

# NEWSBEAT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



**HEAL  
COUNTRY!**  
4-11 JULY 2021

NAIDOC Week resources  
on pages 4 & 10.

JULY 2021

## Exploring a shared future

*How can we be a Spirit-led church together in a new, exciting and co-operative way across our region?*

*How do we energise our people to all the opportunities of working outside the confines of our congregations?*

These questions were among those raised by representatives of six churches from the Casey-Cardinia region of our Presbytery at a consultation on May 22, led by the Presbytery ministers.

25 people engaged in a highly interactive day sharing stories, strengths, challenges and resources. Church councillors and ministry agents came from Pakenham, Endeavour Hills, Hampton Park, Narre Warren North, Berwick and Cranbourne. People were invited to consider what the churches had in common, and what were their unique gifts and strengths.

We also considered a cooperation framework involving growing in Communication, Co-ordination and Collaboration.

### Communication – Let's Talk

All cooperation begins with trust. Relationships form and deepen when we get to know one another. Appreciation leads to encouragement and support. In the Casey-Cardinia region, the ministers have met as a peer group for years, sharing hopes and concerns, offering mutual support. How well do your leaders know those in adjoining churches?

### Co-ordination – Let's Plan

Coordinated activities, like the recent Leighmoor Coatesville Murrumbidgee celebration of the UCA Anniversary.



Jenny Duncan from Cranbourne UCA talks about cooperation with Mike You from Endeavour Hills UCA

Or a pulpit swap of preachers once a quarter.

Or St Andrew's Berwick offering the Youth Alpha program to surrounding churches.

Or the Mt Waverley churches' adult learning forums. Suddenly there's a smorgasbord of ministry and mission activities on offer regionally.

### Collaboration – Let's Share

What if some ministry and mission is better shared than solo? Combined programs. Developing a common sense of mission. Pooling gifts and resources. Seeing what God might grow from this.

Visit the new Presbytery website to read more about ways to build regional co-operation among churches and add your comments to the many ways we're seeing communication, coordination and collaboration in action.

Read more and interact with this story at <https://ucappep.org/exploring-a-shared-future>

# Honouring local leaders on Queens Birthday 2021

*Dawn Peacock, a member of Frankston Uniting Church, and Di Paterson, serving in pastoral ministry with Black Rock Uniting Church and Glen Waverley Uniting Church, have been awarded a Medal of the Order of Australia for service to the community.*



Dawn Peacock, pictured left, was recognised for her service to the community of Frankston. She is a founding member of Operation Larder, has served as an elder for 50 years; a volunteer with the Playgroup; has been leading the support of Tom Sutherland for 40 years; a supporter of Health Help International for 20 years; a Foster Carer; and a former cook for Somers Camp.

Dawn shared recently with the Frankston UCA Church Council that curiosity led her to join a friend in going to church when she was very young.

She was subsequently deeply affected at a church youth camp by the words of Micah 6:8: "He has told you, O mortal, what is good, and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?". She has had a passion for justice and care ever since.

Congratulations Dawn!

Di Paterson, (pictured right) who is serving in pastoral ministry at Black Rock Uniting Church and Glen Waverley Uniting Church, has been awarded the Order of Australia Medal for services to youth, through Guiding, and to the community.

Di has been with Guides from her own days as Brownie and Guide, and has received the Grey Kangaroo Award from Girl Guides Australia in 2019.

Di has served the Uniting Church in Australia as a lay preacher, as a spiritual director with Emmaus Ministries, a pastor and outreach worker with Chelsea Parish, and in her current roles.

She's pictured here with her front page story in the Dandenong Star Journal.

Congratulations Di!





# Mission experiments during COVID times

*Craig Mitchell shares the challenges of working on a new direction in mission at a time when you can barely leave the house.*

In Luke 10, Jesus sends his disciples on a mission trip with no real itinerary or program. Their mission is to seek hospitality, find friendship and then to speak the words of Jesus. Mission begins not with the message but with relationships – not on church property but in everyday life.

Stepping out in mission proved to be a challenge for our Presbytery's two mission pilot teams in 2020. The groups from Glen Waverley UC and Cheltenham-Mentone UC began the learning experience full of energy and hope. The approach was to be action learning through building new friendships in the community.

## COVID Contingencies

Then the social restrictions hit. Church buildings closed. The whole community was in lockdown.

Suddenly, mission team meetings were held over Zoom. People shared observations of the social changes in their streets and suburbs. They began making community connections through phone calls, emails, and distanced conversations with neighbours.

## Exploring communities

Team members explored websites and joined community Facebook groups. We shared in a virtual neighbourhood walk on Google map, making observations about social features of the area.

Census data provided fresh insights about demographic changes in the area. Through coaching and learning intensives, both church teams explored mission possibilities.

The Cheltenham-Mentone team felt called to connect with new residents and with people experiencing loneliness. For the Glen Waverley team, the prompt was to engage with newcomers in the Chinese community, particularly new migrants.

Still in lockdown, the teams looked at how to make these connections – a welcome pack for new residents, contacting local community groups and the local council, talking to community members and to other churches, and making plans for possible events when lockdown was over.



*Mission team members share insights at the first intensive held at Phillip Island, February 2020.*

Small steps were made. We explored Sam Wells' notion of mission starting with "being with" people rather than "doing for" people – incarnational presence.

Each congregation is now making plans to make contact with these groups of people as social restrictions ease.

While COVID has made new connections difficult, there has been space to inquire, observe, discuss and reflect on local mission. Team members have spoken of their new understandings of mission and better awareness of their local communities. We look forward to hearing their stories of what emerges in 2021.

The Presbytery at its meeting in June received a report on the mission pilot and expressed appreciation for all those who took part, including the two teams, the steering group and coaches. Insights were shared in a written report as well as a video featuring members of the teams. See the website below for the full report.

# Statement from the Heart

Congregations across the Presbytery are engaging in a six week study series on the Statement from the Heart that emerged from The First Nations National Constitutional Convention at Uluru in May 2017.

This study guide on the Statement from the Heart was written by and for Second Peoples seeking to explore and pursue a truthful, just and meaningful relationship with First Peoples. The guide was produced by the Synod JiM unit within eLM.

This idea for using the guide this month emerged from High Street UC, Frankston. We invite you to engage in as many of these ways as you choose.

1. Include recognition of NAIDOC week (4-11 July) in your worship services on either Sunday 4 or Sunday 11 July.

2. As soon as possible after NAIDOC week, commence exploring the six sessions.

3. Advise the Presbytery of the timing and location of your group/s (including online) if you are open to other people from congregations in our presbytery joining in. We've provided an online form so that you can advise us of group details.

4. Presbytery will offer three online conversations about the Statement from the Heart with guest conversation partners. Dates and times to be advised. People can join these whether or not they are part of discussion groups. The sessions will also be recorded and put online for viewing anytime.

5. We invite you to explore some connection with First Peoples in your area - groups, history, places, culture - so that this becomes more than an in-church discussion.

6. We invite you to give us feedback about the sessions and your local exploring so that we might share stories and learn from one another across our churches and region.

Download the Study Guide from the Port Phillip Presbytery website, using the link below.



## Celebrating NAIDOC Week

NAIDOC Week celebrations are held across Australia each July to celebrate the history, culture and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. NAIDOC is celebrated not only in Indigenous communities, but by Australians from all walks of life. The week is a great opportunity to participate in a range of activities and to support your local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community.

NAIDOC originally stood for 'National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee'. This committee was once responsible for organising national activities during NAIDOC Week and its acronym has since become the name of the week itself.

This year's theme, Heal Country!, calls for all of us to continue to seek greater protections for our lands, our waters, our sacred sites and our cultural heritage from exploitation, desecration, and destruction.

Country is more than a place, it's inherent to our identity. Country can be spoken about like a person, sustaining our lives in every aspect - spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially, and culturally.

See more at <https://www.naidoc.org.au>



# Reconciliation at Cornish College

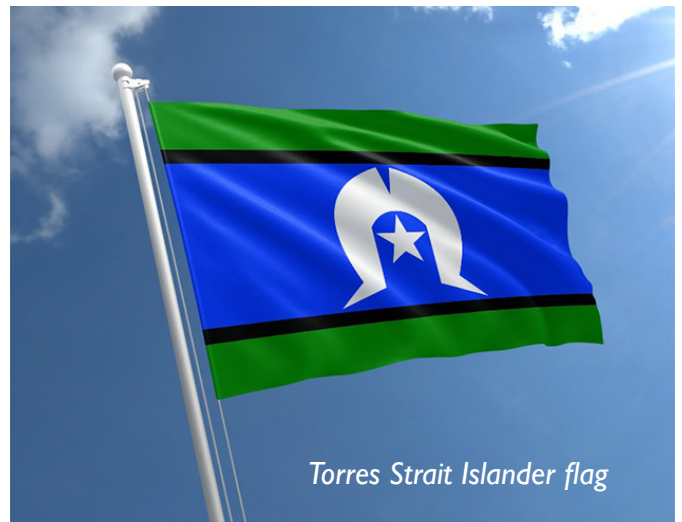
Cornish College has been selected as a finalist in the 2021 HART Awards. These awards recognise local reconciliation outcomes achieved through First Nations people and the wider community working to build and strengthen relationships, respect, and understanding between each other while demonstrating a commitment to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander self-determination.

In a statement, the College said: “We are pleased to be recognised, in particular, for our Reconciliation Action Plan - an ongoing commitment to reconciliation - and our approach to Acknowledgement of Country, which we use to celebrate and educate our community about specific skills, knowledge and cultures of Traditional Owners while paying respect to their relationship with the land.”

As part of the College’s commitment to their Reconciliation Action Plan, students and staff enjoyed a number of activities during National Reconciliation Week. One very symbolic moment was adding the Torres Strait Islander flag alongside the Australian, Aboriginal and Cornish College flags.



*Pictured above are the four students who raised the flags during the ceremony.*



*Torres Strait Islander flag*



## Songwrite November 5 – 7

Port Phillip East Presbytery is hosting a Songwrite event for Uniting Church songwriters. The aim is to encourage the writing of contemporary songs for Christian worship.

The weekend at Murrumbena Uniting Church includes input from experienced songwriters about music and worship, space for songwriting and collaborating, and the opportunity to have your new song recorded as a demo and scored.

One of our key input people will be Rev Malcolm Gordon from the Presbyterian Church of Aotearoa New Zealand. Malcolm is an experienced and gifted songwriter and worship leader, and is currently completing a PhD in this field. He has been involved in previous Songwrite events.

See Malcolm’s websites, [onevoice.org.nz](https://www.onevoice.org.nz) and [malcolmgordon.bandcamp.com](https://malcolmgordon.bandcamp.com)

# Yarn art knits a community together

Yarn artists at Uniting by the Bay Uniting Church unveiled their newest banner at the end of the recent lockdown. The banner was inspired by all the rainbows that adorned houses over the very first lockdown in 2020.

Members from across the congregation knitted and crocheted hundreds of beautiful flowers and leaves that have been sewn into the shape of a beautiful rainbow.

Coordinator Carolanne Strickland explains:

“The large-scale banner at Chelsea measures 2.5 metres x 1.5 metres and a smaller version is being finalised for our Carrum worship centre. It really brought the Church community together. We discussed where you could get wool over the lockdown and everyone was discussing what flowers they were making, swapping patterns and the like.



We have done a lot of yarn art banners and displays in the past but this one had the most participation because the flowers were small and even those who are not the greatest knitters and crocheters felt it was something that they could tackle.”

## Learning in the Kimberley

My wife, Heather, and I visited the Kimberley region in May. On the first day of our tour we visited the Mowanjum Community about 10 km east of Derby. The Mowanjum Community includes people from three main language groups: Wunambal, Worrova and Ngarinyin.

Visiting here I came to realise how much I have yet to learn about Aboriginal culture and spirituality.

In the early 1970s I was part of a CSIRO-Reserve Bank of Australia project to develop secure banknotes. A key to this project was the incorporation of optically variable devices (OVDs) into the banknote. OVDs are devices that change colour when viewed in differing light. There are a number in the current Australian banknotes.

I was asked to think of images that might be suitable to be portrayed on a banknote as an OVD.

We had investigated the obvious ones: the Queen's head, a well known bird or butterfly or an early explorer. I wondered if there was an indigenous image that would be suitable.

I found some striking images of Wandjina figures which had all the optical features needed to make a striking OVD.

We made various OVDs of these images and incorporated them into some experimental notes.

We didn't end up using these images. But at no point did I inquire into the spiritual and cultural significance of these images to the Wunambal, Worrova and Ngarinyin peoples. If I had done so, I would have quickly come to the conclusion that it was quite inappropriate to incorporate such images in banknotes.

This experience at Mowanjum reminded me again of my need to learn about the beliefs and spirituality of the Wurundjeri and Bunurong peoples near where I live.

I've made a new commitment to listen, to learn.

*Tom Spurling*



by Tom Spurling  
Presbytery Chair



# Taking action on climate change - it's your call

How are congregations in our region making an impact on climate change? That's the question being answered by congregations taking part in the Five Leaf Eco-Awards survey this year. Port Phillip East Presbytery is encouraging every congregation to take look at how they're considering the environment in five areas: buildings, worship, congregational life, outreach, and community leadership.

## The Awards

Jessica Morthorpe, who lives in Bendigo, founded the Five Leaf Eco-Awards as an Australian ecumenical environmental change program specifically designed for churches and religious organisations. Using a series of non-competitive awards, the program assists, inspires and rewards faith communities for taking environmental action and becoming more sustainable in response to God's call to care for creation.

There are currently six awards available in the program – two introductory awards and four advanced awards. To earn an award, churches simply complete actions to fulfil the criteria of that award, and are then presented with certificates of recognition for their achievement. The Presbytery will be recognising congregations at each meeting over the next year, and reporting to the 2022 meeting of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

## Join the movement

Taking part in the Five Leaf Awards connects you with a network of churches around the country who are taking action for God's creation. These churches are all around Australia and from a range of denominations. They range from 'normal' suburban parishes to eco-faith communities who meet in a park on Sunday, and communities who meet in completely retrofitted environmentally friendly buildings. Five Leaf congregations have taken all sorts of actions for the environment, from crosses made of solar panels, restoring and replanting watercourses next to their church, setting up community gardens, installing water tanks, developing a peace garden of native plants, and more. They have signed petitions, planted trees, rung their church bells for climate change, held talks and discussions of environmental issues, and held worship around environmental themes.



*A section of the community garden at Murrumbeena Uniting Church*

## Uniting Church connections

Port Melbourne Uniting Church was the first Five Leaf award recipient ever, back in 2009. They'll be taking the survey this year to map their progress since then.

Four other congregations from Port Phillip East Presbytery have taken the survey so far: Glen Waverley, Murrumbeena, Leighmoor, and St John's Elsternwick. We're hoping every congregation will take part over the next year.

What churches are doing is as unique as the people in them, and the Five Leaf Eco-Awards are designed to be flexible enough to allow congregations to take (and be rewarded for) the actions that best suit their own contexts.

No matter where your church is on your sustainability journey, this network of churches can provide inspiration, ideas and experience to help you on your way.

**Get started by taking the survey at**  
<https://fiveleafecoawards.org>



# Weathering the storms

*Presbytery Minister: Pastoral Anneke Oppewal reflects on our experiences of uncertainty and change, drawing on the Gospel of Mark. Tempestuous conditions lashed Victoria in recent weeks leading to floods, the downing of trees and powerlines and leaving some towns cut off for days. It can feel like this in the life of the church at times.*



The gospel of Mark is an incredibly intricate and beautifully structured piece of work. It tells the story of Jesus, taking the reader on a journey from Galilee to Jerusalem and back again. Most scholars agree that it originally finished with the women fleeing the empty tomb 'because they were afraid' after being told by an angel that Jesus was 'going ahead of them' to Galilee. The writer was pointing the reader back to where it all began – with a successful ministry in Galilee.

Mark was most probably written just after the destruction of the temple for a community that was facing a lot of challenges and uncertainty. At that time nobody knew where it was going to go with this movement and the likelihood of it even surviving into the future must have seemed slim at best.

At a time where we find ourselves facing a lot of uncertainty, Mark is a great gospel to be reading. It was written for such times as ours. Where we are not sure about what might happen next, not sure about what the future holds for our churches, not sure about what might be around the corner.

There is nothing new about that. Even when Jesus was around, things got pretty scary at times, with the disciples wondering if they were going to survive the storms they had to weather together. But they did.

After the crucifixion those fearful women got talking about what they had experienced, and together with the others they started on the next phase of the journey. Weathering storms and working miracles and growing as a community.

We're weathering storms right now and some of us may feel pretty stressed out about that. Some of our congregations are looking at closing their doors, joining with others, rationalising their activities or thinking of new and creative ways to give shape to ministry. Finance and people resources are drying up and, within all the upheaval of Covid restrictions, returning to pre-COVID activity levels sometimes feels just too hard.

What the gospel of Mark tells us is that this is nothing new. Even when Jesus was around, things weren't always clear or straightforward, and life could get pretty scary at times. When Jesus died it seemed the end of the road. But it wasn't. As we move through the uncertainties and challenges of the current time it is good to keep that in mind.

Our faith is in a God who creates beauty out of chaos and brings life through death. A God who is not in the business of repeating the same old over and over again, but challenges us to keep returning to a place where a new and renewing story can begin.





A photograph of a paved road winding through a wooded area. The road is covered with fallen leaves, and the trees are bare, suggesting autumn or winter. A white picket fence runs along the left side of the road. The scene is misty or foggy, with light filtering through the trees.

**God we wonder  
“What’s around the corner?”**

**We crave control  
over the uncertainties  
that challenge our sense of  
peace and stability.**

**We worry about what lies ahead,  
and we get overwhelmed at times  
by the storms that may rage around us.  
Help us to stay in the here and now,  
at the time and in the place you’ve given us  
to be followers of Christ.**

**Help us to trust that not all depends on us  
especially when we’ve run out of puff,  
run out of resources, run out of energy,  
run out of confidence, run out of faith,  
run out of visions for how to shape the  
future.**

**Here, now, is where you call us,  
to serve and care  
with whatever we have been given  
as your children  
and followers of Christ.**

**No more is needed than the call to be  
who you’ve created us to be  
here and now.**

**Amen**





## Seeking a new situation?

We have developed a Positions Available page on the redesigned Presbytery website, listing volunteer and paid roles across the Presbytery.

<https://ucappep.org/positions-available>

Send your positions to Presbytery Secretary Anne Kim (email below).

## Presbytery Meeting Dates 2021

- Zoom Café every Friday, 10 - 11 am
- Presbytery in Council, Saturday, August 21, 10 am, in person & on Zoom
- Presbytery in Council, Wednesday, November 17, 7.30 - 9 pm on Zoom

## Port Phillip East Presbytery Office

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## Uniting in prayer for July

Each week congregations are encouraged to include their neighbours in their prayers. The Presbytery's prayer calendar covers congregations, schools and agencies of the Uniting Church.

July 4	Pray for people serving in Assembly and Synod placements: Ji Zhang, Dev Anandarajan, Mat Harry, Mark Lawrence, Mel Perkins, Sue Withers and Robin Yang.
July 11	Pray for St Luke's Uniting Church Mt Waverley, including minister James Douglas and chairperson Eunice Magee.
July 18	Pray for Narre Warren North Uniting Church, including minister Bruce Crowle.
July 25	Pray for Noble Park Uniting Church, including minister Bruce Monroe and chairperson Greg Wyatt.

The Port Phillip East Presbytery website is an exciting additional resource tool for communication across our churches, agencies, schools and communities. We welcome submissions to the website, Newsbeat, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, but should advise that photographs may be used across all, unless instructed otherwise. **To submit a news item for the Presbytery's monthly Newsbeat newsletter, send all articles and images to editor Helen Beeby [newsbeat@ucappep.org](mailto:newsbeat@ucappep.org)**





Artwork: Care for Country by Maggie-Jean Douglas (Gubbi Gubbi)

When creating 'Care for Country' I kept in mind that this meant spiritually, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally – I chose to create a bright and vibrant artwork that included the different colours of the land but showed how they come together in our beautiful country and to make people feel hopeful for the future. I've included communities/people, animals and bush medicines spread over different landscapes of red dirt, green grass, bush land and coastal areas to tell the story of the many ways country can and has healed us throughout our lives and journeys.



# NAIDOC Week

4-11 JULY 2021



Facebook: [facebook.com/NAIDOC](https://www.facebook.com/NAIDOC) Twitter: [@naidocweek](https://twitter.com/naidocweek) Instagram: [@naidocweek](https://www.instagram.com/naidocweek)

#NAIDOC2021 #HealCountry

Acknowledging the 10th Anniversary of the 2010-2011 National Sorry Day, the NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate the resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to honour the legacy of the 1938-1939 Stolen Generations. The NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate the resilience and strength of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and to honour the legacy of the 1938-1939 Stolen Generations.



COME ONE, COME ALL  
TO THE HIGH STREET UNITING

# 2ND HAND MARKET DAY

COME AND GRAB A BARGAIN!  
CLOTHING, HOUSEHOLD ITEMS,  
BOOKS AND MUCH MUCH MORE!!

**SATURDAY 24TH JULY**  
**9AM - 1PM**



HIGH STREET UNITING CHURCH  
16 - 18 HIGH STREET, FRANKSTON

**Stall Holders:**

**\$30 per stall, 2nd hand goods only....**

**If you would like to have your own stall please contact church office**

**before 1st July on Ph: 97833400**

**or via email: [frankstonuc@gmail.com](mailto:frankstonuc@gmail.com)**