

# NEWSBEAT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



MAY 2019



Having a cross to bear... this annual ecumenical favourite creates a meaningful reminder of Easter to the community. Read more on page 7.

Heather's four-year journey to ministry is celebrated at a special service with colleagues, friends and family. The colourful event is captured on page 4.



## Vows and prayers, made before God, by two elated brides

IT was a momentous occasion in the presbytery... the first same-gender wedding since the Assembly decision.

The Uniting Church is currently the only church in Australia to agree to "hold two equal and distinct statements of belief on marriage to honour the diversity of Christian belief among Uniting Church members" making this special service possible for the happy couple.

St. John's Elsternwick was delighted to host its first same-gender wedding in March when Rev. Philip Liebelt presided over the wedding of Stephanie McCade and Natalie Ritches.

Stephanie says: "About 12 months ago, Dad rang a whole lot of churches, over a wide area, looking for a church that would marry us. It wasn't that important to me, but it was for Nat."

Philip explained: "I had to explain to her father that the Uniting Church had not made a decision on whether to allow same-gender marriages as yet, but that I would be happy to discuss it after the Assembly if the decision was in favour - and Stephanie and Natalie also hadn't found another church. "I discussed it with Church Council, well ahead of time, and they were very supportive."

Natalie adds: "I had hoped Gary Heard, pastor of Ashburton Baptist Church, would be able to marry us as the family have known him since before I was born. But as a Baptist pastor, he was not allowed to lead the service."

Philip continues: "In the months after the decision was made and the Assembly put up a liturgy, I was able to show the couple St. John's Uniting Church and Nat and Steph were really pleased with it. So I worked on a liturgy with them."

"But then the threat of the challenge came along, and I delayed our next meeting, rather than telling them it might not be able to happen at St. John's. They had a date and were moving ahead. [Stephanie told me each meeting how many days away it was, as some brides do.] "Fortunately, the challenge did not eventuate, and



thankfully I was able to proceed. Although, I did tell them it had been touch and go afterwards."

Natalie concludes: "We were really pleased that Pastor Gary was able to give the reading and the message, and pray for us still."



Natalie was (apparently) typically late by 15 minutes, much to the amusement of the large crowd that knew her. This caused some consternation, however, because there had been careful planning to have them enter separately, without seeing each other beforehand, and Natalie was due to come in first. In a grateful text after the service Stephanie wrote to Philip: "It was a perfect day, and it couldn't have happened without your help."

"I was a bit nervous." Philip admitted "Having been in a Presbytery placement before St. John's, I haven't actually done any sort of wedding for 12 years. To have such a wedding was special. Mind you, announcing Mrs. and Mrs. Natalie and Stephanie Riches-McCade at the end felt strange, but it was a great honour."

Port Phillip East Presbytery's vision & purpose: "Encouraging, resourcing and giving pastoral oversight to communities of faith and ministers entrusted to our pastoral care."



# Principal developments at Cornish



CORNISH College has announced the appointment of its new Principal.

Ms Nicola Forrest, current Deputy Principal, will be taking up the leadership position in Term 1, 2020.

The move was announced by board Chairperson Rev Dr Robert Johnson following news that Ms Vicki Steer will leave the College at the end of the year.

Rev. Dr Robert Johnson said: "The appointment of a Principal is the most important responsibility for any school board, as it drives the Strategic Plan and shapes the school's culture. With absolute clarity of vision, and someone who sets high standards and focus on innovation, we believe Nicola's leadership will see us excel in providing a meaningful and relevant education for the 21st century."

Ms Nicola Forrest is highly qualified with a Bachelor of Education, with a double major in Language and Literature, a Masters of School Leadership and she is

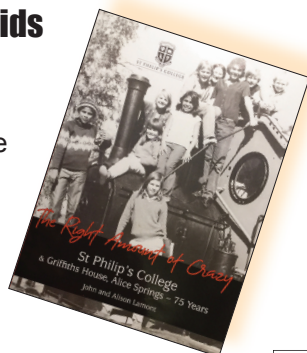
also the recipient of a number of accolades including:

- Formal Education Sector Excellence Award Winner, Environment Education Victoria, 2016
- ASG State and Territory Inspirational Teaching Award, NEITA, 2009
- Young Leaders Program and England Study Tour Scholarship, INET, 2006



## Boarding school for bush kids book now in print

JOHN and Alison Lamont have been researching and writing the history of St Philip's College, a Uniting Church school in Alice Springs, for the past ten years. It has now been published and the title is: **"The Right Amount of Crazy: St Philip's College & Griffiths House, Alice Springs - 75 years"** by John & Alison Lamont.



It was launched in Alice Springs on March 15th and in Melbourne on March 28 and 31, with further launches in all capital cities for College alumni. The book covers 75 years of history, from 1940



until 2015, from the time the original boarding hostel for bush kids was established (Griffiths House) till a larger facility

was needed. That facility was St Philip's starting life as a boarding hostel in 1965 and going on to become a successful secondary school, starting in 1989. The school now has almost 750 students, 128 who are Aboriginal, and over 20 cultures represented among the student body. Many Uniting Church people have supported St Philip's financially over the years, as have different congregational mission groups. Others have been on work parties to the College - more than 40 - involving up to 1500 people over the years. Some from within the bounds of this Presbytery. Publisher: Penfolk Publishing, cost \$75. Available through the College on 0889 504 502 or through the authors on 0429907858.

## Dementia Workshop Growing Dementia-Friendly Churches

**St John's Uniting Church**  
**37 Virginia St Mt Waverley**  
**1.30pm to 3.00pm on Friday May 10<sup>th</sup>**



We will discuss ideas to make our Churches Dementia-Friendly. Then, please join us for a cup of tea or coffee and informal discussion.

Please advise Margery Kennett 9807 4084, [mbkennett@bigpond.com](mailto:mbkennett@bigpond.com) of your intention to attend.  
A gold coin donation would be appreciated.



# Symbols and acts of unity and fellowship in the face of global horrors



AS St. John's, Elsternwick, prepared to dismantle its Christchurch installation, the Sri Lankan bomb blasts changed the discussion.

So we added a field of crosses, and some Stars of David for the Pittsburgh synagogue massacre in October.

Muslims, Christians and Jews have died peacefully going to worship. Whilst preparing for a candlelight vigil, another synagogue attack in California.

The vigil was small but effective, given the short lead time. The wind conspired to prevent candles piercing the night. Good conversation took place; and a community statement made. A Sri Lankan Tamil woman came some



distance - she felt she could, whereas she had felt larger city vigils were "political".

We learnt the woman who died in the latest synagogue shooting was protecting its rabbi, who is distantly related to the rabbi of the synagogue neighbouring St. John's. Being orthodox, the sort of interfaith dialogue we stand up for, is sadly not possible with them. Still we want to proclaim, "We are one!"



by Rev Philip Liebelt

## Hope for faith and humanity

"Thank you to our Muslim brothers and sisters who have reached out to us this week by leaving us flowers and a caring note at the church."  
Posted on Facebook by Hampton Park Uniting Church.



We want to express our deepest condolences, and to say that we stand with you no matter what. We love you.  
- The Muslim Community ❤️





## Steve dons fatigues for his latest church role

IT'S not every day a Uniting Church congregation hosts the commissioning of an Army cadet Chaplain but that's what happened at Cranbourne Regional Uniting Church last month.

Rev. Steve Terrell, Chaplain at Beaconhills College in Berwick was commissioned into a complimentary role with the Australian Army Cadets, on April 28, 2019.



Rev. Mark Dunn, also an Army Chaplain presided at the service lead by Rev. Ray McCluskey, which drew on themes of Duty, Sacrifice and Service. It was a poignant reminder of recent ANZAC Day events and the role of the Defence community in Australian life.

Steve is no stranger to the military, having served as an RAAF Radio Technician for seven years before entering UCA ministry. He was back in a defence uniform for three years when in 2008 he served as XO of 417SQN Sandringham Air Force Cadets. Beaconhills College has its own Army Cadet Unit so when he joined the college it made good sense for Steve to serve there and support the work of what is known as Australia's premier youth development program with over 26,000 cadets nationally.

"For me this is the coming together of three really important strands in my life; military, youth development and Christian faith. When Mark Dunn found me out on the range at Puckapunyal last year and approached me about the role, it turned out to be an offer too good to refuse. I believe God has called!" Steve said. Now with the rank of CAPT(AAC) Steve will exercise his new chaplaincy ministry with school-based Army Cadet Units around Melbourne, mostly in his own time after his school responsibilities, and joins a newly



rejuvenated team of four Army Cadet Chaplains serving across Victoria under the leadership of Rev. Mark Dunn.

*Steve is pictured above with Rev Mark Dunn (also in uniform) Rev Ray McCluskey and his ever-supportive wife Kim.*



Heather's ordination at Glen Waverley on 6 April, was the culmination of her journey to ordained ministry which commenced in 2014 when she undertook a Period of Discernment. Following her acceptance as a candidate in 2015, Heather began her training as a minister of the word.



## Heather completes her journey into Uniting Church ministry

The Presbytery Chairperson, Rev Andrew Boyle presided and Rev Professor, Sean Winter preached. Heather has accepted a placement at Koonung Heights Congregation in the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra. Port Phillip East Presbytery is grateful for Heather's involvement in the life of the Presbytery. I'm sure Heather will make a significant contribution to the life of the Yarra Yarra Presbytery.

*by Ian Firth*





Spotted on

facebook



Easter celebrations at Fun@Five at St Luke's Mount Waverly UC over Easter. So much fun ... and chocolate!



THIS morning at Murrumbidgee UC we were super blessed to share in the joy with Belinda Clear and Joy Han by handing over their Period of Discernment Certificates.

To sum up this +1 year journey with a piece of paper does not give weight to the prayer, reflection, work, time, energy, community, faithfulness and hope these women have intentionally set time aside to discern God within.

God, what an abundance of life you

always have been and are. May your discernment continue, may God's presence never be in doubt and may the path we walk be clear and open.

*Belinda, left, and Joy, right, both pictured with Rev Jay Robinson, above, receiving their Certificates.*



## Children & Families Ministry: Core Issues

Offered in Parkville for the FIRST time, this University of Divinity intensive unit (July 11-13, 15-17) is an excellent professional development opportunity for ministers, pastors, chaplains and those employed or deeply engaged in ministry with children and their families. Addressing theology, spirituality and sociology of the child in relation to family, church, faith, culture, technology, history, discipleship, pastoral care, safe practice and leadership with families. For more information e-mail [chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au](mailto:chris.barnett@ctm.uca.edu.au) or [erlinda.loveseed@pilgrim.edu.au](mailto:erlinda.loveseed@pilgrim.edu.au).

NB: There is also a RE-SCHEDULE of Stories of Childhood – Playgroup/Pre-school Ministry Training Day will NOW be held on Saturday JUNE 22 at CTM, Parkville.

## Calling all Fans, Followers, Friends, Vloggers - but no Lurkers...

PRETENDING you don't have time for social media... but it's really that you don't understand how it works, how it can benefit your life and congregation or possibly even think you're too old?

Are you wanting to learn more about the pitfalls and wonders of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram... or what makes an effective church website? Then you'll be the perfect candidate for the upcoming Workshop on Social Media in Ministry. Come and explore how and why we might – or might not – adopt various forms of social media for mission and communication in different ministry contexts. You'll learn from Rev Jay Robinson, representatives from the Synod comms unit, and ministers on their adoption and use of social media in their ministry.

"Social media for beginners: no question too simple"

**When:** Thursday 6 June, 10am-1pm

**Where:** Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Crescent, Parkville, VIC, 3052

**Cost:** \$10 (includes morning tea) Bring your own device.

**Register** at [www.trybooking.com/BBSes](http://www.trybooking.com/BBSes) or by email to [ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au)

**For more details:** Ann Byrne on 03 9340

8800 or e-mail [ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au) or





## Dick collects award for his courage and commitment to religious literacy



WELL known to many in the Uniting Church, Dick Carter, from Stonnington Community UC, was honoured by WESTAR Institute in the USA recently.

The WESTAR Institute recognised Mr Dick Carter with its Advocate for Religious Literacy Award at its Spring Seminar in March. The award honours members of the public who demonstrate an outstanding commitment to fostering religious literacy. It seeks to recognize the courage, commitment, and contributions of people who cultivate thoughtful discussion and disseminate learning about religion in their communities. Dick has been a foundational influence in Australia in the establishment and growth of the Progressive Christian Network in Victoria and the Common Dreams Seminars in Australia.

Dick is pictured, inset, receiving his award from Native American Rev Chebon Kernell of the Seminole Nation and wearing the award with Marianne Borg and Char Matejovsky. Photo provided by Bill Lehto, Westar Institute.

Dick, his wife Heather (in red beads), and Rev Greg Crowe attended the March Conference in Santa Rosa, California, pictured below with Joe Bessier and Laura Dempsey.



## Reflections on Faith

On the train  
by Bill Pugh

WE hopped on to the train with-others at our suburban station. Thirteen stops before we reach the city. A voice advises us the name of the next station. A little boy gets on with his Mum. He stands propped up against the window. There is much to see as we journey. New people getting on at each station. He smiles and observes each, some even smile back. Old and young, sit and immediately consult their devices, rarely looking up. One closes his eyes as he listens to his headset.

We are all on this journey, a part of life's journey, but only the little boy is really present. Through his window he sees our local beach front sweeping by, a few fishing boats, a speed boat, a sailing boat. Maybe a huge tanker on the horizon?

We pass sports grounds, a bowling green, washing on a line. We cross a bridge, cars underneath. Cars on display in a huge car yard. Soon we cross a river. A crew is paddling upstream. A big school on the right. Parked cars around a green oval. Maybe teachers' cars? Our little boy pauses and smiles at passengers as they enter the carriage on the way. Very little response. Back to his window.

Each stop is announced. No one cares. On we travel till we slowly approach the city via a dark overhead tunnel till we come to a stop. Passengers, zombie-like, put their devices away for the moment and queue up to leave the carriage via the nearest exit.

That train carriage is a cameo of society today. Passengers are physically on the train, but their minds are elsewhere. The little boy the only one to comprehend the scene. Sometimes he wants to strike up a conversation, and comment on something he sees, but everyone is in another place.

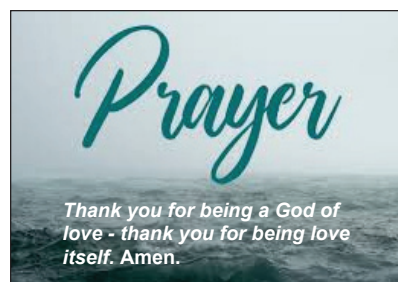
We are losing the value of one to one. It is easier to send a message rather than bother with a conversation. Personal, written letters are out.

Emails now used, even replacing a phone call for a chat. Facebook and social media are means of communication. We have lost the art of one to one, and we are impoverished.

Modern devices have become a short cut to personal communication. Are we lazy?

Sometimes our faith journey is like this. We are expecting it all to happen without speaking to God personally. He is distant, outside the train. Not relevant to our daily life. He is not on the journey, beside and with us. Jesus came into a world where communication with God was difficult, almost impossible for ordinary men or women. The structure of communication was geared to a closed system of rules and regulations.

Jesus understood the value of children. They demonstrated to adults the simplicity of life and importance of their contribution. One day when teaching his disciples, Jesus called a little child and placed him in the midst of them and said, "Unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." Maybe switching off a device and joining the little boy at the window could be a valuable focus for the day and the journey ahead?







## Action Stations

by  
**Margery Kennett**

The Waverley Chadstone Interchurch Council again celebrated Good Friday with the Way of the Cross. The first Station was in the Sanctuary of St John's UC, the following eight were in the streets and a park in Mt Waverley and the final two were at St John's. Rev James Douglas of St Luke's led the singing between the stations. Then we all enjoyed fellowship over a cup of tea and Hot Cross Buns. The eleven banners painted by Paul Gahan, photographed by Ian Bock and then printed were used for the third year. Pictured is the sixth Station where Jesus, played by Phil Davis of St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Church, stumbles.

## Pacific sisters stitch together friendships down the Peninsula

SOUTHERN Mornington Peninsula Uniting Church (SMPUC) is still "abuzz" from a recent seventeen-day visit of eight ladies from Suva, *writes Ros Morton*.

They are widows of ministers of the Methodist Church in Fiji. This group known as "Widows of Zarephath", rely on sewing and other hand-crafts to provide financial assistance for their families. The Fijian culture's extended family setting, predicts that there will always be family members living with the widows, hence the need for continuing financial support.

The widow's visit was an exchange visit following the one we'd made to them in Suva, in May 2018. The SMPUC group are

experts in the fields of sewing, knitting, quilt-making, crochet and teaching. The specific purpose of this visit was to enhance the techniques of the widows in these skills and offer ideas beyond their beads and earring industry,

enabling them to boost their sales of hand-crafted items. During those workshops, the women made bags, quilts, table runners, place mats, scarves and aprons to name but a few. The six ladies who went to Fiji last year were the principal hosts here in Rosebud. We recognised quickly, that the ladies were ready for further enhancement of their skills. We therefore focused on this and our many workshops provided them with new ideas for items they could make for their families, or to sell on return to Fiji, to supplement their incomes.

As a group we worked long and hard for many days, the SMPUC congregation, families and friends were generous in providing evening meals for us, and baking for morning and afternoon teas. Some activities and local visits we'd planned had to be cancelled, as the ladies asked for more time for sewing. They learnt more complicated techniques involved in patchwork, needle turning and applique. It was truly inspiring to see the items they were able to produce by the end of the visit.



*Clockwise from top right: Bula and Gwen with a completed quilt; a combined Sing-a-long; Ana at the patchwork workshop and entertainment at the Western Port Quilters Guild.*



## Presbytery in Council meeting dates for 2019

- **19 June,**
- **21 August,**
- **16 October**
- **11 December**

ALL meetings will be held at Noble Park Uniting Church, jct of Joy Parade and Allan Street commencing at 7.30pm. All ministers and presbytery reps are asked to attend regularly. Thank you.



## PiC News - Fresh faces on Standing Committee

The main item of business at the April Presbytery in Council, PiC, meeting was the elections for Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, Convenor of the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) and for members of the Presbytery Standing Committee.

Rev Andrew Boyle (minister at Ormond) was re-elected as chairperson, Rev Cameron McAdam (Mt Eliza) was re-elected as deputy chairperson, Rev James Douglas (Mt Waverley – St Luke's) was elected as convenor of PRC and Mr David Higham (Berwick), Rev Ray McClusky (Cranbourne), Dr Tom Spurling (Mt Waverley – St Luke's) and Rev Fiona Winn (Armada) were elected to Standing Committee. There will be a commissioning service at the June Presbytery meeting.

David Vine, a member of Presbytery Property Committee was thanked for more than 20 years service to Port Phillip East and Nepean Presbyteries. The Chairperson presented David with a Certificate of Appreciation.



**by Ian Firth**



We will be delighted to induct Revs Duncan Macleod and Anneke Oppewal and commission Dr Craig Mitchell at the Presbytery meeting on **Wednesday 19th June**. At this

meeting office bearers and committee members will also be commissioned. This will be a great moment in the life of the Presbytery and members of congregations within the presbytery are welcome to join us. Look out for more details in the June Newsbeat.

## From the Moderator

Dear friends,

I am delighted to be able to advise that the Uniting Church in Australia has been officially recognised as an active participant in the National Redress Scheme for people who experienced institutional child sexual abuse. The Federal Minister for Families and Social Services, the Hon Paul Fletcher MP, notified the UCA that the Church has met the requirements. We have been committed to becoming active members of the Scheme since it was announced last year so this is truly welcome news. I would like to endorse the comments made by National President of the Assembly Dr Deidre Palmer after we were notified.

"I want to acknowledge those who have been waiting for this decision, which follows months of work and cooperation with Uniting Church and government bodies across the country," Dr Palmer said.


"I would also like repeat once more the sincere apology I and past Uniting Church Presidents have made to people who were abused in our care as children. I am truly sorry that we didn't protect and care for you in accordance with our Christian values."

You can find out more about the Scheme and how to access it at <http://ucaredress.org.au/> or the federal government's site [www.nationalredress.gov.au](http://www.nationalredress.gov.au) <<http://www.nationalredress.gov.au>>. You can also use the freecall line 1800 737 377.

Grace and peace,



invitation



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

You are warmly invited  
to attend the

## Induction of Rev Robin Yang

to Intergenerational Ministry  
-Young Adults

within the Synod of  
Victoria and Tasmania

**Wednesday 15 May, 2019  
at 4.00pm**  
Centre for Theology and Ministry  
29 College Crescent, Parkville

Please rsvp by 9 May to  
[ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:ann.byrne@victas.uca.org.au)  
(please note on street parking only)

*If you would like to submit a news item for the Presbytery's monthly Newsbeat newsletter please send all articles and images to [newsbeat@ucappep.org](mailto:newsbeat@ucappep.org)*



*The Port Phillip East Presbytery website is an exciting additional resource tool for communication across our churches, agencies, schools and communities. We welcome submissions to the website, Newsbeat and Facebook, but should advise that photographs may be used across all, unless instructed otherwise when submitted.*

**Visit the Presbytery website at [www.ucappep.org](http://www.ucappep.org) and [www.facebook.com/ucappep.org](https://www.facebook.com/ucappep.org) for news, events and more....**