

Newsbeat

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



MAY HEADLINES

ENDEAVOUR HILLS
PLAYGROUP

EASTER
REFLECTIONS

10 YEARS OF
CRANBOURNE'S
FOOD TRUCK

EAT & DRINK

WELCOME TO THE
TABLE

MOTHER'S DAY
PRAYER

FEASTING COOK
ISLANDS STYLE

MAY 2022 ISSUE



Port Phillip East Presbytery's *WHAT'S HAPPENING*

An insight into what congregations,
schools & people are doing

PLAYGROUP IS A WONDERFUL PLACE TO BOND AND CREATE MEMORIES THAT LAST A LIFETIME!

Wes Porch writes about the joys of hosting a playgroup

During Easter the playgroup from Endeavour Hills Uniting Church gathered together to share food and fellowship, interacting with others after a very long wait over lockdown.

This playgroup for under 5s and is open only on Tuesdays 10am to 12 noon during school term at Endeavour Hills Uniting Church, on the corner of Raymond McMahon Boulevard and Hellyer Way.

A playgroup is a group of parents or caregivers with their babies, toddlers and preschool children who get together regularly for play and social interaction.

Every week, thousands of self-run community playgroups meet across Victoria. Each parent or caregiver is responsible for the children they bring to playgroup.

Playgroups vary according to the needs of their families. They bring young children, parents, families and communities together to learn and develop through informal play activities and social interaction.



Treasure Trove a place to play, explore, discover, enjoy, journey, adventure, & share!



Playgroups help parents and caregivers build social and support networks that encourage and assist them in their valuable parenting role.

At Endeavour Hills Uniting Church Playgroup runs every Tuesday morning during school terms and shares the playground with the Montessori Kindergarten by arrangement.

In December 2013 the Endeavour Hills Uniting Church Childcare Centre closed after 27 years of service. The closure coincided with renovations at Noble Park and so we were able to provide a temporary home for the Port Phillip East Presbytery offices and related activities.

Members of the EHUC congregation were meanwhile seeking God's plan for the available space, and considered a playgroup. Research confirmed that there were few options available in the area where parents of all backgrounds could meet and chat and form friendships while their pre-kinder aged children could play and interact with their peers.

A Treasure Trove playgroup was born and opened in July 2015. The playground was the brainchild of Stephen Mayes and Cheryl Doddrell (Kinder trained). A small group of families gathered during the months prior to Christmas.

The Montessori Centre was also searching for a new home and moved into the childcare centre end of the building in 2016. To accommodate this, the playgroup moved into the worship centre and the foyer area. We were still able to share the playground.

Our Treasure Trove dream was to respond to the need for mums of all faiths and backgrounds to have a break and share with each other the joys and challenges of raising children, over a cup of coffee. Enrolments have kept up so that advertising is rarely needed. Some families have had three children attend over time.

As the group grew, Cheryl recruited her sister Jenni Porch at the end of 2017 to assist with hosting the enthusiastic bunch.

Many stories have been shared, and some have expressed how much they appreciate talking with other adults. In addition the children seem pretty keen to come back each week.

Prior to COVID the church arranged "A Family Christmas Celebration" and presented a Christmas Story with a play, band, and dress-ups. A sausage sizzle followed. Past and present families were invited, as well as church members, with many taking up the offer.

It was a joyful albeit chaotic event (as you might expect) and we look forward to more such opportunities to grow closer ties with our community as we become more confident after lockdowns.

Wes Porch

Endeavour Hills Uniting Church

10 Years for Cranbourne Food Truck

The Cranbourne Food Truck, operated by Cranbourne Uniting Church, provides free food and fellowship to the needy and disadvantaged of Cranbourne. Tables and chairs are set out, and a hot dinner is served. Hot and cold drinks are also available. Volunteers also give out small food parcels of non-perishable goods, along with fresh fruit and vegetables, and some toiletry items. The Truck operates on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights from 6.30 to 8 pm and is staffed by volunteers.

On Sunday 27th March, Cranbourne Uniting Church held a service of thanksgiving to celebrate ten years of serving the community through the Cranbourne Food Truck. The service was led by the Rev Paul Dau, the Rev Tony Duncan and Chris Marsh.

Sharon Start's leadership of music was supported by Rev Wendy Snook on guitar, and Roy Snook on keyboard. Wendy was in placement at Cranbourne at the time of the inauguration of the Food Truck and was very involved in getting it off the ground. Her husband Roy is still very much involved with the maintenance and upkeep of the truck and is a valuable asset.



Tony Duncan interviews Peter Kreun

Peter Kreun talked about his original vision and how proud he is that the Truck is providing community support in Cranbourne. Chris Begg from Toorak Uniting Church told how his late wife Patrica became involved with the Truck and encouraged TUC to take it on as one of its mission projects. Gordon Manks, an original committee member, told of his experiences as a driver for the truck. Pam Thoonen, one of the first people to volunteer for the truck, told how she was inspired by Peter Kreun to join the team.

Morning tea and fellowship followed the service with Peter Kreun cutting the celebration cake.

*Christine Marsh
Cranbourne Uniting Church*



Vale Duncan Greensmith

Duncan Greensmith, a member of St David's Uniting Church, Oakleigh, died on Friday 8th October, 2021, 98 years young. The congregation held a commemoration of his life on 27 February, 2022, giving time to collate a book of memories and meet with fewer COVID restrictions. Here Faye Sanderson reflects on the significance of Duncan's life.

Duncan was married to Yvonne in 1945 with Rev Bill Morgan officiating. They moved to Chadstone where Duncan built the family home. They welcomed four children into the family. All the members of the family were very active in the Oakleigh congregation – one of his daughters even found her future husband at the local church.

In recent times Yvonne and Duncan moved to Nangare Independent Living Units in Burwood but still returned to St David's for worship and fellowship. They enjoyed 66 years of marriage before Yvonne passed away in 2012 after a battle with Alzheimer's.

Duncan started with the Presbyterian Church but in his early adult years moved to the Methodists. He became a Methodist Lay Preacher and was still preaching services up until the last few years – stopped more by his decreasing eyesight than the ability to stand up and preach with no notes!

Duncan was always supportive of others taking up further theological studies – lay preaching or even conducting services at St David's.

Most of us know Duncan from Union onwards. He was involved in the early discussions about amalgamating congregations across denominations and was also the first Chair of the Presbytery of Nepean – the only lay Chair in the UCA at that time.

In the early 1990s Duncan was a founding member of the UCA Parish of Balkara Church Council and later became its Chair. He held this position for many years. Many would seek his wise counsel both within the Parish and wider afield across the Synod. Using his skills and knowledge gained from his professional life, Duncan applied his experience to helping the administration of the church.

When Balkara was formed, the Parish looked at its mission directions and soon we had a Cook Islands Ekalesia meeting at Clayton and a Tamil Fellowship



Duncan Arnold Greensmith 21st April, 1923 – 8th October, 2021

at Oakleigh. Both expressed a desire to be formally recognised by the UCA. Unfortunately, the first attempt for the Tamils was unsuccessful but Duncan and others took to the task of approaching Presbytery members and encouraging them to be open to change and to other cultures. The second request was accepted. When Balkara returned to Presbytery with the request from the Cook Islands congregation, it was accepted immediately as the wider church could see what was being created. Duncan was very supportive of the two cultures and instrumental in encouraging the Parish to secure BOMAR Funding to allow a fulltime minister to be called to each congregation. He also supported the Oromo Fellowship that Synod placed at Huntingdale until they moved to another location.

Duncan and Yvonne were also involved in the Bread Run that ran for many years and helped the local Community Information and Assistance Service (CSIS). Duncan did have one "fault" though depending on one's allegiance - he supported the Richmond Tigers!

Duncan will be missed by many people from every walk of life. He touched many of us deeply.

Well done, good and faithful servant.

*Faye Sanderson
Balkara Parish Secretary*



Feeling thankful @Sandringham UCA

In March this year, Sandringham Uniting Church members hosted a farewell morning tea to thank Andrea Mayes for her supply ministry during a difficult period of lockdowns and uncertainty. During her 12-month term the refurbished church was completed and Andrea proved her skills on Ebay as she was able to sell pews, old furniture and odd bits and pieces!

Thanks to the skill of the local Men's Shed a beautiful cross was made using wood from one of the pews. The cross is now in place within the worship area. As the property is leased from Mercy Health the Church Council is grateful for the support of Rob McCarthy in maintenance issues. It is truly an ecumenical partnership.

Shirley Martin

Secretary, Sandringham Uniting Church



Handmade cross made by Mens Shed for Sandringham UCA



Members from Creative Ministries Network Congregation.

Photo John Bottomley

Hypocrisy called out

The Creative Ministries Network Congregation first discussed their concern about the hypocrisy of some politicians on public policy related to COVID-19. More recently the Prime Minister has been accused of hypocrisy by other politicians and political commentators. Members suggests the biblical understanding of hypocrisy has a deep meaning for which Scott Morrison, as a self-proclaimed Christian, should be held to account in the public square. To address this concern, the CMN congregation has prepared a call for accountability, on their website:

<http://creative.unitingchurch.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Statement-on-PMs-accountability-for-hypocrisy.pdf>

Reaching Goals

Barry Schofield tells us that St Leonard's Brighton Beach has just reached in excess of \$14,000 with its Coffee Cup Challenge/ Pancake Day appeal for the homeless. This is a record amount, the fifth in a row since they started this appeal five years ago, making a total of over \$60,000. The Coffee Cup Challenge finished on Sunday the 1st of May, which is later than usual because of Covid restrictions.

The next Coffee Cup Challenge starts on World Coffee Day the 1st of October 2022, and will finish on Pancake Day the 1st of March, 2023.



Fellowship: Eat, Drink, Together.

Anneke Oppewal, Presbytery Minister: Pastoral Care, reflects on our theme of food. Anneke explains the importance of food and fellowship to being the church. If we didn't have an opportunity to go to worship somewhere on Sunday morning, what would we do? Where would we eat together?



Years ago one of the members of my then congregation told me that she really appreciated how I kept worship on Sunday morning within the hour and interesting enough for her to feel that she hadn't wasted her time getting to the highlight of her week: morning tea with her friends after. She meant it as a compliment. And proceeded to tell me about predecessors who had not been as engaging, or even worse, had taken the service regularly beyond the one hour she was prepared to give it.

I spend hours preparing worship, choosing the hymns, writing the prayers and am still, after 40 years in the pulpit, so stomach clenchingly nervous on a Sunday morning that I can't eat breakfast. I'm hungry by the time we get to morning tea – and exhausted – and not half as engaged in morning tea as I would want to be because I struggle to get my brain into 'social' gear.

I've always remembered that comment as a friendly reminder that community and fellowship, tea, coffee, Arnotts biscuits and a piece of slice if you're lucky, are a fundamental part of what it means to be Church. I think Jesus understood that long before I did.

The New Testament doesn't talk much about worship and liturgy, about orders of service and hymn books, Church buildings or Church music. It talks a lot about food. Food in people's homes, picnics on the beach or on the hills somewhere, lavish dinners and impromptu sharing, meals structured by tradition and meals completely unstructured and breaking every social convention.

Bread, wine, fish, more wine, a fatted calf, manna from heaven, unleavened bread, water and, let's change that into... more wine.

The Hebrew scriptures also speak of food at every turn, in the wilderness, at home, with friends, with God, with all the nations on a Mountain, the day before fleeing oppression, and the day after the return from Exile.

It is there where people hear and tell the stories, it is there they meet God, it is there where they receive nurture that satisfies more than their physical needs.

Think about it! If we closed all Church buildings and we didn't have any opportunity to go to worship somewhere on Sunday morning, what would we do? We would do what people of faith, Christian or otherwise have always done, everywhere. We would gather in each other's homes, we would gather on the beach or on the hills, we would come together in cafes, upper rooms, backrooms, living rooms and we would share and reflect, and sing a few songs perhaps, and say a prayer, but most of all we would eat and drink together and as Christians remember especially the one who came and welcomed everyone around the table of love, compassion, peace and healing.

We would share the stories about his body broken and his blood spilt, the story of his abiding presence with us. Everywhere.

*Anneke Oppewal
Presbytery Minister: Pastoral Care
Port Phillip East Presbytery*

Welcome to the Table

Craig Mitchell, Presbytery Minister Church Development with Port Phillip East Presbytery, has a growing passion for cooking, and loves connecting culture, creativity, community and spirit all together. Here he writes about the connections he's finding.

A few years ago in Adelaide I hosted a gathering of lay education staff from across Australia. Our theme became "How does a learning community grow through hospitality?" Each person received a copy of the Moroccan Soup Bar cookbook, produced by Moroccan Soup Bar in Fitzroy North. The restaurant is as famous for its owner Hanna Assafiri as for its wonderful vegetarian food.

On the first night we gathered in the home of Amelia and Terry. We divided into pairs and I gave each pair a recipe from the book to make. Soon eggplants, ginger, onion, tomatoes, chillies and other vegetables were being chopped, herbs and spices measured. An hour and a half later we ate a fabulous meal, each person having contributed, with much conversation, laughter, and skills shared in the process.

Over the week we met for a meal each day at a popular eating place – a café for brunch, a micro-brewery which served food, a beach-side takeaway lunch, dinner at an Afghani family restaurant. Each time we read Acts 2:42-47. We asked ourselves "Why is this place so popular? What do we notice about hospitality? What can we learn from this place about community?" Each day we also read one of Hanna Assafiri's wonderful stories from her cookbook – tales of generosity, crossing boundaries, welcome and gratitude from her restaurant.

We wondered what these place and stories could teach us about the church as a people – where and how we gather, why and with whom.

In Hebrew culture, table hospitality was at the heart of community life. Homes were extended families. There were no restaurants or drive thru Maccas. Households welcomed guests and strangers with food and drink, stories and sharing of wisdom. The meal table was also a place of faith sharing and prayer.

Why are there so many stories about food in the New Testament? Welcome and rejection, clean and unclean, empty stomachs and full baskets go side by side in the gospels and letters.



Mel Perkins, Rohan Pryor, Duncan Macleod, Rob McFarlane, Christopher Walker, and Amelia Koh Butler reflect on hospitality and learning communities.



Guess who's coming to dinner!

Jesus exemplified the hospitality of God's table and the abundance of God's nourishment for our lives.

Food also reflects our faith. In Acts 2 we discover some of the core practices of the early church – prayer, community life, worship, service, teaching, witness. These early churches were household churches where community equalled home hospitality. Guess who's coming to dinner? Gentiles! What do they eat? We can't eat that! Yes we can! In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free. Imagine the motley crew gathered around the table working out how to share in a multicultural community meal. This was the early church across the Mediterranean.

One of the best communal activities that I have ever offered was at our annual intergenerational Interactive Easter at Rosefield Uniting Church in Adelaide. We had a Last Supper Room with twelve seats around a table, adults and children.

The room was dark, candle-lit. Ambient instrumental music was playing along with a silent video loop of the Last Supper from a Jesus movie. The table was full of Middle Eastern food - dried fruit and nuts, dips, flat bread, olives and grapes, bottles of grape juice and wine.



A placemat at the table said "Welcome to this table. Today we remember the night when Jesus met with his friends for a meal. We are Jesus' friends. We invite you to tell each other the story of that supper as you eat."

Some around the table knew the story well, some not at all. Food and drink were shared and the story was retold. The meal became an intimate remembering. People did not want to leave the room.

Food reflects what matters in our culture – in production, preparation, and even as waste. Every meal tells a rich story of a particular people.

As I have learned to love cooking I've become interested in gardening, bringing food production closer to home. I've wanted to learn about the staple foods of cultures and how to make them from scratch. Making tortillas, gyoza wrappers, bao buns, flat bread and pasta by hand takes time. It can also become a kind of spiritual habit, taking time to knead, to let dough rise, to pray.

The irony is that in contemporary Australia, while some ethnic communities retain such traditional shared food habits, for many people on low incomes, buying decent meals for a week is impossible. Most of us lack the skills or time for making basic foods. It costs more to buy a bit of food than to buy in bulk.

Community itself is the pathway to better eating and better living. Food co-operatives. "Grow Free" carts. Free cooking classes. Food banks.

Community is built in gardens and kitchens, around barbecues and dinner tables. The habits of faith are embodied - in spiritual and physical nourishment, in generosity from abundance, in story and laughter, in the grace of inclusion. Taste and see that God is good.

Craig Mitchell

Presbytery Minister: Church Development

Craig blogs on his cooking at craigcooks.com.au and hosts a Facebook group "Craig Cooks" in which members post photographs of their culinary ventures.

Smith's Lane – a place for the whole family

Mat Pendle, until recently the Family and Children's Worker at St Andrew's Berwick, writes about his new hospitality role with Baptist missional community Now and Not Yet, in Smiths Lane, Clyde North.

I have accepted an exciting opportunity to help facilitate community development, not in a 'traditional' way but managing a new café in a new residential estate in Clyde. It is a not-for-profit, social enterprise café that operates for the benefit of the community – where all profits are placed back into the local community to facilitate different relational and social opportunities. This might range from food hampers and family nights to addressing specific practical support needs.

In essence being present and being available allows the chance for meaningful and life enriching relationships to form through the provision of space where people can come together to encourage a unique partnership between local residents, estate developers and social enterprises such as the café which will be called Smith's Social Café.

Property developer Mirvac has joined with the Baptist community of Now and Not Yet to journey with and explore how the cafe can be facilitated with the vision of allowing the local community to be formed and developed in new ways.

In Clyde North, this new residential development is called 'Smith's Lane'. The Smiths Social Cafe building is undergoing construction, but the playground has been completed (with a water play area!). The playground almost flows out of the café – it is a great environment for the whole family.

Prior to my work at St Andrew's, my background for the past 16 years was hospitality. Offering the gift of hospitality echoes throughout history. The table is a wonderful way of breaking bread with our neighbours and the 'table' comes in all shapes and sizes. We can see that hospitality has been offered and received for thousands of years and is beautiful way that we can allow ourselves to take time to develop relationships amid the busyness of 21st century life.



Construction started on Smiths Lane community centre

The outer South-East of Melbourne is in the midst of a population boom, and is one of the fastest growing residential areas in Australia with thousands of people moving to areas around Clyde, Officer, Pakenham and Cranbourne. Communities are being established in areas that have literally been paddocks. Those who live in the area can all see housing estates being built before our eyes.

We are in the middle of an exciting time of development in our own 'backyard'. It offers the opportunity to engage with those who are making a new life with their families.

I encourage Uniting Church communities to think how you can meet people where they are and continue to develop relationships that are genuine.

I'm excited to see how God has been at work long before we have even started to explore what we can do. May God continue to prompt and move your hearts to continue to engage and explore how to create community in new and life-giving ways. Hopefully before too long, we'll be able to sit at a table together and share a cup of coffee!

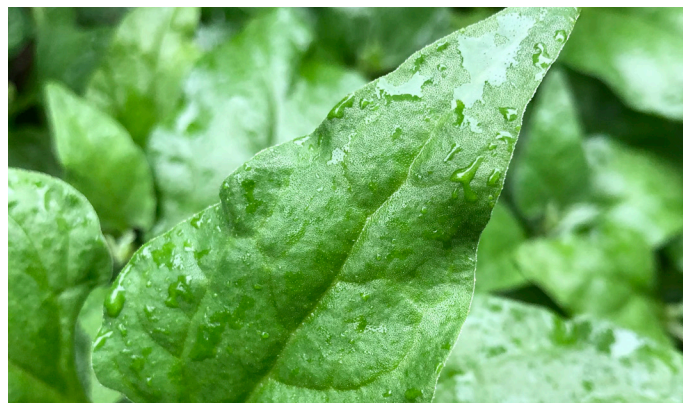
Mat Pendle
Cafe Manager & Place Maker



Artist's rendition of Smiths Social Cafe

Indigenous to our local lands

Mel Perkins, native plant lover and avid gardener in Frankston, asks if we can identify these plants on the right. What type of plant do you think they are?



Indigenous plants, of course! Local Indigenous people would have used these plants in many ways – food, tools (eg. rope), medicine, and so on. Native animals and birds do better when we retain and protect their habitat. And people across the world recognise the amazing properties of Australian bush plants and foods.

So why are people often nervous about growing Australian plants? I think the answer lies in looking at the difference between indigenous plants and native plants. What we call 'native plants' are plants that are native to Australia. Indigenous plants are native plants that are, or were originally, local to your area and its conditions. Just like any plant, native plants grow well in some places and not others. So, it can help to plant those native plants that will thrive in your area and indigenous plants usually do that!

One great plant that is indigenous to parts of Port Phillip East Presbytery is Warrigal Greens (pictured). Originally indigenous to places around Seaford and Brighton, this amazing plant is easy to grow and a tasty, vitamin-packed alternative to spinach. For those who want to try bush foods in their vege patch it makes a great addition. But make sure you keep an eye on it. I have added a plant to my vege patch, and wow! One plant goes a long way, and they respond well to pruning. You can also grow warrigal greens in hanging baskets.

Warrigal Greens produce seeds at the end of summer which can be collected for the next year. Leaves make great pesto. I've tried a version of this recipe, using macadamia nut oil instead. They are very tasty on pizza and go well in quiche. Make sure you blanch the leaves first to remove the high levels of oxalic acid or if using fresh, see here how to prepare leaves.

It is important to note that with indigenous plants, you must obtain good advice before eating any fruit, leaves, or roots. Some are toxic and others are



toxic if eaten at the wrong times or not prepared in the right ways. There are some excellent places for information now – books and some sites on the internet. Many church communities in Port Phillip East Presbytery have a communal garden. How about your church? Do you have indigenous or native plants?

See the helpful links below for information or how to get started!

Some helpful links:

<https://www.organicgardener.com.au/blogs/growing-warrigal-greens>

<https://www.vic.gov.au/our-10-diy-hacks-make-your-garden-wildlife-haven>

<https://gardensforwildlifevictoria.com>

<https://gardensforwildlifevictoria.com/affiliates>

<https://shape.mornpen.vic.gov.au/gardens-wildlife>

<https://www.frankston.vic.gov.au/Environment-and-Waste/Environment/Get-Involved/Gardens-for-Wildlife>

Happy gardening!

*Mel Perkins
Lay Leadership Development Coordinator, eLM
(equipping Leaders for Mission),
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania*

Mt Waverley Easter – Three Women in the garden

Mount Waverley Uniting Church (formerly High Street Road and St John's) held a very special Easter Day Service and Fellowship BBQ.

The Easter service built on the theme of “Three Women in a Garden.” Instead of receiving a celebratory greeting of “Christ has Risen”, people entered the worship area to experience dim lighting with solemn music. PowerPoint slides were in presented in greyscale to reflect the uncertainty and darkness the women experienced when arriving at the tomb, not knowing what to expect. The introit was ‘I Believe in the Sun’ by Mark A. Miller, based on a Jewish WWII poem, which expresses hope even when situations are difficult.

I believe in the sun, even when... it's not shining.
I believe in love, even when... I don't feel it.
I believe in God, even when... God is silent.

Two women gave Bible readings from Luke of the death and burial of Jesus to the sounds of Tibetan singing bowls, while a third woman read the account of the resurrection to music which supported the joy of the text. At that point and for the rest of the service, the Power Point presentation changed to colour.

The main focus of the service was a video featuring three women from the congregation who shared their Christian faith journey over many decades. They were interviewed by a young person who has been associated with the congregation all her life. The setting was a glorious autumnal garden belonging to a member of the congregation. You can watch the 13 minute ‘Three Women in a Garden’ video at highstreetroadunitingchurchmountwaverley.org/?p=5178



Three women in a garden: Marion, Lois, and Shirley

Easter Postcards

After the service, people were offered stone crosses, shared in making a floral cross, enjoyed a BBQ together and had their photos taken with a choice of Easter backgrounds. Promoting their Easter Postcards.

A day of great celebration for the new church.

Shirley White
Church Office Secretary
Mount Waverley Uniting Church



Rev Semisi, Joshua, & Lesieli Tauali'i



Paul Kirton, Congregation Chair at Mt Waverley Uniting Church



Steve & Shirley White



Port Phillip East Presbytery on May 1 gathered at Endeavour Hills Uniting Church to ordain Andrea Mayes as a Deacon. Presbytery Chairperson Dr Tom Spurling presided and Rev Deacon Mat Harry preached a wonderful message. Andrea spoke of her journey and call to ordained ministry. The music was led by the great local musicians.

Pictured with Andrea are Cheryl Doddrell, Joan Wright, Tom Spurling, Fiona Winn, Mike You, Ineke Gyles and Matt Harry. Photo by Kevin Kim. The video will be available shortly in our Presbytery Youtube channel.



Godly Play Core Training Parkville 11th May-13 May

Godly Play is the result of a lifetime of research and practice by theologian, author and educator The Rev. Dr. Jerome Berryman, the Godly Play® method is a curriculum of spiritual practice exploring the mystery of God's presence in our lives. Godly Play is a creative, imaginative approach to Christian formation and spiritual guidance based on the Montessori method of teaching and learning.

For more information e-mail

judythroberts@gmail.com

Mother's Day Prayer

God be with the mother
who sits long nights beside those who cannot sleep
who holds in aching arms the hurting child
who carries in her heart the burden of care and worry
And comforts without words

God be with the mother
who listens and does not judge
who forgives and bears no grudge
who opens the door to her heart
no matter what the cost

God be with the mother
Grant freedom from anxiety
Grant peace and understanding
Give hope and perseverance
Give patience and unlimited grace

God be with the child
who enters an exciting world
who has much to learn
who has much to share
who is becoming

God be with the child
who looks up to the mother
who takes in all the mother does
who learns from the wisdom shown
who has boundaries to learn and stretch

God be with the child
Grant freedom from anxiety
Grant peace and understanding
Give hope and perseverance
Give patience and unlimited grace

God be with us all
May we learn to be all that we can be
May our respect be always there
May our gratitude be endless
May we love and be loved
May this all be in the name of Christ
Amen

*Adapted by Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide,
from "God Be With The Mother", by Michael Leunig.*

Feasting with colour in Clayton

Clayton Cook Islands Uniting Church in April hosted a fundraising team from Ekalesia Sydney, a Cook Island Christian Church congregation who meet in Bidwill, Sydney. The team was able to raise \$84,000 over three days as they visited CICC congregations across Melbourne. At the heart of the fundraising experience was the feast – food, singing, dancing, drumming.

A lot of work is put into preparing food together. Taro, kumara, banana, yams, pork, are cooked in hangi or umu (underground ovens), in barrels or on spits. Poke is a classic Cook Island dessert of cooked bananas mixed with milk, thickened with arrowroot, and sweetened with sugar. Ika mata is raw fish, usually tuna fillet, marinated in a mixture of lime (or lemon) and coconut milk and garnished with raw vegetables. And then there's the seafood, including mussels and oysters.

The feast is given even more colour with attention paid to fabric. Pareu (wrap around cloths) and tivaevae (quilts) are spread around the walls of the hall or marquee and given as gifts. Ei, flower garlands, and strings of beads, are worn as hats, scarves and necklaces. This is in contrast to the white clothes worn to worship services.

Papa Toko Ongoua, minister with the Clayton congregation, was ordained with the Cook Island Christian Church and has served in the Cook Islands, Tahiti and Aotearoa New Zealand. He is the chairperson for the eight CICC churches in Victoria for 2022. Every morning he leads a Bible study on Facebook, starting at 6 am, in Cook Island Maori language.



Papa James Aporo from Sydney (left), Papa Toko Ongoua, Tangimama Tangimama, new Clayton Secretary (right)



Drummers on the wooden drums known as "pate".

A recipe for making ika mata

400 grams fresh raw fish

4 lemons or 6 limes, juiced

1/2 cup coconut cream

1/2 cup red capsicum

1 cup cucumber

1/4 cup red onion

1 tsp salt (or to taste)

Cut fresh fish into regular cubes, cover with lime or lemon juice and set aside for at least one hour. Drain the juice. Add cubed and sliced red capsicum, cucumber and red onion and then the coconut cream. Season with salt and refrigerate until serving. You can add tomato, and garnishes such as fresh coriander and chillies. Ika mata can be eaten as a main dish or as a refreshing starter.



Guests from Cook Island Christian Church congregations

Share your stories

Thank you for participating and sharing your story with Port Philip East Presbytery.

We have another great month of local stories. As you all continue to share what is happening in and around your local communities, we proactively take part in building up the body of Christ.

Let's continue the good work. Stories of success, and also the challenges that you and your congregation face, play an inspiring role in our monthly Newsbeat. So we encourage you to please get in contact with Newsbeat editor Sarah Manase and share something for the coming month's edition.

We aim to have Newsbeat out in the first week 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
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Volunteers for 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 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.

For further information or to express your interest contact Sarah Manase

Administrative Assistant, Synod Coordinator
sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au
or phone (03) 9116 1963.



Uniting in prayer for May

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.

May 1	Clayton Cook Island Uniting congregation, minister Toko Ongoua, see page 14 St David's Oakleigh congregation, minister Peter Wiltshire, chair Pat Murnane
May 8	The Assembly, President Sharon Hollis, General Secretary Colleen Geyer Coatesville congregation, minister Graham Bartley, chair Richard Palmer
May 15	Cranbourne congregation, supply minister Paul Dau, chair Tony Duncan, see page 4 Creative Ministries Network, John Bottomley, chair Linda Hoskins
May 22	Dandenong congregations Trinity & Lewa Tolu Vakalou minister Berlin Guerrero, chairs Ian Spencer & Nigel Bitu
May 29	Endeavour Hills congregation, minister Mike You, chair Wes Porch, see pages 2-3

A PRAYER POST EASTER

*Bread, wine,
a plate and a cup
lifted high and shared
slices of mothers pride
cut in bite size pieces
accompanied by a thimble of
reconstituted grape juice
or pickings from a loaf of freshly
baked sourdough bread
with communion wine
dark and strong
from a cup that does not empty.*

*Food to remember -
a meal that shows us
who we are to be
people that give of themselves
breaking their teeth on the
realities of life
feeding others from what
they themselves received.*

*God we come
stiff necked and determined
clashing, wounded and scarred
shouldering burdens
that you would take from us
if only we would
let go of the load
we consider ours to carry.*

*You come, in Christ,
looking for us
longing for a chat
over morning tea
or a deep philosophical conversation
after supper*

*You come, as Spirit
among us healing what is broken
lightening the load
or
if we let you,
take it from us all together*

*Post Easter we pray
that you would resurrect in us
love and faith
that may have died
in the ravages of life
and show us
how to dance to your tune
joyful and triumphant*

*We are yours
carrying a new dawn
within us
that is waiting to
break into song.*

by Anneke Oppewal



The Presbytery office is at 1 Allan St, Noble Park.



03 9558 4710



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Email stories for Newsbeat to comms-officer@ucappep.org



Dementia Workshop

New Trends in Aged Care

*Workshop on Uniting St Mark's
Adult Day Care program*

@ Mt Waverley Uniting Church

37 Virginia St Mt Waverley

Friday 3rd June 1.30-3pm

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

Ros Grant will talk about Care Guidance, a not-for-profit organisation who help people to find respite / permanent care facility.

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

Register your attendance with Margery Kennett

03 9807 4084 or via email on mbkennett@bigpond.com

A gold coin donation for Dementia Australia would be appreciated.

