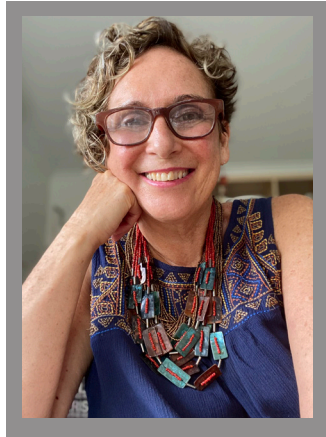




LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Peace and Justice on and for the Earth

We stood looking at the lone tree for a long time. "It's amazing!" the children said walking all the way around it. "Look, there are holes in it where animals could hide!" We got down close to the ground and carefully inspected the holes in the tree that flood waters had exposed over many rainy seasons. It was a Swamp Mahogany, at least 100 years old, and in places we could peer right through the trunk. Despite its battering the tree stood upright, ancient and majestic.



I pondered how like our lives. There is some sort of wisdom that comes from finding resilience in the face of the life's storms. The older I get the more I see its beauty.

The older I get the more I learn to look at things from all angles before coming to a conclusion. The shift comes when I really sit with something or someone - hold space and genuinely listen deeply to their story. Moving in harmony with the reconciling and restoring purposes of God is to proceed from this place. It is to move in concert with all that is.

In these pages are stories of people who have heard a call coming deeply from God. This resonance compels them to act out of love and pursue Peace and Justice on and for the Earth. Together with others they work out ways to make a difference to peoples' lives and to seek out what really matters.

Sometimes peace comes as we learn to transform conflict into opportunities for empathic listening and new understandings. In her article Conflict Transformation June Stephenson shares about how Community of Christ has experienced new peaceful pathways to dealing with conflict and finding common ground. Alice Granleese shares a personal transformative journey. Peter Lonsdale shares an update on the Food Pantry in Perth and the ministry it provides.

Andy Kroesen, talks about the new Peace Pavilion in Independence, Missouri, USA and its vision to promote peaceful learning, living, and action. Emily McLaughlin shares about her sense of calling and the work of HealthEd Connect and their efforts to uplift and empower.

In The Way Forward Judy Jackson speaks about doubts and finding Christ in the midst of crisis. In Project Zion Community of Christ President

Steven Veazey speaks about the very real challenges in the world, the hope found in the Holy Spirit, the meaning of nonviolence in our daily lives and about group efforts to achieve positive change in society.

Sometimes we are challenged to learn from the past or to spend time in dialogue and discernment. Rick Sarre shares in this edition the work of the Peace and Justice Team tasked with the job of creating resources to aid Community of Christ in its quest for peace and right relations.

Finally Candice Unger shares of a project at West Pennant Hills Community of Christ and the ongoing impact that it is having towards promoting spiritual wellbeing.

As I added each story to this edition many other personal and corporate stories came to mind. I thought of so many of you both within Australia and around the world and the work that you are doing in your communities to bring about right relations on and for the earth. I thought of Community of Christ in Bendigo and its Pop up Shop, of Outreach International, of the Health Ministries Association, of The Gully Community Garden in Fern Tree Gully, of the Peace Colloquy in Europe, the Australian Earth Stewardship Team, the Green Cathedral Choir at Forster and of Tuesday Connect in Brisbane. I thought of the work of the youth leaders and those assigned to childrens' ministry, of workshops and weekends dedicated to healing and spiritual transformation, of the World Church Teams, of congregations, pastors and ministers, members and friends. In my mind it became a forest of trees. Tall trees with leafy branches reaching out, smaller trees nurtured in fertile compost and seedlings growing towards the light protected by shade. A lush place of interconnectedness and nurture. This is the beauty of community - we can create positive change in society along side God and each other.

Close your eyes and just take a moment and imagine yourself as a tree being nurtured beside an endless stream of love... Where is this compelling you to reach out?

Anne Bonnefin

Editorial Team Member