

Newsbeat

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



JUNE HEADLINES

ELSTERNWICK

FRANKSTON

GARDINER

CORNISH COLLEGE
MEMORIAL GARDEN

OVERVIEW OF
16TH NATIONAL
ASSEMBLY

PENTECOST
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BREATH OF LIFE

MEET 3 PPEP
MEMBERS OFF
TO SYNOD 2022

JUNE 2022 ISSUE



Photograph by Kim Cain, St Leonard's Brighton Beach

Port Phillip East Presbytery's WHAT'S HAPPENING

An insight into what congregations,
schools & members are doing

Through Thick & Thin in Elsternwick

Michael Forbes writes about how St John's Elsternwick has managed to be diverse from the 1990s to now, and how the last two years have created opportunities for community partnerships.

St John's Elsternwick as it stands today at 567 Glenhuntly Road Elsternwick is an amalgam of four local congregations which came together back in the 1990s.

St John's has been fortunate to have had several ministers and many long serving lay members who have collectively ensured that it has remained an active, outward looking church in the local communities of Elsternwick and Caulfield South in particular.

In 2015 St John's formalised its statements of mission and vision and core values which remain relevant to the present day. They are set out in the About Us section of our website at elsternwick.unitingchurch.org.au

The past two years dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic have significantly restricted our ability to maintain our previous broad range of congregational and outreach activities which we hope to slowly re-introduce.

Regular activities and initiatives dormant over this two year period include:

- A weekly cuppa and chat gathering open to the broader community;
- Weekend prayer group;
- A monthly Sunday Night Live alternative version of 'church' focused on sharing a meal and conversation about memories, ideas and other things meaningful to participants;



St John's Elsternwick members making a stand on climate change.



St John's Elsternwick Friday Friends



St John's Elsternwick Mini Fete

- Monthly Friday Friends social program including local theatre performances, dinners at local cafes, and shared meals with our special guest speakers; and
- A Side Door social justice group meeting monthly, and an annual social justice lunch fundraiser with a special guest speaker on a specific social justice issue.

The COVID-19 period has followed on closely after the retirement of our most recent full-time minister, Reverend Philip Liebelt in November 2019. We have been grateful as a congregation for the supply ministry provided to the current day by the Reverend Lynette Dungan and Karel Reus.

Our worship services have included both individual in-home worship following step-by-step services set out in weekly pastoral letters from the minister to the congregation and online Zoom gatherings, where in-church services were not possible.

In addition to the worship services and pastoral care provided by the supply ministers and elders in our congregation, we have:

- managed to keep our Op Shop at 302 Glenhuntly Road, Elsternwick up and running;
- strengthened our relationship with two local community organisations – Caulfield South Community House and Elsternwick Toddlers Playgroup;
- made improvements to properties under our stewardship to further improve their amenity for lessees and hirers;

- worked closely with Synod Property Services and Port Phillip East Presbytery to sell one of the properties under our stewardship under the Uniting Church's Money for Mission Fund arrangements;
- extended the Jack Campbell Memorial Peace Garden theme to a large prominent tree at the front of our church to enable passers-by to leave their own message of peace and hope tied to the tree;
- participated in the Faiths 4 Climate Justice global action in October 2021; and
- conducted half-yearly mini fetes in partnership with Caulfield Garden Club.

In recent months we have begun to further explore possibilities for stronger partnerships with neighbouring UC congregations and with Uniting VicTas, with the support of Port Phillip East Presbytery.

With our congregation numbers slowly reducing (as is common we understand across many other Uniting Church congregations and other denominations), we believe our future is linked to building partnerships with other Uniting Church entities and with community groups in the Glen Eira and surrounding municipalities who share similar or complementary values with ourselves.

We aim to continue to engage with our broader community to ensure we have something to offer which is valued by people living in the community.

Michael Forbes
Secretary
St John's Elsternwick

Thank you and Farewell David

David Fotheringham was farewelled on Sunday 15th March by his congregation at High St, Frankston Uniting Church, to move onto his new role as Moderator for Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. Ross Huggard wrote this piece in honour of David's time in Frankston.



Sunday 15 May was indeed a momentous day in the life of the High St UC Frankston family, as we bravely farewelled our much-loved and respected minister, David Fotheringham, along with his wife Robyn.

After six wonderful years in our midst, he is now preparing to undertake his next role as Moderator of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

In his time with us, David revealed his exceptional capacity to listen intently to the needs and concerns of others, to resist making hasty and ill-informed decisions, and to enact Christ's love to each and everyone of us. We were nurtured, supported and upheld by him.

David truly ministered to our needs, whilst still ensuring that we had been encouraged to grow spiritually as individuals and as a congregation. Through all of this, his customary and trademark fruity laugh reminded each one of us of his warmth, care and humanity as God's loved and cherished people.



David and Robyn with their congregation, High Street Frankston UC

Several special gifts were presented. We gave David a personally embossed leather compendium, suitable for his new important role as Moderator. We also provided him with a new Uniting Church stole, specially designed and embroidered with images of our church overlooking the bay. This will remind David of his connections with our congregation. We look forward to welcoming him back as Moderator to preach!

Rev Anneke Oppewal marked the conclusion of David's role as Minister with Frankston Uniting Church, in a formal 'releasing of ties'.

The large assembled congregation, through tears, emotionally sang 'May the feet of God go with you' and appropriately concluded with the song 'Shalom to you now'.

We made a tribute to David using an acrostic based on the first letters of his name, laid out on the next page.



Ross Huggard presents a tribute to David Fotheringham



Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal leads a release of pastoral ties service

Dedicated to your sense of spiritual guidance and determined to proffer the cumulative wisdom and insights gleaned from the Bible. For most ministers, one of the most challenging aspects of their role is to develop and present a weekly sermon which enlivens and prompts reflection, if not action- as opposed to numbing their congregation.

Your sermons David so naturally and powerfully weave in the realities of the moment- whether this be natural disasters in East Gippsland or northern NSW or Fiji or Samoa, or climate change, or real acknowledgement and support for our First Nations people or the ongoing challenges presented by the pandemic or the victims of Putin's drive into Ukraine – and reveal the potency and undiminished relevance of Christ's words and advice. These have been special spiritual gifts to each of us, based on your own devotion to our shared Lord.



Astute in your assessments of situations, accomplished as an administrator and approachable in the advice and leadership offered to key groups including Church Council and the Ministry Team. David, you have approached the challenges and issues which have inevitably faced us with consideration, a desire to garner all the facts and due deliberation. These skills will surely be well used in your role as Moderator!

Visionary in your sense of potential ways for our congregation to operate and to extend outreach into the community, as shown in our rapid and seamless transition to Zoom services and the establishment of our Friday Playgroup and Social Justice Group. You have readily explored opportunities and means by which we might operate more effectively and in new ways.

Initiative apparent in overseeing the development of a COVID-Safety oversight group and continually revisiting rules and requirements. As a congregation we were always ready to as seamlessly as possible transition to the next stage of set of governmental rules or Synod advice. Industry and intense input in managing a diverse and very considerable workload. Balancing the requirements of being a father, largely alone, with two teenage sons. At a distance, managing key external Synod committees and expectations and the shifting needs within our own church.

Devoted to sharing, celebrating and extolling God's love for each of us in so many special and memorable ways. As you have reminded us and urged us to reveal such love: rejoice and be gentle!

*Ross Huggard,
Chairperson: Church Council
High Street Frankston Uniting Church*



Breath of Life

Bill Pugh, a writer and retired minister from Leighmoor Uniting Church, reflects on the connection between our experience of the Holy Spirit and our ability to breathe in the fresh air.

Bill writes a regular column for PewSheets, hosted on the Synod website,

victas.uca.org.au/resources/pew-sheets-worship

God walked in the garden in the cool of the day at the time of the evening breeze. A busy God needed a quiet walk, a refreshing breeze.

How on hot summer days we long for a cool, refreshing breeze. Breath, wind, spirit, breeze, are fundamental to human life. Wind drives the scudding clouds and changes the seasons.

There is another breeze which blows, significant in the Bible story. On the day called Pentecost it blew mightily on the gathered friends of Jesus, like a rushing mighty wind which brought new strength and empowerment to proclaim the resurrection.

So the Church was born. They proclaimed his message as they travelled the Mediterranean world.

News of this new faith was received by the scholars and philosophers.

In Athens, Paul was invited to address them on Areopagus Hill, the meeting place. He spoke about the many statues to gods he saw in the city, even an altar to the Unknown God.

Paul said this confusion was unnecessary. The real God is revealed and known through his only son Jesus, cruelly condemned, crucified and raised to life on the third day.

He is the Risen one whom they proclaim. At the mention of resurrection, the council were furious, dismissing him by saying, “we will hear you again on this matter”.

The Speaker of the House, as we would call him today, adjourned the debate with no fixed arrangement.

The old prayer reminds us to be “deeply conscious of the shortness and uncertainty of human life”.

Shortness of breath and physical incapacity underline our vulnerability.

More than ever do I value the ability to breathe into my lungs good, clean air. The gift of life renewed every day. And later to sense the calm and peace which comes at the time of the evening breeze.

William (Bill) Pugh



Pentecost miracle of communication



Each of them heard them speaking in the native language of each.

Acts 2:6

Anneke Oppewal, Presbytery Minister: Pastoral, reflects on the connection between Pentecost and our intercultural experience of being the church.

Someone famous once said (and I really don't know who), that the second and the third person in any movement are much more important than the first. The person with the idea, who speaks, lives and incarnates a dream first, is not half as important as the person who picks it up and hands it on, acts on it and makes it work into the future.

In that sense Christianity started not with Jesus, but with the disciples picking up the ideas that took shape in the living and dying of one Jesus of Nazareth, carrying them with them, and giving them shape and meaning in their lives and community.

In that sense Christianity only gets underway at the moment the followers Jesus had gathered around him in his lifetime decide not to go home but to go on.

Learning a few languages is the first thing they do and those of us who have experience with that will know that to really be able to talk heart to heart with someone in an acquired language involves more than learning the words and a bit of grammar.

It helps when you also learn the culture, the context, the background, the history, the customs and traditions, the dos and don'ts the other person is functioning in. You need to learn to let go of your own mindset and create space to enable yourself to step into theirs.

Having lived and functioned in another language for over thirty years now I can tell you that even that is not enough. There will always remain a gap where I don't know what you know and you don't understand what I can or cannot understand when we exchange words. There is a lot more going on. Even if we are speaking the same language, and come from the seemingly same cultural background, there is still a lot of room for misunderstandings.

That's where the Spirit comes in. Because where people communicate, a miracle needs to happen. Not only the words, not only an open mind and an open heart, but more is needed for a connection to spark and creativity to be stirred up before communication can transform those who participate in it into a relationship where love, peace, justice and grace start to flow. Not only between the participants but to everyone around them as well.

And that is what Pentecost is. God's Spirit, added to the mix, creating more than communication, more than an exchange of words. The Spirit creating gospel, Kin-dom, a coming together across boundaries. Godself entering the mix in what happens between people, inviting them onto the path that Jesus walked, to give shape to his life wherever they might be.

Anneke Oppewal

Meet three PPEP Members going to Synod

With Synod just around the corner, members are getting prepared for our Synod's 18-monthly meeting
30th June - 3rd July 2022

I am looking forward to being able to come together and intentionally take the time to look at the direction we are called to be stepping toward as a church. I love the chance to connect together with our UCA community from all across Victoria and Tasmania.

*I'm Kelly, living on the lands of the **Boon Wurrung People** of the Kulin Nation*



Kelly Skilton
Murrumbeena Uniting Church
Convenor of Mission Leadership Development Committee



Rev Deacon Andrea Mayes
Heatherton Dingley Uniting Church

I love how Synod respects people's different opinions as part of the consensus decision making process.

*I'm Andrea, from the land of the **Wurundjeri People** of the Kulin Nation*



Barbara Shying
Black Rock Uniting Church

For me, Synod meetings are an opportunity to listen, learn and have a role in shaping the Synod's future directions.

*I'm Barbara, living on the lands of the **Boonwurrung people** of the Kulin Nation*

Overview of the 16th National Assembly

The recent reconvened UCA's 16th National Assembly was held on the Sunshine Coast in Queensland from 6-9 May. It was a wonderful turn out. We had around 45 members from the VicTas Synod along with a number of Synod Ministries and Operations staff. There wasn't much evidence of sunshine, but there was worship, conversation, music, discussion and debate. The theme, chosen by National President Rev Sharon Hollis (below), was **Dwelling in Love**, and in the opening service, a major component was the recommitment to the Uniting Church's Covenant with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Conference.

Mark Lawrence

General Secretary, Synod of Victoria & Tasmania



**Mark Kickett, interim chair of UAICC,
with UCA President Sharon Hollis.**

What I'd heard beforehand was confirmed, that I was there not as a delegate, who represents my own church or my presbytery, but as an individual **member of the national council**. Although I'd heard and read about it, this understanding was well demonstrated by many other individual members through sharing of their own views on different issues as well as responding to them. This truly was the highlight for me, and made me proud of being part of the UCA. Being able to interact and fellowship with other members of the Church was a highlight.

Rev. Han Song

Korean Church of Melbourne



We are the church, all of us, and to take opportunity to shape this church reminds me how valuable it is that voice and space is set aside to listen, discern and set new ways of moving forward. One important step was **renewing the Covenant** with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). It was a time of both a celebration of this important commitment, and a time of confession for the ways we have not honoured or lived up to the vision of the Covenant. Renewing the Covenant was powerful and deeply meaningful for me, as in 1985 (when we first covenanted) I was not yet born. This covenant is a core part of the DNA of the Uniting Church, and in its renewal we are reminded that it will remain a core part of our DNA as we listen, discern and set new ways of moving forward.

Kelly Skilton

*Murrumbidgee Uniting Church,
Convenor of Mission Leadership
Development Committee*



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Attending Synod was a great opportunity for me to experience the decision making and what UCA recently has focused on, and what the UCA has been concerned about or interested in. I love the theme, "Dwelling in Love". I personally felt I *was* dwelling in love. I witnessed warm welcoming, respect and minds open to differences in discussion and discerning, listening to various voices.

Various proposals were impressive, especially the moving to being a **truly intercultural church**. Congregations might celebrate Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday on the 3rd Sunday in July or another date best suited to the local setting. It is a great step forward for the intercultural church.

Afterwards, I personally felt the UCA is still alive, struggling in diverse contexts, and we are going in the right direction. I believe God will lead and use the UCA. Praise the Lord.

Rev. Mike You

Endeavour Hills Uniting Church



If you're interested in learning more about the national church and what happened at the recent Assembly meeting, click on this link:

<https://uniting.church/16thassembly>





St Andrew's Gardiner celebrates together

St Andrew's Gardiner is a congregation of about 250 members. Most members are from the Indonesian community. Rosalie Whalen and Monica Jo wrote these articles as the congregation celebrated 37 years since the Indonesian congregation started in Mulgrave.

Our bluestone church building was originally built in Carlton in 1851 for a Gaelic speaking Presbyterian congregation which seated 1200 people and was called St. Andrew's. It had a bell tower with a clock made in Scotland in 1855. The clock was originally intended for the Melbourne Town Hall however it had only three dials instead of four, so it was installed in this Gaelic Church.

In 1938 the church building was moved to Gardiner for the use of a young growing Presbyterian congregation on the corner of Burke and Malvern Roads. This congregation had been worshipping together since 1911 and had moved to a wooden church on the site in 1913.

The Gaelic Church in Carlton was demolished and every stone numbered for re-erection on this site in Gardiner. A smaller church was built to seat 300 people and the extra stones were used for the surrounding fence structure. The clock was relocated in the new bell tower and all was complete for the opening service in 1940.

In 1977 the congregation became a Uniting Church, with most Presbyterians, Methodists and Congregationalists banding together in our area to adopt our church as their place of worship.

Indonesian Congregation begins

In 1984, six Indonesian families began meeting together, led by Rev Barnabas Ong. Permission was granted for them to worship at the Wanda Street church in Mulgrave, and they became part of the Uniting Church in Australia. Their first service took place on 5 May 1985. Mulgrave Uniting Church Indonesian Congregation (MUC-IC) was born. In 1986 the Sunday School was established and in 1988 the Indonesian speaking youth fellowship (MYF) was established in Wesley Uniting Church in Box Hill, catering for students living in Melbourne. By 2006 this Service evolved into a contemporary English service catering to the needs of the second generation of young worshippers. Rev Benyamin Susilo commenced his ministry with us as Senior Pastor in 1995.

All together on one site in Gardiner

In 2014, our present minister, Rev. Ayub Yahya commenced his ministry as a senior pastor of MUCIC. It became important for the whole Indonesian congregation to be able to worship together on the one site.

The congregation at St. Andrew's Gardiner had dwindled in numbers which opened the opportunity for our Indonesian congregation to adopt the church site as our spiritual home.

Our first service took place there on 15 May 2016. A few of the former congregation chose to worship with us and we cater for them with a translated service. A service in English occurs every second week.

MUCIC became SAGUC (St. Andrews Gardiner Uniting Church). We were able to make full use of all the facilities to operate the Sunday School and youth groups along with choir, Family Life Group and Bible study.

(continued on page 11)



In 2020 Covid-19 struck and church had to be celebrated online. Sunday School, Teens Class and Family Life Group all changed to Zoom.

While 2020 – 2022 has been a quite challenging journey for most of us, God has always been faithful. By the grace of God, we are able to celebrate our 37th anniversary on site.

Our theme is “Ordinary People, Unordinary Lives, Extraordinary God”.

It is indeed a beautiful celebration of our Extraordinary God whereby we can reflect on the journey from 37 years ago, and worship together as one congregation again. The event was then followed by an Indonesian food bazaar whereby people could laugh, eat, connect and share life with each other again. Whatever the future holds, we are reminded that though we are all ordinary people, we truly have an extraordinary God and nothing can defeat our God (Isaiah 54:7)

Rosalie Whalen and Monica Jo

Memories at St Andrew's Gardiner

I was born in 1940, the same year that St. Andrew's Church was built. I attended Sunday School along with my sister who was nine years older than me. My parents were believers but did not attend church.

I remember the Sunday School classes being strictly segregated, boys and girls. We had little books and each week we were given a religious sticker to attach to the appropriate page and Awards in the form of books were given every year to those who were regular attenders. (I failed to receive one).

A lot of effort went into celebrating the Church Anniversary, the Harvest Festival and Christmas Nativity each year with children's choirs and much practise and preparation.

Sunday School picnics were a great event and an old furniture van with seats, laden to the brim with kids and carers, served as transport to the beach or the mountains for the day.

I have lived my whole life in the area, except for brief periods away, and have been an active member of the congregation, serving on the Church Council for many years.

I was in charge of fund-raising and also on the Board of Management of the Gardiner Retirement Lodge, which comprises 40 independent units and was constructed on the former site of a Methodist Church in Burke Road. This was a combined project between the local Anglican and Uniting churches.

Over the years it has been sad to see our congregation age and dwindle but now that the Indonesian Church has arrived, I feel a sense of renewal and find them to be so genuinely friendly and devoutly Christian. I thoroughly enjoy our church service under the leadership of Rev Ayub. He puts so much effort into every Sunday. Our pianists are so talented along with our choir and musical leadership.

Every week I look forward to worshipping at St Andrew's and I thank my fellow members for their kindness.

Rosalie Whalen



Cornish College dedicates memorial garden

Dennis Freeman, Community Relations Manager at Cornish College, writes about the establishment of a memorial garden, launched in association with ANZAC Day.

The Cornish College ANZAC commemoration this year was a very special and significant one, as we were able to join together as a whole school community at the site of our Memorial Garden. This is a place where we, as a College, will come together to remember on these special days. In 2022 we are celebrating our 10 Year Anniversary and the establishment of this garden will be a wonderful and lasting legacy for future generations of Cornish students and families.

In the garden we are commissioning a physical memorial and acknowledge the support of the Department of Veterans Affairs who provided a grant for its construction. We were also thrilled to receive support from Legacy, who have given us a Lone Pine tree and Gallipoli Oak tree.

We were honoured to have David Hale from Legacy and Legatee John Bitcon from the Lone Pine Program share in this important and historic commemoration with us, who in turn were grateful to see our students, 'the young people [who] represent the future of our great country'.

They shared the story of the Battle of Lone Pine, fought on a ridge of high ground known as Plateau 400 on the Gallipoli Peninsula in Turkey during the First World War. All the pine trees on this ridge had been cut down by Turkish soldiers and used for camouflage or to line their trenches, except for one, prominent one. On 6 August 1915 and for the days that followed, this single Turkish pine tree witnessed Australian and New Zealand troops attempting to gain control of the Turkish trenches and with that witnessed the loss of thousands of lives.

The Turkish pine tree on this ridge, now known as Lone Pine, was sadly destroyed by artillery shells during the war.

Private Keith McDowell from Wonthaggi, Victoria, had the foresight to souvenir a cone from the 'Lone Pine' and carried it in his haversack throughout his active service at both Gallipoli and in Northern France until he returned home in 1916.

Upon arriving home, Private McDowell handed the pine cone to his wife's aunt Mrs Emma Gray from near Warrnambool, who he knew to be a keen gardener.

From this single pinecone, Emma was able to successfully propagate four seedlings. Before long each seedling had grown into a magnificent tree, both in beauty and historical significance. In June 1933, she planted one of those four trees at Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance. The tree became a living symbol of the courage and sacrifice displayed by the ANZAC soldiers at the Battle of Lone Pine.

Dennis Freeman



Staff and students with representatives of Legacy and Lone Pine Program plant a pine tree in the Cornish College memorial garden.





How the Church's Songs Shape Us

Uniting Church Historical Society is hosting Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood in an afternoon of hymns that enrich all Christian worship – an opportunity for all to sing. The musical heritage of the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches has given a rich resource for community singing.

Sunday 12 June 2022, at 2 pm Stonnington Uniting Church, 57-59 Burke Road, Malvern East

To join in on Zoom, email Ken Barelli
ken.barelli@bigpond.com or phone 0418 317 942



65 years with Andrew Hope

St Mark's in Mornington in February marked the 65th Anniversary of the ordination of Rev Andrew Hope. Presbytery Chair Tom Spurling presented Andrew with his certificate. Rev Joy Blamires led worship and Andrew preached to the congregation, many of whom had been part of his congregations in the past.

Andrew had a significant role in encouraging healing services within the Uniting Church during his ministry. Andrew continues to participate in the life of the church, sharing his wisdom and insights, mentoring others particularly in encouraging prayer groups.



Speaking up on climate change

Glen Waverley Church Council have stepped up the climate change debate by displaying a banner from the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) on the exterior of the church. The building is located at the end of Kingsway, the centre of the busy Glen Waverley activity centre. Church Council agreed to continue displaying it beyond the election, as the new government refines its policies and actions on climate change. See more on ARRCC online at www.arrcc.org.au



Understanding Dementia

Members of Hampton Uniting Church recently took a course on dementia. They decided to do the course to enable them to better care for those who are looking after relatives or friends with dementia, with greater understanding and empathy. The online course is offered by Wicking Dementia Research and Education Centre, based at the University of Tasmania. The course is free & running again in July.

Read details online at
www.utas.edu.au/wicking

Meeting Together

At the next meeting of the Presbytery, Wednesday June 22, we'll be both introducing two applicants for ministry candidacy, and launching a new resource, "Meeting Together". The meeting is on Zoom, 7.15 through to 9.30 pm.

"Meeting Together" is a new booklet from the Uniting Church, Victoria and Tasmania, designed to help committees and other groups to explore what make meetings healthy and how to recognise and name poor behaviour in meetings. The booklet was produced by the Presbytery eLM Ministers, including PPE Presbytery Minister Craig Mitchell. It has short sections which can be used with a council or a committee over time, including some work at a retreat. Download it at:

victas.uca.org.au/presbytery-elm-ministers



Two printed copies of the Meeting Together booklet will be given to each congregation. The booklet also contains ideas for community-building activities. Other resources available in the Meeting Together set include the *Imago Vita: Pictures of Life* photo and activity set, and training video with group discussion activities called Facing Up. Talk to Craig about using these resources.

Pentecost and the Basis of Union

Ennis Macleod has been researching the way the Uniting Church's Basis of Union refers to the Holy Spirit. Here she writes about the connection between Pentecost and the beginning of the Uniting Church.

Here we are, fifty days after the death and resurrection of Christ, celebrating the coming of the Holy Spirit, and recalling the birth of the Church. Christology, pneumatology (study of the Holy Spirit) and ecclesiology (study of the church) all wrapped up in the one season of Pentecost.

And here we are fifty one years after the publication of the Basis of Union, and forty five years after the institution of the UCA. I saw the UCA described as one of "God's polycentric experimental communities," in the title of a semester 1 unit at Pilgrim College this year.

The Basis, and the church birthed on that basis, were a Christological expression of ecclesiology with a touch of pneumatology, and it is that 'touch of pneumatology' in the Basis that I want to call your attention to.

The Basis, like any human artifact, is a flawed document, but, as the expression of the faith upon which the Uniting Church united, it is also a statement of the faith as it was understood in its time.

In terms of where the Holy Spirit is mentioned, the Basis speaks of the power, Gift and gifts, guidance and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. It speaks of the sending, and pouring out of the Holy Spirit. It even speaks of the calling (of deaconesses) by the Holy Spirit.

But if we are to develop a social imaginary more appropriate to the Church in 2022 and into the future, we need a pneumatology that celebrates the Spirit with us when we are gathered, that reignites in us the passion for the Gospel, and that equips us to communicate the good news of Christ in the reality of the world we are in.

If the UCA is not going to cease to exist within a generation, we need to acknowledge the agency of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not just an intellectual construct through which we can 'trust,' 'acknowledge,' and 'confess' God (paragraph 3), but the agent through which, as Simeon Zahl proposes, the 'affective salience of doctrine' is experienced.

We need to find ways to be open to the Holy Spirit as we 'confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds' (paragraph 11). We need to recognise that the gifts bestowed on members of the church are not limited to the leadership of the church (paragraph 14). And that Christ speaks to the church through the means the Holy Spirit chooses, not just 'through any of the church's councils.' (paragraph 15).

In order for us to do this we need to appropriate the prayer at the end of the Basis, (paragraph 18) that through the gift of the Holy Spirit, we will bring glory to God through our 'worship, witness and service' in our lives, in the church, and into the world.

At Pentecost as we gather, as we welcome the Gift of the Spirit of Christ, let us be emboldened to be part of God's mission in the world.



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.

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Homemade Appeltaart (Dutch Apple Tart)



Peel and slice 1 kg of apples, granny smith will do, mix in some sweeter ones if you have them. Mix with 2 table spoons of cinnamon (more or less), add a large cup of raisins or sultanas and a smaller cup of currants (washed). Squeeze over a little lemon juice (half a lemon worth).

Mix the following ingredients:

400 grams plain flour (gluten free gives lighter result)
250 grams butter or margarine
200 grams brown sugar (light or dark doesn't matter)
1 teaspoon baking powder
half a teaspoon salt
3/4 of egg, leaving the other 1/4 to brush the top before it goes in the oven.

Brush the inside of a springform tin with a little butter or margarine. Use about 2/3 of the dough for bottom and sides, put in the apple mix, make some nice lattice like patterns on the top or crumble it if you're short on time with the dough. Bake at 180 degrees for 60 to 70 minutes.

Works also with pear, half pear/half apple, you can mix in fresh berries, or almond slivers, or whatever. Even a little banana and rhubarb tastes good.

Anneke Oppewal
Presbytery Minister Pastoral Care

Uniting in prayer for June/July

Each week congregations are encouraged to include their neighbours in their prayers. The Presbytery's prayer calendar covers congregations, schools and agencies of the Uniting Church in our Presbytery and Synod. You can check the calendar on the Presbytery website.

June 5	St John's Elsternwick UC – Rev Lynette Dungan, Chair Mrs Patricia McKay (pages 2-3) Hampton UC – Rev Ann Simons, Chair Mr Ian Menzies (p 13)
June 12	St Andrew's Gardiner UC – Rev Ajub Jahja, Ms Tracie Mulia, Chair Ms Irma Aer, (pp 10-11)
June 19	Glen Waverley UC – Rev Neil Peters, Pastors Alanee Hearnshaw & Di Paterson, Chair Mr Glyn Howells (p 13)
June 26	High St Frankston UC – Rev John Connan (supply), Ms Mandy Lake, Chair Mr Ross Huggard (pp 4-5)
July 3	Synod of Victoria/Tasmania – Members attending Synod meeting (p 8) Rev David Fotheringham (Moderator), Rev Dr Mark Lawrence (General Secretary)

PENTECOST PRAYER 2022

*Two, three or more,
the journey continues
where you call us, God,
to have the courage
to open ourselves
to each other.*

*And we,
putting aside our judgement
and the safety
of the boundaries
that surround our communities,
make ourselves vulnerable.*

*We concede that
our knowledge and understanding
are limited
at best.*

*We concede that we know not
what is in the heart of another,
that our words only cover so much
of the rich tapestry of who we are
when we enter into relationship.*

*This Pentecost
we pray
that we may truly understand
each other.
We open ourselves to the possibility
of something beyond
where we may have come from.
We open ourselves to the other
on the horizon.*

Faith, hope, love, justice, healing.

*Come with your Spirit
and stir us into a new order
where new life sparks
and old divides fall away,
into new and exciting possibilities
for the future,
living out your gospel
in our world.*

Amen

by Anneke Oppewal



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