

NEWSBEAT



NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

JUNE 2020



Financial planning... learn new ways of giving and receiving with our seminar series. Flip to page 3.



Outgoing Presbytery Chair, Rev Andrew Boyle, bids farewell. Back page goodbye.

Votes are cast to secure a new line-up

Presbytery Standing Committee elections herald fresh leadership - with three positions still vacant

THERE'S a raft of new faces joining the leadership team after the Standing Committee ballot closed on the last Sunday of May. Port Phillip East Presbytery has elected its members of the Standing Committee and they will serve from June 2020 to February 2023.



Tom Spurling, elected as Presbytery Chair, is a member of St Luke's Uniting Church, Mount Waverley, and has been a member of the Standing Committee since February 2019. He works one day a week at Swinburne University of Technology as a Professor of Innovation Studies.

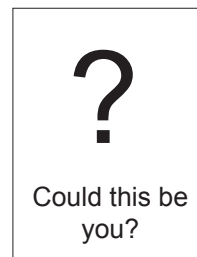
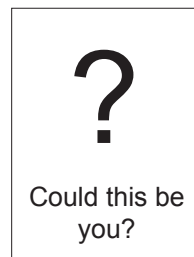
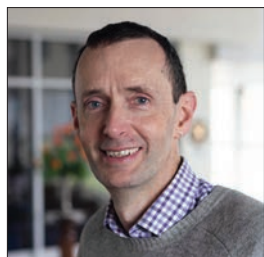


Kelly Skilton, elected chair of the new Mission & Leadership Development Committee, is the Youth & Young Adults Pastor at Murrumbeena Uniting Church. Known for founding the missional community the Sonder Collective, involving 170 people across 35 church communities.

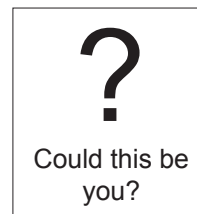
They are Tom Spurling (Chairperson), Cameron McAdam (Deputy Chairperson and Convenor of Consultation Strategy Team), Kelly Skilton (Chair of Mission & Leadership Development Committee), James Douglas (Pastoral Relations Committee), Gavin Faichney (Chair of Property Committee), and Fiona Winn. They are joined by continuing members Ian Firth (Secretary), Jeff Gardner (Treasurer) and Duncan Macleod (Presbytery Minister Team Leader). There are still three spaces that may be filled to address balance in age, gender and ethnicity.

Acting Chairperson Cameron McAdam says, "Our work together as a Presbytery is to now fill these committees and encourage people into leadership and participation, being particularly mindful of building diversity in that leadership. This is the work of all of us. We also continue as a Presbytery to work through key projects in our Cultivating a New Future program, as we develop Leadership Structures, review our resources, and encourage new mission through the Mission Pilot program."

All will be commissioned in a Presbytery gathering using the Zoom platform on Wednesday, June 24th.

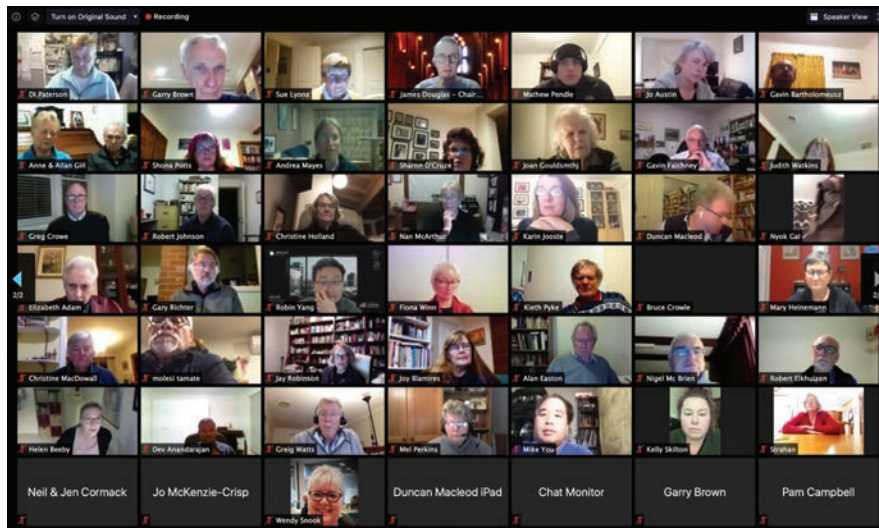


*Serving for next three years are:
Top row, L-R: James Douglas, Gavin Faichney, Duncan Macleod & Fiona Winn.
Bottom row, L-R: Cameron McAdam, Jeff Gardner, Ian Firth.*



Successful and spiritual online meeting for Presbytery in Council

OUR online Presbytery meeting was well attended, and thanks to the 82 people who turned up and participated. Thanks to Cameron McAdam for his chairing and inclusions on Reconciliation Week. The Standing Committee and Presbytery Minister team worked hard to find ways to ensure that we as members would be well informed, inspired and involved. The minute of appreciation for Andrew



Boyle, outgoing chair, was received with acclamation and his abridged speech is featured on page 9. Online voting for the Standing Committee membership was also trialled due to the isolation measures. If anyone has any feedback I'm sure that Ian Firth, secretary@ucappep.org, would love to hear about it.



Delve a bit deeper via the website:

The Presbytery website www.ucappep.org highlights details of:

1. Frequently Asked Questions on COVID-19 from VicTas Synod for congregations in Victoria. New today is advice on our community facilities, including how we engage outside groups who wish to use our premises.
2. An updated checklist for congregations to use as they prepare to allow people back on to their properties. This includes a new useful guide to cleaning.
3. A brochure for the Sacraments in the Uniting Church, an 8-week online course, run on Zoom on Wednesday nights in July and August.

We're starting to receive registrations for the Spirited Generosity course (Tuesday evenings from June 9 and Wednesday mornings from July 1). There are also still some spaces available in the Mental Health First Aid course. Register online at www.tinyurl.com/pppep-events

As you would be aware, the Victorian government has announced an easing of restrictions that take effect on Monday morning, June 1. This means that, in theory, we could have up to 20 people plus worship leaders in private worship settings.

That means you need to know who is attending, and have everything in place to address the risks of gathering in an indoor space together.

As a Presbytery, we continue to advise congregations to continue to proceed cautiously, keeping safety as a primary concern. We know that each congregation has its own context to look at when making decisions about gatherings in person. We need to bear in mind the age profile of our congregations, the size of our buildings, the number of people who may wish to attend, and our ability to establish and maintain a safe environment.

Next Friday, June 5, we'll be running a Zoom seminar on occupational health and safety and risk management as they relate to the current COVID-19 situation, with guest presenter Synod Safety Officer Elnura Dulakovic. I'll send an email reminder out next week with the link to the seminar.

Finally, I find it helpful to remember that life is not always simple and clear. I remind myself regularly to embrace ambiguity and uncertainty with courage.



*by Duncan Macleod
PM, Team Leader*

For broader community guidelines and lifting of restrictions visit the Victorian Government website at <https://www.vic.gov.au/coronavirus-covid-19-restrictions-victoria>

May God strengthen you in your being, in your ministry, in your living.

Join us in Spirited Generosity

Four online seminars on financial giving and developing a budget for mission

FINANCIAL giving and church budgets have been challenged in recent weeks. How can we move beyond just coping to a healthier financial future for churches?

Four online Zoom seminars will be based on the Spirited Generosity resource from Mediacom. We'll explore what inspires generosity, reframing budgets around mission, encouraging more avenues for giving, and positive ways to communicate about both money and mission.

The sessions will be led by Dr Craig Mitchell and Rev Duncan Macleod. Craig has experience with the approach and will share practical examples. Duncan will add wisdom from his experience in working with a wide range of churches.

Two opportunities. Choose June or July series:

June 9, 16, 23, 30 - 7.30-8.45pm or

July 8, 15, 22, 29 - 10.30am-11.45am

Cost \$20 includes workbook. 15 people per seminar.

Register at www.tinyurl.com/ppe-events

Registrations close one week before each series.

For info contact Craig Mitchell at pm-cd@ucappeg.org



When simplicity upholds unity

AT Sandringham Uniting Church our efforts to be together in spirit have been led by our inspiring leader, Rev Christine MacDowall.

Each week she prepares a service sheet, we add news and notes on the back page. It is then edited, printed and delivered to all our folk. We have organised a letter box drop system (with all the necessary social isolation practices!) On Sunday morning we can use the notes, follow the readings and enjoy the surprise included (a chocolate, a heart, a paper chain, *below*). Many of us then watch *Songs of Praise*. As an older group Zoom meetings and video presentations were not possible but we remain connected.

Heart to heart in the Glen Waverley community

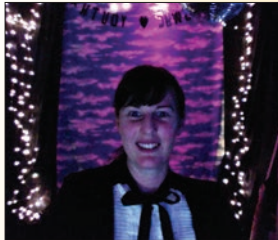
The congregation of Glen Waverley Uniting Church is currently staying at home and isolating, but that hasn't stopped them from 'Sending Love' out to their local community with a display of colourful hearts. Members of all ages were invited to colour in and decorate a Sending Love heart which was then planted in the front lawn of the church. Copies of the colourful hearts have been delivered to local businesses to thank them for "being there and staying open", and these are now proudly displayed in shop windows.



iGen adapts quickly to online environment

WE have been exploring ways to be together & continue to meet, from weekly Youth Group Zooms with activities like "My Masterpiece" where each of our young people and leaders are shown an art Masterpiece on the screen & then run off to work on their own interpretation of the painting.

This was hilarious and involved all sorts of props and household items and even pets. We also felt sad that a number of our year 12 students were missing out on their formals so we had a formal night. We encouraged dressing up and decorating rooms with lights and glitter balls, pictured left. Our junior youth group has also grown in relationships and community as they insisted on meeting weekly!



*Headress hilarity...
having fun during
Online Chat
Worship*



We have loved how our children's program has been going online and have been amazed at the creativity and interaction. We think this may change a bit as school goes back, as we are meeting Monday afternoons instead of Sundays. We also tried a community installation (we loved the rainbow and teddy bear trails) asking our congregation to colour in hearts that simply said Sending Love. We laminated the hearts and popped them on the church lawn, plus a real-estate board. We then also printed a thank you note on the back of the hearts, thanking our local heroes (shops, cafe, bakeries) for serving us during this time. We were chuffed as a number of the businesses have put them up in their windows and on display in their store. **by Alanee Hearnshaw, Glen Waverley UCA**

Shaping Family Ministry online

THE past few months have been full of uncertainty, but our ministry has involved new ways of connecting with our communities. It has been a steep learning curve. We have embraced new technologies and platforms to maintain relationships and foster discipleship in a time of displacement. We have been using Zoom to connect with our Worship @ 9 service, to touch base during the week and have a coffee/tea and dessert each Tuesday night. Having a space available to meet has been important, regardless of how many people use it.

While our Playgroups are unable to meet face-to-face we have been able to meet via Zoom, see how families are travelling, read stories and sing songs. Phone calls are also an important way of staying connected. As restrictions have lifted, I am beginning to visit families as well. Together at St A's (Messy Church) has changed somewhat. We have structured it to incorporate hospitality within the celebration element. We have invited families to participate in the cooking segment, which has been messy and fun. Families have also shared the food that they have created with friends because they have made more than enough for their dinner. This has been appreciated by their friends, and is a new and exciting way of developing discipleship!

I hope this can encourage you to grow and cultivate new ways of connecting with people, both those in our congregations and those who are our neighbours. Blessings.

by Mat Pendle, St Andrews Uniting Church Berwick



Trying out new things

AS CHURCHES closed due to COVID 19, Pakenham collaboratively joined with Cranbourne and Endeavour Hills to produce a recorded service each week at Cranbourne. As an advocate for intergenerational worship I was concerned that a recorded service may not be suitable for all ages and we may find some of our younger generations not engaging. I joined the team to give some balance and thought to children's ministry. Each week, Rev. Tony Duncan and I meet to record a kid's time to work alongside the worship. This is a fun and 'don't take yourself too seriously' space where we can explore the Bible reading in a more casual atmosphere. We have fun with it, although there are limitations to what we are doing. As weeks pass, we are considering ways in which we can use props and other forms to engage with our communities. I know there is room for improvement but I can also see the value in connecting with congregations in this way. Please join us each week at <https://cranbourneunitingchurch.blogspot.com/>

by Jo Crisp, Pakenham UCA

iGen adapts quickly to online environment

THERE are many things happening across church communities, but what has been the greatest asset for the youth and young adults at Murrumbidgee UC is the missional community of The Sonder Collective. We have been able to join in within a larger framework of church communities and hear about what each space is doing throughout COVID-19. As the online Sonder community, "SonderCloud", has already been operating since last year it has become an invaluable resource during these uncertain times. Connecting to this platform has enabled us to maintain our relationships within our local churches, but also with others across Australia (and even those on exchange across the world). Many other church communities have been engaging on the Sonder Collective platform as a way to resource their young people with studies, community and a place to foster a sense of joy. There is something happening every day, from game nights, to movie sessions and study groups, as well as a place to debrief life and share the abundance of services our home churches are

SONDER COLLECTIVE

many churches · one church

by Kelly Skilton, Murrumbidgee UCA

producing. Whether this is with one young person from a church in Geelong, through to the handful of young adults from a church in Brighton,



the online Sonder platform has been a place where people are able to connect.

There are many ways your church communities can connect in: www.sondercollective.org - www.facebook.com/sondercollective - ig: @the.sondercollective

Understanding Generation Alpha

A KEY aspect of any ministry, but particularly intergenerational ministry, is an understanding of the people we are working with. McCrindle Research gives an excellent overview of the general characteristics of Generation Alpha (that is, those people born from 2010 onwards) on the link below and provides an up-to-date perspective on the impact of Covid-19 on emerging generations.

Star (on)line-up for InterGenerate

2020 InterGenerate Australia Conference June 16,17 – NOW ON-LINE!

In a brilliant initiative, no matter where you are located, you will now be able to join in with this intergenerational ministry conference.

Featuring an amazing line-up of international presenters that includes Dr Holly Allen, Christina Embree, John Roberto, Caesar Kalinowski, Don McLafferty and Liz Perraud, this is arguably the most significant intergenerational learning opportunity for 2020. Suitable for individual ministers, pastors, practitioners and for ministry leadership teams. Connect in anytime during the two days for speakers live online with a combination of Input/ Questions and for break-out rooms to discuss the topics. Whatever you miss during this time you can watch later at your convenience. Conference fees includes access to all sessions afterward as a resource to share with your team. All this for only \$50! Information and registration: <https://www.intergenerate.com.au/events>



Faith and families

Connecting Families, Nurturing Faith is a NEW resource for ministry leaders to encourage discipleship across households. It includes a step by step process, a checklist, ideas to share with families and information about four recommended resources. This is not another discipleship resource but is a tool

to assist ministry leaders to choose a resource, to communicate with families to nurture faith at home and to encourage families to connect with each other, particularly while we cannot meet face-to-face. It has been a collaboration by Melissa Neumann (UC Synod of South Australia) and Chris Barnett (UC Synod of Victoria and Tasmania). Visit <https://sa.uca.org.au/documents/intergen-docs/resources/Connecting-Families-Nurturing-Faith-2020.pdf>

Why Connect Church Online?

by
Craig Mitchell, PM
Church Development

"We want to continue connecting online after we regather!"

That's been the repeated message from church leaders who have found the reach of their online worship to exceed their usual church attendance. Since normal resumption of gathered worship has yet to happen, now is a good time to work on what it might mean to connect with people beyond our programmed times of gathering. Why would we try to do it in the first place?

1. Some people lead busy lives;
2. Some people have difficulty attending;
3. Some people are checking us out;
4. Some people feel that they wouldn't fit in;
5. Most people have home internet;
6. Most people have mobile devices.

Do we want to encourage people to be online 24/7? I don't think so. But what they do is their choice.

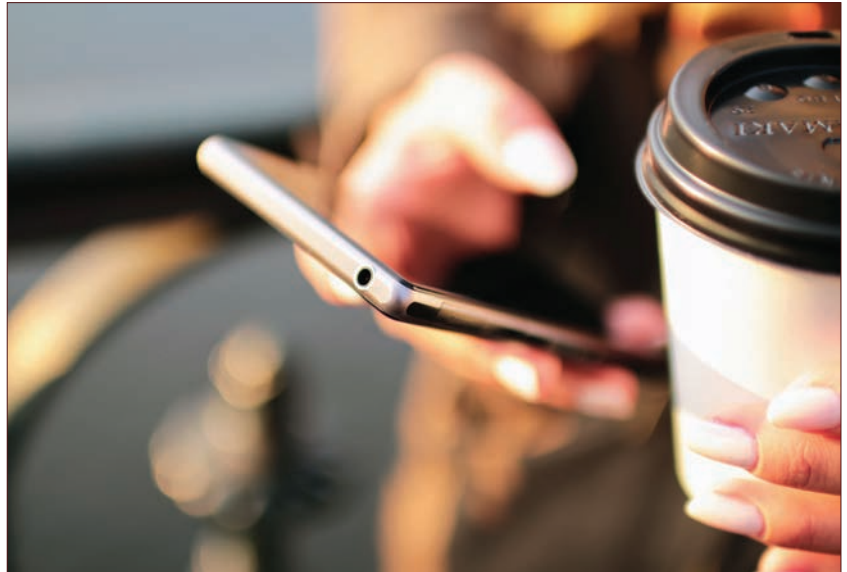
Do we want to meet people where they are at? Yes. Is this the only way for people to grow spiritually? Not at all. However online offers a wide range of ways to engage spiritually.

Is this encouraging individualism? Well, spiritual growth is partly individual. However online can also mean greater connection, not lesser.

What about those who can't connect? Any church needs multiple options for people to engage in faith formation.

Is this time consuming or expensive for church leaders? As little or as much as you choose to invest.

I explore points 1 to 6 in more depth on my Blog at <http://growing-disciples.org.au/why-connect-online/>



Combining church channels



A discussion on the merits and nuances of offering online and face-to-face faith avenues for churches is now on the Presbytery Facebook page.

If you have thoughts or ideas on this click on

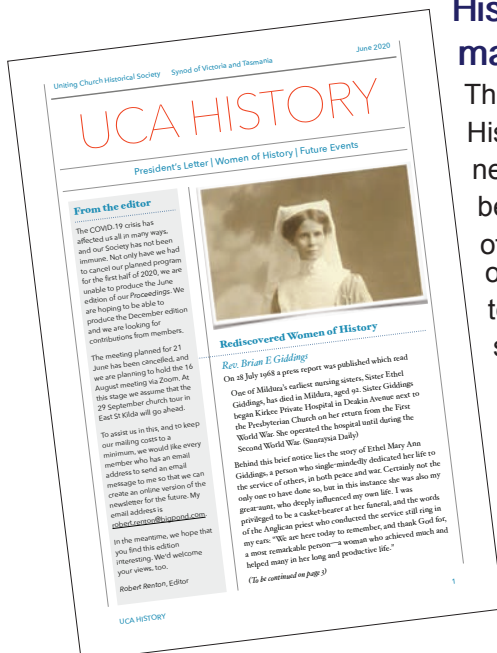
<https://www.facebook.com/ucappep.org/>

Search for the Discussion Post, launched on May 25, with the sticky header above.

History in the making

The Uniting Church Historical Society's newsletter is out now, being sent out in lieu of the June edition of *Proceedings*. We have had to cancel our June meeting (no surprises there) and we are planning to hold our August meeting on Zoom, all being well. If anyone would like a copy of the newsletter, please contact me and I'll send it to you.

Many thanks, Robert Renton
robert.renton@bigpond.com
Tel. 0427 812 606



Good home for printer sought

THERE'S a brand new printer on offer, courtesy of Arthur Poole, and he'd love it to go to a good home. It's a Fuji Xerox

DocuPrintM225dw

No payment expected, but a

donation to Frankston UC's www.womanandchildhealth.org might be nice.

E-mail arthur.ruth@bigpond.com



Meeting a vital human need through Mental Health First Aid

Around 1 in 5 Australian adults experience a common mental illness each year. Yet many people feel uncomfortable and unprepared when thinking about starting a conversation with someone they are concerned about. Having mental health first aid skills means that you can assist someone developing a mental health problem or experiencing a mental health crisis. This online training program helps gain essential pastoral skills. Learn about the signs and symptoms of common mental health problems in adults, how to provide initial help, where and how to get professional help, what sort of help has been shown by research to be effective, and how to provide first aid in a crisis situation.

The Training includes 7-8 hours of self-paced online learning and two 2.5 hour online group Zoom sessions. Online learning starts in July. Led by Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Australia, a national not-for-profit organisation focused on mental health training and research. Hosted by PPE, Yarra Yarra and Gippsland presbyteries. Cost \$225 includes printed manual. Book: tinyurl.com/ppe-events. Limited places.



Care packages for those in need

As part of their 'Caring for our Community' initiative,



Mornington Peninsula Shire in partnership with local Community Support Centres, is offering care packages for our most vulnerable and isolated community members who are impacted by the Coronavirus pandemic on the Peninsula.

Care packages will be sent to eligible households through contactless delivery. Care packages will include non-perishable food and essential hygiene items. You are eligible to receive a care package if you:

- are being impacted by Covid-19 due to self-isolation
 - are considered 'at risk' of getting COVID-19
 - have no support locally to access supplies
 - are experiencing significant hardship due the current situation.
- To register to receive a care package from Mornington Peninsula Shire phone 1300 850 600.

Wunderbar result for Naomi

CORNISH College is thrilled to announce that Year 12 student and one of our 2020 College Captains, Naomi Kah, scooped a Study Award as part of the Premier's VCE Awards for outstanding academic achievement in 2019. Naomi achieved a perfect score of 50 in German. The Premier's VCE Awards recognise students who have demonstrated outstanding achievement in the Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE). Principal of Cornish College, Nicola Forrest, praised Naomi for her fantastic results.

"Congratulations to Naomi on her outstanding academic achievement. These results are a testament not only to Naomi's dedication and hard work, but also to her personal growth and development. We are extremely proud of her."

Naomi is yet to decide what the future holds, but is exploring a range of opportunities for life after Cornish,

such as taking a gap year to work and travel to Germany; enrolling in a science or medicine degree or moving into the research sector. She says: "I definitely want to be doing something that's making a positive difference in the world and making a positive impact on other people's lives. I really care about other people and I feel we need to help other people if they're going through tough situations. We've got all sorts of different issues in the world that need to be solved. For me, that's really important."



Reflections on Faith

COVID-19 has, with little notice, brought disruption, vulnerability, unsettledness and fear into our world. It has upended our routines, assumptions and expectations. While the easing of stay-at-home restrictions will be welcome relief for some, for others, especially for those at risk, and those connected with them, it will bring new challenges which will likely intensify the disquiet and fear. Even while Australia currently has low rates of community transmission, and is in a good position to stay safe, we are all aware that a small misstep can all too quickly change things, as we have seen overseas. As a Church, and as individuals, we are called to make decisions to take the next step. There is an instinctive craving to 'return to normal'. We have missed seeing the faces of our friends and family,

Moving forward

by Rev Anneke Oppewal, PM Pastoral



our traditions and customs, our music and liturgy, our buildings, our places in the pews, our financial stability. What should our focus be in order to make these decisions? What would God's focus be?

Over the last couple of weeks I've been reflecting on the books of Luke and Acts, helped by reflections Sunny Chen shared with me a couple of years ago when he was

writing his PhD on the topic.

In both Luke and Acts, there is movement directed away from Temple worship.

Luke starts with Zechariah the priest's encounter with God in the temple, and it finishes with Paul, in a prison cell in Rome. From one static centre of worship, the early Christian community travels and discovers that God can be encountered in many places, in unexpected ways. Jesus roams the countryside working miracles and bringing people closer to God outside the worship centres of his day.

At Pentecost, people, huddled fearfully in an upper room, are touched by the Spirit, and venture courageously outside, touching, in turn, the spirit of people of many languages and backgrounds, gathered in what was most likely a market place. All through the books of Luke and Acts we see God popping up in all sorts of unlikely places and with all sorts of unlikely people. The early Christians were led by Jesus to rethink their attachment to their temple, synagogues, rituals, customs and treasured traditions. The Holy Spirit moved Jesus' followers to find new ways to be in the world with God, serving in ways Christ had shown them. Over and over again, God's focus has been on his people, especially those who are most vulnerable. Our call is to go forward, not back - to let go of what is no longer safe or useful, and open our minds to what the new normal needs of us, so we can find creative ways of being God's people, to care for one another, and the wider world, post COVID-19.

Anxiety 101

AT THIS time during Covid 19 anxiety has become part of daily reality for most of us.

Here are a few tips:

Take a few deeper breaths, making sure the out-breath is the same or longer than your in-breath.

Something I learned from therapist Tara Brach:

Take a RAIN check if you feel anxiety is starting to become overwhelming:

- **Recognise** that you feel anxious and allow the feeling to surface
- **Acknowledge** and accept the feeling as part of your experience right now, you may want to say something like 'its just a feeling' inside your mind
- **Investigate** - Take a step back and ask yourself if this is legit or just your fruitful imagination running riot, if it is in proportion to the perceived threat, if it is helping you in any way and if there is any action you can take.
- **Non attachment** - take a step back and realise that the anxiety is part of you and not all of you.

I learned a prayer version of this many years ago from Corrie ten Boom a Dutch woman who survived the Nazi death camps:

Bring it to God. In prayer bring whatever it is that's troubling you to God, tell God all about it, in as much detail as you can. God won't laugh, won't interrupt you, and will listen.

Before God investigate the scary, overwhelming, or otherwise uncomfortable and painful things that bother you.

Try, if you can, to take a step back and look at it from the God perspective.

See if there is anything you can do about them - if so see if you can, with God's help, (What would Jesus do) find ways to make a plan and execute it.

If not - leave it with God, and pray for those who may be able to make a difference where you can't.

Let it go.



Praying with the Trinity

When God comes
to be present with us
it is not in one way the invitation comes
it is in many ways.

When God comes
to be present with us
he may sit with us
in the quiet of worship
or walk with us
down the street
to the park or the supermarket

When God comes
to be present with us
it may be like a storm
shaking our foundations
or like a fire
burning away our self centred pre occupations

When God comes
it may be like a gentle ray of sunshine,
a rainbow in the sky,
the sound of waves crashing on rocks
or the wind in the trees outside

When God comes
he can be the friend we were waiting for
that gently encourages
or most honestly tells us how it is
or the stranger that opens
new horizons
and challenges what we knew

When God comes
we can trust
it is with healing
and gentle care
that we will be understood
surrounded by love
and lifted away from fear.

May God come
in whatever way
you and the world around you
may need it now. *Amen*

***A prayer by
Rev Anneke
Oppewal***



I became involved in the Presbytery in February 2015 when I was asked to undertake a supply role as PM Mission & Education. It became clear that the ministry of oversight the Presbytery plays in the Uniting Church requires clarity of vision along with good resourcing and collaboration between its congregations, ministry agents, Presbytery members and leadership. And the Presbytery, to be effective, requires a good working relationship with the Synod.

The Presbytery is not just a sort of middle-management body but is called to know and love the congregations under its care and to foster their life as the embodiment of the church. This is the vision for our church. It seemed we needed to try to fulfill it.

Having opened my mouth too many times on these issues, I was asked by a group of colleagues at the end of 2016 if I would be willing to stand as chairperson. I agreed and was elected.

We engaged Phil McCredden of Ecclesia Leadership who enabled us to do this deeper transformation and reorganisation work, while the Standing Committee continued to do the work required of the Presbytery. We were facing reorganisation of the Synod and changes to funding arrangements for Presbyteries, and we lost our entire PM team.

As a result of the selection and appointment of a new PM team, with significant skills, with clear priorities and mandate, we are beginning to effectively and creatively fulfill the role of the Presbytery and to address the significant challenges in front of us. We have a challenging dual task before us: one of fostering new initiatives and opportunities for growth at the same time as we must pastorally and effectively manage the decline and contraction of other aspects of the church's life. Full speech on the website on footer below.

Presbytery meeting date for 2020

*** Wednesday, June 24th, 7pm**

The next Presbytery in Council meeting - including the induction of the Standing Committee - will be on 24/06/2020 on Zoom. A meeting link will be shared around in the coming weeks.

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....