

NEWSBEAT



April 2014

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



A new take on Noah... Read one minister's review on page 5.

Wesley College welcomes new chaplain. Picture story on page 3.



Feeding families in need hits the headlines

HOW do we reach out in new and reviving ways to our communities? This is a perennial question for the modern church as we seek to connect, or re-connect, with the people in our neighbourhoods.

There are many churches developing new avenues in these areas and Hampton Park has hit upon a successful formula that is also receiving valuable media attention. Through the Uniting Place program their Resource Room helps families with food relief and on Thursday's runs Open UP - a drop-in centre to offer nutritious hot meals and conversations for those in need. Rev (Deacon) Mat Harry, of Hampton Park, said about 50 to 80 people a week, including children, attend the lunch program.

Cont. on Page 2



SERVING others... Rev Mat Harry is all smiles as he shares with participants of the free-meal program.



Above: Matilda with parents, Elisabeth and Craig, godparents Agnieszka Piotrowski and Mark Yeessune-Hlong. Rev Robert Johnson is pictured above and also right with Karin Jooste, member of HSUC Church Council.



New life brings a new service at UCA school

CORNISH College witnessed its very first baptism recently in a beautiful setting on campus, writes Rev Dr Robert Johnson.

Matilda Howe was baptised on February 15 at the Riverend Road school, with family, friends and representatives from High Street UC, Frankston sharing in the celebration. Matilda's parents, Elisabeth and Craig, have lived in a number of

countries before settling here, and so Matilda's brothers and sister were baptised abroad. Delighted that their oldest child is now at Cornish College, which is part of the Uniting Church, they asked if the baptism could be held at Cornish. With the agreement of the High Street Church Council and the Principal of Cornish, the baptism went ahead in a leafy setting outside the Sustainability Centre, followed by morning tea and considerable discussion about baptism, the Uniting Church and Christian faith generally.

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



Cont. from front page

He says: "It is amazing what can happen when a small congregation serves the community in a big way. Over the last few weeks the Leader Newspaper has been running articles about the Feed Melbourne program. In these articles the paper has featured stories about how the Hampton Park congregation in partnership with Connections UnitingCare has assisted those in need. "The success of our free meal for the community on a Thursday is that we have so many people involved offering their talents in the service of others, as well as integrating our community garden into the day's activities. A welcoming, warm community has developed around the meal - so much so that many describe it as 'their family.' It was a Feed Melbourne grant last year that helped launch the program and it is hoped they can add another day in

the week for lunches for more needy families. Volunteers are also being sought so if you would like to help this community



Top: a ray of hope shines through the church.

Above: diners and helpers, old and young, come together to break bread.

Left: an artistic feature in Hampton Park's new facility 'Uniting Place' completed in March 2009.

Far left: the scarecrow works along with everyone else...

Date for your diary

MARK your calendars for the next Presbytery in Council meeting on Saturday, May 3, 9.30am at Cornish College, 65 Riverend Road, Bangholme:

- General Secretary, Rev Mark Lawrence will visit the Presbytery meeting to make a presentation on the Synod Major Strategic Review.
- Discussion groups.
- BYO lunch as there are no shops in the area.

God of good things
We remember Your faithfulness
We are grateful for Your grace
We acknowledge Your patience
We appreciate Your perseverance
Continue to enfold us in Your love
Work within our lives to transform our living
Seed in us Your grace and compassion that they might grow in our hearts
Seed in us Your Word, truth and wisdom that they might grow in our minds
Seed in us Your love and forgiveness that they might grow in our actions
Giving and transforming God
Grow in us all good things so that we might bring good to the world in Your name.

Amen

Lent Event - Prayer authored by Rev Jon Humphries



Chaplain at Wesley College delights audiences at special induction service

STAFF, pupils and colleagues pulled out all the stops for the colourful induction service of Rev Graham Bartley at Wesley College recently.

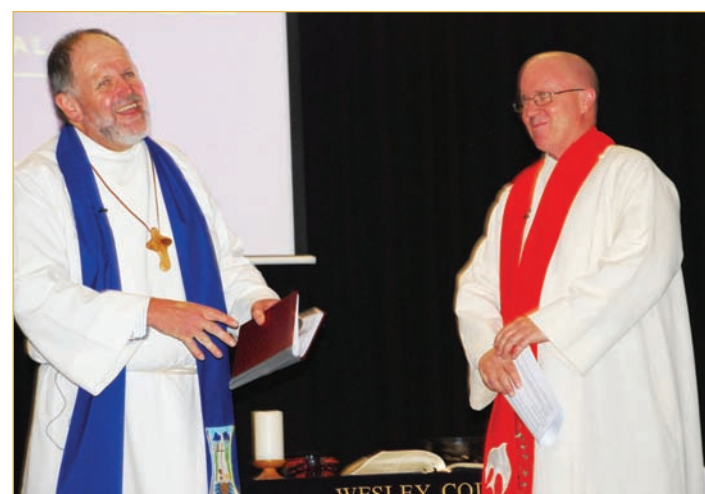
Graham is Chaplain at the Glen Waverley campus and his appointment was made official on Friday, February 28 to a packed house.

The school orchestra and choir performed and the symbols of the Bible, a candle and bowl were brought in to reflect on his tenure, before the laying on of hands during prayers.

Graham says of his arrival at this new role: "I teach Religious Education in the Middle School, lead worship and reflections for all year levels and also have a role in pastoral care and the campus executive.

Previously, I was in a similar role for 10 years at Scotch Oakburn College, Launceston, where I went after seven years in my exit placement at Stratford UC in Gippsland."

Before ordination Graham was a school teacher in country Victoria for 10 years - at Hamilton College and at St. Paul's Anglican Grammar School, Warragul. The new Chaplaincy at Wesley is a spiritual homecoming, of sorts, as he grew up in Glen Waverley being an elder and youth leader at Glen Waverley UC and chairman of the Maroondah (Presbytery) Youth Advisory Council for a few years.



Power of prayer invoked in candlelit vigils



The National Assembly called for a week of Prayer & Fasting for Justice for First Peoples while Act for Peace asked 'Will You Stand #WithSyria?'

Candlelit vigils were staged throughout Australia and the world for these causes and two churches in PPEP joined the national and global prayers for those suffering the effects of both situations...

Mount Martha held a prayer vigil one evening to pray for justice for Australia's first people as part of their response to *A Destiny Together*.

Rev Dr Paul Chalson, Chair of the Presbytery and Minister at Mt Martha, says: "This photo shows some of the symbols we had placed on the table. The song sticks came from UAICC Tasmania and the basket was woven by Aunty Eva, an Elder of Congress Tasmania, and is traditional craft of Tasmanian Aborigines while the

candle comes from the



UAICC Narranna Creations store." The congregations at High Street Uniting Church, Frankston also had a lighting candles and saying prayers section of their Sunday service for the Crisis in Syria and A Destiny Together, pictured left. The 'Christ as the living water' theme was very powerful.

As for the ray of light when the photo came through... everyone was amazed!



Bringing people together InSolidarity

InSolidarity trips are short term, guided visits to our overseas church partners. Participants get to engage directly with locals, church partners and projects. It's an incredibly rewarding experience masquerading as a holiday! There are a number of different outlets for information. The main one is a website:

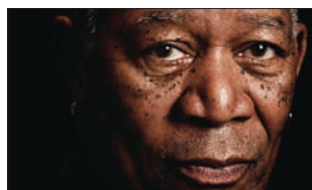
<http://www.unitingworld.org.au/about/church-connections/experience-2/insolidarity/>

The page discusses upcoming trips and also has information specific to the next trip to Tonga

Visit the site and call or e-mail for further information or for ways to get involved.

Quote

"How do we stop racism? Stop talking about it. I'm going to stop calling you a white man, and I'm going to ask you to stop calling me a black man."



Morgan Freeman, Actor.

of the month...

Wit and wisdom...

IF you're looking for some meaning and insight into this crazy world then don't expect it from comedian, actor, composer, songwriter and pianist Tim Minchin... or should you? Check out his brilliant and slightly irreverent speech to UWA graduates at: <http://www.thetransitlounge.com.au/ideas/item/912-minchin-inspires-young-grads>



Could 'Noah' herald new era of biblical reflection?

SUNDAY night called for an outing with some of our young people and a family or two - so we chose a visit to the cinema to see Noah and then later to talk about what we saw and what it said to us - but I thought you might like to know what I thought of this blockbuster movie.

Blockbuster it was! It was big, quite dark at times, and filled with some great special effects. What surprised me was how it was so wound up in the creation story. We were told the creation story in at least two different places and ways, although creation itself is referred to continuously, as is the Garden of Eden, the snake and the apple and then life outside the Garden.

We see man's destruction of the earth, and when I say destruction I mean destruction. Some of the scenes prior to the flood were like moonscapes; areas that had been mined for all that the land could give it, extinction of animal life and fighting over food sources. I had read somewhere that this movie carried a strong environmental message and they were right, but I only noticed it because I was looking for it so perhaps it could have been a bit stronger.

Now this is very recognizable as the Noah story we all know, however there are a few Hollywood liberties taken, so don't expect word for word from the Bible.

Noah's family is made up very differently, there are fallen angels called 'Watchers' – you need to see it to understand this – and there is some very perceptive imagery connected to the snake in the Garden of Eden.



The Creator runs through the whole movie and is often referred to, spoken to, pleaded with, and even intercedes at times. I think I need to go back and read the story again and it may be that the movie could add some insight, at least to my picturing of what goes on. I think there are going to be some great discussions following

this movie. Topics like what we are doing to the land and creation, the call of God and what we can be asked to do in the midst of that call, faithfulness and loyalty, family love, diet (eating meat is associated with power in the movie), justice and mercy and the presence of God in the world.

Russell Crowe was good, but then I like him. Although he does tend to be Russell Crowe regardless of the character he is playing. It was the first time I had seen Emma Watson not playing Hermione Granger, so that took a bit of getting used to, but she did a good job.

I would recommend the movie (rated M) as a good piece of cinema and something that will stimulate some great discussions. I'm sure there will be mixed reactions to it.

by
**Rev Jay
Robinson**

Flippin' marvellous



VOLUNTEERS from HSUC joined forces with Frankston Library staff in a Pancake Day outreach event.

Pancake Day proved to be a great success this year across the Presbytery and Victoria - thanks to the fantastic publicity drive by the UnitingCare agency and local churches alike.

High Street UC flipped pancakes both at the church and down at Frankston Library, after an invitation to join in community celebrations as they opened their newly renovated frontage and square.

Convenor, Barbara McKenzie says: "It was great to see everyone enjoying their morning tea and for such a worthy cause, too! A big thank you to the helpers, those who donated ingredients and to all who made it such a happy day. We made \$447 for the Appeal from both venues."



WORLD Day of Prayer had a decidedly Coptic flavour this year, with the theme 'Streams in the Desert' being chosen by the Egyptian Committee.

The service connected the past with the future and asked for prayers to help those who are oppressed or are unable to pursue education and other basic human rights.

The ecumenical service was held in churches throughout the world, inviting us to 'think about our own lives and where we recognize streams in our own deserts; places and moments where God is actively at work.'

Two churches that were selected for the WDP service in their area were Ewing Memorial UC and High Street UC, Frankston.

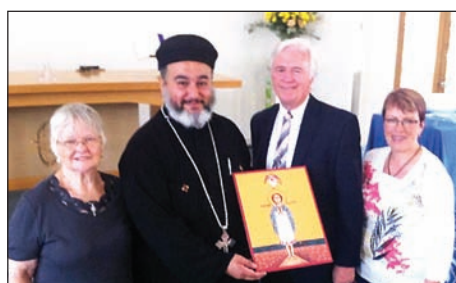
Rev Dr Jennifer Byrnes, of the Centre for Theology and Ministry, *pictured right with Rev Greg Crowe, Stonnington mayor Adrian Stubbs and service leader Jan Riches*, was the speaker at Ewing and gave a very thought-provoking address, where she reflected on neuroscience and not to 'believe all we think.' She said: "Science is showing that even though the hard-wiring is very hard to change – the exciting discovery is that new wiring – new pathways of thinking and behaviour are easy to create. "In John's Gospel we have a good example of Jesus up against significant hard-wiring. The hard-wiring of prejudice and exclusion."

This message of prejudice and exclusion was echoed in Frankston with the address given by Father Elijah, *pictured left with Revs Jay Robinson and Robert*

Johnson with service leader Dawn Peacock, from the Coptic Orthodox (Egyptian Christian) Church in Hallam. He talked of the many references to Egypt in the Bible, numerous icons that originate in Egypt and the history of Christian persecution - which continues to this day with attacks on Christian churches. Most impressive was his underpinning



of Christ's teachings by saying 'we must love our enemies, as Jesus teaches us' in the same breath as telling the congregation of terrible Christian persecutions.



Food for thought at Sandringham

SANDRINGHAM Uniting Church came up with a 'dining with a difference' concept recently.

An **Abundance Lunch** was organised by Olivia Dallison and was shared on Sunday, March 22.

To stimulate spiritual discourse Rev Eileen Ray invited everyone to write answers to the three questions on the paper tablecloth, left. Discussions followed and everyone highlighted their blessings to other guests.



It is 'open arms' at St Mark's that leads to new blood in its sixth decade

by
**Rev Dr
Rajitha Perera**

ST Mark's UC in Chadstone may be one of the smallest Uniting Churches but it has a very big heart...

We have tried to be a friendly, open, inclusive community for people who come here. Foremost in what we do is the Adult Day Centre (or Planned Activity Group), now managed by Wesley Mission, where the lives of seniors is affirmed and advanced. Approximately 60 people attend Monday to Friday and once a month at the Respite Centre.

Traditionally, in the past few years we have been seen as a typical 'Anglo' congregation, with an ageing population and a fairly traditional way of worship, yet open and inclusive to change. It is because of this very inclusiveness we have had over 30 young people from South Korea and China and elsewhere finding this to be their home. This has brought new life. There are 'English Conversation Classes', conducted by the seniors for the young and 'Pizza and Bible study' to explore a relevant meaning of the Bible.

In 2010 we thought it relevant to have a monthly support group for carers and those who have mental illness. This continues in association with 'Glimmers of Hope' from St. John's - an off-shoot of this is the 'monthly music club' to enjoy music.

Sunday morning worship is evolving to be relevant for all. Worship is held during the week for the Day Centre, which is informal and a source of great joy and blessing. Sunday worship is held in Fijian and a combined worship is held every three months.

Music is a very important part of our life and the premier event is the carol service on the Sunday before Christmas for church, family and friends. There are modern carols and texts and stories that express timeless truths in modern and relevant words that draw everyone.

We believe God's church evolves and He leads and guides us through challenges and changes into the unknown future. So, we pray for anyone and everyone who requests prayer and believe that God will work miracles and a culture of care and compassion through our lives.

The Evening Fellowship links a small group of ladies in their life together in interesting activities. They are foremost in maintaining and fostering local links with other churches and agencies. The church has contributed importantly to Monash-Waverley Information Support Group for the past five years.

On April 27 we give thanks to God for 60 years of continuous ministry.



INVITATION

(Corner of Burton and Edward Streets, Chadstone)

is celebrating

60 YEARS OF WORSHIP AND OUTREACH

ON

SUNDAY, 27TH APRIL, 2014

Service at 2.30 p.m.

*followed by afternoon tea
and a time for fellowship and reminiscence*

Guest Preacher: Rev David Pargeter

*(Executive Director of the Commission for Mission
of the Synod of Victoria/Tasmania)*

Guest Organist: Rev John Cleghorn

Minister: Rev Dr Rajitha Perera (Raj)

(9801 4349 or rajithap@optusnet.com.au)

*All present and past members and friends of St Mark's
are warmly invited to join us on this memorable occasion*

**Please RSVP to Don Cheyne, Secretary of the Church Council,
by email at dcheyne9@optusnet.com.au or ring 9807 8639, or by mail to
3 Erica Street, Mt Waverley, 3149 by 10th April, 2014 (for catering and seating
purposes).**

Brighleigh celebrates the past while going forward

It was a full house at Brighleigh UCA for the 170th anniversary of Christian witness in the East Brighton area.

Rev. Christine MacDowall led the service on March 2, beginning with a Call to Worship which included a time of wonder about what it will be like as guests of Montessori (the soon to be owners of the property under *Uniting Our Future*.)

What will it be like to worship and be at mission from here without being Beneficial Users?

The prayer of thanksgiving took the shape of recalling the history of the earliest gatherings in people's homes in the early 1800s. The original wattle and daub building was once somewhat unkindly described by someone as an Ecclesiastical cowshed!

Thanks was offered for the many buildings that followed, right up to the current one which incorporates parts of previous buildings. Stories followed about the people, including table-top preachers, entrepreneurial fundraisers responding to the damage caused by a small tornado, and social events advertised with the line 'if you can't laugh, don't come'.

All the members of the congregation current and recently passed were acknowledged and thanked by name for the way they model the kingdom of God and touch the local community all of whom are loved and treasured by God. The prayer ended with an assurance that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. Past minister of Brighleigh Rev. Denis Oakley proclaimed the Word with the wit and insight for which he is renowned, recalling happy memories, including how he shifted all the pews to face a new direction in the middle of the night. Curiously no one complained! Drawing on insights from the Transfiguration, Denis gently reframed recent experiences and the sale of the church building. Recalling changes in use of previous nearby buildings, and the benefits of not having to look after the property themselves, Denis told stories of other churches who had experienced an epiphany about property use, including one congregation who when, without their own property, became guests of the local trade union! At the heart of his message was the notion that Christ didn't call us to build buildings but rather to build disciples and share in the mission of God.

Children distributed symbols of the congregation's mission during the prayers of the people, where people were sent in mission to the world, to break bread together over a meal, introduced with clear Eucharistic themes. Members of the Brighton congregation served in the kitchen to release all Brighleigh members to enjoy the day. The highlight of lunch, apart from the excellent food, was the 170th anniversary cake. After a rousing rendition of Happy Birthday, the candle was blown out by children of the congregation, and the cake cut by Claire Hilton who celebrates her 100th birthday this year. We wish Brighleigh well into the future, uncertain still, but full of possibilities for faithful mission.



**Words & picture
by Rev Steve
Terrell**



THIS year Somers will be going on Safari, writes Rob Clarke, Somers Leader. We've just launched our 2014 campaign at the Cornish College Carnival and are about to start promoting throughout the presbytery, so you'll see myself or some Somers leaders at your church very soon. This year we are very happy to see so much support from churches and presbytery. It has energized us as organizers. Spots for camp fill up quick so show your friends and family sooner rather than later. Book at www.somerscamp.com.au www.facebook.com/somers.uc We're keen to see as many kids on camp as possible and we know we'll provide a fun, safe, caring, awesome community for all children to walk in faith.

"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth" 3 John 1:4



Tributes ring out for John Bell

ONE of Brighleigh's 'favourite sons' was also celebrated recently when more than 200 people gathered to give thanks for the long life of Mr John Bell.

In Port Phillip East John served more than 40 years as a Lay Preacher and more recently as a member of the Lay Preachers Association. In the wider church and previous Nepean Presbytery he filled many roles, especially in relation to finance and property. John also contributed to the wider community in a multitude of ways including his accounting firm where he made many friends across the state.

John passed away suddenly from a heart attack on Jan 28, 2014.

During the service on Friday, February 7, Rev Paul Blacker reflected on John's life beginning the words of another John Bell, 'will you come and follow me if I but call your name.'

As a man of deep faith it was easy to reflect on the

parallels between John's life and the Scriptures. He

was described as a 'salty man,' a man of light, a man who reflected all of the fruits of the Spirit, who knew that we are not people of chronos time but of kairos or God's time, some times having to wait. As a Collingwood supporter he knew about waiting!

One of the readings from Ecclesiastes echoes the sentiment of there being a time for everything, evenruary to die.

Rev. Christine MacDowall presented John's grandchildren special memory boxes containing among other things a Magpie feather and an old coin to remind them that Grandpa might have got very old but he was great



value! Rev Denis Oakley, an old mate of 70 years, reflected on his friendship with John which began in Wesley College, before leading the Prayers of the People.

The service opened with a song which 40 years ago John chose for this day (In Heavenly Love Abiding) and concluded with a song calling us all to live faithfully for Jesus (O Jesus I Have Promised.)

Perhaps John knew something when we wrote of his faith and lack of fear of death in his journey on Christmas Eve last December.


"As an accountant, I have bored people witless for years by quoting the old saying: 'There are only two things certain in life - death and taxes!' I am writing this piece on the 24th of December, 2013, aged 77 years, and I can honestly say I have no fear of death as I believe in eternal life and that my time on earth is only stage one of my total existence; and like A.B. Facey I have had a most fortunate life. It is hard to describe in physical terms what life in stage two as a spiritual world will be like but if Heaven means we are with God, I am confident it will be a marvellous existence."

John was buried on February 6 in Maryborough, surrounded by his family and close friends, in a service led by Rev Loreen Day. Our thoughts are with John's wife, Frances, and their family, Rev Christine MacDowall and members of the Brighleigh congregation. *By Rev Steve Terrell.*

Still time to book....

Ex 'Steeleye Span'

guitar Virtuoso, direct from the UK



KEN NICOL

'Prodigiously talented'
Clive Fownesby (BBC Radio 2)

I was amazed at Ken's
beautiful ragtime guitar style.
Ralph Metell


Also Featuring: **DOMINIC FINLEY**

'An acoustic powerhouse for the new wave of singer songwriters'
Country Times

'More than just another Singer Songwriter'
Tim Wardyn

Support Act is Journey Bound!

Tickets on-line \$20



http://cranbournefolkuniting.org/

7pm @ Cranbourne Regional
Uniting Church 41 Lesdon Ave
Cranbourne 3977

Sunday
4th May

www.journeyboundmusic.com

www.kennicmusic.com | www.dominicfinleymusic.com

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