



WELCOME TO  
*Epping Church*  
 WKLY NEWSLETTERS

18 Aug 2017

If you have anything to share with the church, please don't hesitate to contact us on the below emails.  
**Mande** :[mande.lees@gmail.com](mailto:mande.lees@gmail.com) ; **Stephanie**: [stephcyee@yahoo.com](mailto:stephcyee@yahoo.com) ; **Alvin**: [ajing@eppingsda.org.au](mailto:ajing@eppingsda.org.au)

## FREE Vegetarian Cooking Demonstrations

**New Recipes Each Day!** 5th, 12th, 19th August 2017  
 New to vegetarian cooking? Want to learn some healthy new recipes? Did you enjoy our 2009–2016 demonstrations?  
 Join us for our 9th Series of Multicultural Vegetarian Cooking demonstrations.



## *Last week of Vegetarian Cooking Class!*

### EVENTS

August 19	The last Vegetarian Cooking Demo!! Don't miss out
Sep 2	Father's Day Breakfast
September 22 - 24	Pathfinder Expedition @ Thirlmere Lakes.
Oct 8	Sunday Working Bee 130pm-4pm
March 9-11, 2018.	Epping Church Camp @ Crosslands (50% Deposit required by end of September)

### PRAYER REQUEST

- Please Pray for our Year 12 students sitting the HSC this year.
- Please remember Fedz father who is ill in the Phillipines
- Please pray for Candy and family as they grieve the passing of her Mum
- Please pray for the Worker family as they prepare for their move down to Melbourne
- Please remember the Young family as they mourn the passing of Esther Young

THIS SABBATH  
@ EPPING

Elder: Greg

Speaker: Pastor Nigel

Offering: Local

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LAST WEEK

Last week was jam packed.

We had Vanessa taking the childrens Story.

Maree took the service with the help of the youth. Her sermon was titled 'Are you Buried or Planted?'

And the 2nd week of the Vegetarian cooking class.  
(more photos below)





12TH AUGUST  
Week One  
Vegetarian Cooking with  
Benita, Meryem & Elaine

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Week Two of Vegetarian with lots of guests.

This weeks cooks were Benita with a delicious vege bean patty.  
and Meryem and Elaine that made a fresh Tabouli salad.



# NOTICE BOARD

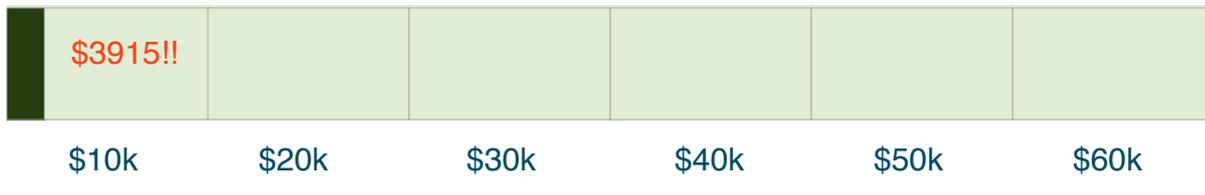
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## ***Epping Church: Roof Repair Fundraising***

The Epping Church roof is leaking and in need of repair. It will cost \$60,000 to fix it. The Board has approved a "Repair the Roof Fund Raiser" with monthly Special Offerings on the first Sabbath of every month commencing August 5th (then Sept 2 / Oct 7 etc)

Roof Repair Fund trip is now on the e giving website. Feel free to donate.

<https://egiving.org.au/Epping%20SDA%20Church>



## ***Bibles wanted!***

Bibles and any Christian books in Malaysian, Cantonese, Mandarin Chinese, Thai or Italian to bring good news to the inmates at Long Bay Prison. Please give them to Pastor Nigel.

## ***2018 ADRA Youth Mission Vanuatu***

Available to donate on our site down below.

<https://egiving.org.au/Epping%20SDA%20Church>



# NOTICE BOARD

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The push for changing the definition of marriage has been an ongoing debate in Australia for a number of years, and it's certainly an issue that is very polarising. Earlier this year the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Australia created a booklet and resources to help members understand the Church's position on the debate, which are available online at [adventist.org.au/marriage](http://adventist.org.au/marriage).

Last week the Australian Government announced a postal plebiscite would be held on the issue. This is a voluntary vote, therefore it is important that you ensure that you are eligible to vote and that your details are up-to-date. You can check your electoral details at [www.aec.gov.au/enrol](http://www.aec.gov.au/enrol). We want to encourage you to make an intentional decision to vote and to be informed about the consequences of changing the definition of marriage.

As we interact with others on this issue, we must do so with love and respect. Many people have called for this to be a respectful debate. As Christians we need to be at the forefront of modelling Christ's character to everyone, even though we may disagree with the other person's point of view. In addition to demonstrating love and respect, let's pray for those engaging in the public debate, and for those who may feel marginalised or upset by the nature and process of this debate. There is no doubt that some people will feel very vulnerable at this time, and we need to find opportunities to minister to them.

We believe a change to the definition of marriage will dramatically re-shape our nation and have consequences for children and freedom of religion. Despite what some may say, and despite the current traditional definition of marriage, there has already been a significant shift, driven by various forces, to restrict freedom of speech for those who disagree with the push to change the definition of marriage. This push to restrict freedom of speech and freedom of religion has been recently demonstrated by the actions of the Anti-Discrimination Tribunal in Tasmania summoning two Christian pastors for sharing their views on marriage in a public place and, amongst other things, quoting Bible verses. This follows a series of events earlier this year where there were campaigns to remove Christians from their corporate and public positions for holding a traditional view of marriage.

As we have seen recently in the Queensland public education system, there have been moves to restrict freedom of religion in the playground, to the point that even the exchange of Christmas cards was to be forbidden. Due to public pressure, Education Department leaders softened their stance. It is unlikely that their views have changed; rather they recognised that they overstepped on this issue.

The cross-party Senate Select Committee on the Exposure Draft of the Marriage Amendment (Same-Sex Marriage) Bill, which reported earlier this year, considered the Government's initial amending legislation. It indicated in its conclusion that, "There was broad agreement that any future legislation to amend the Marriage Act should ensure religious freedoms are appropriately protected when considering changes that extend access to marriage to all adult couples."

To this point, there have been no policies developed by the Government to provide such positive protections. If the Government were to proceed on a proposed private member's bill, the *Marriage Amendment (Definition and Religious Freedoms) Bill 2017*, circulated only last week, there would be clear concerns as, despite its name, the protections for religious freedom are very narrow.

Mark Spencer of Christian Schools Australia expressed it well when he stated, "It is however clear that should legislation be enacted to change the definition of marriage, careful attention is required to understand and deliver a balanced outcome that respects the human rights of all Australians if the



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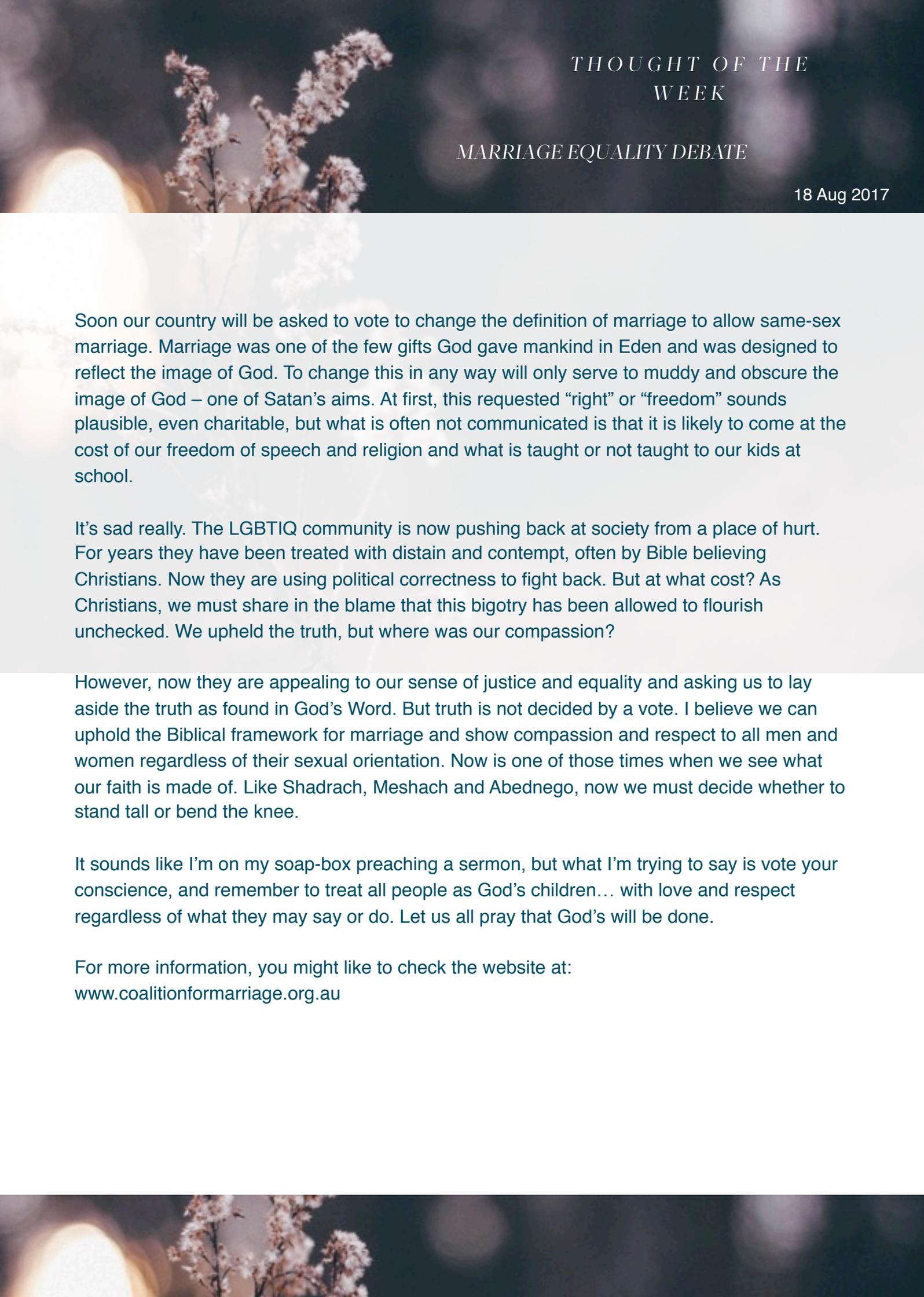
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nation is to continue to be a tolerant and plural society where a diversity of views is not only legal but valued.”

Spencer is concerned that unless such legislation is put in place, then there is no protection or guarantee for schools that staff can be expected to model an approach to marriage consistent with the doctrines, tenets or beliefs taught within that Christian school (or even a church). At this stage the longer term consequences of changing the definition of marriage are unknown, but as we look overseas, there is reason for concern.

Seventh-day Adventists believe, as stated in fundamental belief 23, that marriage is between a man and a woman, and that this belief has its origins in the Garden of Eden. In addition to producing our own series of resources, the Coalition for Marriage, has released some excellent materials on its website [www.coalitionformarriage.com.au](http://www.coalitionformarriage.com.au). The Coalition for Marriage is a coalition of likeminded people that exists solely on donations. Should you wish to donate, you can do so via their website.

In summary, we feel it is important, as Australians and as Christians, that we pray for this process. Further, we need to be enrolled to vote and make an intentional decision to cast our vote. In order to have an educated vote, we need to be informed about the consequences of changing the definition of marriage, including significant risks to freedom of speech and freedom of religion in Australia. We seek God’s guidance and leading for all Australians, no matter their views on the marriage debate, and should we engage in any discussion, to do so with love and respect.



THOUGHT OF THE  
WEEK

MARRIAGE EQUALITY DEBATE

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Soon our country will be asked to vote to change the definition of marriage to allow same-sex marriage. Marriage was one of the few gifts God gave mankind in Eden and was designed to reflect the image of God. To change this in any way will only serve to muddy and obscure the image of God – one of Satan's aims. At first, this requested "right" or "freedom" sounds plausible, even charitable, but what is often not communicated is that it is likely to come at the cost of our freedom of speech and religion and what is taught or not taught to our kids at school.

It's sad really. The LGBTIQ community is now pushing back at society from a place of hurt. For years they have been treated with disdain and contempt, often by Bible believing Christians. Now they are using political correctness to fight back. But at what cost? As Christians, we must share in the blame that this bigotry has been allowed to flourish unchecked. We upheld the truth, but where was our compassion?

However, now they are appealing to our sense of justice and equality and asking us to lay aside the truth as found in God's Word. But truth is not decided by a vote. I believe we can uphold the Biblical framework for marriage and show compassion and respect to all men and women regardless of their sexual orientation. Now is one of those times when we see what our faith is made of. Like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, now we must decide whether to stand tall or bend the knee.

It sounds like I'm on my soap-box preaching a sermon, but what I'm trying to say is vote your conscience, and remember to treat all people as God's children... with love and respect regardless of what they may say or do. Let us all pray that God's will be done.

For more information, you might like to check the website at:  
[www.coalitionformarriage.org.au](http://www.coalitionformarriage.org.au)