

# livingtoday

Issue 92 // Spring 2025

Good news. Locally.

Mooroolbark & surrounds.



## A love of nature **in bloom**

Art • Soccer • Community

# Hello from the Living Today team



Change of seasons means change of sports in our household. As we warm up to spring and then to summer, we are gearing up for the transition from soccer training and weekend games to a long summer of cricket. Whether it is soccer to cricket, netball to tennis, footy to cricket, basketball to tennis, or any other permutation, it is marvellous to live in an area where access to the sports through the changing seasons is on offer.

However, as we transition from one sport to another I will miss the consistency of taking my 10-year-old to soccer training and games – not only for the enjoyment of watching but also because of the conversations with the parents and connected family members and friends who turn up to watch and help out each week.

Consistency is the key, it seems, to the running of sporting clubs where volunteers are present week in, week out. They are so vital to keeping the sporting clubs ticking over and provide so much to our young, and old, team members. For my son's soccer team the coaches hardly missed a game or training session all season, for seven months. This shows why the volunteers and officials are so highly regarded. They add so much to our community wellbeing, which is perhaps forgotten as the results come in.

In this issue of Living Today we have an article about one such consistent and committed volunteer at the "Barkers" Mooroolbark Soccer Club. He is a linesperson, club secretary and writer to boot (apologies for the pun) who features weekly in the Star Mail newspaper for the imaginative match day reports each week. We thank him for the consistency shown over a long time in the same direction.

Before you complain that "too much sport is barely enough", we do, thankfully, feature two local artists in this issue. You'll see some of it on the street very soon.

What could be better – art and sport together in the one place? We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Matthew Gudze, Lead Pastor, Grace Communion Mooroolbark (sponsors of Living Today) on behalf of the Living Today Editorial Team**

## livingtoday

Issue 92 // Spring 2025



**Production:** Living Today is produced by Grace Communion Mooroolbark, with the assistance of local volunteers.

**Editorial Support:** Matthew Gudze, Randall Bouchier, Ross MacKay, Terry Villiers

**Copy Editor:** Dawn Volz

**Publication:** Published quarterly as a service to our community by Grace Communion Mooroolbark

**Contact:** 0474 365 804  
PO Box 228 Mooroolbark VIC 3138  
[editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au)

**Distribution:** 11,000 copies distributed throughout Mooroolbark in March and 1,200 copies distributed in June, September and December. Also available online at [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)

**Contributing Writers for this issue:**

Ross MacKay, Randall Bouchier, Matthew Gudze, Mary Bouchier, Joseph Tkach, Yolande Pickett.

**Photographs:** Yolande Pickett, Mary Bouchier, Mooroolbark Soccer Club, Monkami, Katie Thompson, Charles de Long [freepik.com](http://freepik.com), [thenounproject.com](http://thenounproject.com)

**Cover Photograph:** Yolande Pickett

**Graphic Design:** Ross MacKay

**Printing:** Fishprint, Croydon, Vic

**Like to contribute?**

If you have a good news story about people or groups who are an inspiration to the community, contact us via the details above.

This and all past issues of Living Today can be accessed at: [livingtoday.org.au](http://livingtoday.org.au)

To join the email distribution list please send a request to [editor@livingtoday.org.au](mailto:editor@livingtoday.org.au)

**Our Sponsors:** Living Today greatly appreciates the valuable contributions made by several businesses which partner with us in serving our local community through this magazine. Their financial sponsorship makes the magazine possible, and we gratefully acknowledge those partners in each issue.



**Proudly supporting  
Living Today Magazine**

**9726 7284**

# Contents | Spring 2025



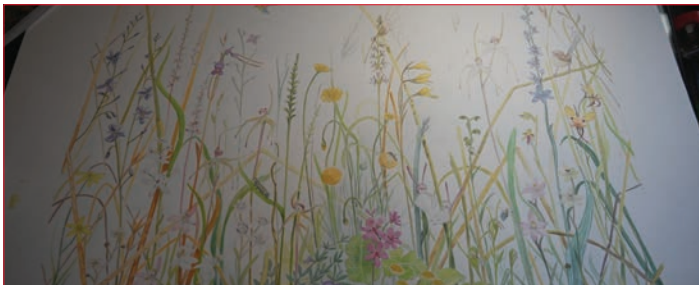
**04**

From Everton to Mooroolbark



**06**

Harmony from diversity



**08**

A love of nature in bloom



**10**

Community  
House



**11**

Artistic  
Horizons

**12**

Kids story

**14**

Speaking of Life

**15**

Church services

**16**

Upcoming events

**Mission statement** To contribute towards and help to foster a growing community spirit within our neighbourhood. We seek to achieve this by:

- Highlighting the many positives within our community
- Encouraging partnership in community initiatives
- Contributing to the process of identifying and addressing community needs and concerns



GRACE COMMUNION  
**MOOROOLBARK**

**Proud Supporters of Living Today**

[mooroolbark.gci.org.au](http://mooroolbark.gci.org.au)

We meet every Sunday at 10.30am at the Mooroolbark Community Centre. Come along and enjoy a service and stay for a chat, with delicious tea, coffee and biscuits.

**Green Printing  
Credentials**



Living Today is printed on Spicers Pacesetter uncoated paper. This paper is sourced from a mix of paper from managed forests and 30% recycled paper.



# From Everton to Mooroolbark

by Randall Bouchier

Imagine a young six-year-old boy attending his first game of football – feeling a little apprehensive as he accompanies his Everton supporting father into the noise and energy of the Goodison Park stadium in Liverpool.

*"I was petrified!"* But for Peter Stephenson, the experience was a defining moment!

*"I was hooked!"* And ever since, Peter has loved the game, and not only supported Everton but accumulated and digested a vast and ever-expanding knowledge of the history of the world game.

Peter completed his education at St Edward's College in Liverpool before studying physics at Warwick University. After a brief stint teaching, he turned to accounting, moving to London and working for a chartered accountant.

In 2004, Peter and his Australian wife Mattena moved to Australia, and settled in Mooroolbark. Their daughter Ava was born in 2012.

Peter found work with the Auditor-General's Department. Having left his UK family and friends behind in the move to Australia, Peter resolved to follow the local soccer team to get to know people. Checking the fixture online, he caught the train to an away game at Heatherton, only to discover, to his dismay, that the Mooroolbark club wore a similar red jersey, as does Liverpool, with whom Everton shares a fierce cross-town rivalry.

The Barkers, as the Mooroolbark club is known, became something of a home away from home, and Peter made long-term friends with some of the English diaspora who had settled in our area. He also began attending the church congregation now known as Grace Communion Mooroolbark.

Towards the end of 2004 he committed a fatal error when he mentioned to some Barker friends that he was an accountant (he works for the Auditor-General's Department) and the rest, as they say, is history!

## "I love it! I love the game. Love the people!"

Peter is now serving his third stint as the voluntary treasurer – a vastly complex role now that the Barkers field five adult and 30 junior teams.

In 2011 he had his first experience as a linesman. A very helpful Football Victoria course run by an Englishwoman taught him much. He describes the role as a "a good mental and physical discipline". During the March–September season Peter officiates each week for the men's reserves, the women's seniors and an occasional junior game.

In mid-2008, he contributed a match report for the Match Day programme. What he thought was a "one-off" led to Peter still writing match reports to this day! These reports are displayed online and are published in the Lilydale Star Mail.

Although the Barkers started in 1962, no one had kept records. Soccer nerd Peter has researched newspaper collections at the State Library over the years and stumbled across the occasional personal diary. This resulted in his developing and maintaining a massive database which houses records of the lineups and goal-scorers for every Barker game played. Records of the women's teams which began in 2003 are complete, and Peter estimates that he has recorded all the men's results since 1962, 80% of the goal scorers and 70% of the lineups. If you know where there's more information, Peter would love to hear from you!

You'd think that would be more than enough, but Peter also serves as the Match Day announcer for home games – reading out the team sheets (not always easy given the multi-ethnic diversity of names!) and announcing substitutions and goal-scorers as the game progresses. He also MCs the Annual Presentation Night and conducts the Best and Fairest count.

Needless to say, he loves the game, the Club and Mooroolbark. "I travelled 12,000 miles from London to at last feel like 'a local'," he says. "London can be very impersonal, but as I walk through Mooroolbark or through the club gates, I feel at home!"

I was taken with Peter's description of those who serve with him at the Barkers. "We believe that we are temporary stewards of something we want to see keep going," he says.



He describes the club as very stable. Whilst many clubs have experienced several name changes and amalgamations, the club has had only one change – Mooroolbark United became Mooroolbark in 1978 after a brief, over-reaching stint in the National League.

Like most voluntary organisations, the club faces ongoing challenges. Fielding 35 teams, finding spaces for training can be a headache. Long-term sponsorship is another, and as teams progress to higher divisions within Football Victoria the club faces mounting costs in upgrading facilities and lighting.

"Why do you keep turning up?" I enquired.

*"I love it! I love the game. Love the people! It's a great social outlet. I love the very nature of volunteering, and without volunteers local sporting clubs cannot survive. I wouldn't mind handballing the treasurer's role if a replacement was available. And I love the way the junior teams provide kids with a chance to get away from their screens and exercise, form friendships, have fun with their mates and learn some important life skills."*

*"My Christian beliefs have shaped both my care for people and my officiating. When you're a voluntary linesman, there can be a perception that you'll be biased towards your club, but I've tried to be fair – impartial – living by the ethos of behaving towards others in the same way as I'd enjoy them behaving towards me. I enjoy the spectators. If you maintain a good sense of humour, there's some enjoyable banter along the way!"*

Thanks Peter. No doubt Mooroolbark is the richer for having the Barkers in our midst, and no doubt the Barkers are well served by passionate volunteers like you!



# Harmony from diversity at Wyreena

by Mary Bouchier

A recent exhibition of acrylic paintings at Wyreena Community Arts Centre featured local artist, Wi Sook Kim, who is originally from South Korea.

After having studied painting at Hongik University in Seoul, the capital of Korea, Kim became a high school art teacher for 30 years and then taught art at university for a further 10 years. She used her vacation time travelling internationally to see famous works of art and architecture firsthand. Many of her paintings now hang in large office spaces in Korea.

Kim and her family emigrated to Australia six years ago, when Kim was 65, mainly to escape the increasing air pollution in Seoul. Her abstract paintings explore her experience as a migrant, particularly finding Australia's gracious effort to embrace diversity a source of inspiration for her art, expressing the belief that "embracing diversity and difference can bring a vibrant, warm and dynamic energy to our lives, rather than leaving them monotonous and static".

Kim's daughter was delivered in 1978 by a young missionary doctor in a hospital in South Korea, who had devoted her life to caring for and empowering Korean women. And, years later, Kim was reunited "amid tears of gratitude" with that same doctor when she and her family emigrated to Melbourne. Yet, in the midst of cultural differences and challenges, they found joy in building harmony within diversity.

"The spirit of compassion and inclusion shown by Australia's early missionaries, who embraced a culture so different from their own, now lives on in our lives," Kim says. "As we become part of this multicultural society – creating a new family and sharing life with people from many nations – I have come to deeply feel and appreciate the continuing legacy of harmony."

This profound sense of gratitude is what has inspired Kim to pour into her abstract artworks movements of merging "clouds" of colour, studded with contrasting, vibrantly coloured shapes, that "celebrate unity in difference and in beauty born from the coexistence of diverse lives and stories",



Kim believes that when we approach cultural and racial differences with an open heart and a respectful mindset, we create a vibrant warmth akin to "the freshness of spring – a harmonious blend of seemingly mismatched colours that come together beautifully".

These ideas are particularly expressed in three of Kim's paintings: *Embracing Different Colours*, ("Reflecting the beauty that emerges when diverse elements coexist in a state of mutual respect and unity by combining seemingly unmatched diverse colours"), *Peace Created from Embrace*, ("Illustrating how the act of embracing differences leads to the creation of warm, peaceful and harmonious connections") and *Vibrance Sprung from Harmony*, ("Depicting the dynamic energy and liveliness that arise from achieving harmony amidst diversity").



# A love of nature in bloom



by Yolande Pickett

When you visit the home of local artist Mary Bouchier, you are greeted not just by her warmth, but also by the kind of generosity that leaves you feeling nourished. Mary and husband Randall's home is filled with art and treasured objects from their life of friendships and adventures. It exudes calm and a quiet beauty, with an appreciation of a slower life.

This deep appreciation for the simple and meaningful things is also reflected in Mary's art. Her latest work – a delicate watercolour painting of wildflowers – will soon grace the outside of Golden Pastry Bread Shop on Brice Avenue, facing the recently rejuvenated laneway at Mooroolbark shops.

The piece depicts native flora that once flourished in the area before Colonial settlement, with a few local fauna tucked amongst them.

To prepare, Mary spent time researching and studying the botanical characteristics of each plant and consulting with long-time resident, Elsie Bolwell, to ensure their forms and beauty were captured with accuracy.

Mary traces her love of nature back to her earliest years, exploring paddocks and bushland near her home. "I remember being about four years old," she recalls. "I looked out the window, the wind blowing through the poplar trees, and the backs of the leaves were silver as they fluttered. I remember suddenly realising there was beauty in the world."

Other moments followed with the same sense of wonder, each giving Mary "a huge rush of joy". As I was listening, I could imagine these moments she described perfectly – but I was also struck by how differently each of us notices

and remembers the world around us, and how this impacts our experiences and what we do with our lives. It's no wonder that Mary is drawn to being an artist.

Mary has carried a sketchbook on bushwalks, drawn inspiration from sunsets and dragonflies, and in more recent years has explored botanical drawing in depth. "I always felt like I was just practising to one day make a beautiful artwork," she reflects. "And now I've made it!"

Her new artwork for Golden Pastry is more than a painting – it's a tribute to Mooroolbark's natural history, and a reminder of the beauty that surrounds us. Just as her home is a place where everything is cherished, Mary's art offers a quiet gift to the community: a chance to pause, look closer, and rediscover wonder in the everyday.

Next time you are passing Golden Pastry, see how many different species of native flora you can find in Mary's painting. Do you know the names of any of them?



## 90 and not out!

I'd like to update you on one of our past personal features in Living Today from a few years ago (Issue 81, pp.2-3, December 2022).<sup>1</sup> We featured local Charles De Long whose interesting life had him singing his way from Cape Town to Kilsyth and whose story was featured on Channel Nine News<sup>2</sup> and mentioned in State Parliament by David Hodgett. The news item and State Parliament mention focused on his recovery from a stroke in 2017.

It was a hard time for Charles who said that the stroke, on top of a bike collision while walking along the pavement, had him visit many hospitals in recovery. But he bounced back, celebrating his 90th birthday in April this year, declaring, "Eight years ago I had a stroke and couldn't utter a word, and now I can't blooming stop talking!"<sup>3</sup> He contacted Living Today to say that he would like to pass on this thanks to Eastern Health and also spread a positive message to us all that whatever we go through we can be thankful for those around us and have the hope that we will come through whatever setbacks life throws at us.

Happy 90th birthday Charles and may this season in your life be a positive to all of us who have been inspired by your story.

1. <https://mooroolbark.gci.org.au/livingtoday/uploads/LivingTodayDecember2022.pdf>

2. <https://www.9news.com.au/health/veteran-singer-back-on-song-after-suffering-stroke/51253605-4b87-4eb1-843b-ce1732ab6e22>

3. Charles' 90th birthday celebration video can be viewed on YouTube at <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=QzoJnXDHw2U>

# Mooroolbark Community House



## Mooroolbark Community House up and running

by Matthew Gudze

It's all happening! The newly minted Mooroolbark Community House (MCH) at the Mooroolbark Community Centre is well and truly up and running. With the appointment of Renae Jones as MCH Coordinator less than 12 months ago, and thanks to the background work and support of the Yarra Ranges Council, CHAOS (Community Houses of the Outer East),

the Mooroolbark Umbrella Group, the Department of Families Fairness and Housing, and various community members, there are several activities you can join in with others, make new friends, and get involved with. And if you so desire you can get your hands dirty. You'll see below the various activities planned for Term 4 of 2025. These weekly activities include the Women's Social Walks, several creative pursuits, and if you prefer to chill out there are several wellbeing activities for both adults and kids.

So why not come and say hello, perhaps have a cuppa, and if you feel so inclined and want some meaningful connection, give something new a go.

## Monday

### Creative Kids Club, 10.00am-12.00pm

An open art room session where your imagination is the limit! This session is for parents/grandparents/carers, and their children. We supply the materials, and some ideas, you assist your child to make their creation. Cost: Gold coin donation appreciated to put toward supplies.

### Tai Chi, 11.30am-12.30pm

Join Jeff for a morning Tai Chi session. Bookings are essential. Call or email to book. Cost: \$100 for the term.

## Tuesday

### Step and Connect – Women's Community Walk 9.30am-10.30am

Join Megan from Inspiro for a refreshing, easy walk around the local area. The walk leaves from the Community House at 9:30am. Coffee, tea, and chat are provided on return. Cost: FREE

### Coffee, Tea and Chat, 10.30am-12.30pm

Come along to a relaxed coffee, tea, and chat. We have books, board games, and puzzles if you would like to do those. Cost: FREE

### Open Art Studio, 12.30pm-2.30pm

Would you like to paint or draw but you're lacking space at home, or would like the company of others? Come and use the art studio; There are tables, chairs, and easels, along with drying racks. BYO supplies - no oils or pastels (they are welcome on Thursdays) Cost: FREE

## Wednesday

### Document Signing Station, 9.30am-12.00pm

We have a Justice of Peace on site to sign your documents. Please ensure you bring everything required. This is a free service.

### Wellbeing through Creativity and Self-Reflection, 10.00am-12.00pm

Facilitated by Ayala, you will use creativity and journaling to explore themes relating of self discovery and wellbeing. Bookings essential. \$30 per term

### Creative Crafternooners, 12.00pm-3.00pm

October 1, 15 November 5, 19, December 3, 17

Come along to this anything goes twice monthly craft group. BYO craft and snacks. Tea and coffee provided. Cost: Gold coin to cover snacks

## Thursday

### Art Club, 10.00am-1.00pm

Would you like to paint or draw but you're lacking space at home, or would like the company of others? Come and use the art studio between 10am-1pm.

There are tables, chairs, and easels, along with drying racks. BYO supplies. Cost: FREE

# Art **delights** and **inspires**

## *Artistic Horizons' exhibition by Monkami*

Earlier this year, Monkami's highly anticipated art exhibition, *Artistic Horizons: Celebrating Ability Through Art*, held on the evening of March 21st, proved to be a resounding success, captivating art enthusiasts, collectors, and the community. The exhibition showcased a vibrant collection of works created by Monkami artists of diverse backgrounds, abilities and experiences.

Monkami is a not-for-profit organisation supporting individuals with disabilities, and funded by Maroondah Council through their Community Grants Program.

Maroondah Mayor, Cr Kylie Spears, and Hon. Michael Sukkar MP, representing the electorate of Deakin, attended the evening, welcoming more than 200 guests to the exhibition. *Artistic Horizons* offered a diverse selection of artistic expressions, including painting, drawing, printmaking, sculpture, photography, ceramics, and textiles, and visitors had the opportunity to meet with many of the featured artists.

Nicholas Jacovou, Acting Manager, Centre Based Supports, said, "Artistic Horizons reminds us that art is a universal language that transcends boundaries. It's a celebration of diversity, where creativity brings us closer, fostering unity and understanding through the unique abilities of every individual."

Visit [monkami.org](http://monkami.org) for more information.

*Hon. Michael Sukkar MP, Monkami's art program facilitator Silvia Cooper, and Mayor of Maroondah Kylie Spears pictured at the Artistic Horizons Exhibition.*  
Photo: Katie Thompson



## Morag at last!

### Part 9 of our ongoing kids story by Ross MacKay

"You're... Morag?" I stammered. "But no, that can't be right. Morag was just a... a name that Abythwrd made up so we wouldn't have to keep saying CFR all the time!"

"Custard Factory Revelation?" said Morag.

"No, Confusion Fusion Reactor"

"What's that?"

"That's you!"

"No, I'm Morag. Maybe you've got the wrong cave. The next cave along might be the one you're looking for, I hear they have custard for dessert every... hello? Are you OK? You look confused. And have three voices."

The voices to which she... it... um, Morag was referring to were the squabbling voices of Nuttingale and Abythwrd coming from my pocket. I pulled the phone out, glanced at their bickering faces and told them to shut up. Which they didn't. So I said it louder. This time they did, though I think it was more out of surprise than actual respect.

"Guys," I hissed at them while grinning at Morag maniacally. "What is going on? Why is Morag a person? You never told me that Morag was a person! I thought she was like a metallic box or something."

"So did I," said Abythwrd, "with bits sticking out like TV antennae, egg whisks and jellied..."

"Really?" interrupted Nuttingale. "I had pictured a glowing orb emanating waves of bioluminescent ribbons of light that left a trail of choc..."

It was my turn to interrupt: "It doesn't really matter!" I yell-hiss-whispered (hiss-pered maybe) at them. I'm not sure why – it was clear

Morag was listening and hearing everything. She just stood there with a wry smile on her face.

"The point is that she's a she, a person, a living being. This really throws my plan out of the window!"

Nuttingale raised an eyebrow at me. It felt like she was trying not to laugh. "You had a plan?" she said, then gave up trying not to laugh and let out a guffaw.

Abythwrd started to ask what a guffaw was but I got in first. "Yes I had a plan! But it was easier when she was just a machine, then I could have hit her with a sledgehammer with much less guilt."

"What? That was your plan? Hit it with a sledgehammer? Do you even have a sledgehammer?"

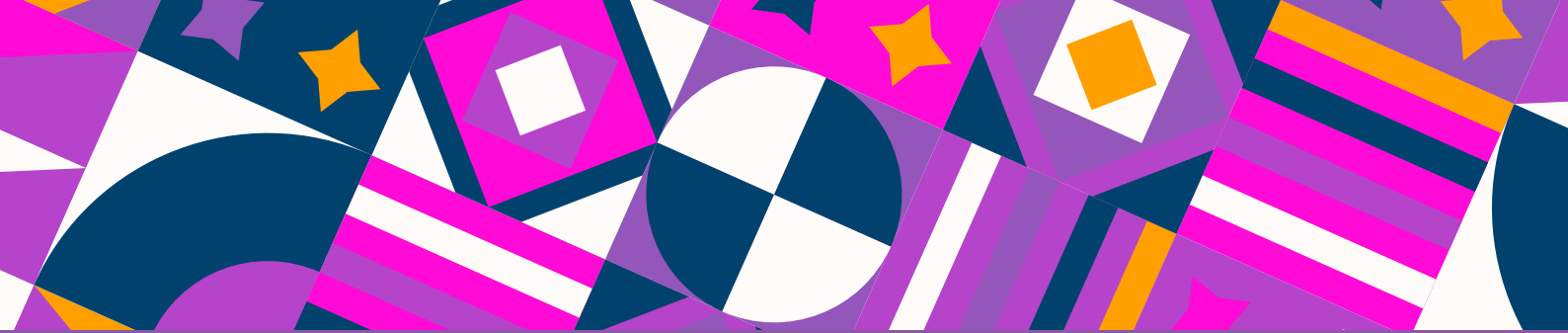
"No," I said. "It was quite a flawed plan admittedly. But now, hitting her with a sledgehammer seems a little... unfair?"

Nuttingale was starting to say something along the lines of not really seeing what the problem was when Morag decided to destroy any illusion that she wasn't listening:

"I'll say! Oh look, you have a sledgehammer now. Oops! I just can't help myself sometimes. And now it's jelly – that's the benefit of being an all-powerful chaos creator, you can just turn things into jelly. It's quite fun."

As the remains of the now jelly sledgehammer dripped from my hands I took the opportunity to ask some pertinent questions of Morag.

"Um, hi Morag... I'm Alllan, how are you?" I stammered. I wasn't entirely sure how to talk to whoever or whatever Morag was. I decided just to get to the point. "So you're not exactly what



I was expecting, I kind of thought that you'd just be a machine or something that had got damaged and was causing chaos inadvertently... um... but well, you're not."

"True, but had you arrived a few hours ago you'd have been right." said Morag. "As it happens a few hours ago someone suggested that I be called Morag..."

"Ooh, ooh that was me!" chipped in Abythwrd cheerily, only to be cut short by a rather sharp look from Nuttingale. He was probably reading my mind also, which wasn't necessarily thinking the nicest thoughts toward him.

Morag continued: "And with the unreality, coincidences and downright bonkersiness that I seem to be causing I changed from a small metal box that you could easily have hit with a sledgehammer to what my internal logic determined was the best form for a... 'Morag'. A small Scottish girl. Any questions?"

"Did you say bonkersiness?" said Nuttingale. "I like it – always up for a new word! I made one up the other day – froobajooba. Haven't decided how to use it yet but it sounds good, right?"

"Nuttingale!" I yelled, "now is not the time to be discussing the virtues of made up words. We have a problem that can't be solved by a sledgehammer that I didn't even have in the first place! What do we do about that?" I indicted Morag.

"Um, I'm right here," said Morag, "and I just wanted to note that although I am still just a machine, admittedly one that looks like a small Scottish girl – actually, what's a Scottish? Have I got the accent right? What's an accent? – Anyway, my point is that being a little girl now I seem to have developed a co..."

"Oh, shush you. We're trying to think of a way to get rid of you." interrupted Nuttingale. "Allan, check your backpack – is there anything in there that might help. Maybe you accidentally, coincidentally packed a sledgehammer..."

"As mentioned before, that's no longer an option."

"Whatever. Agree to disagree. Just check it!"

Half expecting to find a sledgehammer, I slung off my backpack and started to empty out the contents. There were no demolition implements and apart from a small puppy, a tangled mass of spaghetti and a hair dryer (none of which I had packed) there was only what I expected to find – my water bottle which mysteriously vanished when I picked it up, leaving the water behind to fall on to the only other thing in there, my mid-morning snack. A sandwich. Which was now soggy.

I picked it out of the bag and was about to toss it aside when Nuttingale and Abythwrd both screamed at me from the phone.

"Quick, eat it!" was the basic message they seemed to be conveying in a mixture of screams and wails. Just when I thought things couldn't get any more confusing, things went up a level of bonkersiness. I queried their sudden desire for me to eat.

"You remember the soggy sandwich that caused us so much trouble?" said Nuttingale.

"Um, yes and no. I don't think you ever explained it to me... perhaps now would be a..."

"No, no time right now, I'll explain later, but don't you see? That is the soggy sandwich. If you eat it now then it won't be able to travel back in time and cause the..." both Nuttingale and Abythwrd visibly shuddered, "Well, you know."

"No, I don't, but seriously – how on earth do you know this is the soggy sandwich?"

"Really? How many people do you think have a banana, sausage and cornflakes sandwich? It's pretty unique. Scoff it now, we will forever be in your debt!"

I had no idea what or how it could, but if this was the way to save Aquatia then I would do it. It would just be a bonus that in doing so I would get to savour the culinary genius that is a sausage, banana and cornflakes sandwich. Even soggy it's a delight to the taste buds. I ate and waited for the world to be saved.

**To be continued...**

# The Pursuit of Happiness?

Adapted from Joseph Tkach,  
Speaking of Life



Image by Adobe Firefly AI

Almost 250 years ago, on July 4, 1776, America's founding fathers signed their Declaration of Independence. In the preamble, Thomas Jefferson laid out three inalienable rights given to humanity by their Creator – "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness". Since then, free people all over the world have aimed after that last right – "the pursuit of happiness".

What does it mean? If we look around, we're bombarded with products, services and things that are supposed to make us happy – or at least, happier. But countless studies have shown that simply consuming things and experiences doesn't bring lasting happiness. So what gives?

Star Wars creator George Lucas attempted to answer this very question. Speaking at an event, he pointed out that happiness is made up of two different experiences – joy and pleasure. He defined pleasure as something that was fleeting, self-centred and focused solely on what we can consume. He went on to say that pleasure alone is like a drug. You always need a higher dose to achieve the same level of "happiness".

But joy, he said, is different. "Joy is compassion. Joy is giving yourself to someone else or something else... it's much more powerful than pleasure... and if you pursue joy, you will find everlasting happiness."

In Biblical terms, Lucas isn't far off the mark. Recognising the serious limits and liabilities of simply chasing pleasure is something we need to hear. Joy is far more than pleasure. But we need more information than that. Notice Lucas doesn't give us any clues as to the nature of the self-giving that would lead to joy. But I think I might

be able to pick up where he left off. You see, God, providentially, gives us a more complete picture. Jesus himself tells us to first look to find where God is. (After all, he's the ultimate source of joy.) Jesus invites us to join with him and his particular kind of self-giving. And the rest of his story fills out the many details of what this looks like in real life.

To be sure, those experiencing joy are not going to find fulfilment in consuming things, or in acquiring the latest model car or video game. Instead, what Christ has pointed us to is a better, more joyful and rich life – a life which leads us into faith, hope and love, and a life which finds real joy, peace and purpose. The real joy that, as Lucas put it, is found in "compassion" and in "giving yourself to someone else or something else". Only through pursuing that kind of joy will we find "everlasting happiness".

Speaking of Life is a public resource video on the Grace Communion International website: [gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/](https://gci.org/videos/media-speaking-of-life/)

This magazine is sponsored by Grace Communion Mooroolbark (previously known as Mooroolbark Christian Fellowship), a congregation of Grace Communion International. If you would like more information or pastoral support, our local congregational contact is Matthew Gudze on (03) 9737 0126.

**Living Today is  
brought to you by**



[mooroolbark.gci.org.au](https://mooroolbark.gci.org.au)

# I forgive you, Erin

**by Justine Toh**  
**Centre for Public Christianity**

Ian Wilkinson, Baptist pastor and the bereaved husband of Heather Wilkinson, murdered by "mushroom killer" Erin Patterson, has forgiven the convicted murderer, he revealed during victim impact statements recently.

"I encourage Erin to receive my offer of forgiveness for those harms done to me," he told Patterson in front of a packed court, as reported by the ABC.

How on earth is it possible to forgive the person who murdered members of your family?

It's a question that also applies to the recent appearance of Danny Abdallah and Samuel Davidson on Channel 7's Spotlight. Danny and his wife Leila Abdallah spectacularly forgave Davidson days after the drunken driver slammed his ute into three of the Abdallah's children, killing them and their cousin instantly.

Ian Wilkinson and the Abdallahs' ability to forgive, even in the face of terrible suffering and injustice, witnesses to the transformational power of their Christian faith.

In this clip,\* theologian Miroslav Volf explains how forgiveness is another word for grace.

Grace "gives without seeking a return, and also in a situation of injury", he says, which pushes back against our natural instincts for violence, hatred, and revenge.

The only reason grace is possible, Volf explains, is because at the heart of the Christian faith is a God of love and a God of grace. Grace and forgiveness are less a human work than a divine one.

Understandably, critics point out how unnatural it is to forgive. But forgiveness might reveal how deeply a believer like Ian Wilkinson or Danny or Leila Abdullah have grasped the scandalous nature of the God they claim to follow.

*This article has been republished with the permission of Centre for Public Christianity.*  
**publicchristianity.org**

\* "this clip" <https://publicchristianity.org/video/on-grace/>



We meet on Sunday for our Worship Service from 10am at the Mooroolbark Community Centre.

Come along, enjoy a service and stay for a chat with delicious tea, coffee and biscuits.

For more information visit our website

**mooroolbark.gci.org.au**

**For other local church details please visit their websites:**

Life Ministry Church  
**lifeministry.church**

Mooroolbark Baptist Church  
**mbc.org.au**

Mooroolbark Salvation Army Corps  
**salvationarmy.org.au/locations/victoria/v330/mooroolbark-corps**

Mooroolbark Uniting Church  
**mooroolbark.unitingchurch.org.au**

St Peter Julian Eymard, Mooroolbark Parish  
**spje.org.au**

# upcoming events



Sep to  
Nov

## Mooroolbark Miniature Railway

Public train rides on the 4th Sunday of each month, except December, 11am-4pm.

26 October and 23 November. Rides are \$2.50 per person, cash only. [mmr.org.au](http://mmr.org.au)



Sep to  
Dec

## Mooroolbark Community Garden Monthly Market

26 Oct, 30 Nov, 21 Dec, 9am till 1pm  
8 Station Street, Mooroolbark



## Shop 16, Mooroolbark Terrace

Shop 16 offers a central space to enhance and strengthen community connection and wellbeing through coming together and sharing ideas, planning and hosting activities, and creating an atmosphere of cooperation, support and belonging. Come in for a **cuppa and a chat**. **Community pantry** available daily. **Frozen meals available** on request.

@shop16mooroolbarkcommunityconnect



## Mooroolbark Umbrella Group

This year's Community Forum will host an interactive process where we can all share our local stories, values and vision.

**When:** Thursday October 16, 7:30 – 9:30pm

**Where:** Mooroolbark Community House,  
125 Brice Ave, Mooroolbark

More information and booking:  
[mooroolbarkumbrellagroup@gmail.com](mailto:mooroolbarkumbrellagroup@gmail.com)

## Jellis Craig

Proudly supporting  
Living Today Magazine

P 9726 8888

## Community Bank

Mooroolbark

## Bendigo Bank

Proudly supporting  
Living Today Magazine

Tel: 9726 5388