

NEWSBEAT



NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

MAY 2020



Cornish student, Gemma Wildermuth selected from 180,000 entrants for global science prize. Discover more on page 7.



See back page

To Commune or not to Commune? That is the question... Join the debate on page 4



Discovering Discipleship in a Digital Age

Craig Mitchell reflects on an online seminar with Bex Lewis

THERE'S "online religion" and then there's "religion online." That's how Dr Bex Lewis describes the difference between putting your church service on the Internet, and helping people explore faith in a 24/7 digital world.

Our Presbytery's Facebook Live seminar last week on Digital Discipleship with Bex engaged about 100 people on issues of faith and the digital realm. The video has since been viewed by another 1000 people from all over the world. Here are a few takeaways from the 90 minutes we shared together.

Australians have a high rate of mobile phone and computer ownership. On average we spend 5 hours 44 mins a day on the internet and 1 hour 44 mins on social media.* We love Youtube and Facebook.

Bex said that online church can create a shift from performance to participation if people become more engaged. Chatting can help replace passive listening. Online worship provides access for people who can't physically attend, and allows people to check us out safely.

Research shows that people use technology to seek connection, not dis-connection. Online connections supplement face-to-face relationships rather than replacing them. Bex reminded us that when we are online, we are still 'real'. We use technology with our bodies. We speak to real people. We experience real emotions.

Bex discussed the value of having trusted social networks for exploring faith honestly and openly. She told her own story of living with cancer and the importance of online support from others in her journey. From her own experience she talked about ways mobile devices can allow us to use apps for daily prayer, Bible reading, and other spiritual exercises. We can explore justice issues and faith questions with others online.

Digital communication allows us to talk during the week about what we experienced in worship. While we might worry about mis-information online, we can as a community find ways to help people ask critical questions in a safe online space about what they see and hear.

We received many, many online comments and questions during the seminar. The interview can be viewed on our Presbytery Facebook page and will shortly be on our Youtube channel. We'll be running more of these online events.

*Bex is Senior Lecturer in Digital Marketing at Manchester Metropolitan University in England, and the author of a best-selling book *Raising Children in a Digital Age*. Her website is drbexl.co.uk*



Bex Lewis...

Photo by Keith Blundy



Little Free Pantry engages the community

AS A grassroots way of helping those facing food insecurity in the neighbourhood, a community project called The Little Free Pantry has recently been opened on the front grounds of Ormond Uniting Church.

This pantry, on the busy corner of North Rd and Booran Rd, Ormond, is a place where people can freely receive and give household essentials of non-perishable (or long-life) packaged food, drinks, and toiletries. Everyone is invited to either donate items to, or if in need, take items from the pantry. The contents will change day by day depending on who has stopped by. The sign on the pantry door says: 'Please, take what you need; give what you can'. In its initial weeks of operation, the community response has been highly encouraging. Supplies are being left by many local people, and progressively taken by those in-need as word-of-mouth spreads.

It is estimated that 5% of the population in Australia faces food insecurity. That was before the impact of Covid-19 on jobs and businesses. Those more susceptible to food insecurity include unemployed people, single parent households, low-income earners, people with addictions, homeless and socially isolated.

The pantry has been instigated by one of the home groups at Ormond Uniting Church, who have also obtained the funds for its start-up and have developed a roster amongst themselves to check its contents twice a week. Excess supplies are placed in a collection box for delivery to the Asylum Seekers Resource Centre.

Any queries about this project, please contact: David (0488 204 049) or Dennis (0408 457 009)



St Leonard's College
Prioritises Community Wellbeing
COVID-19 Update



Compliments for College that cares

ST LEONARD'S College has undertaken the identification and support of staff, students and families who require additional levels of emotional, academic or physical assistance during these uncertain times. They established a complimentary meal delivery service for College families with parents who are healthcare workers and emergency response personnel. Every Friday they offer the meal delivery service to the homes of these families.

The image above features Community Coordinator Bronwyn Betro and College Principal Stuart Davis, both of whom have been directly involved in the meal delivery service, along with a note of gratitude left at the doorstep of one of our recipient families.

Learn more about how St Leonard's College is prioritising community wellbeing at

<https://bit.ly/2Vy9xBj>

#StLeonardsCollege #StLeonards #STL

facebook

Spotted on

At
High
Street
Road
and St
John's, Mt
Waverley
UCs we

have been pre recording our services by video - some in my home and once a month at the church with virtual Communion. We only use Zoom for meetings and pastoral care. Video is uploaded onto our website on Saturday night. Our web hits have increased tenfold - and some from overseas. Average hits per Sunday are around 600. We think its a small miracle.

by Rev Julie Ross



Frontline fabric heroes

Cranbourne Regional UCA Patchworkers (CUPS) led by Rosemary Kreun plus Wendy snook and Theology student Andrea Mayes have been making masks, hats and gowns for Melbourne hospitals and nurses. Also Northern Territory medical staff and pilots for Mission Aviation Fellowship. It's been done co-operatively through Jan Ebbott MacFayden's Oz Comfort Quilts organisation who runs the Bushfire quilt donations for Victoria and states. Fabulous work to support frontline services.



When every day is spent in isolation

For most of us, social distancing or social isolation is being experienced either as a shock to the system, a period of respite from life on the treadmill or something in between. In summary, it has generally been a very unfamiliar experience. For those who spend much of their lives on the margins of society, social distancing and social isolation are very familiar experiences. This is nothing new to them. They represent part of society's invisible citizens; the ones that people tend or try not to notice sleeping in the doorways of local shops, or setting up 'home' with blankets and cardboard against the back wall of local supermarkets, or making their 'beds' in the parks or under bridges near stations. Amongst this group there are those who live alone and who wander our streets paying attention to the voices they hear in their heads and responding with outbursts of anger or fear.

There are those who are constantly anxious about the world they are in and the things they read or hear. They make their way quickly from place to place. Alert and alarmed. There are those who 'like the son of man' have nowhere to lay their heads, who never stop walking. Always moving.

This is not a great time for many people, but perhaps its providing us with an opportunity for empathy: to feel perhaps for the first time what it feels like to live in isolation, to be disconnected from society, what it feels like to be on the edge of things.

August 2020 represent the 40th anniversary of the St Kilda Uniting Church establishing an onsite Drop In for those in the area who live at the margins, who have significant challenges around mental health, and for whom social distancing is normal. The congregation holds all the participants, volunteers and staff at the Drop In, in its prayers.



by Rev David Pargeter
at St Kilda Uniting Church

To Commune or not to Commune?

*A conversation
between Duncan
Macleod and Anneke
Oppewal, Presbytery
Ministers*

Duncan: We've had a lot of people wondering about ways to approach communion over this period of physical isolation. Across the Uniting Church in Australia we have three main ways to approach this. 1. Fasting from sacraments for the time being 2.

Flexible approaches to celebration of eucharist for dispersed people, or 3. Using alternative sacramental actions like Amelia Koh Butler's Empty Hands liturgy or other tangible actions.

Anneke: When we first started talking about communion in dispersed community, I checked in with friends and others whose opinions I trust and value. Initially what spoke to me most was the idea of fasting. Of holding back and holding sacred the experience of communion as a meal shared together in community, waiting until we bring people together as the body of Christ. However, I've become uncomfortable with the idea that God's presence in bread and wine could be limited – to a building – a person – or an officially and formally sanctioned ritual.

Duncan: People have asked me what are the special words that need to be said by a celebrant to make



bread and wine a communion event. We do invite the Holy Spirit to be with us in our shared meal, so that we're sharing in the meal with Christ and Christ's people. But I think we need to avoid the idea that there's some 'magic' we can pass down through Zoom, Facebook Live or on the phone, just like we try to avoid that when meeting in person (I hope!).

Anneke: Leading worship at Hampton recently I reflected on the road to Emmaus and realised that what happens there is what could happen now. People at home, experiencing the presence of Christ in the breaking of the bread in an impromptu, informal and unexpected way. Linking them back to the community they are part of.

Duncan: The sense of celebrating our connection with Christ, together with people throughout time and space, is one of the most inspiring elements of the eucharist

for me. I would think our theology and practices, in ordered liberty, can work a way through this wherever we are.

We had planned to run a sacraments orientation course for UCA members over two Saturdays in April and May.

I wonder if people would be interested in joining a series of seminars on communion and baptism, one night a week on Zoom. We should try that!



Sourdough sacraments... Craig Mitchell's above left and Anneke Oppewal's, right.

Zoomed out?

Tips for negotiating this new territory

OVER the last weeks, many of us have started using Zoom, Skype, Facebook, YouTube and other internet platforms for work, to connect with friends and family, do our shopping, study and entertainment as we have never before.

A whole new world has opened up, making it possible for us to connect with each other in new and often exciting ways. With less travel time and greater connectivity we tend to meet more often, our discussions tend to be more focussed and we meet with more and different people because it is often easier to attend than it was before. Watching millions of pixels moving, often with a slight delay, can be tiring and disorienting. Watching multiple people, close up, in different settings, all at the same time, and continuously watching ourselves amongst them floods us with information and messes with our brains. Focussing ferociously and waiting for the next internet interruption makes it hard to feel at ease when engaging with online content.



Things that may help negotiate this new territory:

- Be aware that your brain is learning and that this will take time and energy
- Take a break! Leave the room, go outside, do some exercise in between
- Vary between devices if you can
- Physically write notes, pen on paper, while meeting on zoom, it will ground you and help anchor you in time and space
- Turn your self view off - no need to constantly look in the mirror while you're talking to others - with a slight delay. Create some boundaries between a space for work and other activities if you can, or, if you have only the one space, tidy work away at the end of the day to help create some distance.
- Allow yourself time to relax - sleep - meditate - anything that gets your brain in a different gear.
- Allow yourself some space. This is new, this is different, getting used to it is going to take a while.

Here is a link to an article that explain more about why we find virtual conversations and gatherings so tiring and ways to deal with the fatigue. Grab a cuppa and relax while you read... <https://bit.ly/2yiFjKV>

by
Rev Anneke Oppewal

Good reads

Using these times of self-isolation to enjoy a good book...

The Resilience Project: Finding Happiness Through Gratitude, Empathy & Mindfulness, by Hugh Van Cuylenburg

My son bought me this as a gift because the author discovered the ethos behind The Resilience Project while volunteering as a teacher in northern India. Despite their underprivileged community they were positive, while back home people found it hard to be happy. His own sister had suffered from anorexia. The key to contentment and resilience lies in gratitude, empathy and mindfulness. A reassuring read.

by **Helen Beeby**

LET YOURSELF REST

If you're exhausted, rest.

If you don't feel like starting a new project, don't.

If you don't feel the urge to make something new, just rest in the beauty of the old, the familiar, the known.

If you don't feel like talking, stay silent.

If you're fed up with the news, turn it off.

If you want to postpone something until tomorrow, do it.

If you want to do nothing, let yourself do nothing today.

Feel the fullness of the emptiness, the vastness of the silence, the sheer life in your unproductive moments.

Time does not always need to be filled.

You are enough, simply in your being.

Jeff Foster



Being Church In a Time of Crisis

What lies beyond streaming worship? Craig Mitchell reflects on next steps.

TWO teddy bears sit looking out of our front window each day. Another is on the verandah. Taking our dogs for a walk, we pass a girl

painting rainbows and words of hope on the kerb. Further, a sign invites us on an Easter Egg Hunt in someone's front yard. Across our streets and suburbs, people are wondering how to be good neighbours when we can't get up close and personal. Amidst an array of Sunday morning worship options, online and offline, we're trying to work out how to be Christian in these strange days, as a faith community and particularly with those in need. A tertiary chaplain friend is running online cooking classes for overseas students, delivering food hampers and then teaching them to cook. We mailed her bunches of fresh herbs from our garden to distribute. Last Saturday night we had a dinner party over Zoom with a dozen other households, each also contributing a story, or song or poem. It was a wonderful evening.



Love your neighbours

Michael Frost offered a list of 35 ways to love your neighbours.

They include:

- Do a regular prayer walk in your neighborhood, praying for each household.
- Chalk messages on the sidewalk at night so it surprises people in the morning
- Deliver gifts (hampers, toilet paper bouquets, cookies) to your neighbors' doorsteps.
- Offer to do the shopping (including the pharmacy) for your elderly neighbours.

Neighbourhood Mission

While our Mission Expo has sadly been postponed until 2021 (date to be advised), our theme of "Neighbourhood Mission" seems as timely as ever. It's been easy to turn inward a bit and focus on worship and the care of members. Many of our local outreach and service programs have been put on pause. Yet we know that people in our communities are experiencing isolation, anxiety, loss of income, and domestic tensions. Karina Kreminski (author of Urban Spirituality) invites us to seek out the connections between our faith habits or disciplines, and the ways we inhabit our local communities. It's a challenging invitation! With our lives now topsy-turvy, the space to contemplate and reimagine our neighbourhood presence - relationally, spiritually, physically, is something of a gift. How are your church members offering care and hope to neighbours at this time? We'd love to hear and share stories of hope and creative mission. My hope in the next few weeks is to offer ministers in the first instance a chance to chat about this. I'm in conversation with Karina about the possibility of a book group that could discuss Urban Spirituality over the coming months, Zooming her into the conversation at times. Let me know if that sounds appealing to you.

The Practice of Neighbouring in a Time of Coronavirus is a new study book by Karina Kreminski and Armen Gakavian. Exploring what local mission might look like in these times. Available for \$5 per participant (digital copy) from info@neighbourhoodmatters.com.au

Digital Discipleship

On the cover of Newsbeat I've written about our session on Digital Discipleship. In the second half of 2020, we hope to explore some fresh ways to do both faith development and leadership development across the presbytery through blending face -to-face and online options. Let's invite people to make use of their newfound technical confidence for faith's sake.



Focus On... Rev Mike You

IN THE first in a series in which we focus on new people in the Presbytery we asked Rev Mike You, minister at Endeavour Hills UC, some questions to get to know him a little better:



Where were you born? South Korea.

How did you come to ministry? I came to Melbourne in 2001 then in 2011 I chose to study theology and missiology at Pilgrim Theological College and then became a candidate in 2016. I was so lucky to find two great mentors Revs Anneke Oppewal and Rob Gotch.

What's it been like starting at Endeavour Hills

UCA? I only preached one time before the churches shut for coronavirus?!

Do you have a family? Yes, my wife, Hee Jong Kim, was born in South Korea but has been in Australia for 29 years. We have a seven year old daughter.

Do you have any hobbies? I play the guitar. Actually I was a professional musician in South Korea and recorded music with singers and in bands. Ranging from K-Pop to R & B, but my favourite is jazz.

What's your favourite movie? Ghost.

What's your favourite book? I used to say the Bible but I'd have to add a Genuinely Theological Church by Geoff Thompson to that now.



Cornish College student nominated for Dean's List Award

YEAR 10 Cornish College student Gemma Wildermuth was recently announced as a finalist in the FIRST Dean's List Award.

This award recognises leadership, education and technical expertise amongst students participating in FIRST's STEM-related programs (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) Gemma was selected as a finalist out of 180,000 students worldwide.

Gemma's case is particularly special, as she was nominated for both the FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition and FIRST Tech Challenge categories by her two robotics teams, Robocats and Dangerous Minds, respectively. As a finalist, she is representing herself, her teams and Australia.

Gemma and the other finalists recently met online for the FIRST Virtual Showcase. This showcase replaced the FIRST World Festival, which was sadly cancelled this year due to COVID-19.



The FIRST competition season has also been cancelled, so Gemma is using her spare time to design and build a robot to assist with food service in hospitals caring for infectious patients. She hopes to be able to attend the World Festival next year.

Along with her studies, Gemma has participated in several FIRST programs, including the 2018 LEGO League competition, when her team won the Strategy and Innovation Award before competing at an international competition in Uruguay. Gemma also founded Dangerous Minds – the only FIRST Tech Challenge team in Victoria. In 2019, she and Dangerous Minds qualified for the regional competition and, as part of the winning alliance, they won the Inspire Award, the equivalent of a champion's award.

Gemma has also been working on a prototype of a "self-sufficient and sustainable" fodder machine, which she presented at the 2019 Global Table Conference. During this conference, she introduced keynote speaker Dr Howard-Yana Shapiro, Chief Agricultural Officer of Mars Incorporated, and sat on a panel to discuss start-ups.

Gemma said ongoing support from her Cornish peers and teachers has been "amazing". Gemma hopes to study at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology or Caltech before starting a robotics company to "make a difference in people's lives."

Gemma is pictured left in the science lab at Cornish College prior to isolation measures.

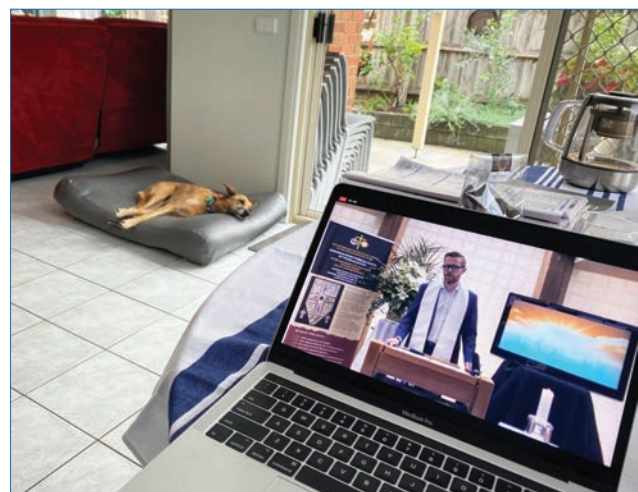
Picnic time for the teddy bears...



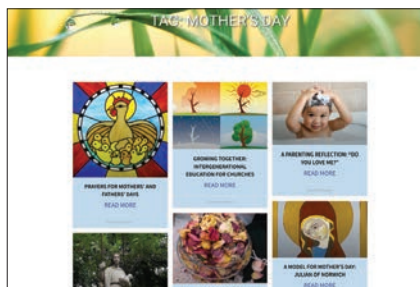
Animal antics

PETS have been getting in on many of the 'working from home' acts. Here's Charlie, Anneke's dog, having a lie-in on Sunday during worship.

He missed a great sermon. Share your pet pictures to Newsbeat and we'll showcase them in our community.



Make something for Mother's Day (May 10th)



Click on: <https://buildfaith.org/tag/mothers-day/>



<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/MessyChurchBRF/pentecost/>



Above: Teddy Bears Picnic has been the kerbside appeal at Stonnington UC, for children and families to enjoy as they pass by the front doors.

YOUTH ONLINE

FRIDAY NIGHTS • 7:30PM - 9:00PM

THIS TERM YOUTH IS GOING TO LOOK A BIT DIFFERENT - ISOLATION DOES NOT MEAN NO SOCIAL LIFE. KEEP AN EYE ON WHAT DEVICES WILL BE NEEDED, AND IF THIS IS A STRUGGLE THEN GET IN-CONTACT.

EACH WEEK YOU MIGHT NEED A SMARTPHONE OR A COMPUTER OR A PEN & PAPER

SOMETIMES IT IS A COMBINATION OF EACH!

GRADE 6 TO YEAR 12

FRIENDS ARE ALWAYS welcome!

WE WILL BE MEETING TOGETHER OVER ZOOM

APRIL 24 • Pictionary Wars YOU WILL NEED OR

MAY 1 • SCATTERGORIES YOU WILL NEED & OR

MAY 8 • KAHOOT! YOU WILL NEED &

MAY 15 • DEEPER NIGHT >> CAN JESUS WALK ON WATER? & OR

MAY 22 • MOVIE NIGHT YOU WILL NEED

JUNE 5 • SCAVENGER HUNT YOU WILL NEED &

JUNE 12 • DEEPER NIGHT >> WHY MARY & JOSEPH? & OR

JUNE 19 • JACKBOX NIGHT YOU WILL NEED &

EVEN ONLINE ALL OUR LEADERS HAVE UNDERGONE CHILD SAFETY TRAINING & HAVE WWCCS



DURING THE WEEK THERE IS ALSO AN ONLINE COMMUNITY ON DISCORD - WITH UNDER 18 & OVER 18 SECTIONS FOR ALL OF US TO HAVE A FUN & SAFE COMMUNITY. MESSAGE IF YOU NEED THE DISCORD SERVER CODE.

PS KELLY SKILTON • 0432 714 758
KELLY@SKILTONS.COM
ONLINE NAMES: @SKRELLY;
@CAPTAINSONDERPANTS

Leadership Refresh – call for nominations plus an online election

PORT Phillip East Presbytery is about to run our first online meeting on Wednesday, May 27 to introduce an online ballot for members of the Presbytery Standing Committee.

We've put out a call for nominations for the positions of Presbytery Chairperson, Deputy Chairperson, chairpersons for Pastoral Relations Committee, Property Committee, Mission and Leadership Development Committee, and two non-portfolio members of Standing Committee. Nomination forms and position descriptions are available on the Presbytery website, ucappep.org/call-for-nominations

At our February meeting at Cornish College we made a strong commitment to ensuring that our leadership represents our diversity in relation to gender, age and ethnicity. We noted that those nominated need to be members of the Uniting Church in Australia, but don't need to be a current member of the Presbytery. All positions are open to lay and ordained people.

Cameron McAdam, acting Chair, says, "This is an important time of discernment for our Presbytery as we prayerfully consider who might have the gifts and willingness to lead the Presbytery in this next phase of its life and ministry. Might God be encouraging you or someone in your congregation to this ministry?"



by **Duncan Macleod**
PM, Team Leader



Our nominations task group, Mary Heinemann, Kelly Skilton and Anne Kim, are available to talk to people who are wondering about the positions. Email the task group at nominations@ucappep.org

On **Wednesday May 27, 7pm** we'll be gathering on Zoom for an update from the Presbytery Standing Committee, and an introduction to the people who have been nominated for leadership positions. All up, we have close to 150 people who are able to come to Presbytery meetings and take part in decision-making. Each one will receive

an email with a personalized link to our voting panel on eballot.com, ensuring that each vote is personal, anonymous and secure. We don't have to worry about foreign interference in this election! Voting will close at **midnight on May 31**.

Standing Committee has been meeting online with Zoom every two weeks since the beginning of March. Andrew Boyle's term as Chairperson finished on April 29, and Cameron McAdam is acting Chairperson through to the end of June. We're looking for new people to serve on our committees, especially Mission and Leadership Development Committee.

Forming a new team

The Presbytery's new Mission and Leadership Development Team will provide a renewed focus and resourcing to how we help congregations follow God's mission, and how we help lay leaders in to grow in their gifts and service. How do we also encourage congregations to give energy to deepening people's discipleship? We're hoping to build a diverse team with vision and passion for these dimensions - mission, lay leadership, discipleship - and I'm excited by the opportunity to work with them in these areas. Would you or someone you know be keen to be part of this? If so, please get in touch with me. Craig Mitchell pm-cd@ucappep.org 0417323088

date

Induction

To watch Rev Joy Blamire's induction at St Mark's Mornington Live on Sunday, May 3 at 2pm click on <https://www.facebook.com/ucappep.org/>



Or if you would like to be on the Zoom service send an email to secretary@ucappep.org for the link to the Zoom meeting and access.



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

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 and www.facebook.com/ucappep.org for news, events and more....