



Cluster News

August 2022

Welcome to the AUGUST Cluster News offered by the Regional Council to share progress and to keep us more connected and involved as we develop this exciting Cluster venture.

Lunches for Eight

Many thanks to the Forest Hill Hosts and to all who contributed to a wonderfully pleasant time of “getting-to-know-you” on Sunday 21st. We see from the comments in all the News Sheets how much it has been appreciated.



A group at Trevor Thomas's table

Working Group Activities.

Last month's Cluster News explained the formation of eleven Working or Task Groups. These groups each comprising 6-8 members, were to provide suggestions and recommendations as the basis on which the **Proposal** will be written. They met feverishly in August, knowing that their task needed to be completed by mid-August.

On Monday 22nd August, Regional Council met for a special meeting to review these reports.

We thank all 50 members involved in the Working Groups and look forward to the culmination of all our planning and praying. This continues the preparation for us to vote, before the end of the year, on the question **“Do we want to become one congregation?”**

Phil McCredden, our consultant, has been guiding us through this process, encouraging us on our journey.

On 7th September council members from all 3 congregations will share a meal, review the work that's been done and prepare for the next steps. We have been doing this regularly, so relationships and friendships are building as we learn together.

There are still many people hard at work so keeping them in our prayers will be helpful for them and bring mindfulness for us.

The “C” word!

Rev Peter

A recent poll for The Age newspaper indicated a significant increase of support for the new government. The pollsters interpreted this jump to not just the “honeymoon period” but also a “sigh of relief” at the actions of the new government. Yet, even so, a significant minority (about 28%) would have preferred the previous government.

Some change is widely welcomed. Not everyone welcomes the same change. But change is inevitable.

Some change is built into our DNA. Some we choose. Other changes happen to and around us. Some are part of the natural order such as growth and decline. Some are caused by others’ actions or natural world changes. Some we can influence and others we can only choose our response.

Some changes we would prefer, if we have to face them at all, to be incremental. Others changes we would rather be radical. Some changes we would rather retreat from and even try to reverse.

Nothing is startlingly new in anything I have just written. Some of you may even say, “yes, but so what?” Others though may remark more harshly, “stop talking about change. I’m sick of it!” I hear both responses.

Whether we like it or not, we are in a midst of change. Social systems and attitudes are changing. The cultural mix is changing. We proceed through life stages, the growth and the decline. Life is dynamic. That is life.

Yes, change can be threatening or overwhelming. There are some things that help us deal with change. Here are a few:

- **Learn** about the changes and see them as an opportunity to grow as a person.
- Many changes can be anticipated. Just as we **plan** for our children’s education, we can also **plan** for our aging and the consequent limitations.
- Maintaining and building positive relationships with friends, family and our community. This builds and maintains our resilience.
- Foster a listening ear. Listening helps understanding. If we need to be heard, we took can seek out someone we know who listens well.
- Exercise and eat well. This helps us stay healthy and energises us to address the issues.

- Allow yourself to grieve loss. Ironically, our grief can be a cause for celebration because it means we had something that was a blessing. Grief points to love and appreciation. Celebrate the gift.

I’m sure you can add other suggestions to this list. It is by no means exhaustive.

I find it remarkable though that in the midst of such a dynamic existence we call life, religion and the scriptures are commonly used as a tool for resistance to change. Bible passages are quoted to condemn a social change. Religious order is used to restrict worship expressions. Religious practice is a bastion of conservatism.

The Bible though is an anthology of stories of change, challenge, warning, learning, growth and decline. It celebrates change.

The prophets call for repentance, a dramatic change in life direction. They then paint a picture of how radically better life can be.

The scriptures offer hope, invite faith to step forward and call us into a journey of discipleship. The coming reign of God is sought: “Your will be done.” God’s creation of life is celebrated.

In the dynamic existence we live, the one thing that continues to give me courage and hope is the constant affirmation of God’s presence. The greatest gift of all is offered to us. All we need to do is ask.

¹³ If you then... know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” (Lk 11:13 NRSV)



Signs of Spring.

Magnolia merrill

Face Forward.

Recently, the lectionary (in Luke chapter 9) took us to some negative sayings of Jesus – the refusal to allow time to farewell family, the rebuff to the one who offered devoted following, and “leave the dead to bury their dead”. Hardly the pastoral responses we would feel appropriate to offer! But this poem puts the underlying message in a much more positive way –

face forward

Luke 9: 51 – 62

I want you to look ahead
and not behind you, whatever lies
in the wake of your footsteps
cannot be undone or retrieved,
by a backward glance
cannot lay claim
to your enlivened heart
cannot distract or divert you
from all that lies ahead

whatever shallow furrow you tilled
whatever grand plan you accomplished
or left undone
whatever crooked path you trod
or golden gateway you created
is in the past, I want you to look ahead

and should you think
that the best of who you are
lies glowing and trampled in the clod
knitted like a fancy sleeve
slipped from the needles
unravelling threads of glory or regret
or both, do not forget
I am with you always

Look ahead and follow me

*Rev Jennie Gordon
in “Dad and Daughter”
“Prayers and Poems on the Gospel”*

It is uplifting to reflect on the work that has been done in the Cluster to heed this message. We “face forward” in many different ways:

- regularly enjoying worshipping as one congregation at “Together at Ten”
- trying different styles of worship in the Public Space – being prepared to move outside our comfort zone to welcome unknown visitors
- intentionally getting to know others in our cluster at the social gatherings of the Trivia Night and Lunches for Eight
- working in Task Groups to develop a shape of being one congregation with one church council in the future
- creatively combining groups and working together, such as Mission and Justice and Pastoral Care

How cheering it is to look at these positive steps! And many thanks to everyone who has made these steps forward possible and a pleasure. May we who have set our hand to the plough continue to “face forward” and not “look back”, remembering that Christ is with us always.

Looking Forward....to Spring!



Dwarf Nectarine

“With Love to the World.”

God’s way and our calling!

Many in our churches enjoy “**With Love to the World.**”, the daily Bible reading guide based on the Revised Common Lectionary which is used by almost 50 major Protestant denominations around the world. The Lectionary follows the pattern of focussing on the **Seasons** of the church year: **Advent, Lent** then **Pentecost.**

The Season of Creation

In 2008, the World Council of Churches invited all churches to observe a *Time for Creation* from September 1 to October 4, the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi whose “Canticle of the Sun” is a well-loved poem found in our TIS number 100. In 2019 Pope Francis adopted the *Season of Creation* for Roman Catholic worship. And so, in many churches around the world, September is now a time to focus on Creation, a truly ecumenical festive season, involving Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican and Protestant churches alike.

The current issue of “With Love to the World” is designated as the Creation issue and we are asked to focus on care of the environment, living sustainably and demonstrating responsible stewardship of the earth’s resources, as integral to the life of discipleship to which we are all called.

WLW App.

With Love to the World is now also available as an app. which can be purchased from the Play Store or App Store on your mobile device at \$24 p.a.

Or, if you would like to obtain a booklet, Elinor Morison would welcome hearing from you. 9898 3774

Preaching Plan. August, Sept

	<u>BNNUC</u>	<u>Forest Hill.</u>	<u>Mountview</u>
Aug 28	Peter	Lay &/or Stream	Tina
Sept 4.	Together @10.at BNNUC Communion		
Sept 11.	Tina.	Peter.	Lay &/or Stream
Sept 18.	Lay &/or Stream.	Tina. (C)	Peter (C)
Sept 25.	Peter.	Lay &/or Stream.	Tina
Oct 2	Together @10 at Forest Hill Communion		

(c) = Communion

This Preaching Plan is subject to change.

With Together Services, the Ministers may choose rostered people from any of the three churches for readings and prayers.

Ministry Team.

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