

# Newsbeat



NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



## APRIL HEADLINES

CASEY CARDINIA  
BUS TOUR

CAULFIELD  
CHADSTONE  
BRIGHTON  
BLACK ROCK  
CHELTENHAM-  
MENTONE  
BRIGHTON BEACH  
HAMPTON PARK

BEING  
INTERCULTURAL

EASTER  
REFLECTIONS

ASSEMBLY  
ACT 2 PROJECT

SYNOD 2022

APRIL 2022 ISSUE



# Port Phillip East Presbytery's WHAT'S HAPPENING

An insight into what congregations  
schools & people are doing

## THE BUS WAS BUZZING!

*7 hours. 116 kilometres. 11 Presbytery Leaders  
Craig Mitchell writes about a wonderful field trip*

*On Tuesday March 15 the Port Phillip East Presbytery Standing Committee went on a day bus trip of the Casey-Cardinia region – an area with a population the same as Tasmania, and growing rapidly.*

*We drove by our six churches and out into the new housing estates. We visited Beaconhills College where we have an excellent chaplain, Steve Terrell.*

We shopped in a local market, and shared news and stories about the many suburbs that we passed. We had lunch at Hampton Park UC, saw their weekly Carers Group gathering, heard about their recent community art show and wandered around their community garden.

The Casey-Cardinia bus tour was a day-long introduction to Presbytery's outer south east for the Standing Committee accompanied by Presbytery Ministers. We boldly went where no Standing Committee had bussed before to explore a mission frontier of PPE.



Standing Committee members get ready to board the bus at St Andrew's Berwick, with tour guide Ineke Gyles. Photo by Craig Mitchell.





Jeff Gardner, Ira Budiono, Duncan Macleod, Tom Spurling, Kelly Skilton, and Ineke Gyles visiting Beaconhills College Berwick campus.  
Photo Craig Mitchell



Anne Kim and Ineke Gyles in a visit to Cranbourne Food Market  
Photo Craig Mitchell.

Casey Council and Cardinia Shire comprise about one third of the geographic area of our presbytery, with a population the size of Tasmania, expected to grow by 50% in the next 20 years. We have six small to medium-sized churches across the region.

Boarding the bus at St Andrew's Berwick, people were given a travel pack containing maps, data, and a quiz to complete along the way. First stop - Beaconhills College local campus, where Campus Principal Sam Watson and Chaplain Steve Terrell gave us a tour and spoke about the college's vision, values and character. We responded by stating our hopes to strengthen ties with the College. Steve then showed us his new experimental chapel space and told of the Beacons of Hope project which connects students with wider community needs.

Up the eastern perimeter of the urban fringe to Narre Warren North UC and a wander around the community garden, then across the top of Carey City to Endeavour Hills UC where the joint was jumping with the weekly Playgroup. Along the way, special guest Rev Ineke Gyles provided expert commentary on changes in the area.

A lunch stop at Uniting Place, Hampton Park, where the weekly Carers Group was meeting. We heard from Rev Ric Holland and Chairperson David Taylor about a range of community programs, including a weekly community lunch, free legal advice, a domestic violence support program, and the recent Arts and Multicultural weekend. Another community garden to visit.

The Standing Committee held its monthly meeting at Hampton Park - how refreshing it was to be considering business matters out amongst our churches.

Travelling south, we stopped briefly at Cranbourne UC, home of the Food Truck, before heading on to Cranbourne Central, where we dropped in at the Fresh Food Market to get a sense of the cultural breadth of the local community. As we saw at the College, the population is increasingly multicultural, and multifaith. What does that mean for our churches?

A key feature of the day was a drive through and past the new housing estates in the Clyde area, beginning at Eliston Estate and then heading north. These new suburbs are astonishing in number and size, with new construction in every direction. I told the story of the café being built by the Baptist Church in Smiths Lane Estate and the intended link with the new College up the road where a congregation was planned. Mat Pendle, formerly working with Berwick UC, is the new café manager.

Driving on past many more estates we made our way to Pakenham UC and saw some of the new housing downtown, before driving through Officer and Beaconsfield back to Berwick.

The bus was abuzz with conversation. The trip could have been twice as long. We have much to think about and much more to learn. Maybe this can become a model for experiential learning across the presbytery?

*Craig Mitchell*

*Presbytery Minister - Church Development*

# Young people lead at Caulfield Indonesian

*Caulfield Indonesian Uniting Church (CIUC) is on an intercultural journey with the development of strategies for supporting children and youth who are growing up in Australia.*

*Natalisa Sembiring writes about the monthly English language service led by young people on the fourth Sunday of each month.*



## 2nd Generation Leadership

1 Timothy 4:12 says, “Don’t let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.”

Responding to this verse, Caulfield Indonesian Uniting Church challenged the Sunday School children and the youth to lead the service once a month. The church was amazed by the response. The children show enthusiasm, passion, and eagerness to take part in the ministry. Using their talents in music, the children put their heart into leading the service as musicians, singers, and Bible readers, and presenting praise and worship items as a group.

Starting its very first service in 1984 in Malvern, Victoria, CIUC has grown ever since in the ministry of influencing people’s lives through acknowledging and sharing the Word of God through interpersonal interaction, praise and worship communities and fellowship. The church holds regular services every Sunday, and focuses on the Sunday School service and the youth ministry.

Bahasa Indonesia, Indonesia’s official language is used for most of the services at Caulfield. However children and young people growing up in Australia are not as familiar with the language. To address this matter, the fourth Sunday of the month is being held in English, with guest speakers. On other Sundays, an English translation of the sermon is provided for the youth for them to read and learn from during the week.

## Learning from one another

The congregation finds there is much to be learned from the faith of children. “Unless we change and become like little children, we will never enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:2-4).

As the children and the youth lead the English Service on the 4th Sunday of the month; they grow in their sense of being part of the church community. Their voices are heard, and their ministry touches the hearts of the other congregation members.

Church leaders have learned that investing in Sunday school and youth ministry is necessary in growing the body of Christ. Teaching young people in the church to grow in their relationship with the Lord prepares them to serve Christ in all they do.

Serving young people will not only prepare them to become future leaders, but also allow them to contribute to the church. This is seen many times in the Bible, as God used Timothy to lead the Ephesian church when he was a teenager.

We believe that as the children and youth take part in this ministry, they will grow strong bonds between one another, building a faithful, Christ-centered youth community that serves God and shares His unconditional love. Engaging with the children and youth, and listening to their passion, will help us keep connected. Being flexible and making opportunities for the children to actively take part in the service will nurture the congregation and allow the whole church to flourish and bear spiritual fruit.



## Fijian women lead in prayer

Women from Melbourne Fijian Uniting Church (MFUC) ran a World Day of Prayer service in March, as part of the prayer movement led by women across the world.

Special prayers were offered for the world, the sick and the vulnerable women and children of the world. Mrs Lesieli Tauali'i shared a powerful sermon and testimony about celebrating hope and being Christ's light in the world wherever we are. A seed of hope, nourished by prayers of intercession and actions of love, binds us together around the world.

Melbourne Fijian Uniting Church has been meeting at St Mark's Uniting Church, Chadstone, since 2005. With the closure of the St Mark's congregation in August 2021, they are now the remaining congregation on the site, along with Uniting DayCare and Bayview Units.

This year the congregation began an arrangement with Mt Waverley Uniting Church in which Rev Semisi Tauali'i spends a quarter of his time providing supply ministry for MFUC.



Melbourne Fijian Uniting Church Ladies Fellowship Group with Semisi and Lesieli Tauali'i after their World Day of Prayer service in Chadstone.



Churches from Chadstone and Mt Waverley on Good Friday each year join in the Way of the Cross walk organised by the Chadstone Mt Waverley Inter-Church Council. Pictured here are participants from the walk in 2021.



# CPR Training @Trinity Brighton

**Trinity Brighton Uniting Church recently ran a first aid course for members.**

The congregation at Trinity Uniting Church Brighton recently had the opportunity to learn and refresh their CPR skills, and also learn how to use their defibrillator machine. Sarah Park, a nurse at St John of God hospital, led members in the basic DRSABCD training (Danger, Response, Send for help, Airway, Breathing, CPR, Defibrillation).

Everyone had a chance to practice chest compressions on Bruce the mannequin. Members now feel quite confident that they would be able to assist in an emergency.

Sarah would be happy to conduct a class at your church hall or congregation. For more details contact Sarah Park on 0433 462 247



Practicing CPR on the mannequin at Trinity Brighton.



Visitors to the Hampton Park Uniting Place art exhibition  
Photo Craig Mitchell.

# Art@Hampton Park

*Maybe your congregation could be next?*

Hampton Park Uniting Place launched its Community Art weekend on 4 March. The art exhibition featured work by 37 people in various media. The multicultural multifaith opening included the Free Spirit Choir from Glen Waverley and a speech by State MP Gary Maas.

# Cheltenham-Mentone @Black Rock

Cheltenham-Mentone Uniting Church members have been without their building since preparations began for the renovation of their site in Charman Rd, Cheltenham. Over the last year St Andrew's Black Rock have provided a home for the neighbouring congregation. Greg Fry and Di Paterson now share in the leadership of worship and pastoral care of the two congregations.

On March 6 Presbytery Minister Pastoral Anneke Oppewal took the communion service at Black Rock after minister Greg Fry became a COVID close contact during the week. Pastor Di Paterson was away due to an earlier arrangement that had her helping out at Sandringham with the communion service there.



Members of Black Rock and Cheltenham Mentone worship together.

Photo Anneke Oppewal

# Coffee Cup Challenge @ St Leonard's

*St Leonards Brighton Beach Uniting Church takes coffee seriously, particularly between International Coffee Day and Lent. Ennis Macleod reports on the Coffee Cup Challenge, a project started at St Leonard's in partnership with Uniting Vic.Tas and joined by many other congregations.*

Each year on International Coffee Day, 1st October, participating members and friends of St Leonard's Uniting Church congregation start putting about \$4 per week into a coffee mug. This amount represents buying a homeless person a cup of coffee a week.

Approximately 20 weeks later, on the Sunday closest to Shrove Tuesday (or Pancake Day to some), participants take the total amount put aside in their coffee mugs to St Leonard's. In previous years we have celebrated the end of the Challenge with pancakes after church, but this year we have had to put off the pancake feast until May 1st when the full amount raised will be announced.

Other churches have also taken up the challenge, and together we have raised money to help provide support for the homeless in our states.

It all started in 2017 when Barry Schofield, watching interviews with those sleeping rough in Flinders Street Station, realised that if 100 people saved the cost of a cup of coffee each week, it would add up to a sizable amount. From there Barry and Church minister Rev Kim Cain developed a plan.

From International Coffee Day on 1 October, they asked congregation members to accept a coffee mug and take on 'The Coffee Mug Challenge.' Barry was right. In the first year of the Coffee Cup Challenge nearly \$11,000 was raised.

The money goes to Uniting Vic/Tas who use all the funds to help those experiencing homelessness, vulnerability and crisis. This year's donations look to be on track to make it a bumper year, with the Uniting website reporting that \$59,994 has been raised since 2018.

One outcome from our participation in the Coffee Cup Challenge is the increased awareness we now have around issues of homelessness. For example, we are now more than ever aware of the importance of the Human Rights and Housing Legislation Amendment (Ending Homelessness) Bill 2022, which is having its second reading in parliament next month. The bill's intent is to 'eliminate homelessness in Victoria by 2030.'

The Coffee Cup Challenge funds go to Uniting Vic. Tas for their work around homelessness, and to assist them in funding their pledge of \$20 million to help build 500 new affordable housing projects across Victoria over the next five years.

The Coffee Cup Challenge is one way in which we can keep the command of God to "open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land." (Deut 15:11)

One person giving the price of a cup of coffee a week for 20 weeks might raise \$100, depending where you buy your coffee from, but when a whole church commits to that one coffee a week for 20 weeks, a lot more can be raised.

St Leonards are pleased to be able to support Uniting as they help those facing housing crises – the poor and needy in our land – sleep a little less rough, feel a little more secure.

You can register your interest in hosting the Coffee Cup challenge on the Uniting VicTas website: [www.unitingvictas.org.au/coffee-cup-challenge](http://www.unitingvictas.org.au/coffee-cup-challenge)



Barry Schofield with spatula and coffee cup ready for serving pancakes

# Being intercultural – a conversation

One of the priorities for the Uniting Church in our region is intercultural ministry and mission. Being intercultural takes us beyond the reality of living in a multicultural society.

It's about the relationships between us that are possible when we go beyond the security of our own way of doing things.

At the Presbytery meeting on Saturday March 19 we asked six members of the Presbytery to reflect on three questions, before breaking into small groups to talk about our own experiences of intercultural ministry and mission.

- 1. What have we been learning as members of the Uniting Church about intercultural relationships?*
- 2. What have we been learning about being in ministry in cross-cultural settings?*
- 3. What have we been learning about intercultural relationships in our wider community on the edges or outside the church community?*

Presbytery Minister Duncan Macleod talked about the ways we define ourselves in relation to our own cultural heritage as well as our relationship with people of other cultures. The term “Anglo”, a shortening of the traditional “Anglo Saxon” given to white people largely of British stock in Australia, was a shock to Duncan after his identification in New Zealand as “Pakeha” (in relation to Maori) and “Palangi” in relation to Pacifica peoples. Duncan reflected on the way we together are culturally and linguistically diverse.



eLM Intercultural Communities Development Coordinator Sylvia Akau'ola Tongotongo talked about the welcome she experienced coming from the Methodist Church in New Zealand. Her observation is that being intercultural is more talked about than lived out in some places, and in other places is lived out but not talked about. Her hope is that we can see beyond colours and race and languages. We have intersectionalities with people who are differently abled, people with different theological perspectives, people with different socioeconomic backgrounds.



eLM Intercultural Leadership Development Coordinator Dev Anandarajan talked about his experience as an immigrant serving as a minister in the Uniting Church, beginning with a Tamil congregation, and then with a predominantly “Anglo” congregation. He had discovered that the “Anglo” community was diverse, and found listening to the stories learning about their faith journeys so that he could shape his pastoral responses.





## *A conversation from our Presbytery meeting in March*

Intercultural describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures.

Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships.

In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together.

Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal talked about the complexity of being a Dutch immigrant serving in ministry with the Uniting Church. She has learned that she can't always assume that we are communicating clearly with one another. Even when we are all fluent in English, we don't always mean the same when we use the same words. As an immigrant she's aware that she will never be at home in the church here in the same way she would be back at the Netherlands. Many people growing up in the Uniting Church absorb so many unwritten rules and expectations. She's not always sure what is "normal", what is "up for negotiation" and what is a "no-go area". Crossing a language barrier is just the beginning of intercultural ministry, with so many ways of living with diversity, being stretched and grown.



Paul Dau, Minister at Springvale Uniting Church, talked about coming to Australia from the Anglican Church in South Sudan. He was attracted to the welcome and hospitality offered by Footscray Uniting Church. God of hospitality, not just accommodation. In Acts 2 there is a sense of respect for one another speaking in different languages. It would be good to test our assumptions of each other being a full representative of our own culture. We need to create platforms where people from minority groups can find their voice without fear.



Tracie Mulia, Pastor at St Andrew's Gardiner, grew up in Java, knowing that as an Indonesian Chinese person she would always be "at home not belonging". Living for five years in the Northern beaches of Northern Sydney it was tempting to erase who she was, so she could fit in. Tracie talked about going to meet people for coffee in her local shopping centre, The Glen, being confident in being recognised for who she is. She's learned to meet workers from different cultures in the shops there, showing interest in their stories and backgrounds.



# Claire Dawe inducted at Cornish College

More than 800 students, staff and guests gathered on 28 March in an outdoor amphitheatre at Cornish College for the Induction Assembly for Reverend Claire Dawe.

The Principal, Nicola Forrest, welcomed us all to the Assembly and introduced Year 8 student Lily Turner, the school's Reconciliation Leader, to conduct the Acknowledgement of Country. The Principal especially welcomed Anneke Oppewal, our Presbytery Minister Pastoral, to conduct the induction ceremony.

Anneke, conscious of the age, gender, cultural and religious diversity of the school community, led an accessible and compelling service to introduce Claire and her work to the school community. She assured the community of the interest and support that our Presbytery has in the work of Cornish College.

A highlight for me was when Anneke asked Claire, "Why did you choose Micah 6:6-8 as today's reading?"

And Claire replied, "God doesn't want their fancy sacrifices or their continual bowing down and making a huge showing of being pious. God wants them to live justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God. It's so simple really and yet we make it so complicated."

I saw smiles and nods of agreement throughout the gathered community.

Sam Joo from the nearby Uniting by the Bay congregation pledged friendship and support for Claire in her ministry at Cornish College.



At the conclusion of the Assembly, Anneke, noting that meals and hospitality are at the heart of the Christian faith, made the popular announcement that there would be a chocolate frog available to all students as they resumed their classes.

Tom Spurling

Cornish College is an Independent Co-educational school in Bangholme. It was established in 2012 by the Uniting Church and was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 2016. The Constitution states that 'The College is established for the charitable object of providing an education for students in a learning community that encourages the values and spiritual development consistent with Christian thought and practice as embodied within the (Uniting) Church.'



# Easter after the flood

*Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal reflects on the experience of celebrating Easter in the wake of floods, war and pandemic. How can it be alright when everything seems all wrong?*

Floods, war, pandemic – on our way towards Easter many of us might have felt the sadness, the challenge, the overwhelm of all that has been happening.

Keeping Lenten practices is perhaps not so hard as imagining a joyful, grateful, hopeful and creative Easter approaching on the horizon.

“Maybe I’ll just do what I did last year”, one minister said to me. Another confessed that they just didn’t seem to be able to get their head in the right space to organise Easter celebrations this time round.

Watching the news about the floods in Queensland and NSW, I remembered back to 1995 when my family and I were living through floods in the Netherlands. We had to leave our home with only a couple of suitcases for an anxiety-filled week or so, because of rising floodwaters and the threat of dykes breaking. We didn’t know if we’d ever see our home or its contents again. Nothing happened, but the experience of letting go of everything material we had, with less than two hours notice, will forever stay with me.

On the first Sunday after our return I preached on Noah. About floods of injustice, suffering and pain clamouring all the way up to heaven, drowning the world. I reflected on God packing a suitcase to somehow keep safe at least some of the world he loved.

The word used for the ark in this story is the same word used for coffin in Hebrew. Noah, with his family and all the animals, is set afloat in a coffin on the floods of chaos for a couple of months before any promise of dry ground and new beginnings is found.

Our current situation can feel a bit like that. We get a sense of being afloat on a sea of threat and dread, with no promise of solid, stable ground in sight. Tired, disoriented, wondering and insecure.

Our son was three years old when we had that experience of needing to let go of what had seemed solid ground and material security. He packed his own little suitcase. His Teddy was in there, and all the animals of the toy ark he had been playing with only recently, and of course some of his toy cars and other little things. Keeping them safe while we were away.



Anneke's three year old son, with suitcase, after the 1975 flood.

Photo: Anneke Oppewal

As we move towards Easter perhaps that is an image that may be helpful for us to be aware of. A world awash in threat and dread, pandemic, war, floods, all putting us on unstable ground and on an unsure footing as to what the future may hold.

Remember that the disciples lost everything that first Easter. They were left wondering, insecure, and on unstable ground in a world of threat and dread. For a couple of days everything hung in the balance. With dread seemingly having the last word.

Dread didn't have the last word. As with Noah, the disciples discovered that God had not let go. Yes, they had had to let go of every other security they had apart from faith in the power of God's love bringing resurrection and new life in a situation where death had seemed to have closed all doors.

Anneke Oppewal

# Uniting Church Future – a national conversation

*Presbytery Minister Duncan Macleod and Julie Ross, minister at Mt Waverley Uniting Church, recently led a discussion on Act 2, a national conversation on the future of the Uniting Church. at the March 19 meeting of the Presbytery. Duncan Macleod writes about the background to the Act 2*

Back in 2020 the Uniting Church's Assembly Standing Committee launched a national conversation about the identity and future direction of the Uniting Church.

In 2027 we'll be celebrating fifty years since the Uniting Church was formed. Fifty years for many organisations is a point at which a pivot is needed. The people who founded the movement have usually passed on and a new generation has the task of reimagining the focus and structure of the organisation. We're part of that generation.

Act 2 was chosen as the name for this conversation. It's a reference to plays and operas in which the characters are introduced during the first act. The second act is when those characters must grapple with a crisis, or respond to a change in their context.

The results from the last two years of consultation are not surprising. We affirm the church's commitment to equality of women and men in leadership, our tendency to be inclusive and welcoming, the significance of the Basis of Union, every member ministry, promotion of justice.

Three core outcomes have been named by the Assembly Standing Committee.

1. Create an enabling environment for local communities of worship, witness, service and discipleship formation.
2. Foster a cohesive national character of the church and collaborative ways of working across the church.
3. Fulfil the Church's legal, ethical and social and legal obligations

Three challenges have been presented to us for consideration and action over the next years.

1. How do we move towards a more equitably resourced and sustainable church?



2. How do we move towards a simpler, more streamlined model of ordering our life?
3. How do we move towards a cohesive national character and vision?

Members of the Presbytery meeting on Saturday March 19 spent time looking at the Act 2 report, Considering Our Lives Afresh. In small breakout groups we grappled with our changing context, and thought carefully about what will be critical for the Uniting Church over this coming decade.

A strong theme coming through was the need to strengthen our capacity to foster discipleship formation, and not lose sight of the communities around us. Changing our structures and clarifying our shared focus may address some of our challenges. Many of our congregations will find it difficult to adapt and respond to the future. But deep at the heart of this Uniting Church movement is our confidence and focus on the Gospel, finding sustainable ways of supporting new models of church, encouraging and equipping young leaders.

How do you think the second act of the Uniting Church will play out?

See more at <https://uniting.church/act2>





## Justice and International Mission Convention

**Saturday April 30th, 9:30am to 4:15pm**  
**29 College Crescent, Parkville, VIC**  
**Centre for Theology and Ministry**

We are witnessing a rapidly growing scientific understanding of the need to act urgently on environmental challenges we face. How can the Uniting Church continue to make a difference in how Australia impacts environment issues?

For more details click: <https://victas.uca.org.au/event/justice-and-international-mission-convention-2022/>

## Safeguarding children & young people in the UCA

Forum on Zoom, Thurs 5 May 12-1pm AEST  
 Free



### Safeguarding children & young people in the UCA

**Free Zoom forum**  
**Thursday 5th May, 12 noon-1pm**

Sarah Lim, National Director, UCA Redress Ltd  
 John Cox, Director, National Safe Church Unit  
 share what UCA is doing to safeguard under 18s in the Church.  
 To register visit (click below)

<https://safechurch.uca.org.au/773-2>



## Online Communities: Spaces for meeting, connecting, creating

**Wednesday 27 April, 10.00 - 11.30 am**

Join us for a webinar on digital spaces for running meetings, conversations, planning events, learning groups and more. Discover a range of ways to go beyond the limits of basic Zoom. This is a "show and tell" of a range of online meetup platforms including QiqoChat - a conferencing shell for Zoom, SpatialChat, Wonder meeting rooms, Twitch and Discord. Rev Will Nicholas is a UC minister who hosts a range of digital communities and projects. Kelly Skilton is a youth & young adult worker who coordinates the Sonder Collective, a hybrid network of young adults. Dr Craig Mitchell is an educator who experiments with online learning and meeting environments. Hosted by Port Phillip East Presbytery.

The webinar will be on [facebook.com/ucappep.org](https://facebook.com/ucappep.org)

## Meditation Groups

*Ann Simons at Hampton Uniting Church leads a weekly Christian meditation group on Monday mornings, 10 am - 11 am, at the church and via Zoom.*

You can join in via Zoom at 10am via the link <https://zoom.us/j/9483535630> or to join in using your phone only, call 7018 2005 and when prompted enter meeting ID 948 353 5630.

*John Tansy at South Port Uniting Church runs a mindfulness-based stillness meditation every morning, Monday to Thursday, 9.30 - 10 am.*

You can join in on Zoom using this link: [bit.ly/mindfulstilness](https://bit.ly/mindfulstilness)  
 Meeting ID: 968 8777 1248  
 Passcode: 750657.

# 2022 Synod

The 2022 Victoria and Tasmania Synod Meeting will begin with an opening worship at Wesley Uniting Church on Thursday 30 June followed by the in-person business meeting at Box Hill Town Hall from Friday 1 July – Sunday 3 July 2022.

The Synod provides an opportunity to come together with members from across all eight presbyteries, along with ex-officio and other appointed members, to determine the policies and direction of the Synod and its agencies, to consider reports from the Boards, Governance Committees, Task Groups, Presbyteries, Synod Ministries and Operations and other reporting bodies and to worship God.



## You can attend the 2022 Synod

Port Phillip East Presbytery has 42 openings for people to attend the Victoria Tasmania Synod meeting being held at Wesley Church, Thursday night 30 June, and Box Hill Town Hall, Friday to Sunday, 1-3 July. So far we've filled 14 of those spaces. People of all ages can attend, both lay and ordained.

What's involved? This is a gathering of people from Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania. The meeting includes inspiring worship, guest speakers, and opportunities to talk about important matters in small groups. There's time to sit down for meals and meet friends and people from other parts of the Uniting Church. There will be resources on display.

What will you need? You'll need a device such as a laptop, desk top computer, or iPad with a camera and a stable internet connection, to attend orientation sessions, and access the meeting papers and other information in the lead up to and during the meeting.

Synod meeting members need to be a member of the Uniting Church, have an email address, and availability to attend some online sessions within the fortnight leading up to the meeting.

You can nominate yourself to attend by filling out a form off the Presbytery website and sending it to Presbytery secretary Anne Kim before April 19.

<https://ucappep.org/category/presbytery>

## You can be a volunteer at Synod

### *Calling on volunteers for the 2022 Synod Meeting*

We are looking for volunteers to assist at our upcoming UCA Synod Meeting in June/July 2022.

Volunteers are required for the Opening Worship which includes the installation of the Moderator on Thursday evening at Wesley Church, Lonsdale St, Melbourne and at the three days of the Synod meeting 1 – 3 July at Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill.

This is a fantastic opportunity to learn more about the Synod, meet Synod members, contribute to the work of the wider Church and have some fun! Volunteers at the Synod meeting are incredibly valuable and help to ensure the smooth running of the meeting.

Volunteers opportunities include: welcoming and greeting attendees, staffing the information table, answering questions and assisting Synod staff.

### *For further information or to express your interest*

*contact Sarah Manase*

*Administrative Assistant, Synod Secretariat*

[sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au)

*or phone (03) 9116 1963.*

# Share with us & tell us what's happening

What a marvellous collection of stories this month. You may have noticed that the congregations and people in our prayer calendar for April are all featured in this issue of Newsbeat. Newsbeat editor Sarah Manase contacted each congregation encouraging them to share something for Newsbeat. This is in response to feedback on the importance of local stories we received in the Newsbeat survey last year.

In May our Presbytery will be encouraging prayer for these people. What stories will you share?

- Clayton Cook Island UCA
- St David's Oakleigh UCA
- The Assembly meeting on the Sunshine Coast May 6- 9
- Coatesville UCA
- Creative Ministries Network
- Cranbourne UCA
- Dandenong UCA (Trinity & Lewe Tolu Vakalou)
- Endeavour Hills UCA

At the Presbytery meeting on March 19 we shared results from the congregational communication strategy survey we ran at the end of last year.

We heard that many of our congregations have weekly communication, using digital and printed notices, as well as less frequent church magazines.

Survey respondents told us that they would value support in developing and maintaining websites. We'll be hosting training sessions through the year.

In the Presbytery meeting we heard that congregations would also value photographs and videos with local stories to share during services.

We aim to have Newsbeat out on the 1st of every month. It's helpful for us to receive all text and photography by the 21st of every month. We look forward to hearing from you.

*Sarah Manase, Presbytery Communications Officer  
Duncan Macleod, Presbytery Minister: Team Leader*

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## Uniting in prayer for April

*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 in our Presbytery and Synod. You can check the calendar on the Presbytery website.*

<b>April 3</b>	<i>St Leonard's Brighton Beach, minister Kim Cain – page 7 Trinity Brighton, minister Kevin Kim – page 6</i>
<b>April 10</b>	<i>Cheltenham-Mentone &amp; Black Rock, ministry team Greg Fry and Di Paterson – page 6</i>
<b>April 17</b>	<i>Caulfield Indonesian, minister Lingky Widodo – page 4</i>
<b>April 24</b>	<i>Melbourne Fijian UC, Chadstone, minister Semisi Tauali'i – page 5 Uniting Day Care &amp; people living in Bayview Units</i>

# A PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

*God of mercy  
beyond comprehension  
behind and before  
beneath and above  
confounding mystery*

*Who are you who shapes such  
unlikely images of yourself  
then risks all so we might  
inherit your likeness?  
who sends your wild child to  
live down our street  
then dares us to reclaim our  
true childhood  
through him?*

*Who is he, this God-Child  
who frustrates his parents  
hangs around with the wrong  
crowd  
questions the town council  
is picked up by the local cops  
and through this remains  
a source of goodness,  
compassion and truth?*

*God of stories,  
open the door for us  
to re-enter and re-live  
this unholy week  
full of longing and loss,  
lies and truth  
shame and indignation,  
trust and rejection*

*This is a time in which we may  
both lose ourselves  
and find ourselves in the  
dusty arena of grace  
This will be one crowded hour  
Walk it with us, we pray*

*God of all who struggle and yearn  
may our worship be  
a watching and listening  
for unexpected grace  
for unquenchable hope  
for unreasonable truth  
in the face of all that denies  
abundant life*

*We seek You,  
improbable Christ  
Amen*

**by Craig Mitchell**

A Prayer for Holy Week is from  
Deeper Water: resources for immersive worship  
available at MediaCom Education

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