



No. 398 7/3/23

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.

Distribution of this edition: **3,927**

One in Christ

The term ecumenism is derived from the Greek word *oikoumene* which, used in Scripture, means the entire inhabited world. In Christianity it was used to describe the universal or general church councils or creeds such as the Nicene Creed. As the church divided, the term ecumenical fell out of use until the scandal of disunity became evident by its hindering the world missionary movement. Hence, ecumenism came to mean the pursuit of Christian unity. Some clarifications will be helpful (taken from *Ecumenism: A Guide for the Perplexed*).

1. Ecumenism is not to be confused with inter-religious dialogue. Ecumenism pre-supposes a common starting point of faith in Jesus Christ, God incarnate, Lord and Saviour.
2. No human activity can create or advance the **invisible unity** that Christians share in Jesus Christ. However, Christian disunity **visibly** distorts the unity the church presents to the world.
3. The aim of ecumenism is not to water down the Christian faith to a lowest common denominator "but full visible communion in faith, sacramental life, apostolic ministry and mission", as Cardinal Kasper put it. The goal is for everyone to move deeper into the Christian life, not just a polite surface level agreement.
4. Ecumenism seeks more than doctrinal unity, but a sharing of the Christian life, both faith and practice.
5. The ecumenical movement involves the whole household of God, not just agreements by church or denominational heads.

Illawarra Church News

Shellharbour and Northern Illawarra Ministers' Associations are meeting again, but Port Kembla/Berkeley, Kiama, Albion Park, Dapto, Figtree, Wollongong, Corrimal/Fairy Meadow and Helensburgh are not. However, some Protestant ministers from the central Illawarra are regularly meeting at TIGS to pray for and discuss Special Religious Education in schools.

5icm News

1. **Wollongong Gospel Choir** rehearsals will not recommence until May but they are taking bookings for later in 2023. For further information, see their [website](#).
2. **Gary Hetherington** reported plans for the Canowindra Outreach last week, "We are all arriving Friday afternoon. Outreach Saturday ... Early morning prayer and Team Communion together 8:00 AM. The Old VIC Inn. Singing with guitars, and sharing Jesus with the locals, on the Main Street 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM. 11:00 AM set-up the CWA Hall Canowindra. Outreach, Free BBQ sausage sizzle, 12-4:00 PM. We have permission from the owners of OLD VIC INN, Main Street, Canowindra, to play guitars, sing and share our testimonies of God's goodness

and healings etc. Saturday and Sunday mornings 9-11 AM. ... Cowra Sunday lunch provided and sharing in large home."

3. The **5icm house church**, which was caring for members from Albion Park Community Church which closed last year, has closed and members transitioning to Albion Park Uniting Church.
4. The **Illawarra Seniors Band** now has its own [webpage](#) on the 5icm website. If you are over 55 and can play a brass instrument or drums you are welcome to join.
5. The next issue of **Clearing the Way for Jesus newsletter** will be sent on **Tuesday 4th April**. Please send me 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 with your email address.

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

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Ecumenical Activities in the Illawarra

Wollongong Gospel Choir – Rehearsals are held on Tuesdays during school terms and will recommence in Term 2.

7:00 pm. At Wollongong Senior Citizens Centre, 192 Gipps Road, Gwynneville.
Contact: [John Sandercock](#) 0499 444 151

Illawarra Seniors Band – rehearsals are once a month on a Tuesday morning at 10:30 a.m. at Port Kembla Senior Citizens Centre, cnr Allan St and Wentworth Lane.

Saturday 11th March, Movie Night and Supper

A fundraiser for Syria & Turkiye earthquake victims. Entry by donation, treats on sale.
Movie: The Greatest Showman (PG). A musical based on the story of P.T. Barnum.
Details: 6pm Gerringong Uniting Church, Fern St.

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](#)

Tuesday 21st March, Illawarra Seniors Band

Details: 10:30 a.m. Blue Haven Retirement Complex in the Atrium, Thompson St, Kiama.

Tuesday 28th March, Port Kembla Mission to Seafarers AGM

Details: 4:00 pm Mission Hall, 55 Darcy Rd, Port Kembla
RSVP: 22nd March to [Gienah Yama](#), 4274 6498

Maundy Thursday 6th April 2023, last day Term 1 for students

Good Friday 7th April

Easter Sunday 9th April

VMTC Training School 12th-15th April

4-day *Victorious Ministry Through Christ* healing and wholeness prayer ministry training.
[Download flyer](#).
Venue: The school is live-in at Chittick Lodge, Gerringong.
Cost: \$400 (includes accommodation and meals)
Register by 22/3/23 <https://vmtc.org.au/ministry/training-schools>

Orthodox Easter Sunday, 16th April.

See the [5icm Events page](#) for more events and the **Regular Events** list.