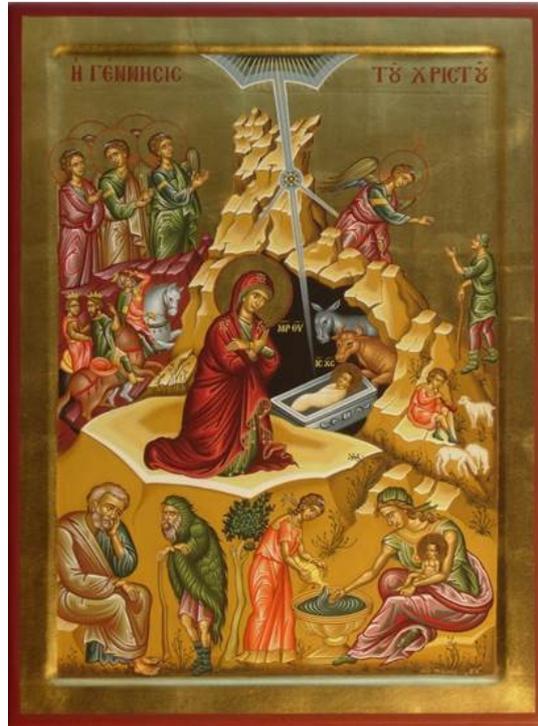


Council News

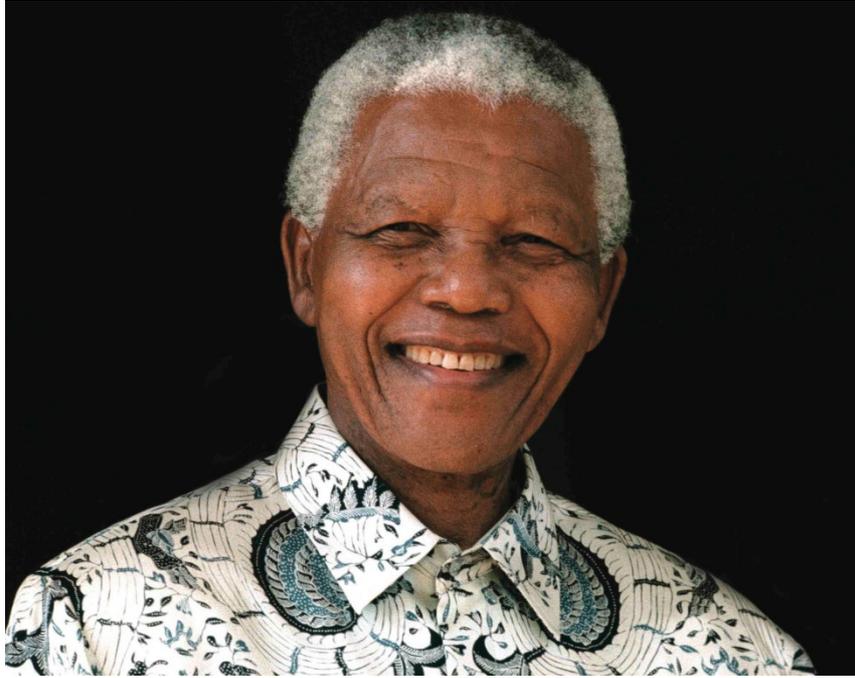
Advent 2013



This Orthodox Icon depicts something of the majesty and mystery that surrounds the birth of the Messiah... As we journey this advent season it's my prayer that each one of us may experience afresh the wonder and grace of this season.

- Ian

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT



A Memorial Service for Nelson Mandela has been organized for this coming Sunday. St Paul's Cathedral are hosting and it begins at 6 pm – all are welcome to attend the service. Following the service there will be a screening of his memorial service held in Soweto South Africa in Federation Square. Please visit the St Paul's Cathedral website [for further information](#).

News from the Council

The Standing Committee met for the first time in December in its new form and is actively seeking to co-opt up to 4 other members of Council to bring balance to the Standing Committee – member Churches have been informed of this and the Standing Committee looks forward to announcing the co-opted members as soon as possible.

The Standing Committee has forwarded the Constitution to Consumer Affairs and we are awaiting notification of its acceptance.

The Standing Committee held a meal of recognition in early December to recognize a number of people who have given outstanding service to the ecumenical movement. With the new format for Standing Committee these people will now be expressing their ecumenical spirit in different ways and so the Standing Committee wanted to say thank you to these Saints.

On the same evening the Standing Committee recognized and thanked Theo Mackaay and Maureen Postma for their contributions as General Secretaries during this past year.

As 2013 draws to a close the Council wishes to thank all who have enriched the life of the Council over this year by attending our public events, serving on Commissions, participating in local Inter Church activities or remembering the Council and its staff in their prayers. May it be a Holy and Blessed Season for all. 2014 awaits, as we continue to implement the recommendations of the review, and seek to be an agent for the Kingdom.

Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry



*Compassion in Times
of Crisis*

Get Prepared for Fire this Summer

This year, summer forecasts show that parts of Victoria are at above average risk of bush and grassfire.

Although it's important to prepare your property for fire, it's also essential to plan for what you're going to do if a fire starts this summer.

Please head on over to the VCC website to [read more](#).

Act for Peace

Electra St Uniting Church, Williamstown hosted a very successful Human Rights Day Dinner on the 10th December as a fundraiser for Christmas Bowl. Close to fifty people attended and around \$1100 was raised. An Act for Peace Refugee Ambassador shared his story of becoming a refugee.

On display at the church were photocopies of excerpts from newspapers of the late 1940's and the 1950's with details of the work of Rev Frank Byatt and the early work and success of the Christmas Bowl of Remembrance Appeal. Mr Byatt was the Methodist minister at that church when Christmas Bowl began in 1949 and was its chief instigator. Also on display were photos of the work of Act for Peace partners, as supported by the funds from Christmas Bowl. Is your church doing something special for Christmas Bowl? If so please let us know.

Resources to support your activities and better knowledge of the work funded by Christmas Bowl may be found online at: www.actforpeace.org.au/Christmasbowl. There you will find a video clip featuring the provision of education for girls in Afghanistan. Also there are resources which may be downloaded, such as the Christmas Bowl Cookbook. On behalf of our partners, thank you for your support for this important work in empowering communities affected by current or recent conflict and helping people to rebuild their lives.

Mr Jeff Wild

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Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network

Bethlehem – Myth and Reality

While we remember the Bethlehem of Jesus' time, the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network invite us to also listen to the Palestinian Christians' experiences of life and the journey of faith in Bethlehem today. Please [read this short piece by Bishop Phillip Huggins](#), or to get a deeper look into life in Bethlehem [download the Kairos Palestine advent resource](#) with prayers, stories, spiritual reflections and key facts – put together by Christians throughout Palestine. www.pien.org.au

Coming Events

*** If you have an event that you want others to know about then contact at vcc@vcc.org.au excluding January we plan to publish a Council News each month ***

SPECIAL NOTE

The VCC office will be closed from the 23rd December – 6th January

*Council News is the official newsletter of the Victorian Council of Churches
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