



Dear Friends,

This will sound like a strange leap, but two things – a comment Dr Joel Hollier made and a story about Bogong moths – both brought me to tears this week.

Dr Joel Hollier, our anniversary preacher, commented, at Saturday’s workshop, on how dramatically things had changed during his lifetime. How extraordinary it was that he - a married gay man - was addressing a church event! And yet, at the same time, looking at the work he does as a trauma researcher, how much still needed to change!

Then I read an article about Bogong moths (*shown here escaping the heat and “aestivating” in a cave in the Australian Alps, Photo: Eric Warrant*) being the first known invertebrate to be guided by the stars on their long, annual migrations from breeding grounds across southeast Australia to the Snowy Mountains. <https://aboutregional.com.au/world-first-discovery-reveals-bogong-moths-rely-on-the-stars-to-find-their-way/481073/>

I told my daughter about the article last night and burst into tears halfway through saying, “*Did you know that Bogong moths use the stars to navigate!*” What an incredible, extraordinary thing!

The discovery was made by a team of international researchers from Australian National University (ANU) – as well as Lund University in Sweden, University of South Australia (UniSA) and others – and was published in the *Nature* science journal in June 2025. “*We knew that some birds and even humans could use the stars to navigate long distances,*” said Lund University zoology professor Eric Warrant, “*but this is the first time that it’s been proven in an insect.*”

Using sophisticated flight simulators and brain recordings the researchers studied the moths' behaviour. Under natural starry skies and no magnetic field, they found the moths consistently flew in the correct migratory direction for the season – southward in spring, northward in autumn. When the stars were scrambled, however, their orientation vanished. *“This proves they are not just flying towards the brightest light or following a simple visual cue,”* Prof Warrant said. *“They’re reading specific patterns in the night sky to determine a geographic direction, just like migratory birds do.... It’s a remarkable example of complex navigational ability packed into a tiny insect brain.”*

So, what does Joel’s comment have in common with Bogong moths navigating by the stars?

In both instances I thought about the revelation of God’s wisdom, built into the DNA of tiny insects sensing the presence of the stars and magnetic fields, and built into us as we find our way towards the compassion God invites us to show one another – the restoration and healing and wholeness that God offers us as a community.

It was a thought summed up in our call to worship last Sunday!

The work of the Creator is visible:

Let us respond with praise.

The example of Jesus is apparent:

Let us respond with obedience.

The wind of the Spirit is blowing:

Let us respond with joy.

The word of God is calling:

Let us respond in spirit and in truth.

Like moths following stars, let us respond in spirit and in truth - with all the migratory capacity we can muster! - to the goodness of God!

Grace and peace,

Belinda