

NEWSBEAT



November 2013

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

Being the people of God in a time of crisis

There is no doubt that the Special Circumstances has incurred widespread disbelief, bewilderment, hurt and anger throughout the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania, writes Rev Dr Paul Chalson.

I could write about how we need to keep in mind that this situation arose because the church dared to dream and to step out in faith to see the realization of a great vision for ministry which sadly failed. I could call us to look to the future, to care for each other and journey together in the affirmation that God is with us. But for a people in pain, this can feel trite and dismissive of the situation and the feelings it has

given rise to. The level of emotion

was aptly expressed in the course of the special gathering organized by the Presbytery as an opportunity for the people of the Uniting Church across Port Phillip East to come together, listen

to each other, support each other and pray together.

The challenge to us in this time is to discover what it means to be Church in this time, to be the people of God reflecting the character of Christ. Folk have said "I'm angry and I don't feel like praying" and this reflects the depths of the emotion felt. But if we can't experience and express the grace of God in Jesus Christ amongst ourselves even in the toughest of times ????

This is a time of crisis, what will distinguish us is how we reveal ourselves as the people of God.

What can you do?



THANK you for your phone calls, letters, cards and e-mails of loving care, support and concern, sent to Brighleigh Uniting Church and others, to individuals you know personally, and on behalf of Church Councils, writes Christine MacDowall.

We do appreciate them, each one, and rely on your continuing prayers in this most distressing time. Our worship is focused on God who is able to hold us and keep us; in ourselves, we are trying to come to terms with a future not of our choosing. So while we do need some space and can't offer much hospitality yet, we send you this invitation:

Come to Brighleigh at a time to suit yourselves, go down the driveway, watching out for children from the school next door. At the end of the car park you will see the old tennis courts and the new Labyrinth we laid down last week. Walk down the grassy slope (keeping an eye on your footing) and enter

the gate. Around the circle you will find the entry to the labyrinth itself, marked with greenery and a pile of white stones. As you walk the labyrinth, be confident in the pathway as there is only one path in and the same one coming out. On your journey you may just walk, listen and be open to God speaking to your own hearts.

If you wish you may include all affected by Divestment in your thoughts and prayers.

You might like to bring a length of ribbon to tie on the fence or choose a stone from the container or bring one from home and place it somewhere within the design – you will see other stones which people

Cont. on page 3

If you would like to submit a news item for the Presbytery's monthly Newsbeat newsletter please send all articles and images to newsbeat@ucappp.org



Viewpoint...

I write concerning the recent reports on the 7.30 Report and in the print media concerning the plans by the Uniting Church to sell church properties around Victoria to raise money to pay off debt and to have a fund for the future of the church.

I have three points to make:

Firstly, the Uniting Church proudly boasts of its concern for the traditional owners of the land on which their churches and other properties are presently situated. Native Title is all about the peoples spiritual connection to the land, to me this also includes those loyal Uniting Church congregates who through many generations have attended these churches.

Secondly, are the people who were responsible for the decisions which have put the Church in its present quandary still in positions of financial decision making in the Church? If so, why? If the Church is going to be run like any other business, then why are the same people now still making these financial decisions which adversely affect the congregates of the Uniting Church.

Finally, in the last 10 years I have given financial aid to help build four churches in Sri Lanka. This has, of course, been very adversely affected by the civil war which raged there for so many years. These churches are in need of such things as altars, church linen and windows. Would it be possible for the Uniting Church in Victoria to give some of the accoutrements of the churches to be closed here to these congregations to honour the work and commitment of so many congregants in these parishes over the years and preserve people's faith and the traditions which came together to form the Uniting Church in Australia and the Sri Lankan Churches.

I would like to also express my support to those parishes which are to be closed. Some of these people will feel hurt, and rightfully so, and will never go to church again. Some of them will go to other denominations. I suspect many will not continue with the Uniting Church. This is a terrible defeat for the Uniting Church in Victoria and only adds to a feeling of retrenchment and surrender within all the Christian denominations.

Sincerely
Christy Thiagarajah



Last Sunday, I attended a special public meeting of Port Phillip East Presbytery to discuss 'Uniting our Future'.

I came away with a heavy heart.

I share our communal distress that failures of governance and accountability led to this awful financial loss. I am disappointed that the process for divestment of assets has not been more consultative. I sympathise deeply with those congregations who are to lose property, especially those where churches are to be closed and sold, with far too short a time to consider the best options for their future as Christian fellowships. But expressing our feelings was a totally inadequate response.

Then, I remembered our worship on that same Sunday morning, when Nathaniel from South Sudan told us of his grief on learning that during the past fortnight his village had been attacked by rebel forces, leaving 88 people dead and a similar number wounded. I reflected that their suffering puts our suffering more clearly into perspective.

Jesus didn't tell His disciples that following Him would assure them of comfort or success. On the contrary, He asked them to deny themselves and take up their cross and follow Him. It would be a hard road of suffering and sacrifice. I don't recall Jesus suggesting that this challenge was just for younger followers; it's still true for us older followers – we haven't 'earned' some exemption!

My sadness as I left that meeting was deepened because we didn't move on to discuss how we could help and support those whose place of worship is to be closed and sold. We have the slogan 'Uniting our Future', but there was no vision of a revitalised Church proclaiming the Gospel to a society which increasingly sees us as irrelevant. I pray that our next meeting of Presbytery will move on from anger, lament and frustration to demonstrate that we are a community of faith, hope and love.

Bob Hindle
Langwarrin

A website has been set up detailing every aspect of *Uniting our future*, the background the process plus resources for congregational use.

Visit: www.listeningpost.victas.uca.org.au

You can also see more on Presbytery life and views on our [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ucappeg.org) page www.facebook.com/ucappeg.org

Two sides of the story...

"I hear a raft of people saying: how could this happen? Who did it? Why did it happen? Unbelievable!

I am getting a lot of this in my congregations. I am saying let's respond to these people. That's what I do every second day when I meet another parishioner of LUC or Heatherton or elsewhere - I start where they are. They want answers and I try and provide as much information as I can. More importantly most of our people don't understand how the UCA works. Most of our people, I posit, don't use 'consensus.' Most of our people work with structured or hierarchical leadership and only see it. They project the notion of hierarchical leadership onto Synod. This is plainly wrong. I firmly believe we need our Synod standing committee reps to face us and tell us what

happened, how they responded, and what they feel like. That could be amazingly healing.

Ultimately we must look to the future.

The future for Leighmoor UC, a small growing congregation, stands on the cusp of growth or stagnation. This will depend largely on a proper and relatively expensive re-location of a discrete programme run for young mum's and the inclusion of members and groups joining us from churches in our neighbourhood that are being closed. Handled well and with generous support from Presbytery and Synod Leighmoor stands to be a stronger church in the future."

Grace and peace
Rev Peter Whitaker
Leighmoor UC



Cont. from front page

Building labyrinth strengthens the spirit of Brighleigh

have brought and placed. In a little while there will be some suggestions for engaging with a labyrinth displayed near the gate. Please just close the gate when you leave. If you wish to do something for us, come and walk! We will know you have been, and you will sustain us through the weeks ahead. The address is Brighleigh Uniting Church, 739 Hawthorn Road (near the Nepean Highway), Brighton East. Thank you. Grace and peace. Christine MacDowall (Brighleigh UCA minister)



Top left: Friends of Brighleigh UC gather for morning tea with Christine to discuss plans and progress. Left: the labyrinth takes shape.



I have been friends with Christine Macdowall for over 30 years, writes Faye Cheney. We went to Heatherhill Church together, our kids grew up there, and we cried together when the decision was made to sell Heatherhill and join with Springvale.

Now my heart went out to her. What can I do? Please God, what can I do? I don't know these people of Brighleigh, but I know Christine. Lord, how can I help? As I was praying, so the Holy Spirit was working with Christine. A labyrinth idea was formed. Christine invited me (and other close friends, who felt exactly like me) to come and help make it for her congregation. We learnt from our experts to walk the path, meditate, soothe the soul, come to the centre, then see where it will lead you. Thank you Lord, what a privilege to be asked to be part of this. And an answer to my prayers.

We have had an amazing day. Shared food, shared the labyrinth experience, shared the sadness, and shared the presence of the Holy Spirit. Thank you Christine, my dear friend, from myself and many others.

The Presbytery Special Gathering highlighted how many people across congregations are unfamiliar with the facts associated with the Synod's decision to implement Special Circumstances and the divestment of properties to repay the debts resulting from the Acacia College Project.

The following information is taken directly from the Synod website - www.listeningpost.victas.org.au - to explain how it started.



The following is an abridged chronology of the Acacia College Project...

March 2006 - The Presbytery of Yarra Valley created the Whittlesea Regional Mission Council (WRMC) in March 2006 with the view to establishing a Strategic Ministry Centre located in the midst of a growth corridor. Land was identified at 35 Williams Road, Mernda and the Board of Mission and Resourcing (BOMAR) provided a loan of \$7m for land acquisition and consultancy costs.

August 2006 – the WRMC appointed a school Principal. This raised issues of governance and a review was instigated. The Synod Standing Committee (SC) established the Whittlesea Regional Strategic Ministry Centre (WRSMC) Interim Board to have oversight of the project.

February 2007 – WRMC approached BOMAR with a revised cost projection. The capital cost estimate had tripled, from \$9.6m to \$30.7m, and this resulted in an increase in the anticipated peak loan required from \$14m to \$32.3m. BOMAR approved an increased loan with various conditions.

July 2007 – BOMAR withdrew support for the project given the increased funding required and the higher SES (Socio-Economic Status) rating of 98 likely to be achieved.

October 2007 – WRMC re-presented the project as a sale and leaseback transaction, whereby the site would be sold to a developer who would develop the required facilities and then lease them back to the Church on a long term basis. The lease had anticipated payments totalling in excess of \$100m over 35 years. However, the developer was only requesting financial support from the Church of a guarantee of \$1.6m. The revised concept was approved by BOMAR subject to terms and obtaining a second quote on the sale and leaseback arrangement. A tender process was conducted in early-2008 and the sale and leaseback awarded to the developer who had originally presented the concept – Marlo Glen.

October 2008 – prior to the signing of the Agreement to Lease and Contract of Sale of the land, the Developer was granted access to the site to commence civil works.

Late-2008 – Agreement to Lease document signed. However, the developer experienced difficulty in obtaining finance so the Contract for Sale of the land was not executed until May 2009.

October - December 2009 - due to continued issues with securing finance, the Acacia Ministry Centre (AMC) also commenced lending money to the developer, initially advancing \$1.4m. The SC then approved a further loan for \$8.0m in order to complete Stage 1 of the development.

Early 2010 - The school opened for the 2010 academic year with over 100 students. The school also commenced rental payments to the Developer.

Late-2010 onward - the SC approved the proposal from the AMC to proceed with the completion of Acacia College as a full P-12 school. At this time, the SC disbanded the AMC and the project was taken over by the SC Acacia College Task Group.

Due to slow progress with the Middle School building, and ongoing issues with the Developer, there was concern that adequate accommodation would not be completed in time for the 2012 academic year. As a result, a decision was taken in mid-2011 to install some pre-fabricated buildings and portable cabins along the front of the property at a cost of \$4.5m.

Throughout 2010 and 2011, the Developer continued to have issues with obtaining finance. On this basis, the Church terminated the Agreement to Lease in late-2011.

Business plans submitted by the Acacia College Board to the SC estimated the required financial commitment to complete the school at around \$55m. The Church sought, unsuccessfully, to identify sources for the additional \$25m required.

Further review of the financial modelling in 2012 identified large discrepancies in the 2011 business plan. In addition, significant expenditure requirements were identified in relation to infrastructure requirements of the City of Whittlesea planning permit for the property. As a result, the total projected cost increased to c.\$82m.

On 17 October 2012, the SC resolved to close Acacia College as a Uniting Church school no later than 31 December 2012

Visit www.listeningpost.victas.org.au for full details on the divestments and feedback

This prayer was read out at the end of the PPEP Special Gathering by Rev Steve Terrell



The gumnut is full of seeds. For us it represents hope and possibility. I invite you to imagine a gumnut in your hands. Be gentle with it. Cherish it in the moment. As we cherish the parts of the church in pain right now, we also cherish the hope that springs from the Spirit of the risen Christ. What hope do you hold for the congregations and agencies that are being displaced? What hope do you hold for the people who will find it hard to move?

What hope do you hold for communities that will receive new people, programs, changes to familiar places?

What hope do you hold for the people implementing the Synod's decisions?

What hope do you hold for the parts of the church crying out against what has been done?

What hope do you hold for the church as we continue to share in the mission of Christ in the world?

What short prayer could you fashion to give voice your hope, and to share with another?

Amen

Sparks of hope from Uniting Our Future

There's a lot going around about the impact the process of Uniting our Future has had on members of Presbytery, congregations and agencies. I want to share a good news story, *writes Rev Jay Robinson*.

About 6 weeks ago our Presbytery was contacted by the North Eastern Presbytery offering the young people of PPE funding to help them attend NCYC in January 2014. This funding means about 10 of our young people who applied will be given a substantial help in reaching NCYC. The reason for the financial help is that with all that is going on with Uniting Our Future in our Presbytery, NE Presbytery didn't want to see any young people prohibited from experiencing NCYC – an experience not to be missed. THANK YOU North East Presbytery!

Quote

"Look in the mirror. We are all wrong sometimes. Some of the criticisms are not without justification. We gain more respect and credibility with a response that admits wrong and apologizes.

Throughout biblical history and beyond, prophets, priests, and pastors have dealt with criticisms, adverse circumstances, and even persecution. The question is not whether tough times will come; they will. The question is how will you respond in those tough times."

Thom Rainer

of the month...

Personal reflections

"I EXPERIENCED a terrible sense of foreboding when the Synod debated Special Circumstances and chose to divest \$56m of properties back in May.

The debt had to be paid, of course, but to realise such a large sum purely from sales could surely cause major spiritual damage and have far-reaching effects on the church, possibly for generations to come?

I was assured, however, by someone with financial acumen that we had plenty of properties lying idle and the sales would be only a tiny percentage of the church's total assets.

Even then my 'news nose' twitched, knowing from experience that humanity and spirituality are often in conflict and the dollars and cents may not matter in the face of people's emotional attachments. The story could 'run and run' - inflicting casualties, internally and externally, along the way?

Even if the sales total was achieved it could be a Pyrrhic victory, with the resulting pain and loss damaging the very thing it was trying to save.

Six months in, it seems we are at a crossroads and have to make some serious choices on how to proceed:

- Can we/should we re-set our sail with a combination of solutions to pay debts and establish financial safety nets?
- Do we need to re-set our sail to regain the trust of congregations to return to a sense of belonging to the Uniting Church?

- Have events overtaken us with recent court decisions on church sales that could very well exacerbate problems if we press on regardless (as happened with Acacia College?)
- Is the UoF situation a welcome chance to re-evaluate how we do church? To re-shape what that means to future generations and thus maintain a meaningful existence? To re-discover how we are 'all one' not islands working alone?

The debate will surely continue, as we are all different and think in contrasting ways.

What we can hold onto, at least, throughout this troubled time is that mankind has followed Jesus for more than 2000 years and God's love is eternal. We are simply passing through."

This month's Reflections was by the Editor, Helen Beeby

Jesus is the true light of our path

Cook Islands General Assembly in Australia proves to be a great success

As a UCA person from outside the Presbytery stated, it was 'not an insignificant event' for the Cook Islands Christian Church to hold its 30th General Assembly outside its homeland.

The Cook Islands Uniting Church Clayton was the main venue for this historic occasion, with Dandenong and Frankston also used for worship

services and other events writes Faye Sanderson - alias Tapaeru, alias Mama Paeru.

It is unusual for Partner Churches to come to

Australia to hold their General meetings, but it was fun and a lot of hard work by many people.

Opening Worship was held at the Clayton Church and the guest preacher was the Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, President of the UCA. He preached on being a stranger in a foreign country - as he was when he studied at a Scottish

University for higher studies and lived in a nearby village. Unless you were born there you were an outsider regardless of how long you had lived there. Just



before he returned home he found he had relatives from the village years ago and he was suddenly accepted as 'one of them.' This related to the migration of Cook Islanders from their homeland - although we are more welcoming and accepting of them as members of the community. Rev Te Maire Vaeau, former minister at Clayton led prayer and I felt that it spoke directly to the people of his former congregation. The opening Service, all Cook Islanders wore white and the whole of the Clayton Hall was also decorated with white broken only by blue sashes on the white chair covers and blue bows on the table decorations. The women and youth served on the tables - about 450+ were seated and with the workers it would have been more than 500 people involved.

After several days of events, some sightseeing and discussions the closing Service was on Sunday, October 20 at Clayton. Rev Jason Kioa, former Moderator, represented the UCA and commissioned the incoming Executive members and Directors - he was very well received as he was from a Tongan background and understood the Pacific Islands cultures.



Delegates from far and near gathered for a group shot at CICC's 30th General Assembly here in Melbourne

UCA Synod VicTas Cross-Cultural Mission & Ministry
Cordially invites you to our

CCMM Christmas Gathering

December 7th
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
West Hawthorn Uniting Church, 10 Power Street,
Hawthorn 3122

Please bring snacks and drinks to share. BBQ dinner will be provided.

Please R.S.V.P. by December 1st to Aigofie Papali'itele at
ccmmc.secretary.aigofie@gmail.com or call/text
0404934356

Children and families reap the benefits of new Pastors at Koornang



KOORNANG UC officially welcomed two new Pastors recently at a heart-warming service.

On Sunday October 27, Rev Liz McMillan commissioned Hannah Rate as Pastor for Children and Tai Alphred as Pastor for Families, pictured right. Rev Dev Anandarajan also took part in the service sharing stories with the children.

"It was a wonderful

service witnessed by the many families and children in attendance. The work of both of these Pastors is integral to the Mission of Koornang and we are very blessed to have them both working with us," says Marg Edwards.



Trinity has grand plans for 160th Anniversary

Trinity Uniting Church, Brighton has the following historical and musical program planned for the weekend of Friday 8th to Sunday 10th November:



- **From Thursday to Sunday:** Historical Display in Trinity House (courtesy of the Brighton Historical Society).
- **Saturday 3:00pm:** Melbourne Composers League concert, Four Colours: GOLD, New Australian, Japanese & Korean music. \$20 (over 18), conc. \$15.
- **Saturday 7:30pm:** Students and staff of St. Leonard's College Concert, gold coin Donation.
- **Sunday 10:00am:** Worship, the Moderator, Mr Dan Wootton, preaching
- **Sunday 12:00pm:** Lunch in Trinity House including a talk by Rev Dr Ian Breward (Church Historian)
- **Sunday 2:30pm:** Organ Recital on the 1884 George Fincham organ

HEY KIDS!

it's back...



Countdown to Christmas!

Now in our 16th year!

Massive Three Day Event:
Craft, music, games, puppets and more!

WHEN: Sat 21st, Mon 23rd, Tues 24th December
TIME: 9.30-11.30am each day
WHO: 4-10 y.o.
COST: \$15
WHERE: Koornang Uniting Church, 117 Murrumbena Rd, Murrumbena
PARENTS: Feel free to join in!

Registration: BY DECEMBER 1st (places fill super fast!)

Enquiries: Hannah Rate, Children's Ministry Coordinator
hannahrate@hotmail.com or 0488 569 099

Presented by
Koornang Uniting Church
WWC Compliant



PLUS! Don't miss out on our
Christmas Eve Family Service.
It's gonna get MESSY!
24th Dec, 5-7pm (including dinner)





The Presbytery of Port Phillip East invite you to join us for
Carols on the Green @ Cornish College
65 Riverend Rd Bangholme

**Sunday 1st December commencing at 4pm.
4-5/5.30pm**

Family activities, craft area, food and drinks for sale,
Nativity Scene to have your photo taken in.

5-6pm

Bring along a picnic meal to share on the grass, or buy
something from the stalls on site.

6-7.30pm

Join in with our Carol time as well as hear items from
Cornish College students and other churches in the area.

Explore the needs of our time at special CTM conference

A small group of Uniting Church ministers in Melbourne is organising a short conference, entitled

From Honest to God, to be at the Uniting Church's Centre for Theology and Ministry (Parkville, Melbourne) on November 19 and 20, 2013.

The conference will mark the 50th anniversary of the publication of John A T Robinson's *Honest to God*, considering the book in retrospect and prospect, with particular attention to the pastoral and missiological needs of our time. The conference is intended to be broad in its appeal. It will foster discussion between different voices on the theological spectrum in the contemporary church as a central motivation for the conference. For further details about the conference and registration information, see www.fhtg.info

Business as mission - the way forward

WITH the changing environment, congregations need to have three or more income sources that they can draw on at various times.

The days of relying on one income source, namely the offering plate, are long past. Other sources of income include property hire, grants, 'investment' properties such as warehouses and shop-fronts, interest from deposits, and social enterprises (i.e. Op Shops etc. designed to make a profit that is then used for some social benefit, including sustaining ministry or programs in a congregation.)

Running a business or starting a social enterprise is not straightforward and certain skills are needed. A program offered by SocialTraders.com.au can equip congregation members with the skills needed to establish and run a great enterprise that will benefit the community and the congregation. One of the best ways to get something up and running is to make use of an 'incubator' program which reduces the costly startup phase. It also generates momentum and excitement, key factors in engaging people to help from within and beyond the congregation.

Presbytery Minister - Mission & Education, Rev. Steve Terrell has a keen interest in business as mission and would love to support any congregation looking to generate funds and contribute to the community in this way. E-mail pm-me@ucappep.org



**... invites you to the presentation of our
2013 Annual Report to the Community**

Date: Tuesday, 12th November 2013
Venue: Kingston Links Golf Course
Corporate Avenue, Rowville
Melway Ref: Map 81 E2
Time: Arrive at 1:30pm for a 2:00pm sharp start
RSVP: 9239 2500 by Friday 1st November 2013

*PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU
MUST RSVP FOR BOTH
CATERING & ENTRY
PURPOSES

Copies of the 2013 Annual Report will be available at the conclusion of the presentation.

Please join us for drinks in the Atrium after the presentation.

Thank-you for your participation in the presentation of our Annual Report to the Community.

Sponsored by:



Beauty of creation acts as fascinating backdrop for worship at Bentleigh UC

After four, yes four, stunning services celebrating the Season of Creation, Bentleigh finished with a fifth Sunday 'Blessing of the Animals' for St. Francis of Assisi Day.

Oceans

The first of our services was about Oceans and it was a time to reflect on the reality that we don't know a lot about our oceans and how they work. We also wondered about the power of the waves and the fantastic diversity of life that the oceans sustain and we gave thanks to God for the oceans.

by Rev David Peel

Plants and animals

The second service was on Flora and Fauna. Once again we immersed ourselves in the reality that much of the world's plants and animals are cared for by God and that we as humans depend utterly on the plants and animals for which we have responsibility and care. They feed us, clothe us, shelter us, but more than that they absolutely enchant us. Thanks be to God.

The universe

Thirdly we celebrated the Cosmos, the stars the planets and the vastness of space. We celebrated the uniqueness of our planet and its fragility. How tiny a part of the cosmos is our world! What is humanity that you O God are mindful of us?

Storm

Storm was a challenge to our faith. We see the destructive power of God as well as the creative power. Without the monsoons great numbers of people would perish. Whole eco-systems, such as the Amazon, would disappear. And yet, the world is a wonderful place which sustains a great outpouring of life and creativity, so once again in awe we praise and thank God.

Blessing of the Animals

Joyfilled enthusiasm and unconditional love were the order of the day. You only have to see Max receiving and giving a blessing to understand that our animal friends don't judge us.

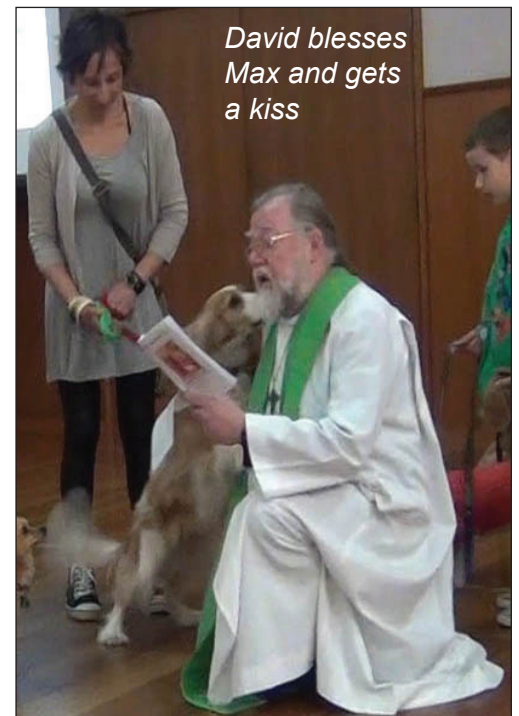
If you visit our website at www.ucappep.net/Bentleigh and go to Worship 3 menu you can see Max and Charlie and Rosie and Parker among others receiving their blessings.

Anglo-Chinese

Aah! But that is not all. On the second Sunday of the month we thought we might have an Anglo-Chinese service. The first one was a fantastic success so we will do it again next month and hopefully we will also have a Bible Study for those who came and subsequently requested one.



'Storm' a sculpture by Rev. David Peel for us to reflect on the storms of life; both internal and the external



David blesses Max and gets a kiss



Rosie and Charlie waiting patiently for their blessing. Sadly, Rosie died about a week later and is now buried under a rose bush. Her soul is with God. RIP.

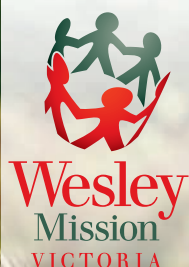
ALL dog lovers are invited to church with their four-legged family pooch member for the 5th annual church service of Dog Thanksgiving at the Heatherton-Dingley Uniting Church.

Last year 45 very well behaved dogs enjoyed the service and it is expected that this year will see some new arrivals as

owners express their thankfulness for all that their dogs do for them. The service will be held on **Sunday, November 17 at 10am** at the church which is located at the corner of Kingston and Old Dandenong Roads, Heatherton. There will be a special recognition of the work done by specially trained assistance dogs. Karen

Hiam is looking forward to telling us about the very special work done by her Labrador, Gypsy. A member from the group "Dogs for Kids with Disabilities" will also speak about the incredible work done by their dogs. All the offering given in the service will go to assist with the training of assistance dogs for both adults and children. The church service will be led by Peter Campbell, a local preacher from Parkdale Uniting Church, and a choir will lead the singing. To mark the

occasion Dot Plummer has written a song of appreciation for the work done by assistance dogs and it goes to a well know hymn tune. After the service photos will be taken of owners and their dogs out in the garden area, and of course, there will be morning tea for all. All dogs owners and their dogs are invited to continue to meet together bi-monthly for morning tea on the third Saturday of the month, with the first meeting for 2014 being in January at 10am in the church.



Wesley's Annual Report to Community

Wesley Mission Victoria is launching its 2012/13 Annual Report.

- When: 5.30pm, for a 6.00pm start Thursday, November 14
- Where: Melbourne Town Hall
- RSVP: rsvp@wesley.org.au
- Keynote Speech by the inspirational Stacey Currie
- Performance by 'Rudely Interrupted'

HOPE | COMPASSION | JUSTICE

Come for a chat about constitutional recognition

Our Constitution was written more than a century ago. By then, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples had lived in this land for more than 40,000 years, keeping alive the world's oldest continuous cultures. But Australia's founding document did not recognise the first chapter of our national story. The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC/Congress) has given its blessing to the Uniting Church to share with people the issues of Constitutional Recognition in the lead up to a referendum.

Come along and hear Peter Lewis and Jill Ruzbacky talk about Constitutional Recognition, and how you can be involved in the campaign and in reconciliation and covenanting more generally!

Date: November 24, 2.00pm – 3.30pm
Place: Ormond Uniting Church: cnr Booran Rd and North Rd

Key note speakers: Peter Lewis and Jill Ruzbacky
FREE EVENT
All welcome.

(afternoon tea provided – so it would be helpful to RSVP for an idea of numbers)
More info: Heather Baxter dhas60@hotmail.com, Marg Phyland 9578 1527
Ormond UC Mission and Justice team

A fond farewell at Mount Eliza



IT was the end of an era at Mt Eliza last month as Rev Brenda Cooper cut her ties to the church and also retired from full time ministry.

On Sunday September 29 the Cutting of the Ties Service was held and the service was followed by a Celebratory Luncheon for all the congregation and many of Brenda's friends and past colleagues. During her seven years of ministry at the Village Uniting Church, Brenda has seen the church grow from just a village church to a church and busy community centre where playgroups, music classes and many other activities are held every day. There is now a Sunday evening

Contemporary Service and Youth Group also Messy Church and KUCA for younger people..

Rev Brenda Cooper has been very involved in the growth of the church in the community and warm appreciation for all aspects of her ministry to the people of Mt Eliza was shown on the day.

Everyone gathered in the garden as a tree was planted by Brenda which will be a reminder of her time with our Village Church.



The Presbytery of Port Phillip East invites you to participate in the:

**Induction Service of Rev Tim Angus at Hampton Uniting Church, 17 Service Street,
Hampton, 3188**

on Sunday, November 24, 2013 at 2:30 pm

Followed by an Afternoon Tea in the Parish Centre

All welcome



Tim is currently the Presbytery Minister for Pastoral Care in the Presbytery of Gippsland. He is also Chair of Uniting Care Gippsland and Chair of the Health Care Chaplaincy Council.

Prior to his current position, which he has held since 2007, Tim was Parish Minister variously at Sale, Bendigo/Axedale and Healesville since moving from New Zealand in 1988. He has also been a Prison Chaplain at Bendigo.

Tim is married to Frances and they have one son, Martin, who is doing Year 12 this year.

Grow old with me, the best is yet to be



WITH a rousing rendition of 'He's got the whole world in his hands' and a warm Welcome to Country by Dianne Kerr, Uniting AgeWell was officially launched in Victoria.

The new name replaces the old one of Uniting Agedcare.

Chairperson Dr Alan Wilkinson, pictured, explained the name change as a reflection of the desire of seniors

not just to need care but to participate fully in life. He commented that this shift in the perception of ageing had attracted attention from within and beyond the church.

But it's not just about spin

and branding, the name reflects a shift in service delivery, maintains a clear link to the UCA and marks a distinctive change in approach from 'illness' to 'wellness'.

Executive Director, Sharon Donovan shared stories and plans about what ageing well looks like - simple things like waking up when you want not when staff say so. Or eating breakfast when you're ready rather than en mass. Plans include the provision of a 'restorative gym.'

VicTas Moderator, Dan Wootton offered a blessing noting the theological foundations on which the name rests, in particular the Bible passage John 10:10 and the call to abundant life later in life.

Keynote speaker Christine Bryden brought a unique perspective. Having been diagnosed with dementia, she

Words and picture by Rev Steve Terrell

has since written two books on living with the disease and become an international speaker on the topic. Christine spoke about having a strong sense of purpose to answer the confronting question "Who am I when I can no longer 'do' things?"

Special presentations followed including awards for clients reaching 90 years of life, thanks to volunteers & ministers, and recognition of employees of the year, and long serving staff. Two were recognised for 30 years with the organisation.

As the string quartet and the chefs got ready for the social interlude to follow, Carol Fountain, Director for East Victoria Region summed up the day perfectly in one word, 'Inspiring!'

Progressive Christian Network of Victoria presents a symposium on

ETHICAL DILEMMAS IN SAVING AND TAKING LIVES

with three outstanding presenters:

**Dr Harley Powell,
Paediatric Renal Physician
Royal Children's Hospital**

**Dr Allen Edwards,
Former Chaplain, Royal Children's
Hospital,
Uniting Church Minister**

**Associate Professor Christopher Wright,
Monash University Medical School
Physician and Intensive Care Specialist**

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