided into five bays, separated by buttresses surmounted by pinnacles, there being in each bay a two light window above and below. The parapets and enrichments are of pierced and handsomely carved white stone. In the end of the transept is a large traceried window similar to that in the front and at the other extremity is another entrance porch.

The roof is covered with slates cut into various shapes and the ridge is finished with an ornamental iron cresting. At the junction of the nave with the transept the roof is surmounted by an elegantly-shaped spire ventilator.

The appearance of the interior, which in its unfinished condition does not approach that of the exterior, is nevertheless very fine, the ample space and bold curves of the roof giving an effect of extreme lightness to the building, which, when the walls are adorned and the windows filled with coloured glass, will be vastly improved. The body of the church consists of a nave 46ft. and side aisles of 8ft. wide, from which the nave is divided by pointed arches supported by polished Malmsbury bluestone pillars.

The aisles by "a happy thought" are intended to serve only as passages, the whole of the congregation being seated within the nave and transept so that the columns form no obstruction, as they ordinarily do, to the view. The nave, which is lighted by clerestory windows and the large window in the south gable, is crossed by a transept 30ft. in width behind which is an apse, or semicircular recess lighted by three lancet windows, and forming a platform for the pulpit, which is of carved freestone.



One end of the transept is fitted up as a chamber for the organ, which is being erected by Messrs. McKenzie and Co. The ceiling is plastered and divided into panels by gothic oak principals and purlins, and when properly painted and decorated will have an excellent appearance. The two principal entrances are connected by a lobby at the south end, which is cut off from the church by an open screen with a small gallery above it. The total internal length of the building is 126ft. Ample provision is apparently made for ventilation, both in the floors and ceiling, and all the doors open outwardly, in consonance with the requirements of the Central Board of Health.



The architects are Messrs. Reed and Barnes, and the contractor Mr. David Mitchell, the amount of contract for the building alone without the fittings being £20,000. The seats, &c., which are to be of French polished cedar, will be supplied by Mr. Mc Ewan. These with the organ and other fittings, will cost an additional £5, 000. At present temporary benches are provided. It is intended to send to England for gasaliers, sunlights being meanwhile used. The carving about the place which from its admirable quality is worthy of notice, has been executed by Mr. Brain. The church, although unfinished, will be opened for Divine service on Sunday.

The Argus, 27 November 1874, p.5

CELEBRATION REFLECTIONS

“This welcoming church community reminds us that the church is not just the building, but it is most importantly the people.” Those sentiments were often repeated as we asked members, old and new, to reflect on the part Scots’ Church has played in their lives and their faith...

As a member of a youth group from Wellington NSW, Bruce Evans travelled to Melbourne to attend the famous Billy Graham Crusade at the MCG in 1959. With a friend, he stayed on for the evening service at Scots’. “We were struck by the friendliness of the congregation,” recalls Bruce. “We expected this in our local church back home, but were amazed that such a large city church would be so welcoming when they had so many visitors.”



When Bruce started work with G.J. Coles in Wellington, his aim was to one day be promoted to their Melbourne Head Office – a goal he achieved in early 1968. Remembering the warm welcome at Scots’, he began to enthusiastically attend the Wednesday lunch time service. He and Valerie were married at St. Andrew’s, Bexley later that year, and together joined the main Sunday congregation at Scots’ when they came back to Melbourne.

Bruce and Valerie Evans have a wealth of memories associated with their years at Scots’. They were at the service attended by Queen Elizabeth on September 27th, 1981, and also remember the State funerals of Prime Ministers Sir Robert Menzies, and Malcolm Fraser. On a more personal note the wedding of their daughter Laetitia to Matthew Dench was a joyful family. Bruce went on to serve as an Elder and Trustee, positions he still holds. He and Valerie cherish their memories and their many friends at Scots’.



Rae Anstee began worshipping at Scots’ in 1957, when she was nursing at the Royal Children’s Hospital, and attended until she became an aged care resident. As Rae reflects on her many years at Scots’ she says she has seen each minister contribute something special to the church. In her earlier days her Christian faith was greatly strengthened through the ministry of Rev. Leonard Small, Turnbull Trust preacher in 1971, 1976 and 1979 and more recently, by the visits of Rev. David Lunan. She continued to enjoy the biblical preaching from the Scots’ pulpit over the years. Rae also saw the music at Scots’, always excellent, blossom under the leadership of Douglas Lawrence, supported by loyal and talented choristers. “The music adds another dimension to the worship service,” says Rae. “And Douglas is ‘good value!’”

During her years as Session Clerk and Chairman of Trustees, Rae saw major changes, including the refurbishment of the Assembly Hall and the development of the Westpac building site; a collective effort of the Trustees, ministers, church staff and congregation during a period of upheaval. She also remembers the visit of the Queen in 1981 as a great occasion.



As a staunch royalist, Rae was 'overwhelmed' at the privilege of attending the service. On a more contemporary note, she's delighted to see the increasing number of young people joining us in worship; "They're the future church," says Rae. Her sadness is that she is now unable to attend services in person, though she remains very much a part of the Scots' family.

Both Judith Kilmartin and Beverley Aberline remember travelling from the country to attend a Presbyterian Fellowship Association Youth Service at Scots' on Sunday June 14th, 1964. Conveniently, it was the day the Beatles arrived in Melbourne, where they were greeted by about 30,000 screaming fans at a reception at the Southern Cross Hotel. They both joined in before attending the service.

Judith and Barry Kilmartin have been members at Scots' since 1973, and have



very special recollections, especially their joy at the baptisms of their two daughters. As our archivist for 27 years, Judith has a wealth of knowledge and experience associated with special events at the church. She agrees that the Queen's visit was a highlight. "There was much preparation with seating arrangements as everyone wanted to attend the service," recalls Judith. There were requests from all over Victoria. "The Sunday School children sat before the apse in front of the Queen. Dame Pattie Menzies was in attendance and, during the service, handed over to Scots' Church for permanent safe-keeping the insignia of the Order of the Thistle that had belonged to her late husband, Sir Robert Menzies. It had hung over his seat in the Thistle Chapel, St Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh. And of course, there was the 'bomb scare' at St Michael's opposite, an hour before the service commenced!"

Judith also recalls the 125th celebrations of our church building in 1999. The new Rieger organ was dedicated, following weeks of worship services in the Assembly Hall as the organ was being installed. "The ladies spent many hours filling the church with floral arrangements," says Judith. "There was a display of archival material in the church hall, which included bridal photos of many couples who had married at Scots'. A dinner was held through the week to celebrate the occasion."



Helen Holman, who joined Scots' following the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977, remembers spring cleaning the church the day before the Queen's visit. The bomb scare had additional significance for her, as her son Andrew was in the creche, and the congregation was asked to remain in their seats after the Queen had left; an anxious wait for her! Andrew was the first infant baptised by Rev Norman Pritchard on commencing his ministry at Scots'.

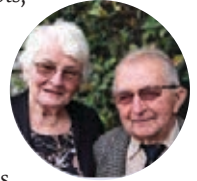
The evening that Helen, with ten others, was ordained as elder at Scots' remains a strong memory. There was heavy rain, as just as they were about to say their vows the church roof started to leak, with an incessant dripping sound. Kennedy Blair, an Elder and Trustee, took off his jacket and placed it under the drip on the pew, and the service proceeded peacefully. Helen has served faithfully as an elder and trustee for many years, though most importantly she says of Scots' that it is "a very welcoming church, where wonderful friendships have been formed."



Beverley Aberline recollects attending the Kirkin' o' the Tartan with her dad for many years, when they presented the Farquharson Clan tartan. This tradition continued in later years with her husband Ron; she still proudly joins the procession at this special Scottish themed service every year.

Beverley has enjoyed the wonderful preaching at Scots' over the years, as well as the sense of fellowship provided by the church community. She has enjoyed occasions like congregational lunches, AFL Grand Final services and the sausage sizzle - all opportunities to meet old friends and make new ones. "The history of the church, the choir, the beautiful stained-glass windows, all add to a wonderful experience being at Scots," says Beverley. "I have met some lovely people in my time here".

Lois and Gordon Taylor live at Whittlesea, and used to travel to the CBD after church on Sundays to go to the beach or the Fitzroy Gardens. One Sunday they decided to go to Scots' on the way to the beach. A member, John Lewis, persuaded them to stay for morning tea and meet some of the congregation after the service, and they've been attending ever since. Eventually, Gordon was inducted as an elder in 1987, and Lois in 1993.



Lois instigated the sausage sizzle in 1993, which grew to become an 'institution' over the years until the pandemic intervened. Lois and Danise Sherman took on the Sunday School when the Nixon family retired, and the Taylor children rejuvenated the PFA at Scots'. As the editor of the Pot Pourri for *The Leaflet* for 20 years until 2021, Lois kept up with all the important news for the church and its members. Gordon was closely involved with the stonework restoration of the church building in the 1980s and early 1990s, ensuring its preservation.

Grace Bailey is an American student who joined us in early 2022. "Growing up in a smaller, more contemporary church in the USA gave Scots quite the imposing vibe," says Grace. "However, immediately after going inside I realised Scots was exactly like back home! The people were so welcoming and genuine in their efforts to get to know me and make me feel comfortable, I couldn't help but feel like I was surrounded by family!"



Grace found Scots' via a search on Google Maps, and listened to a service online.

"I was excited to hear a sermon preached that focused on the scripture and lovingly encouraged us to pursue God," says Grace. "Since coming along in person, I've been encouraged regarding life generally but also in strengthening my relationship with Christ. The commitment to speaking God's truth and helping people understand who Jesus is really helps."

In her time at Scots', Grace has stepped up as a welcomer at the 11am service, and as a leader in our small kids church. She's also been a key part of our young adult community. "I pray that Scots' continues to be a church where God's hand is so evidently at work," says Grace. "It's been great to be part of a historic church that still draws people in and encourages them, and keeps God's word at the foundation of every step of outreach. As I near the end of my time studying here in Melbourne and head for home, I'll pray that the members of Scots continue to be people after God's own heart, reflecting the love and mercy we've all received to the people around them!"

All these recollections hardly touch the surface! We treasure our memories as we continue to trust and serve the Lord Jesus and worship God together in beautiful surroundings amongst warm and caring people, and continue to welcome all who join us. ■





ROYAL OCCASIONS

During her long reign, Queen Elizabeth II twice attended services at Scots' Church. The first visit was in February 1963 at the congregation's 125th anniversary service, and the second was in September 1981 when she visited Melbourne to attend the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting...

The 1963 visit

On her first visit the Queen, accompanied by Prince Philip, was met and welcomed by minister Archibald Crichton Barr, along with the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland and their wives.

The opening hymn was the paraphrase of Psalm 100, *'All people that on Earth do dwell'*. The Old Testament reading was from the first 11 verses from prophet Isaiah, chapter 40. The congregation then sang *'O God, our help in ages past'*. Prince Phillip read from the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 5, verses 1-16 from his own Bible. The translation he used was the New English Bible, first published two years earlier.

Perhaps the most moving part of the service was a hymn composed for the occasion by a Scots' Church member, the poet Peter Bladen, to the beautiful tune, *'Finlandia'* (usually associated with the hymn *'Be still, my soul'*). Here's one of its verses:

*Invoke the strength of God the Father's might,
The Son's great love to witness and revere,
The Holy Ghost to flood our hearts with light,
So shall our day of jubilee appear,
More than a shrine to hallow ancient worth,
A newfound joy and wonderful rebirth.*



Following the service, Her Majesty unveiled the memorial windows and mosaic in the church vestibule. She and Prince Philip signed the church's book of remembrance under their respective coats of arms. The Queen also presented the minister with a lectern Bible, bound in scarlet leather, with a crest on the front cover, and inscribed on the flyleaf to commemorate the visit.

The 1981 visit

Queen Elizabeth visited for a second time on Sunday 27th September, 1981. She was welcomed by the minister Rev Norman Pritchard. During the Service, Dame Pattie Menzies, the widow of former Australian Prime Minister Sir Robert Menzies, presented his banner and crest to be placed in the custody of Scots' Church in memory of her husband. These insignia of the Most Ancient and Most Noble Order of the Thistle from St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, were dedicated to the glory of God by Pritchard who accepted the gift on behalf of the congregation.

The Sunday School children sat on the steps of the apse, directly in front of the Queen.





Afterwards, Her Majesty once more signed the Book of Remembrance.

On this occasion, one detail did not go according to plan. Rowland Ward, his 2014 history, *The Scots' Church Melbourne: A Story of 175 Years*, gives the following account:

“There was some unexpected fallout from the service, although it was not officially mentioned in *The Scots' Church Leaflet* at the time. The Queen had requested that a certain tune be used with the Scottish Paraphrase, ‘*O God of Bethel by whose hand/ thy people still are fed*’. Peter Nicholls, the very competent, strong and demanding organist of St John’s Essendon, ... who had been appointed to Scots’ Church just five months before, played a different tune. This was no accident; Nichols was noted for his strong views on the appropriateness of the music and his view that, as director of music, he should decide what tunes be used. Such views, indeed, had brought on his resignation at Essendon. It was a very hard thing for Pritchard, but he had no option, but to require Nicholls’ resignation.”



In her two visits to Scots’ Church, Queen Elizabeth II left tangible evidence that remains for all to see. She also left indelible memories for those who joined her in worship on those occasions. And perhaps we can say the music director’s refusal to play the Queen’s requested tune during her second visit paved the way for Scots’ Church’s current director of music, Douglas Lawrence AM, to be appointed three years later, in 1984. As they say, every cloud has a silver lining. ■



MEETING YOUR MATCHA

If you're looking for a fresh new taste sensation at your local café, Phil Campbell suggests you try a matcha latte — at least once!

Kermit the Frog once sang that it's not easy being green. But try telling that to Melbourne's newest drink sensation, the matcha latte. It's steamed and frothy, topped with latte art like a regular laneway coffee. But, it's green — lush, verdant, Shrek-like green.

Sound appetising? I wasn't so sure, until a team meeting with our two (younger) Scots' Church assistant ministers in a local café saw me as the only one at the table with a traditional coffee order. The popular choice was a matcha latte with oat milk — making me think it was time to work up the courage to try it.





While Melbourne's love affair with espresso has been legendary, this unlikely green contender emerged from the streets of Tokyo. Ground from specially-grown green tea leaves, matcha offers a rich, umami flavour profile claimed to be both soothing and invigorating. Traditionally, it's whisked into hot water for tea ceremonies. The Melbourne version reimagines this as a latte, with the slight additional sweetness of oat milk as a popular variation.

With an early following from our Asian student community, matcha soon gained traction with the city's health-conscious crowd. Its claims of antioxidant benefits and lower caffeine count than coffee promptly caught on. Health foodies and Instagram influencers were charmed by its vibrant green tone and subtle sweetness, and soon, matcha lattes were popping up on menus across the city.

If you look around, matcha is everywhere. Cafés are experimenting with matcha in everything from frappes to croissants, cheesecake and ice cream. The Urban List website highlights *Oko Café, at 131 A'Beckett Street* in the CBD. Named after the Japanese word for 'experiment', Oko exudes a laboratory feel with minimalist décor, abstract light fixtures and matcha lattes sourced straight from the matcha farms in Uji, Japan. "Using Kohiki matcha powder, a premium culinary grade characterised by its robust and full-bodied flavour profile, Oko's matcha features subtle dryness, sweet undertones, and a light astringency," says reviewer Claudia Goundar. "Round out your matcha order with a croissant filled with matcha cream sourced from Garon Bakery — they're absolute fire."

Closer to home base at Scots' Church, the new *Morning Bar Cafe* nestles in the entry of a Flinders Lane car park adjoining St Paul's Cathedral. They devote a whole menu section to "Not Coffee-Not Tea" — including Matcha Latte alongside more established chai and cocoa-based drinks. With a moody, all-black interior and a specialist list of Code Black Coffees, the vibrant green of my first-ever matcha latte offered a high-contrast and appealing splash of colour.

My coffee-seasoned palate took a little more persuading. I chose regular milk, not a plant-based alternative. A pleasant green grassiness emerged through the underlying green tea tone; there was a subtle sweetness, followed by a slightly sharp tang at the back of the palette. But it's mild — very mild. A powdery residue at the bottom confirms the cup's 'ground green tea' origins, as I drain it with a hint of satisfaction. Perhaps I was pleased that I'd jumped aboard the latest trend — and maybe even with the overall experience. It's hard to say, partly because matcha latte offers a milder alternative to the typically robust shot of Melbourne coffee. But I suspect that's exactly the reason for its growing appeal. ■

ORIGIN STORY

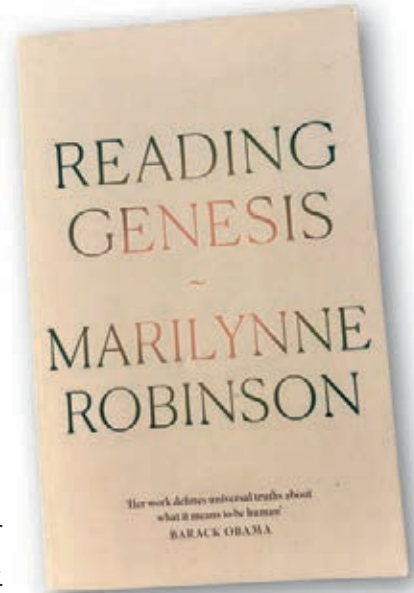
Reading Genesis by Marilynne Robinson
Pp. 344. London: Virago, 2024.

Marilynne Robinson's popular new book "Reading Genesis" provides fresh insights for a wide audience, says Arthur Keefer

The Old Testament has been getting a voice beyond the church pulpit. Australia's own Russell Crowe starred in the film "Noah" in 2014, and "Exodus: Gods and Kings" was released that same year. Jordan Peterson, the Canadian practitioner and professor of psychology turned YouTube life-coach has released a seminar discussion of psychosocial interpretation of the book of Exodus, after his well-received series on the book of Genesis. Meanwhile, highly respected novelist Marilynne Robinson has published a work on the book of Genesis, reaching a remarkably wide audience with her thoughtful work.

Some would say it's remarkable that a woman, now 80 years old, who spent most of her career teaching at the University of Iowa has become a familiar if not household name in the USA, Australia, and Europe. And yet the quality and repute of her novels, along with the unobtrusive way in which she publicly expresses an intelligent Christian faith, make that less surprising. Robinson is one of the rare, and I'd say among the best, cases of the true academic whose voice is heard well beyond the lecture hall.

Robinson's *Reading Genesis* is a 200-plus page stream of thought on the book of Genesis. There are no chapters or chapter headings, only occasional section breaks between any number of paragraphs, and its structure resembles the actual book of Genesis far more than an essay or biblical commentary. Robinson follows the sequence of Genesis itself, and makes abrupt transitions as she moves from one topic to the next. She often returns to a topic, picking it up again, and then putting it down. She at times retells the biblical story but is soon explaining that story as a reader herself. It is, in other words, a form of commentary. The final 100 pages of the book is the King James Version of Genesis, which is helpful for those who want to read Genesis alongside Robinson's prose, but not helpful for anyone unfamiliar with Genesis who wants to jump back and forth for reference. Robinson includes no chapter and verse references in her own portion of the book, so she mentions Abimelech, Abraham and Isaac, and scenes of Jacob's deception, for instance, but gives no indication as to where these people and events occur in the book of Genesis itself. In that sense, it's as much a "guide for the already familiar" as it is an invitation to "become more familiar."





There's no sign of what scholarly sources Robinson has read in her own study of Genesis, but she has clearly read widely. She gives a notable amount of attention to ancient Mesopotamian literature, especially *Enuma Elish* – a story about how and why the universe was created that bears a likeness to Genesis 1 – and the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, which has some similarity to the biblical flood story. She gives due respect to the similarities and differences between these biblical and non-biblical stories, and I think most readers unfamiliar with that world of literature will find her comparisons fascinating. “The biblical vision of Creation,” she writes, “is structured around there being no preexisting reality of any kind, an absolute difference from other myth” (p. 30). With this also comes comments about the literary conventions of Genesis, such as its repetition of scenes and inner connections, as well as glimpses into the book's original production and transmission. New for me was the observation that Genesis is framed by two stories of forgiveness, the Lord showing mercy to Cain and Joseph showing mercy to his brothers (p. 211).

When it comes to the narratives of Genesis 12-50, Robinson's reading includes moral and psychological reflections about the characters, something that she herself is well-versed in as a novelist. Her novels, too, reflect a familiarity with biblical narratives, so it is interesting to see Robinson now writing about the Bible rather than writing her own stories under the Bible's influence.

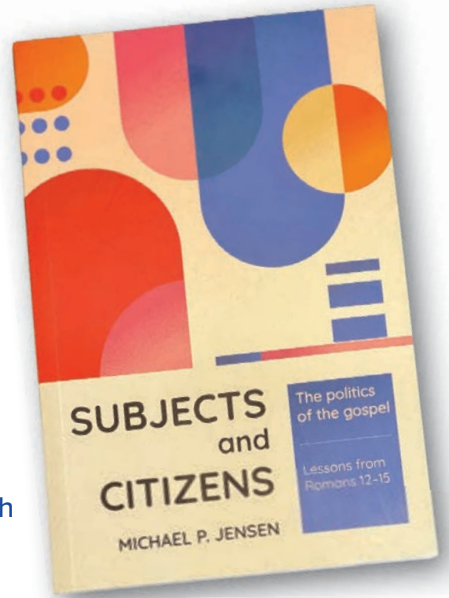
She also includes a large amount of theological reflection, including her own theologizing about the book. For example, based on the statement in Gen 2:9 that “out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight” (KJV), she says “Two things are signified, that God as the creator of beauty intends it for us to see and enjoy, and that He gives us the gifts of apprehension this pleasure requires, which is nothing less than a sharing of His mind with us in this important particular” (p. 39). Aside from her typically elegant and insightful comments, Robinson makes regular reference to the biblical covenant and God's commitment to his creation and creatures, which I found both unexpected and satisfying.

Robinson does refer to other Old Testament books, and sometimes to the New Testament, but I would not say she reads Genesis as “Christian scripture.” It is read as covenant scripture, which I say as an affirmation, but the person and work of Jesus Christ, or New Testament theology, don't feature in this book. If you're not familiar with that much bigger story, it's a thread worth pulling. Robinson's *Reading Genesis* will, I think, best suit those who are familiar with Genesis, perhaps highly familiar, and are amenable to an unstructured form of prose that is, in some ways, characteristic of Robinson's non-fiction writing. That reader should find this book stimulating, insightful, and maybe even educational. ■

POLITICS OF LOVE

Subjects and Citizens, by
Michael P. Jensen

Politics and Christianity are a dangerous mix, causing widespread polarisation. Phil Court reviews a book that clears a path towards putting love into practice through our varied political convictions...



Violent anti-immigration riots and massed counter demonstrations in England; mayhem in the Middle East... War in Ukraine and Sudan, and poisonous vitriol and shallow sloganeering in the USA... that's the stuff of our daily news cycle. And here in Australia, sharply divided opinions on every hot-button issue.

Sad to say, some who identify as Christians have entrenched themselves in the culture wars and are even leading the charge in various mutually hostile political camps.

That said, Michael Jensen's recent book, *Subjects and Citizens* is a timely and much-needed fresh look at the age-old subject of politics. He chooses to write to self-identifying Christian readers. It is, however, just as helpful for anyone curious to know if a coherent Christian approach to politics is possible.

Jensen is an Australian Anglican pastor, theologian and public commentator. A couple of months ago, Scots' Church hosted his Melbourne book launch, moderated by Barney Swartz from the Centre for Public Christianity and former long-time Religion Editor of *The Age*.

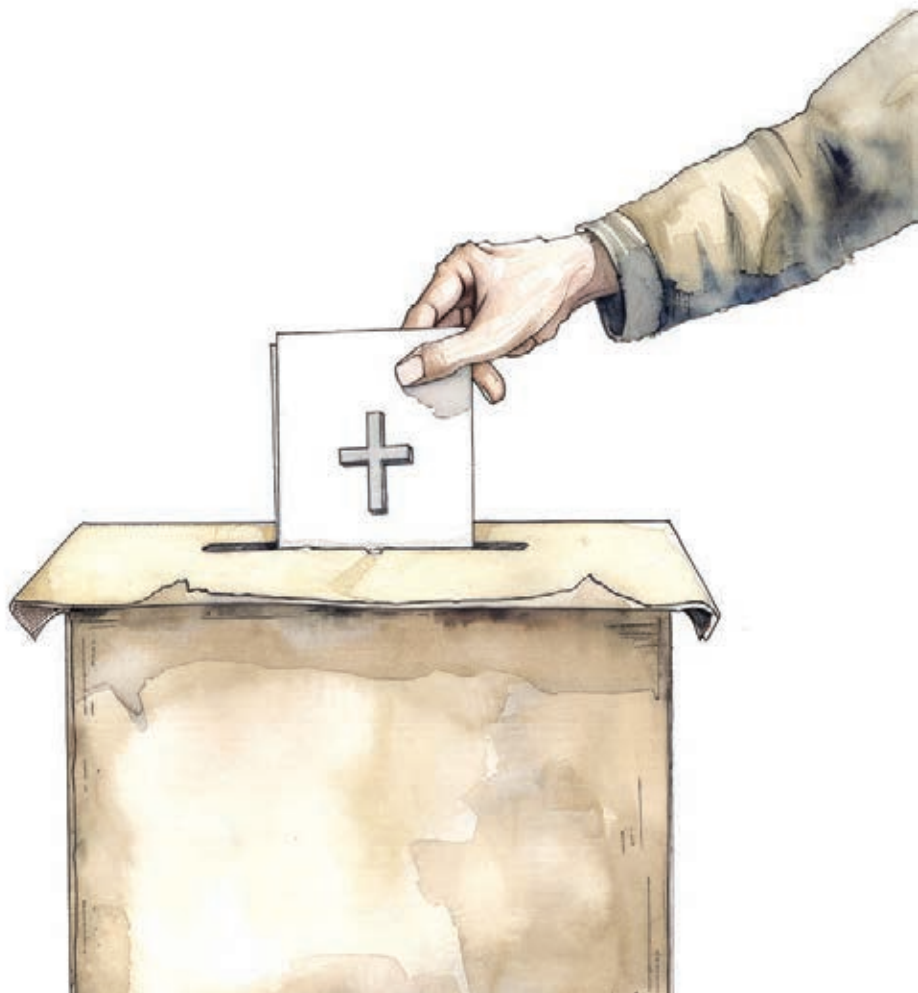
Why did Jensen write this book? He tells the reader it's "*because Christians have been too tempted to think that changing the government or changing the law (or not changing it) is what they should be all about.*" In contrasting this mindset with what he calls the politics of the Gospel, he uses the Apostle Paul's letter to the infant church in Rome as his yardstick for how followers of Jesus ought to interact with the prevailing government, culture and politics of their surrounding society. It's a yardstick, Jensen argues, for all epochs and all societies.



In setting out his case, Jensen borrows a common phrase from the world of IT. He describes our dominant adversarial party-politics as Politics 1.0, and the “politics of the gospel” as Politics 2.0. It’s shorthand for distinguishing these quite different mindsets throughout the book. Not that he’s arguing for a purist holier-than-thou separation from worldly politics, as advocated by some Christian-like sects or cults. Rather, he wants Christians’ involvement in Politics 1.0 to be governed (and their aspirations moderated) by the principles and practices of Politics 2.0.

If you expect (or hope) Jensen will end up hitching his wagon to one political party or another, you will be disappointed.

“Inside and outside the church, many of us are passionate about our politics, but we should recognise the freedom that Christians have in Christ to disagree over political philosophy.”



The two primary, and sometimes seemingly contradictory priorities that drive Politics 1.0 are justice, on the one hand, and compassion on the other. But, Jensen maintains, *“There is not a one-size-fits-all political philosophy that will always deliver maximally on justice and care for the outcast, in every time and place.”* If that is so, then maybe the best a Christian voter can do is to vote for candidates who claim to be Christian. Jensen disagrees. *“Simply choosing the Christian candidate is not a guarantee of competence or honesty, sadly. Someone may be a genuine Christian and an incompetent governor. Another may be able to put on a façade of Christian faith but not display any integrity in government.”*

So, is there, after all, a litmus test that over-rides party loyalties and cuts to the chase? Jensen says there is.

“Christians should be advocates for the rights of the defenceless and voiceless rather than for the powerful. How society ensures that the poor, the frail, the elderly, and the vulnerable are looked after is a complicated and inexact business on which we may validly disagree, but the disposition of the Christian towards the rights and needs of the weak is non-negotiable.”

One form of politics that fails this test is what has come to be called Christian nationalism. It's particularly blatant in US politics, but it pops up in Australia, too. Jensen condemns it. *“It is with shame that we can easily point to chapters of Christian history in which love of one's ethnicity or patriotism, or simple racism, has featured more strongly than the welcome of one another that the New Testament commands of us. This is one of the deep perversions of the gospel that result from Christian nationalism. It is far too easy to think that if one's nation is a Christian nation, then to be English, or Greek or American is to be Christian.”*

Jensen argues that the starting point for any Christian interaction with political issues has to be love; specifically love of neighbour. He puts it this way: *“An orientation to love of neighbour will result in the treatment of others with equal dignity and personhood... If you start with love, you end up with an equality that allows for differences between persons. I don't think you can say with any confidence that the reverse is true, however: any number of brutal regimes in the past two centuries have started with equality as an abstract principle to be enforced.”*

There is much more in Jensen's book to engage any thoughtful reader, with chapters focussing on the politics of peace, respect, love, selflessness and hospitality.

Put together, it mounts a thoughtful and challenging appeal to adopt a politics founded on the person of Jesus himself, the Prince of Peace.

Phil Court



A PLACE TO CALL HOME

The unfolding story of the Bible is reflected in our Scots' Church architecture, writes Rosemary Fethers...

The beauty of Scots' Church Melbourne, and the impression of “home-coming” are two common themes in the remarks of newcomers. Throughout the last two millennia, people have striven at great cost to build beautiful and inspiring places to gather for Christian worship. It is remarkable that it took less than two years for David Mitchell and his team to build Scots' Church, which aspired (in the words of Architect Joseph Reed) to be “the most beautiful building in Australia.”

Many factors have influenced church architecture through the ages, such as the status of Christianity in society, wealthy patronage, the presence of relics, current architectural trends, available materials and technology. Adjunct functions such as hospice care or schools also affected the type of building, as did the theology of the time.

The one constant factor has been the incorporation of essential biblical messages into the internal and external architecture as a reminder of the Christian journey.

As you enter the Russell Street doors of Scots' Church, you'll find yourself surrounded by various windows. The Good Shepherd welcomes us in, and then the story of the Christian journey begins to unfold with Old Testament prophets, followed by New Testament figures, John the Baptist and the Four Evangelists, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. After ascending the stairs, two of the most important promises of Christianity are there to inspire us further, the Resurrection of Jesus, and the Gift of the Holy Spirit.

Thus inspired, we progress into the back of the church (the 'Narthex', in architectural terms) and notice a carved wooden screen separating this and the main body of the church. The narthex was traditionally a place for penitents, or for people who were not full members of the congregation.

The position of the screen signifies the new covenant - God's earthly presence is with the members of His Church, who love and obey the words of Jesus. God's presence is no longer enclosed in a tabernacle, screened from the eyes of all; and later in the Holy of Holies in the Jerusalem Temple, which could only be entered by the High Priest once a year on behalf of the people. That screen was torn in two at the time of the crucifixion, signifying the new, open access to God through Jesus.

Our screen contains several quatrefoils, a sign of the four evangelists, the authors of the Gospels where we learn of the life, words, sacrificial death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The body of the church building has a design that has not changed much since Roman times. It appears like a Roman basilica with a central nave, columns and low roofed side isles. The eye is drawn to the apse which was the traditional semicircular raised and domed structure of Roman authority and in church buildings has come to signify the authority of God.

The linearity of churches, looking in a straight line towards the apse, indicates that both time and the Christian journey are linear, heading towards a God-given goal, rather than a circular, more pagan concept of time.

Many churches would have the baptismal font at this back entry point to remind the faithful of their baptism. Some churches had external baptistries - only the baptised could enter. Post reformation churches often moved the baptismal font to the front so all the sacraments were together.

The columns that run down each side represent the twelve apostles, the pillars holding up the church. From the earliest times, churches have often had columns in multiples of twelve for this reason. Scots' Church has twelve columns supporting the body of the church and four columns in the transept.

The people of God's Church are represented by all the colours in the stained-glass windows. In the book of Exodus, under God's instruction, it was the twelve tribes of Israel that were each represented by a different coloured precious stone in the high priest Aaron's breast plate. However, with the New Covenant the precious stones come to represent the faithful people of all the nations. In many significant churches the stained-glass windows and mosaics all originally contained these precious stones.

Back in the twelfth century, the desire to represent the Light of God and the Holy Spirit influenced the development of Gothic architecture; Romanesque (classical) churches tended to be fairly dark. The pointed gothic arch allowed much higher roofs and much more space for windows resulting in very large stained-glass windows and light filled churches. Gothic revival architecture was championed by the architect Augustus Pugin (England 1812-1852) who was raised Presbyterian but converted to Catholicism because he disliked the plainness of the Scottish church. He felt that the





visual imagery which was typically purged from churches post reformation was instructive, rather than idolatrous. At that time there was a general move away from the neoclassical church architecture because some felt it was too pagan, too industrial and too rational.

The contrast between Gothic revival and Neoclassical architecture can be seen when comparing the internal and external architecture of Scots' (Gothic Revival) and the Collins St Baptist Church (Neoclassical).

A step onto the carpet down the nave reveals a fleur-de-lys pattern representing the Trinity, with us throughout our journey. There are many fleur-de-lys in Scots', on the ends of all the pews and around the apse. The Trinity is also represented in all the side windows which are trefoil shape and topped with smaller quatrefoil windows.

The nave (from Latin *navis*, ship) has come to mean the whole area between the narthex and the transept. So we can take a seat and sail towards salvation.

Sitting in the body of the church you'll be surrounded by many of the great parables and teachings of Jesus, pictured on the side windows and great rear window. The windows in the transept illustrate some of the momentous events in the life of Jesus. The eight-sided font reminds us that the Day of Resurrection occurred on the day after the seventh day, that is, the new day of creation in Christ.

Flowers are incorporated into the plaster work reminding us that the Church is the Bride of Christ.

From our position in the nave, our main focus is towards the apse which contain the symbols of God's Kingdom, power and salvation. The three apse windows depict Faith, Hope and Charity, the theological virtues associated with salvation.



Faith with shield, Bible and Cross, Hope holds our ship and a large anchor. Charity (or Selfless Love) holding the orb of power is the central, most important figure.

In many great churches, the apse has a rich portrayal of an enthroned Christ and depictions of the New Jerusalem, concepts of paradise and the Kingdom of Heaven. These often included ordered stars and ordered flowers - the new order in heaven and earth. Ours is a subtle version, with ordered golden fleur-de-lys.

The apse architecture and decoration reminds us that if we have faith in the Lord Jesus and show love, we share the hope of the new beginning of God's Kingdom to be revealed to us. As the Apostle Paul says in 1 Corinthians 13, "For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face... [for] now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love."

The window closest to the representation of the God's Kingdom in the apse is the window entitled "Suffer the Children", an archaic form of saying "allow" or "permit" – a reminder of the fact that Jesus said, "Allow the children to come to me, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these." It's a tragic irony that these words from Jesus have been so overlooked – and a key motivator behind our own highly regulated Scots' Church safety policies.

The Cross itself – the most well-known Christian symbol - has various small representations but is most evident in the fact that the whole building is, itself, in the shape of a cross. The architecture thus reveals a good summary of the Christian Biblical story from Old Testament prophecies to the promise of salvation, while also illustrating the Christian journey of the faithful. ■





SHINING A LIGHT ON STAINED GLASS ARTISTS

With specialized skills from a bygone age, the stained-glass artists who created the windows of Scots' Church still speak to us today, says Rosalie Strother...

When viewed from inside, a sunny Melbourne day reveals the full beauty of the renowned stained-glass windows of Scots' Church. Each window portrays a biblical narrative, parable or figure with skill and nuance – all superb examples of this specialised art form.

Created by artists working in close partnership with a manufacturer, the windows illustrate an intimate knowledge of their biblical subject matter, reflected in the detail and execution of the design.

Walk through the main entrance to the church from Russell Street – open from 10am to 2pm weekdays, and Sunday mornings from 10am – and look back at ‘The Good Shepherd’ over the door. Proceeding up the steps to the foyer, you’ll pass Moses, Samuel, Elijah and John the Baptist on the left, and gospels writers Matthew, Mark, Luke and John on your right. Once inside, art surrounds you from all angles, from the oldest and most prominent at the rear of the church (1876) to the most recent in the vestibule, installed in 1963.

Inside the nave or main body of the church, turn back to face the gallery where ‘Teachings of Jesus’ is flanked on each side by the pipes of the gallery organ. Sir Samuel Wilson, then President of the Victorian Legislative Assembly, presented the window soon after the building’s completion. Manufactured by Ferguson and Urie of Melbourne, it ranks with the best imports of the time and is classified by the National Trust. The window shows eight episodes from the gospels in elaborate detail: four events in Jesus’ life, and four of his parables.

The windows were designed by artist David Relph Drape, who was born in Greenrow, in England’s north-west, in 1821. The son of Quaker parents, Drape was in his 30s when his interest and skill in painting and stained-glass window design developed. After an apprenticeship in nearby Carlisle, Drape formed a successful business partnership with fellow artisan John Scott. They offered services that included plain and decorative house painting, ecclesiastical decoration, glazing, glass staining and carving.

In 1858, Drape moved to Melbourne with the promise of working as a senior stained glass artist for the plumbing and glazing firm Ferguson and Urie. Drape’s wife remained in England due to illness. Ferguson and Urie, based in North Melbourne, was the first commercial stained-glass company in the colony. But Drape arrived in Melbourne to find the colonial city in the grips of the Gold Rush - and no work. In fact, almost a third of Melbourne’s men fled the city to find their fortune. Drape joined them, settling in Maldon, where he worked as an architect for the next three years. He designed several prominent Maldon buildings, including Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Maldon Hospital and the Beehive Mine Chimney, all of which still stand today.

By the early 1860s, tradesmen and failed gold diggers were returning to Melbourne for work. Ferguson and Urie finally launched a stained-glass window workshop in Curzon Street, and in 1863, they enticed Drape back to Melbourne. By this time, he had received news his wife had died. In 1864, he married Jane Selby, whose family he had known in Carlisle. They bought a cottage on Chapman Street near the workshop.

In 1873, Ferguson and Urie established the Hotham School of Art to encourage young men to develop the skills needed for the stained-glass business. Drape taught ornamental shading and landscape and became founding member of the Victorian Academy of the Arts.

Drape spent 19 years with the firm, designing and painting many landscape scenes and portraits in ecclesiastical and secular





stained-glass windows. He died in 1882 and was buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

The memorial apse at the front of the church has three single stained-glass windows representing faith, hope and charity. These windows are dedicated to the memory of an early minister, the Rev Irving Hetherington and his colleague, the Rev Peter Sinclair Menzies. These windows are the work of artist Antoine Joseph van der Poorten, imported from Belgium and installed in 1876, then dedicated in 1879.

Faith, on the left, depicts a figure who holds the shield of faith on the left arm to quench the flaming arrows of the evil one (Ephesians 6:16). The symbol of the cross appears on the shield. Her left hand grasps a Bible, and a cross is held high in her right.

Hope, on the other side, has her left hand resting on an anchor, an early symbol of our hope 'anchored in Christ' (Hebrews 6:19). A sailing ship rests on her right hand and forearm - an ancient Christian reminder of the one who carried his disciples to a safe harbour through the storm.

Charity, the central window, shows Christ holding an orb with a cross in his left hand, and his right hand raised in blessing.

The creator of these windows, Antoine Joseph van der Poorten, was born in Brussels 1849. His father, Joseph Leopold, was initially a house painter who established himself as a stained-glass painter in St Jans Molenbeek near Brussels. Antoine worked in his father's business as a young man and accompanied his windows to Melbourne to see them installed.

Antoine defied his parents' plans to have him join the Roman Catholic priesthood, instead travelling to the Belgian Congo and Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), escaping a shipwreck in a small boat. He visited Australia with an Irish friend, then returned to Sri Lanka, where he was appointed the first Consul to Belgium in 1885. He travelled between Brussels and the Belgian Congo in 1892, assuming the position of manager of the plantations of Leopold II in the Congo Free State prior to the monarch selling it to the Belgian government. Van der Poorten and his Singhalese wife, Ranmenike, had eight children. He died in 1936.

Although Antoine Joseph van der Poorten did not pursue a life-long career in stained glass artistry, the windows of the apse are a lasting reminder of his extraordinary ability.

When you visit Scots' Church, take the time to walk around. Along with the fine artistry, the stained glass windows may well inspire you with their beauty and their message. ■

FLAGS OF VALOUR

Scots' Church is home to many flags and banners that bear ongoing testimony to our historic links with historic campaigns, says Rosalie Strother...

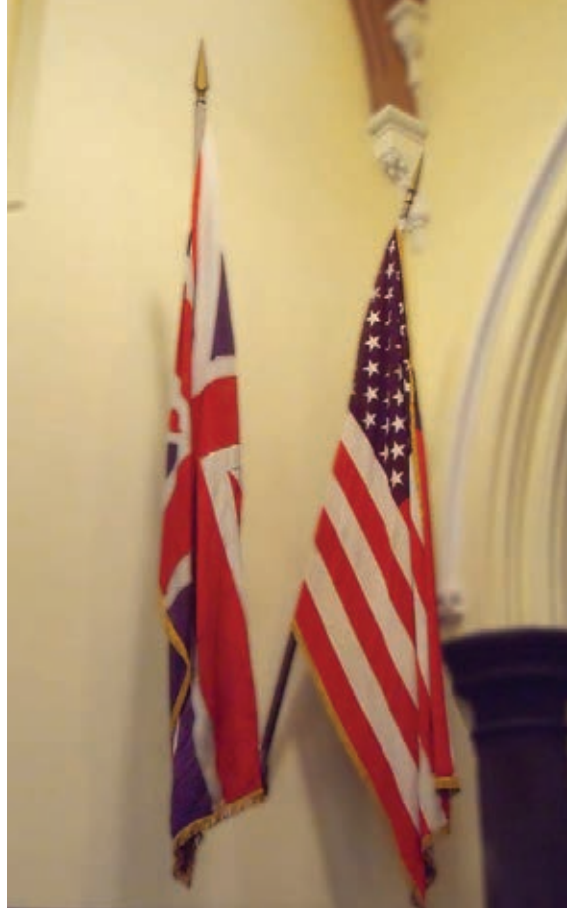
The story of the Red Cross flag at Scots' Church in Melbourne is one of courage and resourcefulness. During the Great War, World War I, it was carried by the 10th Australian Field Ambulance AIF, and was damaged by bullet fire. Repaired with patches of material after the war, it symbolised the resilience of those who served under it.

The same flag was then presented to the 2/9th Australian Field Ambulance 2nd AIF before they embarked in 1941 and was used throughout their Malayan campaign, flying atop St Andrew's Cathedral in Singapore when it was used as a main dressing station during the desperate final days before Singapore's capitulation.

After the fall of Singapore in 1942, a driver from the 2/9th Australian Field Ambulance found the flag discarded on a heap of rubbish outside the Cathedral. Recognising its significance, he retrieved it and brought it back to his unit at Changi prison, where Major Grant Forsyth, the Quartermaster, carefully sewed the flag into his pillow, sleeping on it throughout his time as a prisoner of war. This was a small act of defiance and hope, a way of holding onto a symbol of humanity and protection amidst the dehumanising conditions of captivity.

After surviving Changi, Forsyth brought the flag back to Australia. Once more, it was unfurled and used by the 2/9th Australian Field Ambulance Association for ceremonial occasions such as Anzac Day and Remembrance Day. The flag, still symbolising survival and sacrifice, was laid up in Scots' Church on Remembrance Day in 1984.

Banners like these are symbols of national pride for military



units and have deep personal meaning for those who served under them. They are associated with the memories of comrades lost, battles fought, and the ideals that motivated those who went to war. The Red Cross flag, with its history of being carried through two world wars and its survival through the darkest days of the Malayan campaign, is a powerful symbol of faith and humanity.

The story of the American flag housed in Scots' Church is equally poignant, carrying with it the memory of a heroic chaplain with a personal connection to the church. At the rear of the church, on the right side facing the back, the Star-Spangled Banner hangs alongside the Union Jack. This American flag was a gift from the Rev. Dr. Daniel Poling, who served as the Turnbull Trust preacher at Scots' Church in 1944. Dr. Poling donated the flag in memory of his son, Clark, who lost his life in the sinking of the United States Army transport ship *Dorchester* during World War II.

Clark Poling's story is one of faith, courage and ultimate sacrifice. Born in



Columbus, Ohio, in 1910, he was raised in Auburndale, Massachusetts. After completing his secondary education, he attended Hope College, where he decided to continue a long family tradition by becoming a minister himself. He completed his studies at Rutgers University in New Jersey and went on to Yale Divinity School, graduating in 1936. Poling married, and he and his wife had a son, with a daughter born about three months after his death.

When the United States entered the war in 1941, Poling volunteered for service as a chaplain, driven by a deep sense of duty and a desire to spiritually support the troops. He initially served with a transport regiment in Mississippi and later attended the Army Chaplains School at Harvard

University. It was there that Poling, now ordained by the Reformed Church, met his fellow chaplains, who would soon join him on the fateful journey aboard the hospital ship *Dorchester*: Chaplains George Fox (Methodist), Alexander Goode (Jewish) and John Washington (Catholic). These four would later be known as the "Immortal Chaplains" for their heroic actions on the night of 3 February 1943.

Shortly after midnight, the *Dorchester*, carrying 751 passengers, 130 crew members, and 23 naval personnel from Newfoundland to Greenland, was torpedoed by a German submarine. The ship was less than 300 kilometres from its destination when disaster struck. The *Dorchester* began to sink rapidly in the icy waters, and hundreds of men scrambled for the lifeboats, several of which had been damaged in the attack. Instead of seeking safety for themselves, the four chaplains began organising the frightened soldiers, distributing life jackets stowed in a locker. When the supply ran out, each chaplain gave his own life jacket to another soldier, knowing full well the consequences of their actions.

As the ship sank, just 27 minutes after the torpedo struck, the four chaplains were



seen with their arms linked, praying together as the icy waters closed over them. Their selfless actions that night saved the lives of many men and left an indelible mark on the hearts of all who heard their story. Of the 904 aboard the Dorchester, only 227 survived. The heroism of the chaplains was widely recognised; they were all posthumously awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for extraordinary heroism and the Purple Heart. In 1961, the U.S. Congress awarded a Special Medal for Heroism to honour the memory of the four men.

The original American flag presented to Scots' Church in memory of Clark Poling did not survive an attempt at restoration. However, the replacement flag, which has hung in the church since 1966, carries its own significance. It was used at the memorial service for the late President John F. Kennedy at Laverton Air Force Base, linking it to another moment of profound national grief and remembrance.

The Red Cross and American flags in Scots' Church are more than historical artefacts; they embody the stories of those who served, suffered and sacrificed during times of war. They remind us of the human cost of conflict and the enduring values of courage, resilience and selflessness that transcend the horrors of battle. Whether carried into the heat of battle or laid up as a symbol of peace, these flags continue to inspire and remind us of the profound impact that individuals can have, even in the most trying circumstances. In this way, the flags of Scots' Church stand as enduring testimonies to the legacy of those who fought for freedom. ■





TOWER OF STRENGTH

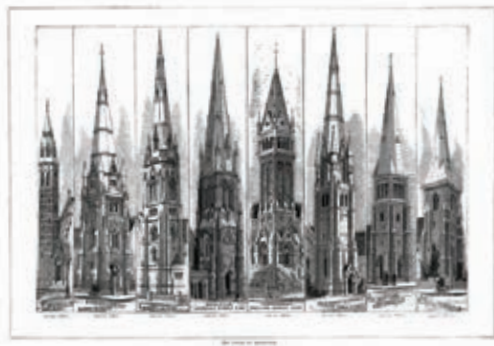
The spire of Scots' Church was, for a time, the highest point in Melbourne. But through the 150 years of our history, it's been through some ups and downs, says Phil Campbell...

When built in 1874, the Scots' church spire reached a height of 211ft, which *The Argus* described as "the most conspicuous elevation in the city." That's 64.31 metres in today's terms - but it didn't stay that way for long. In 1923, after just 49 years aloft, *The Argus* describes (and pictures) a major renovation. "The science of church spire construction ordains that the pinnacle of the spine shall be built in two sections on the ground, and then lifted into place, instead of being constructed on its base stone by stone."

Just a few years later in 1936, more work was needed. "When cleaning of the spire was undertaken last year it was discovered that the spire and tower were unsafe, and rebuilding was undertaken," says *The Argus* on August 17, 1936. "Inside the spire, from base to within 30 feet of the top, an 8-inch reinforced covering was placed on the four sides, and the stone work is now a veneer. It will now be possible at any future date to take any stone out and replace it. The spire is now regarded as everlasting."

The repairs were completed in dangerously high winds. "The laying of the stone was undertaken during a severe storm, with gusts estimated at 40 miles an hour," says *The Argus*. "The architect, Mr. W. M. Shields, who mounted the spire to superintend the work,





had to be tied to a scaffold post.” Perhaps that should have been seen as a portent - as shown by the Titanic a few decades before, claims that we can build anything ‘everlasting’ are always overstated.

In another severe storm in 1963, just 27 years later, the top of the spire was extensively damaged and had to be removed. A temporary replacement was 40 feet lower, standing at a more modest 52.1 metres.

However, in 1989 the exterior stonework was restored, and the spire rebuilt to its original height, regaining its traditionally important - though these days more modest - position in the Melbourne skyline. The reconstruction of the spire required historical research to ensure the new spire matched the original design as closely as possible. The new structure carefully replicated the original design by Joseph Reed and was seen as a significant achievement in heritage preservation, and the spire today continues to be a defining feature of the Scots’ Church.



Even so, the fact remains that while ever since the biblical account of the Tower of Babel in Genesis chapter 9 humanity has been trying to reach up to the heavens, we’re bound to be frustrated. In other words, while these days we might aspire to build higher and higher into the sky, it’s only the fact that God himself has reached down to us in the person of Jesus Christ that we have any hope of knowing him. As Jesus says in John 3:13, “No one has ascended into heaven except he who descended from heaven, the Son of Man.” ■





HAPPILY EVER AFTER...

A pioneer aviator, a famous singer and a rock star – among the thousands of marriages at Scots' Church, these three made headlines at the time, says Rosalie Strother...

All weddings are special occasions for the bride and groom, and for family and friends. Scots' Church has provided a beautiful setting for thousands of these happy events over

the past 150 years. Every so often the wedding of a celebrity couple captures the imagination of a much wider audience; these that follow are just three of many!

Charles Kingsford Smith was an Australian aviation pioneer. He piloted the first transpacific flight, and the first flight between Australia and New Zealand. His first marriage in 1923 was to Thelma Corboy; this took place at the Registrar's Office, Marble Bar, Western Australia. After an unsuccessful marriage the couple divorced in early 1929.

Late in 1929 Kingsford Smith met Mary Powell on an ocean voyage from the United States to Australia. She was the daughter of a Melbourne businessman, and was engaged to Kingsford Smith before the end of the year.

The couple were married at Scots' Church on 10 December 1930. The best man was Kingsford Smith's friend and fellow aviator Charles Ulm. The wedding was the society event of the year and attracted over 10,000 spectators, disrupting traffic in Collins Street for hours.

Almost 40 years later, on 21 November 1969, Judith Durham from "The Seekers" married her musical director Ron Edgeworth, at Scots' Church.

Judith had left the Seekers in July 1968. She embarked on a solo singing career which also included acting, and her popularity as a singer never waned. It was while working in London Durham met brilliant pianist Ron Edgeworth, and had asked him to come to Australia with her to be music director for her first solo tour. They became a couple and married at Scots' church where her parents had married three decades earlier.



Judith wore an exquisitely simple gown of white organza. A deeply spiritual person, her faith in Jesus Christ which was reflected in the path she took throughout her career and personal life, and symbolised at her wedding by the fact that she carried a white prayer book and a single white carnation. Her sister Beverley, also dressed in white organza with a cinnamon sash, was maid of honour and Ron's brother Pat Edgeworth of Bristol UK was best man.

Huge crowds bustled outside the doors of Scots' to catch a glimpse of the couple after the wedding, before the group moved to a small informal reception with about 50 guests at the Southern Cross Hotel.

Judith Durham has been rated as one of Australia's greatest women singers along with Dame Nellie Melba and Dame Joan Sutherland. Her pure voice remained distinctively unmatched during her lifetime.

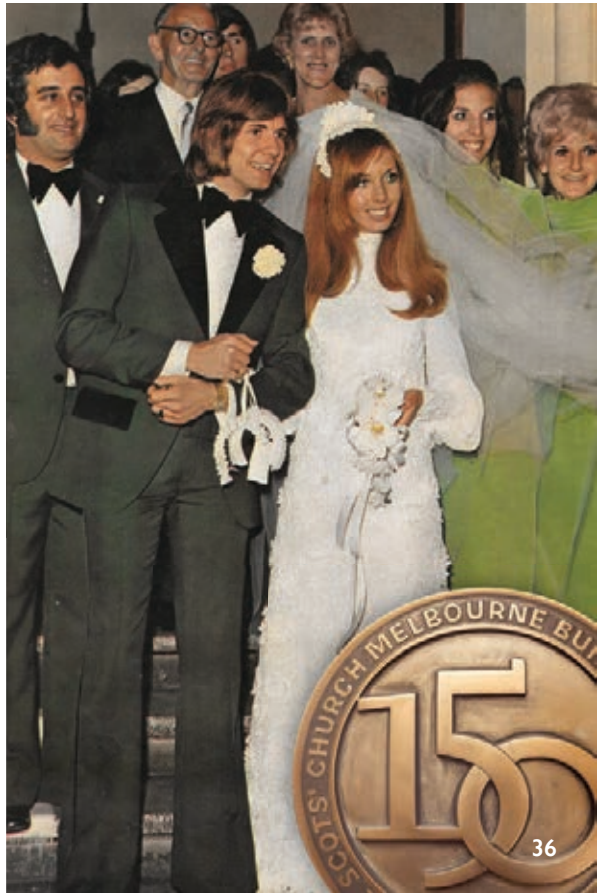
In late October 1970 popular rock singer-songwriter Ronnie Burns and dancer Maggie Stewart were married at Scots' church in what was described by the media as 'pop wedding of the year!' Police were on hand to control the anticipated crowds as the couple arrived, although a violent rainstorm sweeping across Melbourne saw people scurrying for shelter.

With arc lights and television cameras in place, the wedding had the atmosphere of a full-scale television production.

Maggie wore a fitted dress of heavily embroidered Swiss lace with gently bloused sleeves of chiffon. Her high-heeled, wet-look white boots with silver heels contrasted a traditional full veil and she carried a small bouquet of white camellias. Her sister and a close friend were bridesmaids, dressed in vivid citrus green velvet. The groom and his attendants wore suits of dark green.

The wedding ceremony included the singing of the 23rd psalm. The couple left the church to the strains of the Wedding March, where their way was blocked by fans eager to wish them well. The guest list included many friends working in the television and pop industry.

Following the ceremony more than 150 guests attended a lively reception at a Melbourne discotheque. It was noted that the guests were dressed in a wide variety of clothing, ranging from formal to strictly casual. ■



HONOURING FAMOUS LIVES

State funerals are held by the government to acknowledge contributions of individuals to the nation...

Several State funerals have been hosted by Scots' Church over the years, including a service for Dame Nellie Melba, one of Australia's greatest singers who had strong links to Scots', and two for Prime Ministers with Scottish Presbyterian heritage.

After an illness of some weeks **Dame Nellie Melba**, Helen Mitchell died in Sydney on 23 February 1931. Rumours suggested her death was due to complications after a facelift. She wanted to be buried in Lilydale Cemetery, so her coffin was transported to Melbourne by train in a special carriage.

Melba's State funeral service was held at Scots' Church on 26 February at 1.00 pm. The Hobart Mercury provided a moving account of the service as follows:

'During the morning a great crowd passed through the church to take its last look upon the coffin which lay before the apse, surrounded by flowers and draped with the Australian flag. Circumstance lent an even greater pathos to the occasion than was inherent in it, for it was in this church, which her father built, that Melba worshipped as a child. Now, after the triumph and tumult of the years her body had been borne to it, again to lie for a time in the silence of that sanctuary of noble stone, which once thrilled to her own incomparable singing.

'When the service began, the church was full and people were standing at the sides by pillars wreathed with laurel. The faint throb of the first organ notes ceased, and the congregation rose and sang, "Jesu, Lover of my Soul." Prayer followed, and the Moderator of the Presbyterian Assembly and Scots' Minister, the Right Rev. Dr. W. Borland spoke. He said: "The Lord giveth and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord. As we pay our last tribute to the memory of our great countrywoman, let us keep in mind what the Lord gave when He raised up in our nation Dame Nellie Melba. There is sorrow in many hearts to-day and deep sympathy for those nearest and dearest to the great lady for whom we mourn, but there is more of gratitude even than of sorrow, even than of personal human sympathy. That gratitude is shared by millions of fellow mortals in every land throughout the world. No one in these two generations, which most of us here have



known, has been so wonderfully gifted as she, whose voice thrilled the hearts of millions, whose understanding directing that voice made possible that matchless sympathy for all things human, and for many things divine which enabled her to interpret the very soul of true music.'

Girls from the Albert Street Conservatorium joined with the choir of the Church in singing "O, for the Wings of a Dove," from Mendelssohn's "Hear My Prayer." When the congregation had sung "Rock of Ages," Dr. Borland gave the Benediction.

Outside Scots' Church and all along the route to Lilydale Cemetery, huge crowds gathered. Simplicity marked the ceremonies. The wealth of flowers and the silence of the crowds revealed the intense affection in which Melba was held by all who had heard her voice or come within the scope of her all-embracing charity.

Robert Gordon Menzies retired as Prime Minister in January 1966. He was active in early retirement, spending time in Great Britain and the United States.

While in London in September 1968, Menzies suffered a mild stroke, and in November 1971 a more severe stroke left him completely paralysed on one side. Despite extensive physiotherapy and treatment, he never regained full mobility and relied on a wheelchair outside of his home.



Menzies suffered a heart attack and died on May 15, 1978. A State funeral at Scots' Church was held four days later, on 19 May 1978. Australia's leading politicians, representatives of overseas governments and Prince Charles, representing the Queen, attended the service. There they heard Menzies' old friend, the Reverend Fred McKay, speak of the private Menzies, the family man and friend. Over 100,000 people lined the route from Melbourne to Springvale crematorium. There, in a service attended only by the Menzies family, his body was committed for cremation. A 19-gun salute was fired at the end of the ceremony.



A State funeral for The Right Honourable **Malcom Fraser** AC CH was held at The Scots' Church on Friday 27th March 2015. Mr Fraser, who was Prime Minister of Australia from 1975 to 1983, died on 20th March at 84 years of age.

The service was conducted by Senior Minister Rev. Douglas Robertson, with Assistant Minister Rev. Richard O'Brien also participating. Douglas Lawrence was at the organ, and the Scots' Church choir sang.

The church was filled to capacity, with arrangements in place for an 'overflow' congregation at St. Michael's Uniting Church opposite. The service was attended by dignitaries including the Governor General, the Prime Minister, the Premier of Victoria, and past and present parliamentarians, as well as members of the Fraser family and their many friends. The ABC broadcast the service live on national television.



The service of thanksgiving was dignified, and inclusive of family members. Each of Malcolm and Tamie's children, Mark, Angela, Hugh and Phoebe, as well as granddaughters Hester and Angela, participated in the service.

The National Anthem and an opening prayer were followed by the hymn, 'I vow to thee, my country'. Family members read scripture passages from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8, and Luke 10: 25-37. Hester Fraser then accompanied herself on the piano as she sang a piece she had written in honour of her grandfather called 'The Camellia Tree'.

A eulogy by The Honourable Peter Nixon AO paid tribute to Mr Fraser's long political career, from the time of his election to the seat of Wannan in 1955, when his ability became apparent early, indicating that he would go far. Mr Nixon went on to speak of Mr Fraser's later work in many areas, highlighting his actions toward ending apartheid, and the founding of aid organisation CARE in 1987, which he led from its inception until 2002. He also spoke of the great support Tamie had provided to her husband through the years.

Following the singing of the 23rd Psalm, and the congregational hymn, 'Lead us, Heavenly Father, Lead us,' Rev. Douglas Robertson gave the address. He spoke first of the Frasers' link with Scots' Church. Mr. Fraser had attended on a number of occasions as a member of The Melbourne Scots, and more recently, to launch a book about Rev. John Flynn, 'Angels in the Outback', by Max Griffiths. In earlier times his grandparents had been members, sitting in Pew 112. Rev. Robertson went on to draw a parallel between Mr Fraser, Rev. Flynn and the parable of the Good Samaritan, from the reading in Luke's Gospel. This parable challenges prejudices, and Flynn and Fraser did the same. Each was moved by compassion to take practical action; this drove Flynn into the Australian outback, and Fraser into public life. As he concluded, the Rev. Robertson spoke warmly of the way God reaches out to us in our suffering, through the kindness and comfort of family and friends.

After the congregation joined in singing the hymn, 'The day Thou Gavest, Lord, is ended', the Benediction was pronounced, and the choir sang 'The Lord bless you and keep you', arranged by John Rutter, as the casket was borne from the church. ■



SEEING THE LIGHTS

The spectacular Aurora that lit up our southern skies in May were a highlight, writes Ronnie Cheung...

You may be one of the many fortunate Melburnians who caught a glimpse of the gorgeous southern lights, or Aurora Australis, earlier this year. My family were blessed to be among those who witnessed the spectacle back in May. I said 'blessed' because seeing the aurora had long been on the top of my 'bucket list' before we came to Australia in 2021.

Caused by the strongest solar storm in two decades, I didn't pay much attention to this spectacular phenomenon until my daughter saw it at Deacon University around dusk. We stepped outside our door at home and I saw the first ever aurora in my life. The effect wasn't strong because of the suburban light pollution so we decided to head to Frankston to try our luck.

At the beach we waited with eager anticipation for about an hour in the cool breeze together with dozens of others, not sure whether we would be rewarded for our efforts. After an hour of waiting and chatting on the beach, we started to notice some slight changes in the colour of the sky... pink, then green, becoming ever brighter. It was surreal to me, as I have longed to experience this space-like phenomenon, and now I was watching a spectacular display of the 'southern lights'; this without having to go to Finland. It was also a relief that my son wasn't disappointed, as he hadn't been keen to come!

In the process, I've learned a major fact about the aurora. What we actually see is something to do with our vision. The wave-like aurora shown in the pictures I took was actually only visible through my camera, while the colours I saw directly were far "weaker" and without the "waves". That puzzled me for hours as I was trying to figure it out from the photos and my limited knowledge of physics. Then a thought flashed through my mind:

"Seeing is believing" has been a long-held saying. But in the case of the southern lights "Not-seeing" can also be believing. Or put it this way: something we cannot see exists way beyond our own limited senses. Our believing or non-believing won't change the presence of something. It's really there... and non-seeing, and non-believing might just be our own ignorance, or our limited perception.

At that point, I seem to see something out in space smiling at my stupidity, while I think I'm part of the smartest species in the universe. Worse still, when it comes to matters of life and death, non-believing could be more than stupidity. This reminds me of what Jesus said to the disciple Thomas, who didn't believe accounts of the resurrection before seeing his risen teacher with his own eyes; "You believe because you have seen me. More blessed are those who believe without seeing me." (John 20:29 NLT). Your choice. ■



WHAT WILL SURVIVE OF US IS LOVE

Amy Isham reflects on the slow decline of her mum, and asks big questions about what really matters...

“Do you know the man who lives in the little house on our property?” my mum asks me. “Yes, he’s my brother, Alex, I’m very fond of him,” I answer. We share a smile, because we both know the man and now, for a short time, we know his name.

Small capillaries have burst near the memory centre of mum’s brain, so she picks her way around forgotten words, names, and phrases like a child leaping over submerged stones in a creek. The words she chooses feel like an unfolding folk tale (the man, little house, our property) and I prefer them to “Have you seen Alex today?”

According to Dementia Australia, dementia is the second leading cause of death of all Australians and will likely soon be the first. With this looming statistic, carers need to be available continually for their loved ones, while they face the sorrow of watching them fade away. Their job is not just to keep them safe and fed, but to foster their connection with the world around them.

My brother makes time to wonder with mum daily. They spread oats for the currawong, worry about the wallabies in the Tasmanian drought, linger on photographs on walls and in albums. When I visit from interstate, the sorrow I expect to feel isn’t here, only a mindful joy. Instead of feeling like I am losing something, there’s a powerful sense of gaining something previously lost.

There’s a fading glory in physical and cognitive decline, and a dignity in caregiving that reminds us of God’s image alongside the sacred in everyday life. As we care for the people we love, even as they forget themselves and forget us, we honour them and the God who sees them. ■

Dr Amy Isham is a Melbourne based associate of the Centre for Public Christianity.

CITY WORKERS FIND CALM CONNECTION THROUGH AN ANCIENT TRADITION

Recently the Melbourne Anglican website ran a feature on our new Vespers service at Scots'. Hannah Felsbourg filed this report...

A new take on traditional evensong services is giving young city workers an ancient way to connect with their faith in modern times.

Scots' Church has been running a modern twist on traditional vespers services on the first Thursday of each month since June 2024.

Featuring choral singing, a brief sermon, and prayer, the services have given Christians a space to come after work and connect with God and fellow believers.

Scots' Church senior minister the Reverend Phil Campbell said he hoped attendees would take away a tangible sense of connection with Jesus and find value in fellowship after the service.

He said the goal was to use the ancient traditional paradigm of evensong but lighten it up with contemporary touches like speaking about a current issue.

He wanted vespers to be a still point in attendees' weeks, a time to decompress and connect.

Mr Campbell said research suggested the younger generation was seeking deeper connections and a faith rooted in tradition.

He said the vespers services offered this in a digital age where people often became overstimulated and engrossed in continuous negative scrolling on social media.





The Reverend Arthur Keefer and senior minister the Reverend Phil Campbell lead vespers, alongside the Reverend Justin Ang. Picture: Hannah Felsbourg

“When you pause and take stock you think, ‘There’s got to be more than this,’ and ‘There’s got to be something that goes back further than my social media feed,’” he said.

Rachel Bailey, who was visiting Melbourne from the United States, said attending a vespers service for the first time felt like coming home at the end of the day.

She said her first thought was about how peaceful it was. The church had a coffee machine going and it felt cosy.

Ms Bailey said the smaller service size allowed everyone to sit near the front, creating an intimate atmosphere. It made the service feel like spending time with friends and family.

She said meeting up after the event with other attendees at a nearby restaurant, it was easy to open up, ask questions, and go deeper. It was like a family dinner.

Ms Bailey said her favourite part of the vespers service was the way the sermon connected the scripture or topic to real-life scenarios.

She said she appreciated how this brought the message full circle, helping believers see how they could apply it in their everyday conversations and activities.

The practical examples used in the service made it easier to relate to and understand where God was working in her life.

Vespers is held on the first Thursday of every month (excluding December-January), with coffee from 5:30pm for a 5:45pm start. More information can be found at scotschurch.com/vespers. ■

This article first appeared on The Melbourne Anglican, tma.melbourneanglican.org.au, and was reprinted with permission.



The Scots' Church Melbourne
150TH ANNIVERSARY DATES



GIANT FREE CITY SAUSAGE SIZZLE
Wednesday 30 October at lunch time

ANNIVERSARY SERVICE SUNDAY
Sunday 24 November at 11am
celebrating 150 years of worship in the current building

SCOTS' PROMS CONCERT
Sunday 24 November at 2 pm

HISTORIC DISPLAY OF THE SCOTS' STORY
From 7 November throughout the month
in the foyer of 150 Collins St. building

FULL OF HISTORY. FULL OF LIFE.



scotschurch.com