



TASMANIAN COUNCIL OF CHURCHES

PO Box 166, New Town, Tas. 7008

website: tctas.org.au

tctas@bigpond.net.au

0418-3076-449

November 2013

The 'Lund' Principle

Should not the churches act together in all matters except those in which deep differences of conviction compel them to act separately?

From the President



ADVENT & CHRISTMAS TIDINGS

May the joy and peace of the coming of Christ be with you all. Advent and Christmas are about Jesus Christ's coming to Earth to save the world from sin, something truly to celebrate. Christmas-tide is also about the victorious nature of his coming in the face of worldly opposition from the political forces of the day, in the form of King Herod. These themes echo the sentiment of Easter and the story of the fledgling church found in Acts, and with good reason as they are about the incarnation of the spirit of the living God

in our midst. Christ ministers through His Church to the suffering world tormented by turmoil and doubt, fear and ignorance, in acts of love and grace, redemption and divine reconciliation. In many traditions, Advent also reminds us to reflect on the Christmas event in the light of Jesus's imminent return to judge the living and the dead. May the joy and peace of the coming of Christ be with you all.

PARLIAMENT

It is no use complaining that parliamentary debate does not reflect the views of the church or the faithful "quiet in the land" if we are not putting forward for election people who will act faithfully to Christ. With a State lower house election early in the coming new year, and upper house elections not long afterward, I renew my charge to member churches, first given at the TCC's Annual Meeting in June this year:

As part of our mission, to pray that God will raise up Christian men and women to serve Christ faithfully in our parliaments and local councils for the betterment of Australia.

At the moment, the level of public debate on many issues too often sadly lacks the depth that a healthy, persuasive, Christian perspective gives. I believe it is our collective responsibility to correct that.

THE CHRISTMAS BOWL

The Christmas Bowl is the Christmas appeal of **Act for Peace**, the international aid agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. The idea of the Christmas Bowl is that you put a bowl on your Christmas dinner table and contribute the cost of a meal to aid those whose lives have been affected by war and poverty around the world. Further details about this appeal, and other important appeals being run by Act for Peace, may be found later in this issue. I commend these to you all. If your church would like to be involved in the Christmas Bowl, please email our office for more information.

David Morris, President, Tasmanian Council of Churches



The Tasmanian Council of Churches and its member churches wish you, and all the members of your congregation, a joyful Advent-Christmas season and a healthy and happy 2014.



Emergency Ministry Training



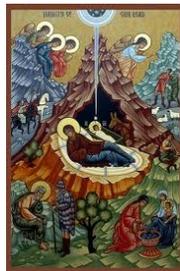
The TCC, in co-operation with the Victorian Council of Churches, continues to offer training for people (lay and ordained, of a wide variety of faith perspectives) seeking to be involved in ministry in response to community emergencies. Recently, training was offered in Launceston (8-9 November) and Ulverstone 11-12 November). This follows training offered in Sorell and Mornington in February, soon after the destructive fires in January. During 2013, around 75 people have been trained to provide emergency pastoral care. They join another 10 Tasmanians who previously received this training interstate. The TCC thanks our ecumenical partners in the VCC for their assistance in enabling us to begin offering this training to Tasmanians.

Praying and Worshipping Together

Advent Worship: An ecumenical service for Advent will be held on the evening of the First Sunday of Advent, 1st December, at St. Mary's Cathedral, Hobart, at 7:30 p.m., organised by the clergy of some of the centre-city churches. All are encouraged to attend this time of worship and prayer.



Service of Readings and Carols: Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church invites you to its annual service of Nine Readings and Carols (in English) at Holy Trinity Church (Warwick Street, North Hobart) , at 7:30 p.m., on Friday, 20th December. A light supper will be served in the church hall after the service.



Multifaith Gathering: The Hobart chapter of Religions For Peace will be holding its annual multifaith gathering for Human Rights Week 2013 on Sunday, 1st December, at the Friends' Meeting House, Argyle Street, North Hobart from 2:30 to 4:00. Sue Ennis from Religions For Peace Australia will speak, as will Mary from the film *Mary Meets Mohammed*. Music will be provided by the community choir *Sisongke*. All are encouraged to attend.



Service of Lessons and Carols: All Saints' Anglican Church, Macquarie Street, South Hobart, will hold its service of Nine Lessons and Carols on Sunday, 22nd December, at 7:00 p.m. The All Saints' Choir will sing.



And yet another Service of Lessons and Carols: Scots' Uniting Church, Sorell, invites you to its Service of Lessons and Carols on Sunday morning, 22nd December, at 10:00 a.m. at the church (Arthur Street, Sorell).



Up to 10,000 people are feared dead and millions more made homeless following the impact of Super Typhoon Haiyan which hit the Philippines this month.

One of the strongest storms ever recorded, with winds of up to 314km/hour and waves up to 13 metres, Haiyan has created a mass of devastation. Flash floods, landslides, fallen trees, collapsed buildings, damaged roads, downed power lines and telecommunications currently hamper rescue efforts. Humanitarian workers in the area have said they have not seen such devastation since the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004.

Act for Peace's partners are working on the ground to provide immediate relief to people impacted by the deadly typhoon. This includes providing emergency supplies such as food and water, as well as mosquito nets and sanitation to help prevent the spread of disease.

The World Food Program estimates that 2.5 million people are in need of urgent assistance. Storm-affected areas include communities experiencing high levels of poverty, which are more vulnerable to the impacts of disasters.

Additionally, many of those affected by Super Typhoon Haiyan are still recovering from the 7.2-magnitude earthquake that struck the region on October 15.

Please, give now to help Act for Peace's partners on the ground deliver live-saving emergency assistance.

You can give either by visiting the Act for Peace website (<http://www.actforpeace.org.au>) or by ringing the toll-free number 1800 025 101.



Residents carry relief goods past damaged homes in central Philippines. The city remains littered with debris from damaged homes as many complain of shortage of food, water and no electricity since the Typhoon Haiyan slammed into their province.



act for peace
Christmas Bowl

Thank you for supporting the Christmas Bowl in 2012! With the help of the Christmas Bowl, our Act for Peace project partners assist more than one million people living in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, the Pacific & Australia.



After years of poverty and injustice, the people of Afghanistan are slowly re-building their country. One of the ways they are doing this is through education, a program that the Christmas Bowl supports.

Adela is a nine year old girl and goes to school in Afghanistan. It is unusual for girls like her to be in school because children, especially girls, are made to work instead. That's because Afghanistan is one of the poorest and most conflict-affected countries in the world. Most women are forced to go to work at a young age, in order to help support their family.

Because the Taliban is against girl's education, for girls, just going to school can mean risking their life. Girls' schools in Afghanistan are regularly attacked, injuring and even killing students. As a result, many schools have been forced to close and even when they are open, parents often decide to keep their daughters at home.

Without access to education, girls face a lifetime of poverty and oppression. Women without an education are more likely to get married younger, have more children and have very few job opportunities. Their children are also more likely to live in poverty.

Currently, only 13% of women in Afghanistan are literate.

Half of all schools do not have buildings and there are not many textbooks or teaching materials for us to use. School resources are very basic. Act for Peace's program partner in Afghanistan has supplied tables, chairs and blackboards, trained teachers and given school bags.



"My school bag contained books, notepads, pencils, crayons, rubbers, ruler and sharpener. I liked my school bag and its contents. They were really useful and help me learn more while I'm at school, which is good because when I grow up, I want to become a doctor to help my country. Thank you for your help."

- Adela

act for peace

reduce poverty | protect refugees
prevent conflicts | empower communities

Why not give a gift that will help rebuild lives?



For Christmas, birthdays, anniversaries, Mother's and Father's Day or for any occasion that calls for a meaningful gift, why not give a gift that will help rebuild lives?

For every **Gift for Peace** you order, you'll receive a colourful greeting card with a matching fridge magnet— so that your loved ones have a keepsake to remember your thoughtful gift forever.

All cards tell a story about one of the programs where your gift is helping, with beautiful images and a colour-

ful fabric pattern from the country featured on the card.

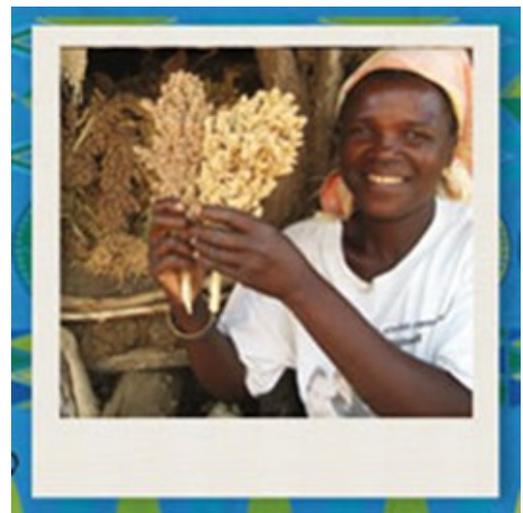
To order, please ring **Act for Peace** today on 1800 025 101 or visit the Act for Peace website (<http://www.actforpeace.org.au>) to order online. Please allow up to two weeks for processing and postage of your gift.

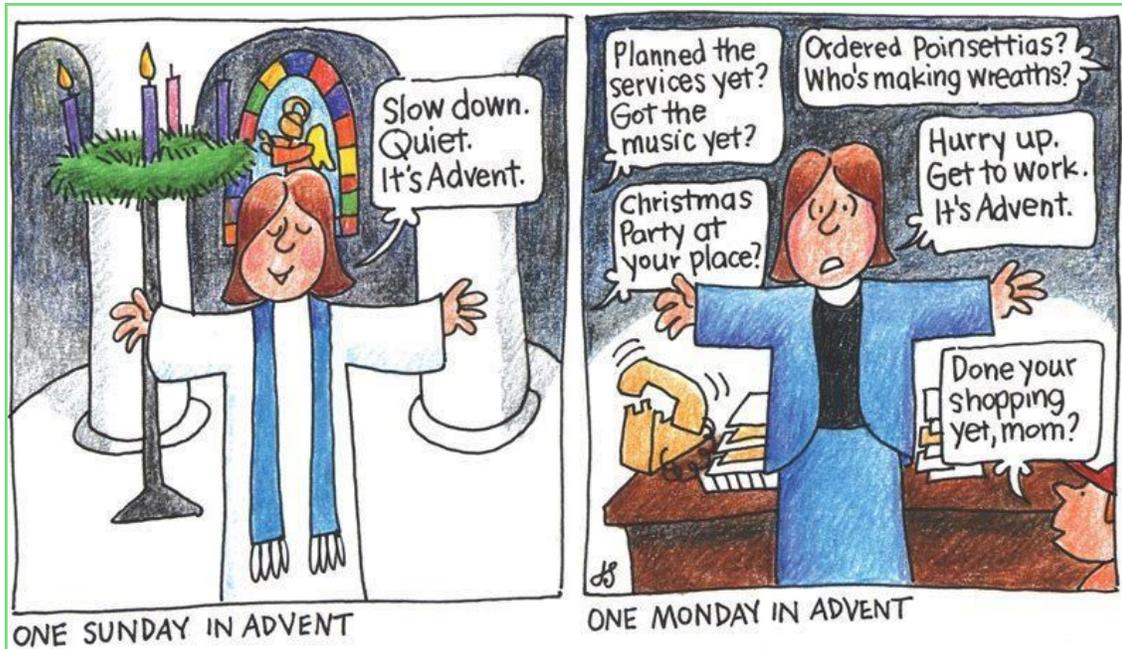


Your gift will help people who seek safety, security and peace. Give a gift that makes a lasting difference!

Gifts range from \$10 (school supplies for a girl in Afghanistan) to \$10,000 (an irrigation system), but the majority of gifts range from \$10 to \$150.

In the event of a particular item being over-subscribed, **Act for Peace** will redirect your gift to other needs of the same region or to an equally worthwhile project.





Pints of Faith

Pints of Faith continues as a gathering for young adults offered by Catholic Youth Ministry Tasmania.

In Hobart, **Pints of Faith** will continue at the Soho Hotel on the first Thursday evening of the month, from 6:30 until 9:00.

In Launceston, **Pints of Faith** will happen, as announced, at the Cock and Bull British Pub.

Please ring Catholic Youth Ministry on 62086274 or 62086270 for more information about **Pints of Faith**, and other CYM programmes.





A Visitor from Taizé

During the week of the 30th of September, Tasmanian Christians of a variety of denominations gathered in a variety of locations to pray, sing, and reflect together on Scripture.

Brother Matthew, from the ecumenical Taizé Community, was in Tasmania as part of a longer Australian visit on behalf of Taizé. In Tasmania, Brother Matthew was the guest of the Tasmanian Council of Churches, Catholic Youth Ministry, and All Saints' Anglican Church in South Hobart..

On the Monday and Tuesday evenings, Brother Matthew led brief prayers for the early evening prior to participating in one of the CYM's "Pints of Faith" evenings. During the "Pints of Faith" gatherings, Brother Matthew was involved in conversation with the (mostly) young adult participants about his own journey of faith and about Taizé's ministry and mission. On Monday evening, the prayers were held at the chapel of Guilford Young College with "Pints of Faith" at the Hotel SoHo in South Hobart, while Tuesday evening's events took place at the Church of the Apostles and the Cock 'n' Bull British Pub in Launceston.

Wednesday evening's prayers were held at All Saints' Anglican Church, South Hobart. As well, All Saints' Church hosts regular prayers in the style of Taizé on the third Sunday of each month – except January – at 5:00 p.m. (7:00 p.m. on 15th December) .

During his visit to Tasmania, Brother Matthew met with a number of people who previously had been visitors to, and volunteers at, Taizé.

The Taizé Community was formed in the 1940s, when Roger Schütz, a young member of the Swiss Reformed Church, and a number of other young men formed a monastic community in a small village in France with the intention both of praying for – and actively promoting - the unity of the Christian Church and reconciliation among the nations of the world.

Their small community saw the ministry of hospitality as a major part of their mission. During the Second World War, their ministry of hospitality included the sheltering of Jewish refugees seeking to escape persecution by the Nazis.

In the decades following the war, young people (first from around Europe, later from around the world) were drawn to Taizé and the small community of monks. Increasingly, ministry to these young people, both in terms of spirituality and in terms of practical hospitality, became a major aspect of the community's life.

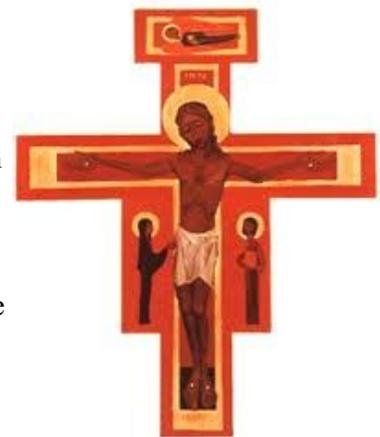
The style of meditative worship song we associate with Taizé today developed from this ministry. As large numbers of young people (frequently with no single shared language) spent time worshipping with the community, there was a need for the community to develop some songs (with simple melodies and profound words) that could be sung simultaneously in a number of languages.



With the tragic death of Brother Roger in 2005, leadership of the community passed to Brother Alois who had been designated as the successor to Brother Roger earlier that year.

In addition to the Taizé Community's ministry at Taizé itself, the Community is active in providing ministry in settings around the world: sometimes in large gatherings, sometimes in small ones; but always with a focus on its mission of unity and reconciliation.

(Bob Faser, originally written for *The Tasmanian Catholic*)



Schools Sunday: 16th February 2014

Schools Sunday 2014 will be observed on 16th February. This will be a few weeks before the beginning of Lent. Schools Sunday is an opportunity for your congregation to develop its relationship with schools in your community. Many useful resources will be made available soon on the Schools Sunday website (www.schoolssundaytas.org.au). Schools Sunday is offered by the TCC's Commission on Christian Ministry in State Schools (CCMISS) in co-operation with Scripture Union Tasmania.



A Blue Christmas

Catholic Parish of Moonah-Lutana
St. Therese of Lisieux Church
24 Hopkins Street Moonah

An Open Invitation to a Blue Christmas

Christmas is a difficult time for people who have experienced loss, grief or disconnection from the sentiments of those around them at Christmas. People can feel broken and the cheer of the Christmas masses can seem out of step with their own life.

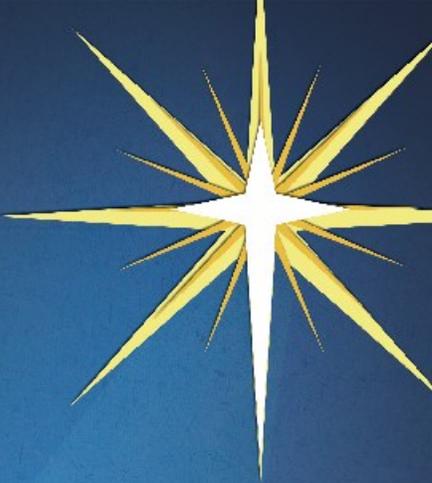
The Parish of Moonah Lutana wish to invite any parishioners to our Blue Christmas Midnight Mass (11.30 pm music). This Mass is aimed at reflecting on the hope that Christ's birth brings to the world no matter what is happening in our lives at present.

If you wish to share your faith in a spirit of gentle love and reflection then come and join us. We look forward to welcoming you all.

Kind regards

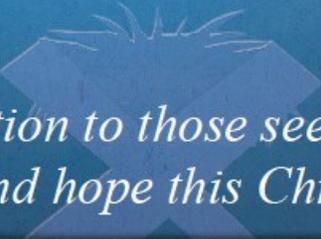
The Parish of Moonah-Lutana

(Please see the poster on the next page.)



Blue Christmas

Mass of Hope
Tuesday 24th December
Midnight Mass (11.30pm)
All welcome



*A special invitation to those seeking comfort,
support and hope this Christmas.*

St Therese's Catholic Church
24 Hopkins Street, Moonah
light refreshments to follow Mass

From the Liaison Officer

Christmas as a time of ethical transformation



One area where the Christian and secular dimensions of our Christmas celebrations come together in a profound way is in the theme of Christmas as a time of ethical transformation. There is this notion that our celebrations of Christmas in and of themselves have the power to bring forth our better selves.

This idea began in Charles Dickens story *A Christmas Carol*, the story of Ebenezer Scrooge. Scrooge was a miser, and he was also a man who refused to celebrate Christmas. (And those two facts were closely related.) His response to Christmas, as well as to anything else that would encourage any spark of generosity in him, was always “Bah, Humbug!”

At the beginning of the story, we hear this about Scrooge:

“Oh! But he was a tight-fisted hand at the grindstone, Scrooge! a squeezing, wrenching, grasping, scraping, clutching, covetous old sinner! Hard and sharp as flint, from which no steel had ever struck out generous fire; secret, and self-contained, and solitary as an oyster.”

But, by the end of the story, he is described in these terms:

“He became as good a friend, as good a master, and as good a man, as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town or borough, in the good old world.”

And, in short, the source of this amazing transformation, in which Scrooge’s best self was enabled to emerge, was in the exposure to the celebration of Christmas.

We also see this theme, which I call “the Scrooge motif” in many other secular Christmas stories, such as Dr. Seuss’s children’s book *How the Grinch Stole Christmas*, the films *It’s a Wonderful Life* and *Miracle on 34th Street*, and just about any good “Christmas special” on TV. Christmas is an occasion of ethical transformation, in which we are enabled to let our best selves emerge.



For people of Christian faith, we need to recognise this factor in the Christmas celebrations of our wider community, and to affirm the fact that this season is a time of greater ethical sensitivity for many people, and a time when many of our neighbours are asking the deep questions of life.

As well, it is an easy jump for us – as Christians - to say that the entire Christ-event is an occasion of ethical transformation, enabling each of us to allow our best selves to emerge in response to God’s grace to humanity through the person of Christ Jesus.

And, as Mr. Dickens said of Scrooge after his transformation, “... *he knew how to keep Christmas well, if any ... [one] alive possessed the knowledge. May that truly be said of us, and all of us! And so, as Tiny Tim observed, God bless us, Every One!*”

Bob Faser, TCC Liaison Officer

(You may also want to read Bob’s blog “*A funny thing happened on the way ...*”, which can be found at <http://revdocbob.blogspot.com.au>.)

The next *Oikoumene* will be published in February, 2013. All material for publication should be received at tcctas@bigpond.net.au or at PO Box 166, New Town 7008 by the end of January.