

NEWSBEAT



NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

JULY 2020

Home sweet home, at last, down in Southern Mornington. Open the door to the full story on page 4.



Bushfires and rescuers have not been forgotten. VCC Emergencies Ministry follow-up kindled on page 5.



Mary joins us online for faith formation

FAITH comes by seeing and hearing. In a 24/7 digital world, we can form faith by engaging people's hearts and minds in many ways and at many times. Stories are central to the task of nurturing disciples. Stories shape our values, stretch our vision, bring us hope, guide our beliefs: the big narrative of Scripture, the testimonies of saints past and present, our own faith journeys.

- What stories will you tell of recent months?
- What stories have disturbed you?
- What stories have brought hope?



by Dr Craig Mitchell
PM Church Development

Hosted by Port Phillip East Presbytery this is the latest online interview in our series on Blended Faith Formation, coming up on Friday 3 July, 10.00-11.30am on [facebook.com/ucappep.org](https://www.facebook.com/ucappep.org)

TV and social media bombard us with multiple truths. In our daily world we are delighted, challenged and transformed by stories, remarkable and ordinary. In the digital world we can explore, connect, share, empower, celebrate and be changed through stories, local and global. We're excited about having a conversation with Dr Mary Hess about the value and possibilities of growing people in faith in the online world using stories. Mary is Professor of Educational Leadership at Luther Seminary in Minnesota, USA. She is a well-known religious educator in the US and internationally. Mary has a strong interest in the role of media in faith formation, religious education and theological education. She is a core member of the International Study Commission in Media, Religion and Culture. <https://meh.religioused.org/web/>



Dr Mary Hess
Luther Seminary
Minnesota US

Digital Storytelling + Faith Formation

Hosted by Port Phillip
East Presbytery

Fri 3 July 10.00-11.30am EST Aust
LIVE at [facebook.com/ucappep.org](https://www.facebook.com/ucappep.org)

“I am the vine, you are the branches” - Moderator sets the scene with John 15

THE Presbytery commissioning service for new Standing Committee appointments made for an uplifting and meaningful Presbytery gathering.

Held via Zoom once again, the meeting on June 24 began with a stimulating and prayerful message from UCA VicTas Moderator Rev Denise Liersch, pictured below, based around *John 15*.

The Presbytery's Commissioning Service was led by acting chair Cameron McAdam (the prayer he shared is featured on page 3), previous chair Andrew Boyle and Presbytery Minister Anneke Oppewal. Watch the entire service on the Presbytery YouTube channel at <https://youtu.be/YWBgbIRXH0Y>



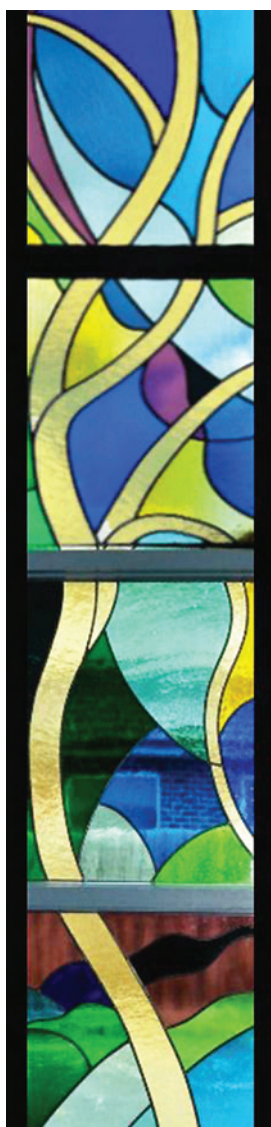
Tom Spurling, elected as Presbytery Chair, is a member of St Luke's Uniting Church, Mount Waverley, and has been a member of the Standing Committee since February 2019. He works one day a week at Swinburne University of Technology as a Professor of Innovation Studies.



Thank you all who participated in the Commissioning Service. I found it most uplifting. I was very pleased that our Moderator, Rev

Denise Liersch, chose to speak on John 15. In 2017 St Luke's, Mount Waverley, installed two marvellous stained-glass windows designed by member, Tony Lenten. One is based on John 14:6, 'I am the way, and the truth, and the life.' And the other, pictured, is based on John 15:5, 'I am the vine, you are the branches'. Tony's design highlights growth through connection. My hope is that our Presbytery will thrive by staying connected to the 'vine' and working productively together.

I have been active in Church life since being an undergraduate at the University of Western Australia, and a member of St Luke's since 1970, where I have served in roles including Elder, Church Council secretary and on the finance committee. My wife and I also lived in Jakarta for three years from 1999 to 2001 where I was Chair of the Council of the Jakarta Community Church.



Photo, above, by Max Darby

Kelly Skilton, elected chair of the new Mission & Leadership Development Committee, is the Youth & Young Adults Pastor at Murrumbeena UC. Also known for founding the missional community the Sonder Collective.

Thank you so much for all your kind words. I have felt welcomed and encouraged across the Presbytery as I have stepped into the role of Chair of the Mission & Leadership Development



Committee. Across PPEP it is evident that there is an abundance of amazing projects each congregation is engaged in. These ventures are active responses to mission across our communities, though what would it mean to establish a unified approach of action and stewardship for PPEP? I would love to see many changes and developments in the life of the church, though in the coming years my hope is that the MLDC embodies an active posture of listening. Not only to be able to hear one another more clearly, but also so we are able to hear the movement of the Holy Spirit working across this generation. It is this that leaves me excited and hopeful, the cultural shifts and developments we could uncover, and the active steps forward we could be taking as a Presbytery together.

"There is always an air of excitement when new people take on leadership responsibility," said Rev Cameron McAdam at the Commissioning service. "It is a time of celebration and hope as we turn our eyes and minds towards a new future. In that spirit we offer prayers of hope, and I'm grateful to my colleague John van de Laar on whose prayer these words are based..."

Prayer

In the quiet moments, in the still places,

we can sometimes hear it;

An urgent voice, echoing

through the wildernesses of the world,

and of our hearts

calling us to prepare and to participate in the new world that wants to be born.

How can we be part of something that we haven't seen,
that we struggle even to conceptualise, let alone understand?
Yet, still the voice calls, and our hearts stir.

We begin to imagine a world of joy and creativity,
a world where the poor are always cared for and the rich are always generous;
a world where justice guides, and where mourning is always temporary;
a world where the highest values are valued most highly
and where priorities and agendas are set with the greatest good in mind.

This world exists, Jesus, in the Gospel you preached,
in the stable and the cross and the empty tomb,
in Baptismal waters and Eucharistic meals in your constant calling, and your constant coming.

And so, as a Presbytery we gather tonight and we praise you for this world,
and for the dream that we can learn to know it here and now
even as you do.

Gather us together as your presbytery, your church, your people, so that together we might live your Gospel vision, we pray in Jesus name. **Amen.**



Stonnington Uniting Church makes a stand

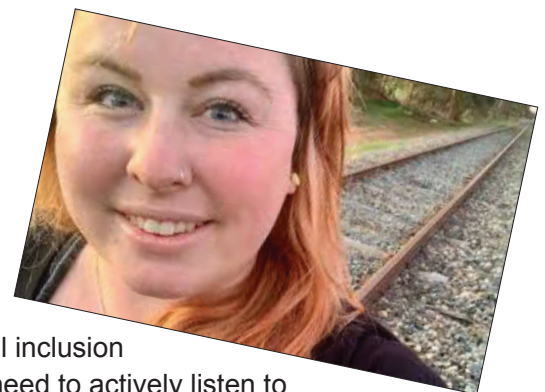
GROWING up in a South African family I grew up hearing of the damage of racial segregation and systemic oppression.

Particularly the dangerous reality of when the church remains silent. The truth is I had heard about this from my parents, and sisters; all white people that benefited from the apartheid regime. My family taught me that when we benefit from the system it is then



our responsibility to actively posture ourselves differently. We do this by loudly advocating through alliance, and listening deeply to the voices of those crying out. We need to learn that 'silence' is more than just the absence of a voice, but rather it is about the absence of listening to those crying out for radical change. The Black Lives Matter movement reminds us, again, that if we cannot see 'what the problem is' then we are sitting in the comfort of the privileged—we are the oppressive system.

As the church, institutionally and individually, it is our responsibility to recognise our complacencies and actively work toward seeing the Kingdom of God lived out on earth; that is a reality of radical inclusion and reconciliation. We need to actively listen to the voices of young people, migrant peoples, people of colour, and Australia's First Peoples. It is too dangerous for the church to remain silent.



by Kelly Skilton



earth finally come together

by Rex
Chris Menelly

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Above:

Newsbeat

issue from

January 2018

From this....

THE congregation at Southern Mornington Peninsula Uniting Church can heave a sigh of relief and satisfaction as we sign off on the Lease for Murray Anderson Place [MAP] with NDISP who will be the official SDA Provider [Property Managers] for the coming 10 years.

As Churchill said: "This is not the beginning of the end – but the end of the beginning" of the dream project to provide special independent accommodation for adults with an intellectual disability at Southern Mornington Peninsula Uniting Church. Our state of the art four-unit complex is ready for occupancy. Now we can look forward to welcoming eight eligible residents, although Covid 19 restrictions will have to be observed.

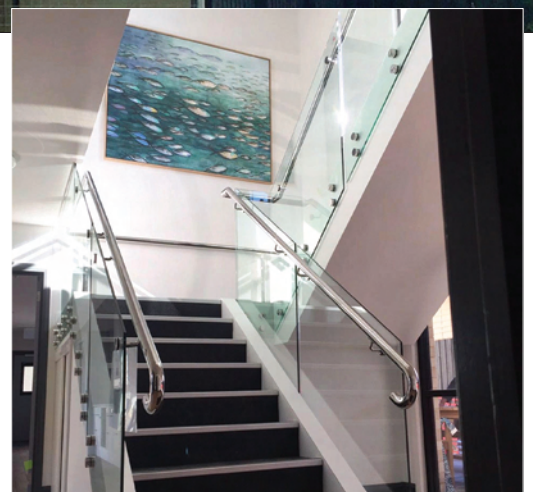
The regulations applying to Federal and State government grants and the regulations applying to the NDIS have controlled the direction of this unique missional project and we have to thank

Synod's Property Services and Mission Resources Department for the expert assistance they provided.

A special mention must be made of the outstanding work and enthusiasm afforded us by Rina Neustroski, our project manager. Without the expert support from Synod and Rina, this project would not have succeeded.

Words Jill Fearon.

Images Peter Hunter.



... to this

A Network of Care

The COVID-19 pandemic came hard on the heels of the devastating bushfires across Australia. Alan Mathews shares some reflections and images of the trauma and recovery.

ALONGSIDE many other Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry [VCCEM] volunteers, I was deployed during January and February to offer care following the East Gippsland bushfires. After work at the Recovery Centre in Bairnsdale, on two occasions, in teams of three, I worked alongside a Local Government Environmental Health Officer and a Building Surveyor to help with the process of assessment and healing. The first week was at Sarsfield, the second, from Buchan to Wulgulmerang and Gelantipy.



There were many profound experiences:

Being trusted with people's pain-filled stories was like walking on holy ground: God with us in the interactions.

The tears and telling their story was cathartic: releasing emotion, lightening the load – at least for the moment.

The sense of working in a team, with each of us using our gifts, offering what was needed, was a blessing: to the people

we met and to ourselves. Seeing the nature's regrowth was a sign of hope; though properties are still to be cleared and some people are still living in tents or caravans.

I visited Sarsfield Estate, a local winery. While talking with the owners, I heard that their 2020 vintage was ruined, many vines were destroyed; and, since the fires, their sales had almost stopped. So, I bought wine; and, on arriving home, took some to a BBQ of High Street Uniting Church people for a tasting. Orders were taken



from that group and others, with nearly 30 people enjoying their wine. Recently I received this message of thanks: "You supported us with more than considerable wine sales to your friends. I loved your photography and very much appreciate your quiet and gentle understanding." It is good to be part of a network of care.

The Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministry plays an important role in community care and support, writes regional co-ordinator Rev Jay Robinson. A large number of VCCEM volunteers were involved in the bushfire response, and other emergency situations, such as the Bourke St Mall incident, where listening ears and support are needed. A number of the members of the Presbytery, both lay and ordained, are volunteers for the VCCEM already, but there can always be more. If you are an accredited VCCEM volunteer the Presbytery is keen to know. Due to privacy laws the Presbytery can only get this information from you! So, please write to secretary@ucappep.org If you are interested in getting involved in VCCEM then speak to Michael Downing at Michael.Downing@vcc.org.au who will share opportunities to get involved in this great ministry.

Rethinking Church Finances

THE Spirited Generosity seminars being offered by the presbytery are an opportunity to consider the why, how, when and who of people's financial giving. *"This is a conversation about people's motivation for giving, and an opportunity to re-examine how we think about weekly offerings. More importantly, it is about recognising that generosity is part of our discipleship."*

Craig Mitchell and Duncan Macleod have run a series of four online seminars in June, and these are repeated in July. The seminars are based on the work of Carolyn Kitto from Spirited Consulting and Dr Kennon Callahan from the US.

Craig says: *"While we refer to financial giving, this is not about a stewardship program. The starting point is how our churches see themselves as sharing in the mission of God. But it is also about moving from a sense of giving based on obligation and commitment to a broader sense of how and why people are willing to make a positive difference in the lives of others."*



The second series of Spirited Generosity starts 8 July, for 4 Wednesdays, 10.30am - 12.00pm. Registrations at www.tinyurl.com/ppe-events

"WE'RE inviting congregations to reframe their budgets from maintenance to mission and to see giving as participation in the mission of God".

Bev Boys, Treasurer at Seaford UC Treasurer, says: *"I have found the seminars very interesting. From a small congregation perspective they encourage thinking about our mission and the relation to how we are resourcing this and why. The seminars also enable us to think about alternatives for resourcing and options without asking for more from the congregation."*

"We've had a mixture of people learning: treasurers, chairs, secretaries, ministers. Whilst this is to a certain amount about cash, it is quite a different way of looking at the interaction of the church's mission and finances, I think it would be good for all the leadership team rather than just the Treasurer. It is fairly straightforward, a good different way of looking at things," adds David Higham, Berwick UC Church Council and Seaford UC supply ministry.

Rev Jay Robinson, Murrumbidgee UC says: *"The Spirited Generosity training is highlighting the need for good and accurate communication and has excited and inspired me about the possible options for the future. It has been great to think outside the square as we encourage our congregations in various forms of giving and really great that our treasurer has joined me in these sessions."*

Places still available for July seminars on financial advice

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.

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

Register at www.tinyurl.com/ppe-events
Registrations close one week before each series.

For details contact Craig Mitchell at pm-cd@ucappep.org

Reflections on Faith

We're going on a bear hunt...

WHEN our children were smaller they couldn't get enough of the book 'We're going on a bear hunt' by Michael Rosen. It came with movements, and sounds, and vivid conjuring up of the various obstacles, and a tape to play in the car. It travelled with us wherever we went and it even moved continents with us, from Holland to Australia to England and back to Australia again.

In hindsight I think the song reflected what we were going through at the time. We were on a bear hunt where nothing was ever certain and where new and different challenges cropped up all the time. We made new friends, learned new customs, and found ways to fit into environments that were quite alien to us.

When Tanya Wittwer talked to us about pastoral care after Covid19 and compared it to moving into another culture, memories of this time surfaced. With bears in windows everywhere perhaps that song was there all along, but only then did I realise what this story meant to us in a time of great upheaval and change and how it had provided us with something solid to hold on to, giving us a sense of safety and belonging as well as encouragement. Although the world may have felt like it was upside down, what we were doing in the end was none other than a bear hunt. And all we needed to do was to get through it.

In the current crisis it could be like this: "We're going on a bear hunt, oh, no, there is Covid 19, we can't

go under it, we can't go over it, we have to go through it... (sounds and movements to put in as appropriate)."

In the Psalms we find sentiments like that. Psalm 23 for instance speaks of travelling through death's valley and coming out the other end with God's help. All through the scriptures there are stories about God's people moving through difficult times or into alien territory and finding a way through challenging circumstances into a new way of being with God's help.

It is never easy to be in a place of great uncertainty like we are now. As people we like control, we like to know what we're in for. We like to feel secure.

But if and when we find ourselves in a situation where we don't feel secure, it is good to know we've got a book full of stories, songs and ritual to draw from to help us get through.

They can connect us, as a community, and show us where to go. Not under, not over, not around, but right through it, trusting that God will still be the same on the other side of whatever it is that lies ahead of us.

by
**Rev Anneke
Oppewal
Port Phillip East
Presbytery Minister
Pastoral**



are valued and honoured. If you have experienced violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation as a person with a disability, or are aware of this happening, we encourage you to tell your story or make a submission to the Disability Royal Commission. You can do this in writing or by asking for a private session with a Commissioner. It can be distressing and difficult to raise these issues and the Commission can provide you with counselling and support. For more details go to <https://disability.royalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story>

However, if you have any questions or would like to provide feedback, you can contact Rev Andy Calder on either andy.calder@victas.uca.org.au or 03 9380 8844. Andy is the Synod's Disability Inclusion Advocate and is Chairperson of the Synod's Disability Royal Commission Task Force. Any such contact will be confidential.

Respect and values motivate Commission

THE Synod of Victoria and Tasmania welcomes the Royal Commission and is committed to responding actively and fully.

The Commission provides an opportunity for us to work together with people with disability to create a society that is inclusive, respectful of difference and where all people



Royal Commission

into Violence, Abuse,
Neglect and Exploitation
of People with Disability

THIS online training program helps gain essential pastoral skills. 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.



Mental Health matters

ONLINE

MENTAL HEALTH

FIRST AID TRAINING



Cost
\$225
includes
Manual

Lay Leadership Resources

Just a reminder that the Synod has a range of leadership resources that can be accessed online or downloaded for local use.

<https://victas.uca.org.au/community-learning/leadership/lay-resources/>

And don't forget the excellent courses at Pilgrim. Check out their Semester Two offerings at <https://pilgrim.edu.au/>

Children & Families Ministry Intensive Unit

The upcoming Children & Families Ministry intensive and the Graduate Certificate

July 15-17, 20-22

in Children & Families Ministry are excellent professional development opportunities for ministers, pastors, chaplains, Christian educators and those in paid children & families ministry roles. Enquire NOW about the possibility of participating in the July offering ON-LINE. Click <https://victas.uca.org.au/event/children-families-ministry-core-issues-in-diverse-contexts/> or e-mail chris.barnett@victas.uca.edu.au to express interest or find out more.

Sacraments in the Uniting Church

Leaders: Rev Anneke Oppewal and Rev Duncan Macleod

During the COVID-19 restrictions we've had to ask significant questions about why we celebrate communion, the role of the presider, and the issue of where and when we celebrate. Here's a great chance to explore these questions and more. Sacraments in the Uniting Church is an invitation to explore the meaning of baptism and communion, and discuss what God offers us as we participate in them.

The course is offered to all people interested in learning more about our experience of God in the sacraments. People who are hoping to be authorised as lay presiders will need to complete the five assignments associated with this course. The \$30 fee covers a pack of printed UCA resources for communion, baptism and thanksgiving for a child.

Registration at tinyurl.com/ppe-events

Wednesdays 7- 8 pm
1 July to 19 August

Sacraments in The Uniting Church

PORT PHILLIP EAST
PRESBYTERY

For more information
contact Duncan Macleod
pm-tl@ucappep.org
0439 828 718
Register online at
www.tinyurl.com/ppe-events



Wednesdays 1 July to 19 August, 7.00-8.00pm

GATHERINGS

What face-to-face gatherings are permitted at church? As of 25/06/2020:

The recommencement of small gatherings for worship, prayer, or Bible study, or even home visits to some church members, presents a challenging task of how to decide who may take part without the risk of some feeling excluded. This includes finding ways of meeting the safety requirements that don't involve or obligate those most at risk of severe illness, e.g. those over 70 or with health conditions, including Ministers or other congregation leaders, to do the tasks to achieve these requirements. This will require careful consideration by each Church Council based on local needs and requirements. Please keep your Presbytery informed about your plans for face-to-face gatherings including worship.

Before using any church owned buildings, or allowing any other group to use church-owned buildings, please complete the Recovery Checklist at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8848/recovery-action-plan-checklist>

Religious gatherings and ceremonies are permitted with up to 20 people plus the minimum people required to conduct the gathering to be held indoors or outdoors, providing physical distancing can be maintained (1.5metres and a minimum floorspace of 4 sqm per person is available). This number was scheduled to increase to 50 people on June 22, but the government now insists all religious gatherings and ceremonies be capped at 20 people (plus those involved in staging the worship)

Outdoor religious gatherings and ceremonies are permitted providing physical distancing requirements can be maintained.

At least one hour should be allowed between services or ceremonies to reduce the risk of crowds at entrances and exits and to enable cleaning. Attendee names and contact details must be recorded in case contact tracing is required. As a minimum these must contain the first name and contact telephone number of every attendee. These records should be kept for 28 days.

Post-pandemic advice

VARIOUS documents from the VicTas Synod in relation to COVID-19 are now being circulated. FAQ update includes reference to the new checklist, a visitor contact sheet, and a guide to communion for congregations who are starting to gather again. They can be viewed in full on the Synod website at www.victas.uca.org.au

COVID-19 VICTORIA FAQs
AS AT JUNE 22, 2020

To help identify items which are new, or have been updated since the last FAQ, simply look for:

NEW UPDATE

This week's updates:

- GATHERINGS
- COMMUNITY/CHURCH HALLS

How will we know about further updates?

We have established a Synod Crisis Management Team which monitors changes on a daily basis. Compliance and Pastoral advice will continue to be issued via emailed letters from the General Secretary and/or Moderator. All other relevant advice will continue to be sent via the special Coronavirus editions of Synod eNews, which will appear in your inbox from "Communications". ENews and emailed letters are sent to all Presbyteries, all ministers, all church councils.

Separate editions of these FAQs are now being produced for Victoria and Tasmania reflecting the different approaches of each state government in easing Covid-19 restrictions. Please ensure that you are reading the version relevant to your state.

MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Ethnologue have information available in 51 languages at: www.ethnologue.com/a/COVID-19-comparative-translated-resources/. The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: <https://govt1311language.homeaffairs.gov.au/health/>

LIVE-STREAMING WORSHIP

How many people can be involved in live-streaming worship services?

Recording and live-streaming of worship services is permitted providing all of the following guidelines are met. This streaming of worship services is permitted only when the number of people at the premises is limited to twenty (including those providing technical support) plus those participating in the ceremony and providing the following social distancing requirements can be met:

- Each person must maintain a distance of at least 1.5m from another person
- At least 4sqm of floor area per person is required in the place where the ceremony/performance takes place. This means the immediate area around the participants where the ceremony is performed.

In addition, you must take measures to mitigate any risk of disease transmission by ensuring the following measures are in place:

- Exclude persons who are unwell from participating in the production of the live streaming
- Exclude persons in identified vulnerable groups from participating in the ceremony and the production of the live streaming, including:
 - Those who are immunocompromised, etc.
 - over 70
 - over 65 with significant medical conditions
- Aboriginal Tasmanians over 50 with significant medical conditions
- Ensure all people present practice good respiratory and hand hygiene and provide appropriate hand washing facilities and hand sanitiser
- Maintain environmental cleaning standards in line with those published by the Australian Government Department of Health.

Uniting Church in Australia
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IMPORTANT!

This document contains references to Covid safety in Kitchens.

The Synod Covid Management Team is still trying to obtain clear guidelines for conducting morning and/or afternoon teas and other types of meal sharing.

Until such time as the weekly FAQs can provide that guidance these activities should not occur.

Please regard all references in this document to kitchen and food safety only as an opportunity to prepare for when these activities can recommence.

Take time

Take the time required to assess risks, address them and only proceed once you're sure that you have people, plans and resources needed to open up again.

Take care

Consider the needs of people who are vulnerable because of their age and health as you put in place your plans.

Anxiety about being in public spaces may be addressed as we demonstrate that we've worked out ways to keep people safe in this time.

As we start to gather again for worship and other activities, this document will help you ensure that you do so safely.

SECTION A: PREPARING A COVID-SAFE BUILDING

This section should be completed before re-opening any building for worship or any other type of gathering. This needs to be completed only once.

SECTION B: KEEPING A BUILDING COVID-SAFE

This section outlines the ongoing and recurring measures required to keep buildings safe in which to gather. This needs to be completed and updated regularly.

SECTION C: COVID-SAFE GATHERINGS

This section outlines the specific measures required before/during/after every gathering for the safety of all attendees. This needs to be completed before and after every gathering.

The requirements shown in all three sections are based on current Government directives. All requirements must be followed to ensure COVID-compliance.

COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan for Congregations V1.1

June 2020



Presbytery meeting date for 2020

* Wednesday, July 29th, 7.30pm

The next Presbytery in Council Zoom meeting will be held on Wednesday 29 July and will include receiving a recommendation from the Ministry Formation Committee of a candidate for Minister of the Word and confirming a candidate for ordination. 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@ucappeg.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.ucappeg.org and www.facebook.com/ucappeg.org for news, events and more....