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Clearing the Way for Jesus

The newsletter of **Five Islands Christian Ministries** links Christians and churches from Helensburgh to Gerroa to promote church unity. Printer-friendly 2 x A4 PDF files of the newsletter may be downloaded from www.5icm.org.au/resources.html.

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One in Christ

The book "Ecumenism. A Guide for the Perplexed" by Nelson & Raith has a chapter on the decade of the 1960's when there was much ecumenical activity including the Catholic Church's Vatican II (1962-1965). Vatican document UR 1 states "The restoration of unity among all Christians is one of the principal concerns of the second Vatican synod." The document states that true unity subsists in the Catholic Church in spite of the divisions within Christianity. The words "subsists in" instead of "is" was deliberately vague. Prior to Vatican II, the Catholic position was for other churches to return to the fold. But as Walter Kasper, a German Catholic cardinal and theologian, wrote, "The Second Vatican Council overcame this ecumenism of return by an ecumenism of common return, or common conversion to Jesus Christ...In this sense the ecumenical endeavour is a common pilgrimage to the fullness of catholicity which Jesus Christ wants for his Church."

Another new concept was there is a "hierarchy of truths" within Catholic dogma meaning doctrines carry more or less weight depending on their proximity to the centre of revelation. It was left unresolved whether doctrines further from the centre were open to examination or were to be held as true in equal measure. After Vatican II the Catholic Church participated in the World Council of Churches' discussions, although refraining from becoming a formal member.

But not everything went well for ecumenism in the 1960s. Twice as many new denominations formed as in the 1950s. The quest for church unity continued, for as the Epilogue of A Guide for the Perplexed states, "To be Christian is to be ecumenical." We will look at what it means to be ecumenical in the next newsletter.

Illawarra Church News

1. Sunday Church Services are no longer being conducted at **St Aidan's Anglican Church**, Mt Brown, and **St Luke's Anglican Church**, Brownsville (although there is a Wednesday Service at St Luke's). All parishioners meet at **Dapto Anglican Church** on a Sunday.
2. **The Crossway Abundant Life Fellowship** is no longer conducting services in Dapto Ribbonwood Centre, having changed its format to a network of house churches.
3. Local **minister's fraternals** (Helensburgh, Northern Illawarra, Corrimal/Fairy Meadow, Wollongong, Figtree, Port Kembla, Dapto, Shellharbour, Albion Park, & Kiama) don't appear to have restarted meetings after Covid. A number of ministers have moved to the Illawarra recently and others have left. To help meetings get started again, please let me know of any fraternals that are meeting and I will email all the ministers in the fraternal area.

5icm News

1. **Wollongong Gospel Choir** rehearsals will not recommence until May. They are taking bookings for later in 2023. Choir bookings are free. For further information, see the WGC [Facebook group](#) or WGC [website](#).

2. **Gary Hetherington** commences outreach meetings in Canowindra on Saturday 4th March in the CWA Hall. A local farmer is providing free B&B accommodation for 6 team members. This is already taken up for the first week, but other accommodation may be available in Canowindra. [Email](#) Gary if you are interested in applying to join his team.
3. The **Illawarra Seniors Band**, which was formed in 2001 under the Salvation Army, is joining 5icm to take advantage of public liability insurance coverage etc. Any organisations that are open to Christians from any denomination and are interested in joining 5icm, please contact me for details of benefits of membership, the 5icm Constitution, and obligations of members. Membership is free and provides incorporation, charity status, and a number of other benefits.
4. The next issue of ***Clearing the Way for Jesus* newsletter** will be sent on **Tuesday 7th March**. Those with gmail, yahoo, or Hotmail addresses will find newsletters are filtered to their junk mail folder. If you don't know how to prevent this from happening, [download instructions here](#). The Distribution number at the top of the newsletter does not represent the number actually being opened. I do not include spyware in the newsletter to monitor this or links followed. Please contribute to the life of the church in the Illawarra by sending church news items, prayer requests and combined church events to share with Christians of the Illawarra. To subscribe to this newsletter please email or message me on Facebook.

God bless,
 Derek Thompson,
 Five Islands Christian Ministries Inc., a registered charity.

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 This message was sent to !*EMAIL*!

Ecumenical Activities in the Illawarra

- **Wollongong Gospel Choir – Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays during school terms but will not recommence until Term 2.**
 7:00 pm. At Wollongong Senior Citizens Centre, 192 Gipps Road, Gwynneville.
 Contact: [John Sandercock](#) 0499 444 151
- **Wednesday 22nd February, Ash Wednesday Keira Electorate Candidates Forum**
 Hosted by Figtree Anglican Church for [Freedom for Faith](#).
 Details: 7:30 p.m. Figtree Anglican Church, 4-10 Gibsons Rd or [watch online](#)
- **Friday 24th February, Illawarra Prayer Breakfast Launch**
 Details: 6:30-8:30 a.m. Awaken Church Wollongong, 39 Ellen St, Wollongong. RSVP [here](#).
- **Wednesday 1st March, Wollongong Electorate Candidates Forum**
 Hosted by St Michael's Cathedral for [Freedom for Faith](#)
 Details: 7:00 p.m. St Michael's Cathedral, 74 Church St, Wollongong or [watch online](#)
- **Wednesday 1st March, Heathcote Electorate Candidates Forum**
 Hosted by Engadine Anglican Church for [Freedom for Faith](#)
 Details: 7:30 p.m. Engadine Anglican Church, 4 Waratah Rd, Engadine or [watch online](#).
- **Friday 3rd March, World Day of Prayer**
 10:00 a.m. Kiama Baptist Church, 1/3 Brown St, Kiama
 10:00 a.m. Gerringong Uniting Church, Fern St.
 10:30 a.m. St Columbkilles Catholic Church, 99 Princes Hwy Corrimal
 11:00 a.m. LifeWay Lutheran Church, 15 Burelli St Wollongong
 11:00 a.m. St David's Anglican Church, Roxburgh Ave, Thirroul
 11:00 a.m. St Paul's Catholic Church, 251 Tongarra Rd, Albion Park followed by lunch.
 11:00 a.m. Warrawong Anglican Church, cnr Cowper St & First Ave South. [Download flyer](#).
- **Sunday 12th March, Song Fest**
 Details: 2:00 p.m. Dapto Uniting Church, 122 Princes Hwy, Dapto
 Cost: \$10 per person or \$25 per family (includes afternoon tea)
 Contact: exercisecare@gmail.com, [website](#).

See the [Sicm Events page](#) for more events and the **Regular Events** list.