



From the Minister

Greetings and peace to you all!

It has been another wonderful and rich month travelling with you all as we are going through this month, the season of Lent.

In the past few weeks I had invited you to challenges ourselves to hear the voice of God, and to see new visions for our journey, personally and as a church. We reflect through Jesus' experience in the wilderness, to find a new perspective of wilderness. In my sharing, I pointed out to you the hidden blessings of wilderness: that it is not all about barrenness.

Wilderness experience was the shaping factor for Israel, the defining moment for Jesus as he affirmed his identity and mission, and a potential growth period for many of us. We looked at Abraham's journey into the unknown and went through the challenges and facing personal battles in his faithfulness to follow God's call.

In the midst of this, some of you have come together to have a conversation about the future of the church. During this month, I've attended the AGM at Hampton UC, the conversations with Rev Robin Yang and the Church Council meeting. During the week, I have come to the Monday Meditation groups, and the Playgroup gathering on Thursday mornings, building connections with different groups. I also had the opportunity to attend the funeral of Rev Kim Groot and meeting some of you there, as well as other fellow ministers. It was a humbling opportunity to hear your stories and journey along with you in your loss and remembering her presence in the history of Hampton UC.

In addition to the pastoral care, I am aware that some of you have had faced some health challenges lately. I have had some pastoral conversations either in person or phone conversations. My prayers are with you and I will try to continue to check in and be in touch with you. In the meantime, in case any of you wondering when to find me in person during the week, I will be in the church mostly on Monday when Meditation is on, or on Thursdays between 9:30am-11:30am. I will also try to make time for visitation during the week, especially on the fourth and fifth week.

May the blessing of God, the Creator, and the power of Christ, and the continuing presence of the Holy Spirit, nourish and sustain us, surprise and reorder us, and strengthen us in faith and hope daily. Amen.

Kharis Abadani

Holy Week in Hampton

Palm Sunday April 13

Worship Service 10 am

Monday April 14

Christian Meditation 10 am

Thursday April 17

Seder Meal 11:30am for 12 noon
Please let Ian Menzies or Margaret Ackland know of your intention to attend to assist with catering.

Thursday April 17

Service of Footwashing 7pm
at Holy Trinity Anglican, 10 Thomas St

Good Friday April 18

Worship service 10am
Hot Cross Bun
Morning Tea 11am



Easter Sunday April 20

Worship Service 10am
Greening of the Cross



Hampton Uniting Church

www.hamptonunitingchurch.wix.com/hampton-uca



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AUSTRALIA'S TREATMENT OF REFUGEES



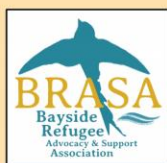
WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN?

2 pm Sunday 30 March 2025

St John's Uniting Church, 567 Glen Huntly Road, Elsternwick

Afternoon tea provided

This is a free event, but your gold coin donation will help needy refugees



www.baysiderefugeesupport.org

Enquiries: Geraldine 0408512522.

The Bayside Refugee Advocacy and Support Association has been operating in the southern suburbs of Melbourne since 2013. We raise awareness of the challenges that refugees face, we advocate for them, and we offer support and friendship. We welcome visitors to our monthly meetings, either in person or by Zoom.



The foyer window display this month



Compassion

The 'Compassion' theme of our Foyer windows this month arose from the theme of Kharis' sermon on 16 March and has been re-purposed in support of BRASA's free event (as advertised above) at 2pm THIS SUNDAY 30 March 2025 at St John's Elsternwick Uniting Church.

Guest speaker David Manne is a lawyer and migration agent and Co-ordinator of the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre. He commenced working with the Refugee and Immigration Legal Centre in January 2001, which is the largest provider of free legal assistance to disadvantaged migrants, asylum seekers and refugees in Australia. He also sits on the Boards of the Refugee Council of Australia and the Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture Ethics Committee, and is a regular and prominent contributor to the public debate on Australia's refugee and immigration laws and policies.

Hampton's support

Hampton Uniting actively assists BRASA by hosting its monthly meetings, any of which you are most welcome to attend. Our weekly offering also includes donations of grocery items for distribution to local refugee families. The next meeting is next Thursday, 3 April at 7:30pm in the Fellowship Room, or via Zoom. Please contact Geraldine Moore for the link via email at gm_moore@bigpond.net.au

Where to next for Hampton?

A lengthy, thoughtful and thorough discussion at our AGM outlined the current situation of ourselves and surrounding Bayside congregations and examined several possible scenarios for action in regard to the congregation's ministerial vacancy.

The general consensus of those present was that we should complete and submit a Congregational Profile to the Synod's Placements Committee in an attempt to seek a new Ministerial Agent. Given the large number of ministerial vacancies throughout the Synod, it was noted that this may take some considerable time to come to fruition. In the interim, it was agreed that we continue to participate in the current discussions amongst local Bayside congregations over mutual support and cooperation with Presbytery support, and remain open to any creative developments that may subsequently arise.

Subsequent to the AGM, Presbytery Minister Rev Robin Yang agreed to meet with the Church Council and other interested folk to discuss future options for the congregation. This meeting took place on Wednesday 19 March. Again, the consensus arising from the meeting was that we should proceed with preparing a Profile, and simultaneously consult with local Bayside churches about the possibility of mutual cooperation.

Some significant information from that Profile includes:

- Membership: Number of contacts on the Pastoral Roll: 37 (17 'active')
- Average number each week: 10-16
- Meditation group average attendance: 10-14 (from 18)
- Missional activities we would like to develop include:
 - Weekly worship remains our highest priority
 - Dayspring programs including Quiet Days and ecumenical retreats.
 - Continued community outreach via the use of our facilities
 - Development of the proposed Bayside Regional Cluster

News Snippets

Annual General Meeting

The 2025 Annual General Meeting was held on Sunday March 2. The Minutes of July 2024 congregational meeting, the 2024 Annual Reports, and Budget for 2025, as had been circulated in NUCH, were tabled, received and unanimously approved by consensus.

A lengthy discussion was held on the various future options for the congregation (see left).

At the meeting Office bearers for 2025 were re-elected:

- **Ian Menzies** as Chair of congregational meetings;
- **Margaret Ackland** as Secretary of congregational meetings
- **Ailsa Drent** as Presbytery representative; and
- **Margaret Pollock** as Church Treasurer

Happy Birthdays

We extend sincere birthday wishes to the following who celebrate theirs throughout April:

- 13 April **Elsa Breydon**
- 16 April **Barbara Lobb**
- 25 April **Evelyn Hansen**
- 26 April **Margaret Oulton**

And we extend belated good wishes to **Kharis Abadani** for her birthday on 17 March.

Donations for Refugees

The Bayside Refugee Advocacy and Support Association (BRASA) is seeking ongoing donations to assist refugees in our community. Goods must be unopened and within 'Use By' dates.

Sought-after items include:

Basmati rice, dried beans, lentils, chick peas, tinned fish, powdered milk, tinned vegetables, flour, long-life milk, spices, honey, tea, coffee, soap, detergent, deodorant, women's sanitary products, babies' disposable nappies, shavers, toothbrushes, and household cleaning materials.

Your support would be greatly appreciated. Donations can be left in the basket in the church each Sunday or placed in the collection box in the hall storeroom near the internal glass doors.

Seder Meal

Maundy Thursday

We are planning on holding our traditional Seder Meal commemorating the Last Supper as a luncheon at noon on Maundy Thursday 16 April 2025.

To assist with catering preparation, please let Margaret Ackland or Ian Menzies know of your intention to attend.



Later that day a communion service of foot (or hand) washing will be held at Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 10 Thomas Street at 7pm.



Everyone is welcome to attend either or both of these events.

Good Friday

After our 10am Worship Service on Good Friday 18 April 2025 we will be holding our usual Hot Cross Bun Morning Tea at 11am. All welcome.

Daylight Saving

A 'timely' reminder that Daylight Saving ends next Sunday 6 April. We will 'fall back': turn your clock back an hour

and enjoy an extra hour of snooze. Don't forget to also check and change the batteries in your smoke alarm.



Vale Rev Kim Groot

Former Hampton UC Minister, Rev Kim Groot, died peacefully at home on Sunday 23 February following a brave two-year battle with cancer. The following notice appeared in Tasmania's *The Mercury*:

Dearly loved and loving daughter of Jack (dec) and Jan (Ingram). Now re-united with her husband Greg Shanahan. Devoted and dearly loved mother of Liam and Eamon, loved and loving sister of Jason, Wendy and Simon and loved and loving sister in law of Tina. Dearly loved by all her nieces and nephews. A remarkable caring woman loved by so many. 25/08/1957 - 23/02/2025

At her funeral on Monday 3 March her sons Liam and Eamon delivered the following tributes:

Liam:

Community was extremely important to mum. It didn't matter where she was: at church, at school, or even sitting on the train with strangers; she always cherished conversation. She had a knack for locating likeminded people who could rant about *Game of Thrones* with her, who shared her dark sense of humour, who she could trust and talk openly with.

Many people here will know Mum for her speaking. Whether she was delivering sermons as a minister and chaplain at Hampton Uniting Church and Haileybury College, discussing *Hamlet* and *The Wasteland* with her English classes at Haileybury and the Centre for Adult Education or engaging in group therapy over coffee and cakes with friends; speaking and discussing was always the core. Some of my favourite recent memories are of sitting in the lounge room after watching *Blade Runner* or *The Sopranos* for the hundredth time and still finding new things to talk about.

In the last two years mum had the opportunity to choose how she wanted to spend the rest of her time and she chose to spend it in cafes, talking with friends. As well as spending a lot of time reading in bed, of course. I think it says a lot that mum didn't need to alter her behaviour at all in order to live her best life; she'd already worked out what was important: people and books.

Mum's first job was at a bookshop in Hobart, where she inevitably spent all of her pay on books for herself, but really she loved sharing books. She especially loved being a provider of kid's books. No doubt many of you and your children have received a bombardment of books and book recommendations over the years. She cherished any opportunity to encourage reading. Before she retired, mum had a great time recording videos of herself reading kid's books during lockdown. As a side note, I think we all agree that someone so adept at relaxation deserved more out of her retirement.

Eamon and I are in the privileged position of having Kim as our mother; we benefited most from her care and her love for education. As children, we were given the tools to express ourselves and were treated like intelligent people. Dad would always laugh that, mid-argument, mum would stop us to edit our grammar and we would pause the screaming to fix what we'd said and then the yelling would continue. We were shown how to love reading, but also to love writing, painting and drawing. Most importantly we were taught by her example to care for the people around us and I hope you have all taken your own lessons from your time with Kim as well.

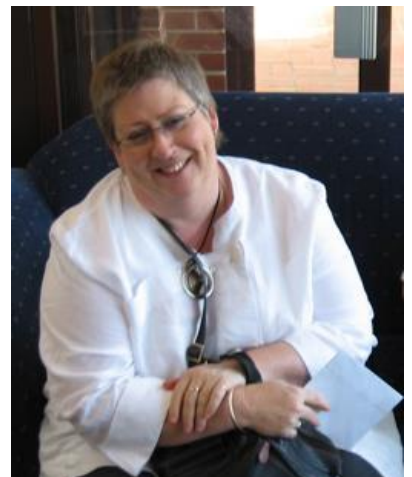
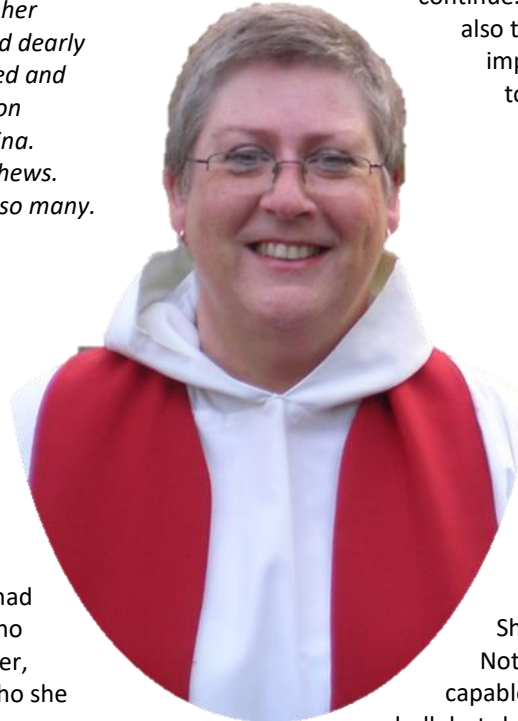
Eamon:

She was an eccentric woman, our mother. She'd have been delighted to know that word was to be used about her now because she was quietly proud of her ability to go about things in her own way. Part librarian, part leader, part mentor and part hippie, she somehow managed to go with the flow and yet simultaneously dictate her own current.

She was also uniquely capable. Not practical – not in the slightest – but capable nonetheless. She couldn't change a light bulb but she profoundly changed the lives of those around her. Not in a showy way but with a deep and subtle resonance. She was instinctively wise and powerfully empathetic. As confidante, friend and advisor to many, she wielded significant power thoughtfully and compassionately. In recent weeks and months, we have heard endless accounts of Mum's ability to listen, reflect and lift spirits. She doubted the full depths of her influence but she was formidable and she sent powerful ripples of positive influence through her friends, family and communities.

She was tasteful, artistically-minded and cultured without pretence. She devoured TS Eliot, drank up Shakespeare and swam in Bob Dylan. She shuffled off her mortal coil in dialogue with great poets – Bob got the last word but she didn't complain.

Equal to her thirst for art was her love of humour - the dark, the sarcastic and the ridiculous. She preached Christ's ability to take away death's sting but I can assure you, a clever woman in her final months shares that miraculous power if armed with a good sense of humour.



As a reverend and a teacher, you could say that she was professionally obliged to be kind and yet she far outshone any kind of obligation. She gave generously and often to those who needed it. However, being kind did not make her meek; she was a Bolshie woman who suffered neither fools nor bastards. She was almost as scathing of those who earned it as she was sensitive and affectionate to those who needed it. No singular doctrine or rationale drove her moral art - only a shrug of the shoulders that assumed it was the obvious and natural course to be good.



Aside from being eccentric, capable, tasteful, funny and kind, my mother was loving. She loved widely, freely and sincerely. In everything she did, her love was evident.

What is also self-evident is her ability to make deep connections with a vast range of wonderful people. She sought throughout her life to know others in numerous communities - through the church, her schools and through many circles of friends - to know others deeply and to be known by them. Her social calendar, before and during her illness, speaks to someone uniquely capable of forging meaningful and enduring bonds. Though she questioned what she had done to deserve such love, admiration and friendship, to all of us it is wholly obvious. We are all lessened by her loss but more so, we have been made more by her life with us.

And finally, a word from Kim herself, as she farewelled Hampton UC in December 2012:

I am extremely grateful for the time I have spent among you as your minister. I am grateful that you have allowed me the freedom to minister in the way I believed called to do so. I have learned more in your company than I ever knew of the real nature of pastoral ministry. I have had it confirmed over and over again that the world needs the faith of the church more than ever. Every week in worship among you, I have heard the clear reminder that we are given all we need in Christ and that our job is to maintain the life of worship for the sake of the world.

You are a precious community. Hold the line! Keep faith with God in Christ who keeps faith with you. Whatever the future holds, remember who is Lord of time and space. Give yourselves to him anew every time you gather. Trust him to provide what you need to navigate the time ahead. Look to him and steer by his light.

In faith, hope and above all love,

Kim Groot



Four Hampton UC ministers (circa 2013):

L to R

Peter Wiltshire (1992 - 1997)

Tim Angus (2013 - 2019)

Kim Groot (1999 - 2012)

Ross Carter (1986 - 1991)

The Power of Food

A reflection on Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32

One of his best known stories, the one about a father's grand celebration over the return of a renegade son, comes by way of Jesus responding to a complaint.

A growing number of the region's outcasts had been congregating around him. He is as apt now to be found hanging out with tax collectors and a dappled array of sinners as to be discussing theology with scholars and scribes. These elite educated ones, who serve by keeping an eye on what is right and who is wrong, begin to complain and grumble against Jesus and his practices, making the worst accusation they can muster: *"This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them."* Need they say anything more?

To follow Jesus
is to be part of a spiritual story
that can be traced
on a trail of crumbs

They know the power of food, how it binds people together or tears us apart. To follow Jesus is to be part of a spiritual story that can be traced on a trail of crumbs, from the first bite of Eden's fruit to harrowing times of famine and starvation to the awe of mysteriously multiplying loaves to the most shocking command of all: *"Eat my body, drink my blood."*

Look at the sharing of food in any family, church, neighbourhood, nation, world, and you will see much more. Food is an emblem for who has power and who must beg, a sign of what we believe about sharing, hoarding, squandering or depriving one another of life. With whom will we eat today?

The runaway son, trapped in famine, is hired to feed a herd of pigs. Adding insult, the pigs eat better than he. If only he could be one of them, he thinks, one of the despised, eating what they eat, rather than starving for forgiveness and home. At the edge of complete catastrophe, where newness tends to break in, he finds his humility and humanity. Ready now to be in the lowest position, ready even to be punished, insulted, despised, he returns—and is welcomed with a joyful feast.

Jesus knows what it costs to become bread for each other, to openly, deliberately, boldly, break barriers and extend the table. To disturb the peace is his way of making peace; to stand accused of eating with the despised—meaning every single one of us—his great joy.

from the blogs at InwardOutward.org



Agnusday appears with permission of Agnusday.org

Phone Etiquette

This notice can be found in some French churches:

"En entrant dans cette église, il est possible que vous entendiez l'appel de Dieu. Par contre, il n'est pas susceptible de vous contacter par téléphone. Merci d'avoir éteint votre téléphone. Si vous souhaitez parler à Dieu, entrez, choisissez un endroit tranquille et parle lui. Si vous souhaitez le voir, envoyez-lui un SMS en conduisant."

TRANSLATION:

"It is possible that on entering this church, you may hear the Call of God. On the other hand, it is not likely that he will contact you by phone. Thank you for turning off your phone. If you would like to talk to God, come in, choose a quiet place and talk to him. If you would like to see him, send him a text while driving."



EARTH DAY



22 April

The theme for Earth Day 2025 is **Our Power, Our Planet**, inviting everyone around the globe to unite behind renewable energy, and to triple the global generation of clean electricity by 2030.

Presbytery Annual Report



The Presbytery of Port Phillip East (PPE) stretches from Toorak south down the Mornington Peninsula and across to the Casey-Cardinia growth area. Each congregation is represented by its Ministry agents and an elected lay congregational representative (Hampton's is Ailsa Drent). PPE's 31-page 2024 Annual Report was adopted at its meeting on March 15. The following are just a few snippets from those various Reports:

Pastoral Relations

Filling ministry vacancies is becoming increasingly difficult with the large number of ministers retiring and small number entering college. In some cases, we are seeing very long vacancies. Congregations need to think creatively about ministry moving forward. Collaboration is viewed positively. The PRC is willing to work with you to explore creative ministry options.

Property

With the intention of the State and Local Government to levy taxes of church property that was not being used for religious purposes, the commercial leasing of the Presbytery Manses became problematic... the use of... manses to temporally house Ministers is preferred and this will be the policy to be implemented whenever possible.

With the amalgamation of the Black Rock and Cheltenham congregations to form the Charman UC the question of the future use of the properties for which the former Black Rock UC has Responsible Body Status (RBS) needs to be determined.

Ministry of Pastor team

Some of the main challenges for 2024 included the changes in fixed term contracts introduced by the government in mid-year, the continual education of congregations to know what a Ministry of Pastor position is and the roles and responsibilities of ministry agents in these roles.

Casey-Cardinia Region

Some congregations are discerning and agreeing to [the goals of having]:

- 1 network of congregations
- 1 ministry team
- 1 regional council

Presbytery meeting

The meeting at St Columba's Church Noble Park on Saturday March 15 was well attended. Worship was led by the Lewa Tolu Vakalou (LTV) Fijian congregation from Dandenong. Their powerful and awe-inspiring singing heralded the opening of worship. We joined in the singing too, finding it surprisingly easy to decipher the words from the screen for the two hymns: *'We are marching in the light of God'* and *'Guide me O my great Redeemer'*. Prayers were also shared in both languages.

Certificates to acknowledge that Sarah Back, Sakeisi Salababa and Nyok Gai are all entering periods of discernment for different ministries were awarded with acclamation.

The business of the agenda flowed well, with pastoral concerns shared. It included:

1. An update on the Casey-Cardinia project which is slowly coming to fruition. A combined service of all its member congregations is to be held at the Hampton Park UCA this Sunday 30th March.
2. An emphasis on education events regarding the need for everyone to prepare for future change in the UCA.
3. Publicising the event *'Understanding Church Mission'*, led by Rev Dr Karina Kreminski.
4. Nominations for attendance at the next Synod are being considered, with a total of 56 places available for attendees from our Presbytery, shared equally between lay and ministry representatives.
5. The Annual Report was tabled and accepted (*see left*).

Table conversations followed with questions to guide discussion. The plenary reporting from these groups included the following:

- A need for complete understanding of Safe Church responsibilities and follow-up after training sessions and clarification of education responsibilities for several areas of importance: pastors, lay people, presbytery, Pilgrim and other situations
- a plea for new members to join the Property Committee
- a short description re Beacon Hills College, a school auspiced through both the UCA and the Anglican Church. The college has four chaplains and believes that it is fulfilling a role as a 'faith community' in its life and work.

Time to complete all of the agenda became limited and so we closed with a 11-minute video presentation by Moderator David Fotheringham on *'Faithful Futures'*. This significant production helps us to appreciate the planning steps that the Church is designing as we take new steps for our future.

It can be viewed online at <https://vimeo.com/1026310960>

(Ed: Please note this video was made in 2024 so references to 'next year' are for 2025 and some are occurring now. A summary draft vision of *Faithful Futures* is included overleaf.)

Ian Menzies

Ailsa Drent

UNITING CHURCH VIC & TAS DRAFT VISION, VALUES & GOALS

Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples,
seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation;

Inclusive, diverse, seeking justice, journeying with Jesus

Coordinated Ministry

Coordinated ministry and mission in each Local Government Area (or suitable equivalent), attentive to the life and needs of the local context, by 2030.

Respecting Country

Every congregation will be able to tell some of the story of the Country in which it is located by the end of 2028, and be invited to develop local and appropriate ways to respond.

Intercultural Leadership

By 2028, to:

- (a) be providing leaders of different cultural groups with appropriate formation and equipping; and
- (b) develop networks to support worship, witness and service among communities of diverse languages and cultures.

All-age Growth

80% of Local Government Areas (or equivalent) have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative by 2030.

The Uniting Church is called to be a pilgrim people, participating in the movement of God. Presbyteries and the Synod have been engaging in a "Faithful Futures" Project discerning ministry and mission ahead. The VISION is widely recognised.

The VALUES have been distilled through the 2023 Synod meeting Working Groups. The GOALS have been developed through Bible study, survey, prayer and consultation. This poster shows the progress of this work, which is expected to be finalised in March 2025. Shared goals will help to relieve burdens and strengthen new mission opportunities as we follow Christ together.

For further information contact FaithfulFutures@victas.uca.org.au

November 2024

Zoom into Worship

We have a new Zoom link for those of you who attend online.

Simply copy or click on this link:



<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/4111712080?pwd=MXV1NUpDWnNUZk03bS8vdHI3ckEyUT09>

If entering via the Zoom App, the Zoom Meeting ID is 411 171 2080 and the Passcode uevX5a

Alternatively, you can simply ring in to the worship service on your phone: Dial 7018 2005 and when prompted enter this meeting number and two hashes:

411 171 2080 # #

To mute or unmute yourself on the phone, press *6

Rosters for April

Worship

April 27

Kharis Abadani
Margaret Pollock



Communion

Margaret Pollock

Lectionary

April 6

Margaret
Pollock

Colour: Purple

Isiah 43: 16-21

Psalm 126

Philippians 3:4b-14

John 12:1-8

April 13

Palm Sunday

Liz Thompson

Colour: Purple

Isiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 118:1-2, 18-29

Philippians 2:5-11

Luke 19:28-40

April 18

Good Friday

Ian Menzies

No colour

Isiah 52:13 - 53:12

Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25

John 18:1 - 19:42

April 20

Easter Sunday

Shirley Coxhew

Colour: White

Acts 10:34-43

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

1 Cor 15:19-26

John 20:1-18

April 27

Margaret

Ackland

Colour: White

Acts 5:27-32

Psalm 118:14-29

Revelations 1:4-18

John 20:19-31

"Easter was when Hope in person surprised the whole world by coming forward from the future into the present."

NT Wright

The Last Word

I never thought I would be the kind of person that could get up early in the morning to exercise ...

... and I was right.

