

NEWSBEAT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



History in the making

– women who shape our community
on pages 5, 6 and 10



AUGUST 2021

Thanks for the memories

So, this is my final *Newsbeat* as editor.

Many of you will have seen the recent announcement on my departure in the weekly Presbytery e-mail update. Yet, I didn't want to go without saying goodbye – and thank you.

It's been 10 years since I started working part-time with Port Phillip East Presbytery – one year in administration, then nine years in communications.

Working with a number of successive Presbytery Ministers and the Communications Task Group (and also serving on Standing Committee for a few years) it has been an exciting and productive time for us.

We launched *Newsbeat* in the early days and it has continued on every month, growing in subscribers and content submissions year on year.

Over time we constructed the former website, with grateful users, leading to the new website recently.

We also established accounts with social media platforms, developing content and reach in these emerging spheres.

It's been a fantastic decade and I believe we've gained enormous strides in raising the profile and engagement of PPEP within our congregations, agencies and schools and the wider Victorian and interstate community.

I will really miss the level of immersion I have enjoyed in PPEP life. I have made so many friends and been humbled by some very appreciative feedback.

I've been enriched by my involvement in church life and the people I have served alongside, not to mention the special communities I have met and heard from along the way. The loss is palpable, but it's time...

Thank you for all the support from various Presbytery teams, successive Standing Committees and all the congregations (I toyed with naming a few names, but the list would fill at least half a page). It was always a team effort and I've been proud and fulfilled to be a part of the journey.

I'll see you around, all being well...

Helen Beeby



Presbytery meets in August

Port Phillip East Presbytery's third meeting for the year is being held on Saturday August 21 at Glen Waverley Uniting Church, and on Zoom.

Following on from the success of our blended meeting at Korean Church of Melbourne in March, we're looking forward to a day of inspiring worship, stimulating conversation, learning and important decisions.

We'll be exploring ways in which we take part in God's renewal of all creation, supported by Synod Social Justice Officer Timothy Molineux and Five Leaf Eco-Awards founder Jessica Morthorpe. We'll have an information session on the Ministry of Pastor. We'll be sadly marking the closure of St Mark's Uniting Church, Chadstone. And we'll be honouring the work of Newsbeat editor Helen Beeby.

What are our churches doing for God's creation?

A recent Climate Justice Synod Resolution (19) asks congregations to inform their presbytery of the actions they have taken to address climate change so their presbyteries can report back to the Synod Climate Action Task Force.



Port Melbourne Uniting Church (South Port) won the very first Five Leaf Eco-Award in 2009 for their environmental initiatives, like their community garden.

Port Phillip East Presbytery is partnering with the Five Leaf Eco-Awards to reward churches who have taken action. The Five leaf Eco-Awards are a national ecumenical environmental awards program for churches and religious organisations. The first ever Five Leaf Eco-Award was presented to Port Melbourne Uniting Church in January 2009.



Participating congregations now come from Anglican, Baptist and Catholic churches, as well as the UCA and other denominations, and from every state and territory of Australia.

Churches in our Presbytery who have completed the online survey recently include: Glen Waverley Uniting Church, Murrumbeena Uniting Church, Leighmoor Uniting Church, St John's Uniting Church Elsternwick, St Luke's Uniting Church Mount Waverley, Port Melbourne Uniting Church (South Port), Heatherton-Dingley Uniting Church and Mulgrave Uniting Church. To participate visit www.fiveleafecoawards.org

Discovering more on the Ministry of Pastor

Within the Basis of Union of the UCA we recognise that all members are given gifts and skills that can be used in ministry and mission. Leadership in these areas of our life as the church in the community can come from both ordained and lay people. The Ministry of Pastor recognises the gifts and skills that are given to our lay people.

At our next Presbytery in Council meeting we are going to take time to explore what this can look like and how important the recognition of this style of ministry is. Make sure you come along, or Zoom, and hear more about this important opportunity for the church.



A walk in the park with Ormond Indigenous Action Group

On a chilly Saturday morning early in July a group of Ormond Uniting members met at Mallanbool Park, Murrumbeena.

The site, previously occupied by Murrumbeena Secondary College, has been beautifully landscaped with native Australian plants. There are reedy marsh areas, a reflective meeting spot, overhanging tall, majestic trees as well as scrubby plants for tough environments.

What a treasured, reflective place this has become for many people.

At various stages on a meandering walking track there are listening posts – press the button and you will get information about plants used by First Australians of the area, customs, and the everyday life of these peoples a couple of hundred years ago.

New information was taken in by the group, old information was recalled and reinforced. Gentle walking added to this reflective experience.

Details on Mallanbool Park and Indigenous history can be found at Glen Eira City Council website www.gleneira.vic.gov.au

National Church Life Survey 2021

The NCLS has been conducted on behalf of Australian churches for the past 30 years and is the longest running survey of church life in the world. Every five years it coincides with the Australian census. The Presbytery is sponsoring all our congregations to take part in the surveys in October and November as part of our support of ministry and mission development in our region.

The surveys consist of

1. Church Census - summary information about each congregation (one per church). This provides information about church activities and participation.

2. Leader Survey - one for each minister or pastor and lay leaders whom you designate. This provides information about ministry and leadership attributes, training, well-being, and attitudes.

3. Church Life Survey - one survey for each church attender. This gathers information about qualities of church vitality including private devotions, importance of God, growth in faith, experience of worship, belonging, evangelism, service, advocacy, leadership roles, involvement of children, etc.

Following the survey, our ministers and church councils will be able to access and assess the data themselves. The presbytery ministers will also be offering interpretation assistance in 2022.

Anniversary celebrations bolster unity



Pictured at the 44th anniversary of the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia are Moderator Denise Liersch joined by Ministers Graham Bartley, from Coatesville, Heeyoung Lim, from Leighmoor, and Jay Robinson, from Murrumbeena Uniting Church.

Moderator of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod, Rev Denise Liersch came along as guest and preacher at the UCA Anniversary Combined Service with the LCM cluster.

The LCM cluster is made up of the congregations of Leighmoor, Coatesville and Murrumbeena Uniting Churches and gathered at Murrumbeena UC to celebrate the anniversary of the UC.

This was the first formal combined service of the LCM cluster, and it proved a great occasion. The band was swelled by members of the Coatesville and Murrumbeena bands, and a joyous noise was indeed heard in the building.



The Leighmoor choir led our reflections during the time of offering, so all congregations were able to share their creative gifts. Both the congregations at Leighmoor and Coatesville are used to using Zoom for their worship together whilst Murrumbeena live streams to Facebook and Church Online.

Some 60 others joined on Zoom, Facebook live and Church Online. To add to the challenge of gathering together in a COVID world the internet went out in the area, but because the service was recorded people accessed via YouTube later that day.

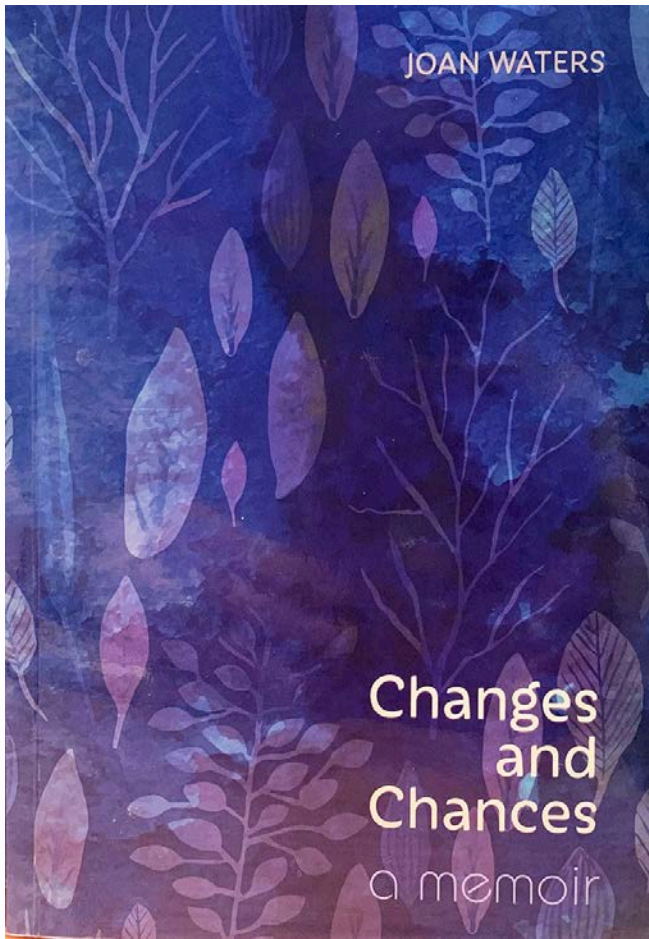
Over the past 12 months the LCM Cluster have shared in a carol service prior to Christmas, shared the same material for our Lenten Bible Studies and have also shared other resources such as access to some of the families and children's activities.

There are plans to continue exploring future activities together as Christmas comes closer and there is a hope to share in a walk of witness on Good Friday.

The leadership teams, as well as the congregations of the LCM cluster, look forward to exploring ways they can share in the mission and ministry of Christ in their communities.

by Rev Jay Robinson, Murrumbeena UCA

History in the making....



***Changes and Chances* is a story of 60 years of service, writes Geoffrey Grinton.**

Joan Waters has recently completed and published a memoir of her husband, Rev Reynolds Waters, who passed away four years ago. It is the story of 60 years of service to the Presbyterian and Uniting Churches of Australia in Australia and overseas, and touches on many of the issues that have been faced by our churches over that time.

It is interesting and eminently readable, and will bring back many memories to those who can recall growing and attending services during that time.

While it is essentially the story of one minister, it is also an exploration of how the Church and the society of which it is a part have changed.

The move from a time when the local church and its activities were the centre and focus of a community to a very different world where the church is seen as less relevant by many is explored with insight and balance as the story of Reynolds' many interests and activities unfolds.

\$25.00 (\$2.50 postage)

Contact Joan 0401 782 177 to order a copy.



Rev Charissa Suli has joyfully been declared President-elect of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Charissa is the youngest person and the first woman of colour to serve as President-elect, and the second ordained woman.

In her response to the announcement Charissa said: "This is truly an historic moment for the Church. This is ground-breaking that you call a Second Generation Tongan, still in her thirties. Today we move forward because of you all."

I am conscious of people, both known and unknown, who have prayed, sacrificed and struggled for this moment. But let us celebrate it and give thanks for what God has done and continues to do through your witness to Christ's radical hospitality."

Charissa will serve the Uniting Church in Australia as President 2024 to 2027.

Searching for Sister Grace

Sunday 22 August 2021 at 2.00pm

Historian Dr Cheryl Griffin will be joining the VicTas Uniting Church Historical Society to talk about four church workers simply known as Sister Grace. She will be covering issues such as why so many women's stories are absent from the Church's history and history in general will be explored.

For the Zoom link, contact Robert Renton
robert.renton@bigpond.com
 mobile 0427 812 606



Hampton Park UC recently farewelled Jo Austin who has been their Children and Family worker for the last six and a half years.

Ric Holland interviewed Jo about her work, and Craig Mitchell gave thanks on behalf of the Presbytery. We wish Jo well for the future!



Hannah Dungan, Children & Family Ministry at High Street UC Frankston, is joining Ringwood Church of Christ as their Generations Minister in August 2021.

Hannah thanks the community for the love and encouragement she has received during her time in ministry in Frankston, Somers Camp and within PPEP.



Belinda Clear was farewelled in July by the SouthPort Uniting Church congregations of Port and South Melbourne, after two years of providing supply ministry in their midst.

Chairperson Jeff Castles thanked Belinda for her work during this time of transition and challenge.

There were some beautiful and meaningful gifts and a sit down lunch after the service.



Kharis and Ben Abadani have welcomed into the world their new baby son Arian, born 9 July. "Welcome Baby Arian. Blessings to you all and we look forward to meeting Arian at a future Presbytery event."

Kharis is minister with Mulgrave and Monash Uniting Church and is taking the rest of the year as maternity leave. Belinda Clear and Daniel Sihombing are providing supply ministry while Kharis is on maternity leave.

Speaking of success...



Congratulations to the students who represented Cornish College at the 2021 Southern Independent Schools Public Speaking Championship.

The championship was won by Cornish College.

Marli Hunter, Year 7 and Harrison Walsh, Year 8 won the Junior Division, with Marli taking home the award for best speaker. Year 11 student Jake Ormsby-Goad and Will Irving, Year 12 were also successful, winning the Senior Division.

Pictured (L-R): Madeline Fantas, Jake Ormsby-Goad, Marli Hunter, Will Irving and Declan Molloy

Stamp duty continues for Allan

Dear Readers,

Now that Sammy Stamp (UCAF Stamp Fund) resides in this Presbytery, at Trinity Uniting Church, Brighton, some of you may be interested in a few snippets of news occasionally.

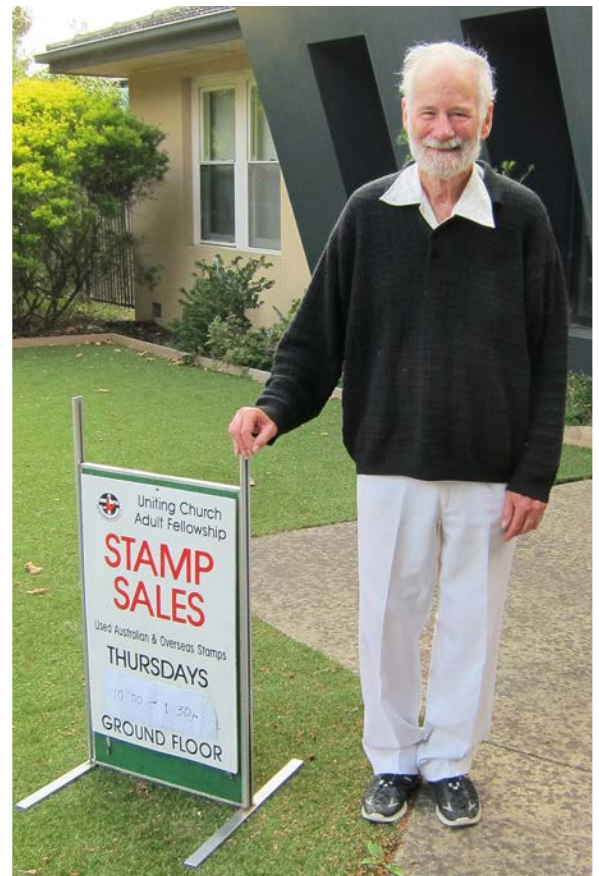
Allan, who is our Convener, lives conveniently in Bentleigh and he catches the 703 bus to attend most weeks. Allan first joined Sammy Stamp about 18 years ago when he and some of his family moved to Bentleigh from Narrabri West, N.S.W. where he had sold his Post Office business so he could help look after his mother-in-law, Glad Reed who was a volunteer at Sammy Stamp.

Glad had to give up volunteering as her health declined and following her passing, Allan could dedicate more time to Sammy.

If you know of anyone who has any sort of collection of stamps that they no longer have any interest in, please tell them to contact Sammy Stamp so they can be examined and then passed on to someone or more who is/are willing to donate/pay money which Sammy Stamp can use to support worthy causes.

If you are interested in the causes Sammy Stamp supports or if you would like to visit Sammy Stamp at work on a Thursday, contact Allan on (03) 9557 1008 for a chat.

by Judy Clarke (Sammy's pen pal).



Through thick and thin

Presbytery Minister: Pastoral Anneke Oppewal reflects on the longing for the sacred space where God feels close and connections are plentiful.

As we bounce between opening and closing our churches and the sense of shadowloss this pandemic brings she reminds us that the Bible is full of similar stories that urge us to look beyond the here and now.



In several Zoom conversations around the Presbytery this month we talked about spiritually 'thick places' and how worship and being together in a Church building provides such a 'thick' place for many of us.

A place thick with connection, emotion, spiritual nourishment and care. A place that can become a place that is 'thin' towards the divine presence of God, Christ and the Holy Spirit and help us connect to a reality beyond the day to day.

Many of us miss the rhythm of gathering in that space in person. Although there are other places where this 'thick thinness' can be experienced, even in lockdown, for many of us this is not the same.

A walk, being in nature, reading a book, the quiet of a warm and comfortable home, being able to connect with friends and loved ones over the phone or zoom, listening to music, although all of it has 'thick/thin place' potential, not being able to gather at Church leaves many of us longing.

The Bible is full of this longing for a place where God feels close and connections are plentiful. Of stories about finding ourselves outside our comfort zone and harking back or hoping forward to somewhere where we are not in the present moment. We read stories about life in slavery, of tracking through the wilderness for many years, of exile over centuries, of trauma and death experienced by the people of God in many ways shapes and forms, leaving them longing.

There is poetry singing about it, there is prophecy speaking about it and there is dreaming and fantasies about the future lifting hearts and minds to a different perspective than the challenging reality of the here and now.

We're reminded to look beyond the here and now, and, more than treasure and grieve for the past, to cast our imagination forward in hope. To see the challenges of the present as an invitation to dream about the future and begin to bring that future into the present. To start living forward into something that is even better than what lies behind us.

Revelation 21 is such a text – written in a time when death and destruction were imminent realities. The writer was in prison and fearing for his life, the Christian community under threat. And yet here is this text that has given people over the ages hope and something to look forward to and work towards.

No tears, no death, no suffering, the whole world a place thick with the presence of God. An antidote to the panic and anxiety that may be pulling at our heart strings at the the moment.

From the future God calls us to work and make this a reality for generations to come.

Revelation 21: 1-4

Ezekiel 37:1-14

Jeremiah 31: 1-9

Psalms 121 (to name but a few)

Prayers of Hope

by Anneke Oppewal

Let us pray
for a world
thick of thin places,
where God is near
and Christ skips beside us
joyfully rejoicing
because all is well.

Let us pray for a world
where tears are no more
and cemeteries
full of freshly dug graves
are a thing of the past.

Let us pray for a world
where death has disappeared
and loss and grief
no longer meet
with restrictions
and limited access
to comfort and care.

Let us pray for people
who live the future now
without fear
their hearts and minds open
to welcome and embrace
whoever is looking for shelter.

Let us pray for an end
to whatever mars
the image of Christ
the Church is living out
and a future
where pain, grief and tears
are obsolete.

Let us sing of
what we dream of
and imagine the future
into the present
because here and now
is the time to start living
the reality of God's love.

Amen

'Such a wonderful sense of community'

Stormy conditions across the state caused floods and flattened trees and leaving some towns cut off for days. It's during such emergencies that the VCC Emergencies Ministries swings into action to ease the emotional and spiritual trauma for residents.

Following the recent storm damage in the Dandenong Ranges I was deployed through the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry, VCCEM, to attend Kalorama as part of an outreach team visiting residents who had been affected by the storm.

We went to Kalorama, along with members of the Australian Defence Force, ADF, and discovered that many of the access roads were closed due to fallen trees. On our way we were redirected by the ADF to use different routes to the addresses and homes that we had been instructed to visit.

Driving to our first home we were surrounded by fallen trees on top of houses, and partial damage to homes, including trees that had fallen across driveways, leaves and debris everywhere, the whole scene looked like a war zone. Some of the trees on different hillsides had fallen in a domino sequence such was the force of the wind.

Many of the homes were uninhabited as residents had been told they would have to find alternate accommodation as their homes were too dangerous to live in. Most of this devastation happened at night when many residents were in their beds and sleeping.

Some were injured, some were trapped until help arrived.

Speaking with residents who were able to live in their homes

I discovered a great sense of community. As one resident said: "When we had no Internet or phone usage we used the bush telegraph, letting each other know what was going on, and checking to see if they were ok."

Our ADF support took us to a local family who had set up a 24 hour roadside marquee providing hot soup and food for all emergency visitors, including lots of generators that had been donated.

Such a wonderful sense of community.

This experience reminded me of a similar experience during the 2019 bushfires, where I had been deployed to Bunyip in support of local residents, and helping to feed Emergency Services personnel. Everyone was doing their bit, helping and supporting each other.

People looking out for each other and checking to see if they were ok.

**by Nancye Cottrell
Wheelers Hill UCA
Church Council**



As a VCCEM volunteer the experiences that I have had with so many people who have had experiences involving great hardship and great loss have helped me gain a much greater sense of what community means.

A greater sense of presence among us, and a sacredness that is ever-present.

To volunteer with VCCEM and find more supporter stories and videos visit:

www.vccem.org.au

St Andrews UC to run free budgeting and financial wellbeing course

St Andrew's Uniting Church, Berwick has been successful in applying for funding to offer CAP Money through the City of Casey.

This a great opportunity to offer key budgeting skills to our community in a safe and easy to access online format through Zoom. The course can be delivered both in a face-to-face or online capacity and is generally run in a two-session course.

This course is a fantastic way of helping our neighbours and showing systems that help navigate finances in a totally confidential way.

We are seeking new coaches to help facilitate the course, so that we can set this course up in the most holistic way that we can. If you would like to explore what this could look like, please use the contact details below.

More information from Mat Pendle at standrews.cap@iinet.net.au

Details of CAP Money Course and to register: www.capmoneycourse.org.au.

About Christians Against Poverty

CAP releases Australians from debt and poverty in two ways; practically with debt advocacy and financial education, and at a deeper level through connection to local community.

With a network of over 198 churches across the country, the charity operates through a growing network of centres, each opened in partnership with a local church.

CAP will help anyone who is facing hardship as a result of unmanageable debt, providing all services free of charge.

CAP empowers people to help themselves be released from the fear, oppression and worry generated by overwhelming debt. The CAP service also proactively teaches good financial wellbeing to all Australians, regardless of their situation.

christians
against
poverty

CAP

Messy Church

Make it Messy!
NEXT STEPS IN MESSY DISCIPLESHIP
SAT, AUGUST 7TH
FREE ONLINE GATHERING

1. NETWORKING & ENCOURAGEMENT
2. IDEAS & RESOURCING
3. PARTICULAR FOCUS ON MESSY CHURCH
values of Creativity and Hospitality

REGISTRATION APPRECIATED BY 3 AUGUST
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/make-it-messy-tickets-162612818317>

Chris Barnett Chris.Barnett@victas.uca.org.au Jocelyn Czerwonka jocelyn.czerwonka@waiapu.com

Preaching Workshops in September and October

Are you interested in growing your communication skills?

Would you like to go deeper as a preacher?

Do you know someone who has potential as a preacher?

Port Phillip East Presbytery invites you to take part in six online preaching workshops in September and October, coordinated by the Victoria Tasmania Synod's eLM (Equipping Leaders for Mission) unit.

Join with others on the Wednesday night Zoom workshops, led by a variety of church leaders, and access online learning material.

Presbytery Minister Craig Mitchell and a team of volunteers are available to support and assess preachers as they complete the written assessments and try out their preaching skills.

See more on the Presbytery website:
www.ucappep.org/preaching-online-workshops

Presbytery Meeting Dates 2021

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

Port Phillip East Presbytery Office

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03 9558 4170

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Jeff Gardner treasurer@ppe.victas.uca.org.au
Newsbeat newsbeat@ucappep.org



Uniting in prayer for August

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.

August 1	Pray for Pakenham Uniting Church with supply minister Robert Elkhuizen youth workers Jo Crisp and Riak Kirr, and chair Marie Harding.
August 8	Pray for Ormond Uniting Church with minister Andrew Boyle, supply minister Pam White, chair Mardie Townsend.
August 15	Pray for St David's Parkdale Uniting Church with minister Anna White-Atkins.
August 22	Pray for Uniting Eastern Victoria and Southern Victoria Divisions with General Managers Wenda Donaldson, Lee-Anne Chapman, and Michelle Riggall.
August 29	Pray for Sandringham Uniting Church with minister Andrea Mayes and chair Helen Jackson. Pray for Seaford Uniting Church with supply minister David Higham and chair Anne Gill.

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 newsbeat@ucappep.org

See the Presbytery Facebook page: www.facebook.com/ucappep.org

Dementia Workshop

**New Trends in Aged Care, Workshop on
Uniting St Mark's Center Based Program**

At High Street Road & St John's Uniting Church

37 Virginia St Mt Waverley

1.30pm to 3.00pm on Friday September 17th



The Co-ordinator, Ethan Gankanda, will describe Uniting St Mark's day program activities and how people could access the program.

Afterwards, please join us for a cup of tea or coffee and informal discussion.

Please advise Margery Kennett
on 9807 4084,

mbkennett@bigpond.com of your
intention to attend.

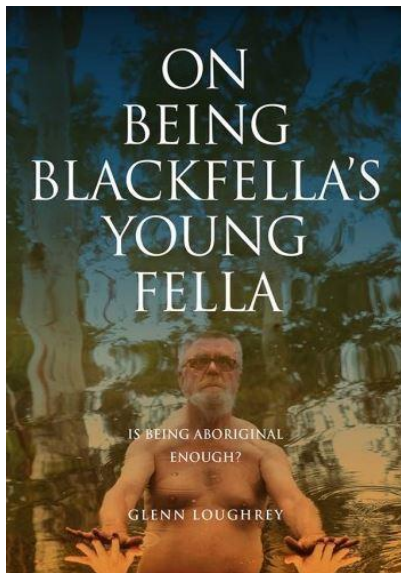
A gold coin donation would be appreciated.

YOU ARE ALL INVITED TO THIS FREE EVENT

SUNDAY, AUGUST 22

A COMMUNITY FORUM
'LISTENING TO FIRST AUSTRALIANS'
(WHIN-NGA-RRA ... LISTEN, HEAR AND THINK)

**LET'S TAKE THE FIRST STEPS ON OUR
JOURNEY TO UNDERSTANDING**



THE PROGRAM INCLUDES:

- WELCOME TO COUNTRY/
SMOKING CEREMONY
- TALK BY INSPIRING WRITER
AND ARTIST, WIRADJURI
MAN, GLENN LOUGHREY
- OPEN FORUM/Q&A, WITH
AN INDIGENOUS PANEL ON
MATTERS IMPORTANT TO
THEIR COMMUNITY
- GLENN'S ARTWORK ON DISPLAY

AT HIGH STREET ROAD UNITING CHURCH*
482 HIGH STREET ROAD, MOUNT WAVERLEY
2:15PM TO 4:15PM

PLEASE NOTE: PLACES AT THE VENUE MAY BE LIMITED, IF
COVID RESTRICTIONS ARE IN FORCE

BOOKING ESSENTIAL: **0416 007 496** or
mbkennett@bigpond.com

***ACCESS TO LIVE STREAM ...**
ZOOM LINK: <https://tinyurl.com/2jm7629n>