

City of Sharing



On behalf of the City of Port Phillip, I am very proud to support this initiative of the Port Phillip Multifaith Network.

The terrible loss of life in the February bushfires has thrown matters of faith into sharp relief for many Melburnians. Some may have questioned their faith but many more found it a source of hope and comfort.

Faith leaders in Port Phillip maintain that there appears to be a strong correlation between declining spiritual health and diminishing community connectedness. Many people, even if not formally religious, search for more meaning in life.

Whether we're Jewish or Catholic, Buddhists or Anglicans, Orthodox Greek or Muslim, we all share a deep commitment to the welfare of people in all its many and varied dimensions.

This booklet articulates the spirit of generosity common to all our faiths.



Frank O'Connor, Mayor
City of Port Phillip

Music for the soul

Music and singing brings joy in so many ways. From choirs to chanting, rock'n'roll to sacred organ music, you can find it all in Port Phillip. Here is just a sample of the many musical offerings that welcome you as a participant or audience.

St Kilda / Elsternwick Baptist Church, 9 Pakington Street, St Kilda: Each Sunday at 10 am a group of musicians lead the congregation in the singing of both traditional and contemporary songs. Emerging more recently from the community has been the 'Solstice Singers' formed and led by the church's former pastor Digby Hannah. The Solstice Singers meet on many Wednesday evenings and perform a capella works from many different eras.

Hare Krishna Temple, 197 Danks Street, Albert Park: Every Hare Krishna event contains some chanting. The chanting of Hare Krishna is promoted as an easy and sublime method of meditation that encourages absorption and a deep connection with the self and its connection with the divine. If you've got a good singing voice or can play an instrument, or would simply like to absorb the atmosphere, you are welcome to come along.

Paul the Apostle, 325 Dorcas Street, South Melbourne: People are welcome to join the choir – come along to rehearsals, Monday evenings from 7 pm.

Christ Church, 14 Acland Street, St Kilda: The magnificent 1859 William Hill church organ has been completely restored, and Stephen Baldwin has been appointed as organist and director of music. He will oversee the music for the Sunday liturgies, and special services such as weddings and funerals. We hope to start up a motet choir to augment worship and other occasions.



Everyone can be involved in the community garden at Port Melbourne Uniting Church.

Community grows together

Empty open space next to the Port Melbourne Uniting Church has been transformed into a beautiful and productive community garden. Now the garden is linking neighbours and prompting discussion about food miles, recycling and caring for each other.

Janet Hoare says the 'Simply Living' garden literally grew out of a desire to strengthen links within the community. 'A group of us were looking at ways to live more sustainably as Christians. We had an empty open space next to the church and a big roof that could catch rain water.

'We also talked about food miles and food security, and we realised a lot of people who come to South Port Uniting Care are looking for food vouchers. Fresh food grown in a simple community garden was such a natural link between all these ideas – and a fun thing to do.'

'Since the first sod was turned last year, the garden has attracted many locals. It brings people of all ages and backgrounds together. It also makes the church space more welcoming, it's an open invitation to come and work in the garden,' said Janet.

If you want to get involved, drop by anytime to do some weeding, watering or harvesting. There's also a working bee on the third Sunday of each month at 11 am.

Port Melbourne Uniting Church, Cnr Bridge and Nott Streets, Port Melbourne

21st Century Church Hall is a Community Centre

One of the first things you notice about Christ Church on Acland Street is the lack of perimeter fence. Apart from a low hedge, the historic old church isn't fenced off from the community.

Openness is part of the church's philosophy, says Father Jim Minchin. 'The church is open every day, starting with 7 am prayers. We also have a popular playground behind the church and the grounds are open space. We aim to be as open as we can be while maintaining our sanity.'

That's been no easy task in a neighbourhood challenged by drugs, prostitution and alcohol-related violence. Rather than retreat from the challenges, the church has built an impressive community centre adjacent and has quietly set about making it a really useful, popular community venue.



Christ Church Community Centre hosts a great range of activities.

'Our community centre is a modern take on the church hall of old,' Father Minchin said. The community centre, with a variety of flexible spaces, great access and modern facilities, attracts about 1,200 participants in everything from 12 step groups to music therapy.

Father Minchin said the church is set to build a small number of transitional accommodation units next to Theatre Works. The units will provide affordable, quality accommodation for singles and families moving out of crisis accommodation for three to five years.

The gift of food

'For I was hungry and you gave me food; I was thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you made me welcome; naked and you clothed me; sick and you visited me; in prison and you came to see me.' Matthew 25: verses 35-36.

In 1982, Catholic parish priest Father Ernie Smith, motivated by this gospel message, opened his door and shared a meal with a homeless man.

This act of generosity inspired the formation of Sacred Heart Mission to provide the basic necessities of life – food, clothing, emergency relief, accommodation and companionship.

At first a small team of committed staff and parishioners from St Kilda West helped prepare simple meals out of the presbytery's kitchen. Within a year, scores of people were arriving each day for lunch and the parish hall became the dining hall. Today, Sacred Heart Mission provides breakfast and lunch each day of the year for hundreds of people in need.

The meals provide an opportunity to get to know people in a relaxed environment. Support workers establish relationships with people to gain an understanding of the challenges they are facing and the most appropriate services to help them.

There are lots of ways to get involved – volunteering at the dining hall, visiting people in hostels, helping in one of the four opportunity shops or at fundraising events. The easiest way to get involved is to visit the website or get in touch with the Volunteer Coordinator on 9536 8419.

Sacred Heart Mission, 87 Grey Street, St Kilda



Sacred Heart Mission serves up a good helping of food and friendship every day. Photo by Mark Munro.

Equal opportunity meditation

Good Shepherd has regular community nights to introduce people to Reiki and meditation.

Gendrie Klein-Breteler said Good Shepherd's core work is providing counselling and support for women.

'We've found that the spiritual journey through meditation and healing can create a common ground and a safe space.'

'With the support of our volunteers, we now have two community nights which provide opportunities for Reiki and meditation. These nights are open to everyone in the community.'

Gendrie said *'a feeling of belonging in itself creates a greater sense of meaningfulness. Many great and wonderful changes can grow from social contact in a supportive environment.'*

For more information about Good Shepherd and their programs, call 9537 1416.



Everyone is welcome at the Hare Krishna Love Feast.

Sharing the food of life

While sharing food is part of the spiritual life of many faith traditions, the Hare Krishnas are famous for their feasting. Aniruddha Dasa explains that Hare Krishna puts a lot of faith in food.

'Spiritual life means celebration. If you have friends over for an evening, what do you do? You feed them of course! The Hare Krishna tradition is known as the kitchen religion because food and life go together. Food and spiritual life are inextricable.'

'Food is meant for three purposes. It aids bodily strength, increases the duration of life and helps purify the mind. Every meal cooked at the Hare Krishna temple is prepared with these three purposes in mind. Ingredients are carefully and deliberately chosen whilst the preparation is done as a meditation or offering to the Supreme.'

'Every Saturday and Sunday the Hare Krishna temple is open to all as a means to discover oneself through meditation, philosophy and good food. Every day at 4.30 pm the chanting starts, followed by a brief presentation on the science and practice of spiritual life, topped off with the famous Love Feast. Everyone is welcome to attend.'

'This service is provided by the members of the Hare Krishna Movement who volunteer their time to serve the community. Their donations provide the ingredients and their cooking skills celebrate those of the Supreme who creates, maintains and ultimately vanquishes us.'

Hare Krishna Temple, 197 Danks Street, Albert Park

Taize prayer in St Kilda

The Elwood St Kilda Catholic parish has established a Taize prayer – inspired by an ecumenical centre in France which hosts thousands of people in meditative prayer. The Taize community has an ecumenical focus and is very appealing to young people. The Taize group meets once a month, and more often during Advent, and is open to anyone. For more details, phone 9531 6120.

Authentic inspiration

If you would like to put some pizzazz into your life, if you want to push your boundaries, deepen your spirituality, recharge your batteries, develop relationships or clarify some goals for yourself, then come and see what the Kilbride Centre has to offer.

Coordinator Mary Kingsbury says the Kilbride Centre has a rich program of events that encourage spiritual nourishment and investigation. They offer short-term workshops, courses and groups that cover the areas of arts, music, spirituality, meditation, prayer and people-skills, for those interested in a variety of aspects of personal development and spiritual growth.

'Much of the program is about living authentically in the modern world. It's about sharing experiences and learnings with others in a peaceful atmosphere.

'The program offers a great variety of formats



Angela and Roberta met two years ago at the Kilbride Centre, and have been writing poetry together on a fortnightly basis.

and topics. There are sessions during the day and in the evenings, workshops and meditations, retreats and get-togethers. Topics range from spiritual teachings, meditation, prayer, cooking and craft.

'Also, you may wish to spend time in one of our quiet rooms, take a reflective walk by the sea,

make use of our library, or simply visit us for a friendly chat.

'We've got a magnificent location and a rich spiritual heritage to share,' said Mary.

Kilbride Centre, 52 Beaconsfield Parade, Albert Park

Beyond crisis

In times of crisis, it's good to know that places like the Salvation Army Crisis Service have many ways to help.

The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre in St Kilda has a 'no appointment necessary' system that makes getting help easier. The centre works with people to address their immediate needs, but also listens to their stories with the hope of meeting some of their longer-term needs.

Chaplain Craig Farrell says that the immediate aid goes beyond the material. 'Chaplains offer emotional and spiritual support for the staff and clients of the services. We offer a confidential, non-judgemental and non-discriminatory service that invites people of all faiths, traditions and denominations.

'The opportunity for a chaplain to simply 'be with' another is a very powerful and profound interaction. We hope to go beyond the initial crisis and help people build the connections needed to recover and rebuild their lives,' said Craig.

'The people at the crisis centre made me feel like a VIP,' said Craig Porter, a young man who has found himself homeless many times.

He found a place at the Salvation Army refuge in St Kilda last year when he was 'in crisis' and was



The Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre offers spiritual support. Craig Porter (left) and Craig Farrell have built a great rapport.

too sick to live in a boarding house. 'I had health, money and drug problems, I wasn't travelling well,' he said.

'The refuge gave me a safe place to be and linked me up with people who could help. The chaplains and other staff are available to talk to at anytime. My life got better the minute I walked in. It wasn't just the staff, but the other people in the same situation. I was supported and encouraged to work out what I wanted to do.'

Craig Porter now has his own accommodation and is looking at studying youth work part-time.

'Knowing that people really care about me made a big difference,' he said.

Salvation Army Crisis Contact Centre, 29 Grey Street, St Kilda

Start your day the spiritual way

According to ancient sages and rishis of yore, the hour and a half before sunrise is the most beneficial for meditation, study and prayer. This is also corroborated by the ancient texts of India which enjoin us to rise early to be free from the distractions that bewilder us upon the rising of the sun.

At the Hare Krishna temple we honour this tradition every day with a predawn service, starting at 4.30 am. It's a great time for a prayerful offering of devotion where you can join the communal chanting of Hare Krishna. At 5 am we sit quietly for our individual chanting which continues till 7 am when we greet the Deity of the temple with more morning prayers.

Breakfast is served after a short class on the ancient scripture, Srimad Bhagavatam, which outlines the philosophy and practise of Hare Krishna spiritual life. Everyone is welcome. Wear loose and comfortable casual clothing and bring an open mind.

Other spiritual starts include:

St Silas' Anglican Church, 99 Bridport Street, Albert Park: Morning prayer with Bible readings each day at 9 am and the main Sunday Service is at 9.30 am. Christ Church, 14 Acland Street, St Kilda: Prayers every morning at 7 am.

Support for spiritual journeys

A unique library and seminar program offer diverse opportunities for all who wish to undertake a creative and supportive spiritual journey.

The Carmelite Centre in Middle Park strives to awaken people to the spiritual dimension of life. The centre promotes a spirituality which is concerned with the whole of life; with justice, social order, contemplation and personal enrichment.

The centre's program offers experienced and leading presenters in workshops, courses or seminars on particular topics. Programs are formatted to provide participants with input and guidance as well as time to share with others, for personal reflection and to increase self-awareness and understandings about the spiritual journey.

While placing a special emphasis on the mystical core or contemplative dimension of Carmelite spirituality, the programs are respectful of other

religious traditions and often seek to find the connections and intersections between world faith traditions.

Carmelite spirituality, with its origins in the 11th century, had its beginnings with hermits living on Mount Carmel in Palestine. In the 21st century, they seek to engage in a creative search for a new language of faith.

The Carmelite Library of Spirituality, which is also located at the site, contains an extensive collection of books and journals related to Carmelite, other Catholic and Christian spiritual traditions, Islam and the spiritualities of other world religions. The resources of this library are open to all.

During 2009, the centre will offer seminars, workshops and courses in meditation, spiritual searching, inter-faith understanding, well-being and contemplative living. Contact the centre on 9681 9600 or thecarmelitecentre@sj-mc.org.au.



Philip Harvey and Anna Welch can 'unlock' a world of spiritual literature for you.

For further information or to join the email contact list, please contact the Carmelite library on 9682 8553 or email librarian@carmelitelibrary.org

Language of the spirit

The Boonwurrung people, part of the Kulin Nation, have always shared their culture and history through oral stories and drawings. Boonwurrung elder Aunty Carolyn Briggs continues this sharing of knowledge in her book *The Journey Cycles of the Boonwurrung*.



Combining English and Boonwurrung language, Briggs invites us on a journey through the land of her people. In doing so, she opens the door for the local community to learn about the importance of the history, spirituality and life cycles of the land they live on.

Briggs' storytelling draws on the significance of the Boonwurrung land's natural resources and seasonal changes, as well as the strong oral history of her ancestors. In the preface, she says: 'these written stories are a vehicle that we are using to be able to continue our voice, continue the process of retelling the stories of our history that reconnects us back to our culture, heritage and identity.'

'Transforming from oral to written is a means of getting new people to be a part of that story. This represents the diversity of our culture.'

The spirit of the Boonwurrung people comes to life in the stories Briggs explores: stories of connection, creation and renewal. Language is described as 'the spiritual base to the Boonwurrung country' and through it, Briggs finds a platform for shared understanding.

The Journey Cycles of the Boonwurrung: Stories with Boonwurrung Language. Carolyn Briggs. Victorian Aboriginal Corporation for Languages (VACL), 2008, \$29.90, 64pp. ISBN: 9780957936072

Promoting faith and understanding

Temple Beth Israel has many ways for non-practicing Jews and the wider community to enrich their understanding of Judaism.

Rabbi Fred Morgan says the temple welcomes unaffiliated Jews who may have drifted away from the Jewish community. 'Being part of a faith community has a lot to offer in these uncertain times. Families who have previously practiced Judaism only within the home are coming back to the synagogue, finding great strength,' he says.

Rabbi Morgan says there is interest amongst non-Jews to know more about Judaism and the Jewish way of life. 'We host regular tours of the synagogue building for schools and other groups. We also hold events where visitors can sample traditional Jewish cuisine or listen to the beautiful music being performed by one of the four TBI choirs.'

TBI is keen to help its members to understand other faiths. This includes hosting special events like the Storytelling Night, where two representatives from the indigenous community shared their life experiences with an audience of 60 people.

TBI hosts a range of workshops open to the general public on mental health issues such as depression, Alzheimer's disease, anxiety, and caring for the mentally ill. 'Beyond Maturity Blues' is a seminar later in the year aimed at identifying and treating depression in older people.



Rabbi Fred Morgan (right) leads regular tours of Temple Beth Israel.

Global Pink Hijab Day united women around the world to support breast cancer research.



Pink goes global

The most noticeable characteristic of the Muslim community is their intrinsic capacity to do voluntary work and their eagerness to give back, not just to their own community, but to the wider Australian community.

One of the initiatives the Muslim community has been involved in was a clean-up day at Coburg Lake, initiated by the Islamic Ecological Society to address local environmental issues.

Muslims in Victoria were also strongly involved in Global Pink Hijab Day, an event designed to break down stereotypes about Islam and encourage dialogue with the wider community, while promoting an awareness of cancer and cancer prevention.

For more information about the Islamic Council of Victoria, visit www.icv.org.au.

Feed your soul at a library or two

There's a warm welcome awaiting you at the Port Phillip Bahá'í community's monthly Tranquillity Zone at St Kilda Public Library. Held on the third Sunday of every month for the past five years, this is a peaceful interlude in the busy round of life. You can relax to the sounds of beautiful music, and hear readings from Bahá'í scriptures and other religions.

Separately, Bahá'í also offer regular classes where you can develop your spiritual capacity for service to humanity, based on the teachings of the founder of the Bahá'í Faith, Bahá'u'lláh. Born in the 19th century, he taught that all religions come from one God, providing guidance suited to their particular time and place. Bahá'u'lláh's teachings speak to the modern world, calling for equality between men and women, a world commonwealth of nations, and an end to all forms of prejudice, wars and conflicts.

Another Bahá'í devotional meeting with a difference is Soul Food, a monthly gathering at the magnificent State Library of Victoria. The



Tranquillity awaits you at the St Kilda Library.

gathering combines readings from the world's great faiths with reflections from leading philosophers, interspersed with live and recorded music by some of Melbourne's most noted performers. The readings and music are augmented by photographs and videos that illustrate particular themes – generosity, the equality of men and women, purity of heart, unconditional love – all set against a candle-lit background.

Tranquillity Zone, third Sunday of each month, 11.30 am, St Kilda Public Library; Soul Food, first Sunday of each month, 10.30 am, State Library of Victoria (Village Roadshow Theatre).

Multi-faith contacts

Baha'i Community of Port Phillip

Tel: 03 9525 6699

www.bahai.org.au

Carmelite Parish Office

www.sj-mc.org.au

Phone: (03) 9681 9600

Christ Church St Kilda

www.apwd.com.au/clients/ccsk/index.html

Phone: (03) 9534 3892

Elwood / St Kilda West Catholic Parish

Phone: (03) 9531 6120

Good Shepherd Youth and Family Service

www.goodshepvic.org.au

Phone: (03) 9537 1416

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness

www.iskcon.net.au

Phone: (03) 9699 5122

Islamic Council of Victoria

www.icv.org.au

Phone: (03) 9328 2067

Kilbride Centre for Spirituality and Personal Development

www.kilbridecentre.com.au

Phone: (03) 9690 1076

Paul the Apostle Uniting Church

www.stpaulapostle.com.au

Phone: 0407 351 545 (Reverend Ross Carter)

Port Melbourne Uniting Church

www.southportuniting.org.au

Phone: 0438 883 659 (Reverend Peter Greenwood)

Rabbinical Council of Victoria

Phone: (03) 9525 9492

Sacred Heart Mission

www.sacredheartmission.org

Phone: (03) 9537 1166

The Salvation Army Crisis Services

www.salvationarmy.org.au/crisisservices

Phone: (03) 9536 7790 or freecall 1800 627 727

South Port Uniting Church and Uniting care

www.southport.uningchurch.org.au

Phone: 9690 1188

St Silas' Anglican Church

www.anglicanalberrypark.org.au

Phone: 0403 416 340 (Archdeacon Ray McInnes)

St Kilda / Elsternwick Baptist Church

www.stkildabaptist.org.au

Phone: (03) 9525 4620

Temple Beth Israel

www.tbi.org.au

Phone: (03) 9510 1488

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