

# NEWSBEAT



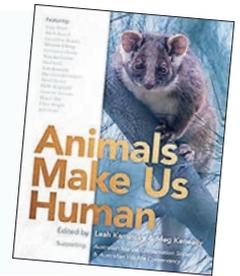
NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

NOVEMBER 2020



This famous author has forged a friendship with one of our Uniting Church school students. Find out more on page 2.

The bushfires have not been forgotten. Turn to page 6 to see which PPEP minister is featured in this new book.



## Church Emerging...

MUCH of 2020 has been spent winding down our physical presence on church sites, getting used to connecting with each other online. Now that the Victorian government is starting to ease restrictions on gathering, we're facing a new set of complexities. It feels like emerging from hibernation to find a world that is still going through significant changes.

One of the benefits of this year is the closer link between our congregational leaders, the Presbytery, and Synod staff as we work out what we need to be saying together each week. We've just had Synod Insurance & Risk Manager David Herbert help us run successful Zoom workshops to unpack the meanings of the government directives around gathering inside, outside, in public places.

From November 9, all going well, we won't be requiring worker permits, and we'll be free to travel beyond 25 kms as well as travel to and from regional Victoria.

We still carry huge responsibilities for the health and safety of members of our congregations, members of people using our buildings, and people with whom we come into contact.

Some churches have already decided not to make any significant changes to worship and use of building arrangements until well after Christmas.

*'In all of this, we remember to keep alive our God-given sense of vision, hope and dreaming a new future.'*

Duncan Macleod



by Duncan Macleod  
Presbytery Minister:  
Team Leader

Others are wrestling with varying degrees of opening up and returning to more face-to-face contact and opening up of premises.

We don't have instructions that cover every part of what we do together. It's at times like this that we draw on our ethical values: care for the vulnerable, open communication, patience with one another and ourselves, a posture of learning, and the sense that we are not alone.

In all of this, we remember to keep alive our God-given sense of vision, hope and dreaming a new future.

See the latest Frequently Asked Questions documents on the Presbytery website [www.ucappep.org](http://www.ucappep.org) and the Synod website, [www.victas.uca.org.au](http://www.victas.uca.org.au)

**COVID-19 METRO MELBOURNE FAQs**  
AS AT OCTOBER 29, 2020

**Metropolitan Melbourne moved to the Third Step (Stage 3) restrictions, from 11:59pm 27 October 2020 with a number of restrictions eased.**

**What HAS changed for metropolitan Melbourne?**

- Leave home: stay local (25km), no restrictions on reasons to leave home but stay safe. The restrictions to travel into Regional Victoria will remain until 11:59pm November 6.
- Visitors to the home: households can have two people from one other household plus their dependents (children under 18 or other dependents such as elderly people) to visit once per day. Different visitors can visit on different days. All visits must be within a 25km radius. Your household can either visit OR be visited once per day, but not both.
- Weddings: allowed indoors or outdoors with up to 10 people. The couple, the celebrant and one photographer are not included in this limit.
- Funerals: allowed with up to 20 people (not including infants under 12 months of age or people required to conduct the funeral).
- Religion: outdoor religious gatherings, with no sharing of food, drink or other items by participants, for up to 20 people plus a faith leader are allowed proximate to a place of worship. Indoor ceremonies for a faith leader and up to 10 members of the public in multiple groups, with each group socially distant, are permitted. Maximum duration of 90min, with clearing requirements between services. No food, drink, smoking, alcohol, vases or other equipment may be shared.
- Gatherings: can meet outdoors with up to 10 other people from any number of households but no further than 25km from your place of residence. There is no time restriction.
- Adult education: learn from home if you can, single learning for hands-on, skills-based learning.
- Hospitality: indoor and outdoor seated service, group limit of 10, indoor limit of 10 patrons per space and cap of 20 patrons indoors. An outdoor cap of 50 patrons per venue, group limit of 10, subject to density requirements. Live music permitted outdoors with musicians included in patron caps. Food courts, cafes, indoors and outdoors with specific density limits, patron caps, and case per table.
- Retail: re-opens with safety measures.
- Real estate: residential and commercial real estate activities, including inspections up to ten people from two households. Auctions outdoors with up to 10 people, plus those required to conduct auction.
- Entertainment: outdoor venues and events, subject to pre-approved plans.

**What has NOT changed?**

- Physical distancing (1.5m) and maximum occupancy requirements must still be observed.
- Good hand hygiene must continue to be followed.
- Do not go to work if you are unwell.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or elbow.
- COVID safety plans are required for all workplaces (including churches, halls etc) including:
  - Attendance Contact Lists
  - Clearing protocols
  - Physical distancing, maximum occupancy and all other COVID signage
- Face Masks must be a fitted face mask - bandanas, scarves etc are no longer acceptable) must be worn outside the home including at all times in the workplace. Fines for non-compliance: \$200 for individuals and up to \$8,000 for employers.
- Work: Continue to work from home if you can.
- Travel between Metropolitan Melbourne and Regional Victoria only for permitted reasons. Permitted reasons now include bushfire preparations.
- Public gatherings: up to 10 people from a maximum of two households that can meet outdoors for an interaction (infants under 12 months of age are not included in the cap).

Continued P2

# Award-winning author and film-maker connects with Cornish student

IN 2019, Cornish College student Olivia Rivera-Burke contacted award-winning screenwriter, film-maker and author Cath Moore to gain some perspective about her Year 6 Exhibition project.

What followed was a totally unexpected, but wonderful, connection between the two of them. Olivia's project focused on "being of two or more different races", which she wanted to normalise.

"I wanted to raise awareness that some things – some questions – that might seem harmless can actually be a bit offensive. I didn't think a lot of people realised that, because I didn't even realise that."



Olivia invited Cath to the College to talk about racial identity from the perspective of someone with a mixed racial background. Cath is of Irish/Afro-Caribbean heritage, was born in Guyana and raised in Australia. She has contributed to works such as *Growing Up African in Australia*. Olivia is "half-Filipino, half-Irish", so Cath was someone she could immediately relate to. "I don't know many people who are quite like me with my ethnicity, so it was really cool that Cath and I had a lot of things in common," said Olivia. "We had really long discussions and it really helped with my project." Cath recently invited Olivia – now in Year 7 – to the launch of her first novel, *Metal Fish, Falling Snow*. The launch was particularly special for Olivia because Cath thanked her and called her "an inspirational young person and a talented writer. It was amazing. I never expected that – it was really humbling. She also sent me a signed copy of her book and said to look on page 228, where she mentioned my name in her acknowledgements."

Olivia is also a keen writer – another thing she and Cath have in common. Cath sent some of her writing to Olivia after their interview. Since then, they have remained in touch. "We email back and forth. I watched a program about racism and told Cath maybe she should watch it. She also sent me links to Australian writing competitions."

Olivia plans to stay in touch with Cath, and hopes her project will raise awareness about respect and consideration when getting to know others.

## Rousing send off to the Class of 2020



*The Class of 2020 celebrated and were farewelled with a wonderful Valedictory Lunch and final assembly at Cornish College at their stunning Bangholme site. They have experienced unique challenges this year, but their spirit and resilience are stronger than ever. Best of luck with their exams and future endeavours.*

## Union still happens

HIGH Street Road and St John's Uniting Churches in Mount Waverley have voted, almost unanimously, to unite as one congregation in January 2021.

Julie Ross, minister with High Street Road, writes about the congregation's development of a shared vision at the heart of this union which was confirmed at a meeting on September 13.

"We are overjoyed that this has come to pass and give heartfelt thanks to God! In a time when everyone has been social distancing, we have reversed the trend and have become one! Many faithful people have worked tirelessly for more than ten years to bring us to oneness.

Our vision is to ensure that we leave a legacy of a vibrant Uniting Church presence, centred in Mt Waverley, in service to the local community, in ecumenical fellowship with other churches and in partnership with Uniting Church and other agencies. The Church on the Hill and the Church on the Plain are now one Church in Community!"



Port Phillip East Presbytery's Standing Committee, under its delegated responsibilities, has approved the merger of the congregations and the governance and leadership model. The Pastoral Relations Committee has looked at ways to support and strengthen the merger.

Presbytery ministers Craig Mitchell and Duncan Macleod have over the last year supported the steering group, led a visioning retreat with leaders from both congregations, and been present at congregational discernment meetings. Support will continue in 2021 as Rev Julie Ross and Rev Semisi Tau'ali'i form one team, a new church council gets underway, and members work together to be one congregation.

Leaders from the two congregations will be telling the vision journey at the November 11 meeting of the Presbytery.

## The Nurture and Spiritual Guidance of Children

- **November 25th - 27th**
- **December 1st - 2nd**

Available via Zoom, this development opportunity from Pilgrim College is for Ministers, Chaplains, Pastors, Thoughtful Practitioners and Christian Educators. Taught by Beth Barnett - suitable for church-based, school-based and community-based expressions of ministry. Participants will:

- Develop theologically-informed practice in the spiritual nurture of children
- Examine links between Scripture, spiritual and psychological development



- Explore educational, congregational and missional settings
- Increase capacity for care children in context of family, church and broader society

For information and to enrol:

Tel: (03) 9340 8892

Email: [erlinda.loveeed@pilgrim.edu.au](mailto:erlinda.loveeed@pilgrim.edu.au)



# Growing healthy church councils

MORE than 200 people from across the Presbytery have taken part in Healthy Church Councils, a series of three online seminars run by the Port Phillip East Presbytery on Friday and Saturday mornings in October.

Presbytery Ministers Duncan Macleod, Anneke Oppewal and Craig Mitchell presented material on ethical governance and values, responsibilities of the church council, preparing agendas, growing healthy participation in meetings, using behaviour covenants and the Code of Conduct for Lay Leaders, growing as learning communities, using consensus decision making and discernment process for choosing church leaders.

Fostering a learning community, particularly in lockdown, encouraged hundreds to participate in online training

The three sessions were recorded, edited and uploaded to the Presbytery YouTube channel, <https://bit.ly/PPEPYoutube>.

A digital kitbag of resources for church councils is available on the Presbytery website, including the Basis of Union, Regulations, Manual for Meetings, and resources for planning meetings.

<https://www.ucappep.org/church-council-resources/>

James Douglas, minister at St Luke’s Mount Waverley, writes about his experience as a participant: “Despite having plenty of Church Council experience, this course surprised me with new approaches to conducting the business of meetings, as well as helpful avenues for being more intentional and strategic in planning agendas, increasing involvement, raising productivity and deepening the experience of being the Church Council.

The sessions were well crafted, with a balance between input, plenary and small group work. The course modelled the concept of a learning community and in essence created such a community among the members of the groups. I know I’ll be approaching Church Council differently from now on.”

Duncan Macleod says, “I’m really encouraged by the response to this series. Many of the people we’ve worked with in person or online over the last eighteen months came along, and we got to meet a lot of new people as well. We’re hoping that there will be more training delivered like this in 2021.”

## UN anniversary celebrated

The 75th anniversary of founding of the United Nations was celebrated on October 24, 2020. To mark the occasion and honour the work of the Organisation, the Social Justice and Mission Group of the five Mt Waverley and Chadstone Uniting Churches has prepared a video. It features speakers with varying connections to the United Nations from the UCA and beyond.

The video is available on YouTube at the web address [https://youtu.be/ObmhfmHWv\\_c](https://youtu.be/ObmhfmHWv_c) We hope you find the video informative and inspiring, and filled with hope for our common future expressed in the UN motto “peace, dignity and equality on a healthy planet”.

THE last six months have been filled with challenges, joys and opportunities.

I hope that when we return to 'COVID normal' we take the opportunity to revitalise the life and mission of the Uniting Church in Port Phillip East.

Our Presbytery covers one of the fastest growing and diverse areas of the nation. It is a modern mission field. The Presbytery is charged by the Basis of Union to 'perform all the acts of oversight necessary to the life and mission of the Church' in our area.

We will not be starting from scratch. Through 'Creating a new future' we have:

- Started mission pilot projects
- Recruited top Presbytery ministers
- Set up our mission and leadership development committee



by Tom Spurling  
Presbytery Chair

We are aware that whatever we decide as our goals, they won't be achieved overnight. We will develop an operational plan for 2021 and give you regular reports on progress.

## Strong foundations underpin new future

- Helped to develop the Money for Mission program
- Grown trust and support between ministers
- We believe that the events of the past months have prepared us to take the next step. We have started a visioning process which we hope will
  - Articulate where we want to be in 2025
  - Document where we are now in relation to our goals
  - Develop a shared understanding of how we are going to get to where we want to be.

The first step in this process is to listen to your views on how we, the Presbytery, can better perform our function to support all our congregations to 'strengthen one another's faith, to bear one another's burdens and... fulfill your high calling in Christ Jesus'

Over the next months we will be conducting focus groups to explore with you your vision for our Presbytery.

These sessions will represent the great cultural, linguistic, age and geographical diversity of our Presbytery. We do hope that you will be a willing participant in this planning process.

## Search is on for new chief at Fusion

Fusion Australia's CEO Fiona Gunnion has stepped down from the role to focus on community development and trauma-informed recovery support. Fusion is now in the process of looking for a new CEO to support a range of centres across Australia who are caring for their local communities so young people can thrive. Do you know of anyone who might be right for this role? Is this something you would be interested in?



An information pack is available from Gemma.Bell@fusion.org.au, the closing date is November 13th 2020. Gemma Bell, Team Leader at Fusion Mornington

Peninsula says: "I am happy to field any casual/discreet questions on 0424 552 643, however, formal applications should be directed to David Bartlett david@resolveconsulting.net "

## Advent season nears

The season of Advent, leading up to Christmas Day, begins on Sunday November 29 this year. What will December be like without Christmas choirs, Christmas pageants, end of year Christmas breakup dinners, and crowds turning up for candle-lit Christmas



Eve carols? 2020 presents us with opportunities for new and creative ways to celebrate the coming of Christ.

Presbytery Minister Craig Mitchell ran two online seminars drawing on years of experience in designing creative resources and leading events to run at home, outside or in new environments. The videos can be viewed on the Presbytery YouTube channel.

<https://bit.ly/PPEPYoutube>

We plan to run more online workshops later in November. The December issue of Newsbeat will

feature ideas that come from those workshops, along with contributions sent to the editor. Please send ideas through.

## The glory of fauna by Rev Barbara Allen

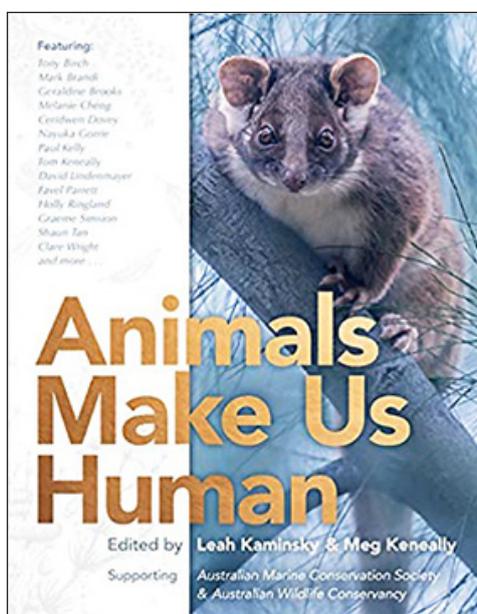
2020 has been a tough year. In Australia we greeted the New Year during the haze of devastating bushfires. Our New Year resolutions included prayers about loss of life, burnt-out properties, and the deaths and displacement of over 3 billion animals and birds. 3 billion! I cannot imagine that number.

Our hearts broke when we saw images of kangaroos hopping through fires, and koalas being carried out through the smoke, for treatment. Then the corona virus hit, and we have struggled through 2020.

Many of us are still grieving for the loss of our bush, the deaths of so many of God's creatures. The philosopher Tom Reagan once said that animals have biographies as well as biologies. What is our bond with 'the other'? It may be easier to answer when you consider the relationship you have with our own pets/ animal companions. I know that I would have found it harder to get through lockdown if I didn't have my dog, two cats, birds and fish.

What about the wider animal world? What is our responsibility? What does God require of us? October 4 was The Feast of St Francis of Assisi/World Animal Day. How can we be a 'blessing' to animals in need?

There is a new book, due to be released this month (November), by Penguin Books: *Animals Make Us Human* (edited by Leah Kaminsky and Meg Keneally).



The book is a response to the devastating 2019-2020 bushfires, with the proceeds going to the Australian Marine Conservation Society and to Australian Wildlife Conservancy.

The book consists of contributions from more than 40 writers, and 28 photographers. The contents are divided into Earth, Water, and Air. There are pieces from many well known writers, including Tom Keneally, Paul Kelly, Geraldine Brooks, and Shaun Tan.

I am not one of the famous writers, but my contribution, about the Australian Pelican, is in there. This was a challenge. My book *Pelican* (Reaktion Books was published last year, and is about 35,000 words in length; this contribution is about 1000 words! Oh how hard for a Minister of the Word to limit words (but it was a good spiritual discipline).

Australia holds the record for the worst mammal extinction rate on earth. Now, after the fires, we need to protect the animals we have, and rebuild their habitats.

I know it is tough at present, but if you want to buy a book about animals, or a book that is a fundraiser for animals, then this might just be the one. It would also make a lovely Christmas gift for animal lovers in your family, or amongst your friends.

<https://www.booktopia.com.au>

# The river of life - Ezekiel 47

RECENTLY I preached on Ezekiel 47 at Glen Waverley Uniting Church. It talks about the image of water coming from under the temple door and making its way into the world, changing and bringing new life to everything that it touches in its path, and when it finally arrives at the Dead Sea, it transforms even that notoriously lifeless body of water into a place of life and abundance.

It is a beautiful image for the Church at this time. Ezekiel and his people were in exile when the prophet came up with this magnificent image. He, and they, are dreaming about the homecoming - the rebuilding of the temple, and the restoration of their rituals, their worship life and their community, imagining what it will look like, what it will taste like, what it will feel like, what it will be like. A bit like we have done over the last months while thinking about the end of restrictions and returning to our Churches.

Prayer

Taking us away from what we know,  
You turn us around to show us a different view of the world.

Listening to our imaginings about what it will be like to go back,

You call us to move forward and imagine what the world could be instead.

Flowing through and around us with the power of Your Spirit, you draw us away gently from what we think we know to what we didn't know was possible.

Show us please show us where your life-giving love of immeasurable depth saturates our being.

And transport us with you to where even what seemed destined for death revives.

**Amen**

And now that our own 'homecoming' is a tangible prospect, it is good to pause and reflect, before we

by **Anneke Oppewal**  
Presbytery Minister: Pastoral



rush headlong into what used to be, and see if there is anything we may have learned since, and undergo some transformations too.

Ezekiel's image of that life-giving water, flooding out from under the door of the temple into the world and bringing life and abundance wherever it goes, even to as dead a place as the Dead Sea, is not about the celebration of the return to the old building he envisages, with all the people streaming back in, singing and dancing. Rather, it is a flowing out that he imagines, into the world, taking measurements of the depth and width of the river of life every so many cubits.

Perhaps that's what they learned in exile - that the goodness of God is not meant to be kept inside buildings, but that the living water brings healing and life when it is allowed to flow out of them, mixing with and transforming an ailing world. Now imagine what would happen if the temple doors are flung open and the water of life flows out freely.

## Past, present and future - on and offline

### Early Notice of 2021 Meetings

THE Uniting Church Historical Society was pleased with the increased attendance at this year's Zoom meetings, so have planed two more for 2021 (**18 April and 22 August**), plus one "in person" meeting on **June 27** - details are yet to be confirmed. They also plan to resume their church tours in October. 2021 If you are interested in receiving the Society's newsletter, please email [robert.renton@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.renton@bigpond.com).

The Society exists to publish stories of historical interest concerning the churches of the Uniting Church or its predecessor denominations, and also those of people and events. If you have a story to tell, please contact [robert.renton@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.renton@bigpond.com). The next edition of the Proceedings of the Society is due to be published in December 2020.



*Robert Renton*

# Finding the sacred within a digital dominion

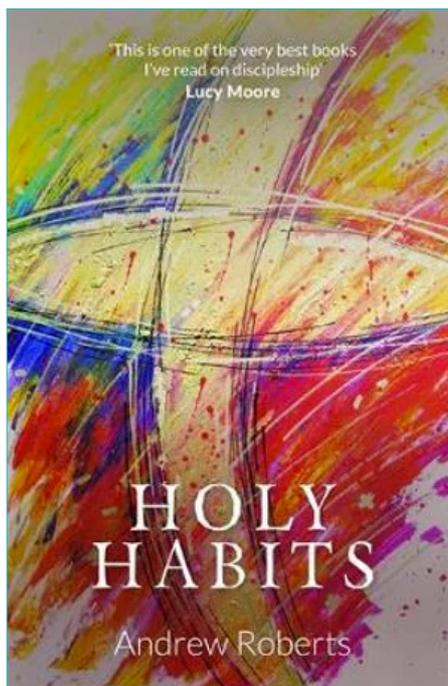
"Sacred Places, Digital Spaces", on October 20, is the most recent conversation in Port Phillip East Presbytery's series on blended faith formation exploring faith formation and discipleship in both digital and physical spaces. Presbytery Minister Craig Mitchell led a conversation with Mark Berry from Telford, UK, and Sandy Brodine from the UCA Banyule Network in Melbourne. Sandy and Mark talked about ways their communities have developed online settings to provide synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for their members during this year's COVID-19 related restrictions. Synchronous refers to events in which people are taking part at the

same time, potentially interacting with each other. Asynchronous refers to events or resources that people access in their own time, at their own pace. The focus on spiritual disciplines was given shape by the work of Methodist UK Pioneer and writer Andrew Roberts in his book and

website, Holy Habits. <https://www.holyhabits.org.uk> We were able to hear about ways Messy Church and other intergenerational gatherings have included Biblical teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, prayer, sharing resources, serving, eating together, gladness and generosity, worship, and making more disciples. People from across Australia and beyond used Facebook Live's chat feature to interact with Craig, Mark, Sandy and each other. The video of the Sacred Places, Digital Spaces conversation can be viewed on the Presbytery Facebook page (unedited – start at 10 minutes), and on the Presbytery YouTube page (edited).



Mark Berry



Sandy Brodine

## Graduation night recognises awards

PILGRIM College held its annual Valedictory Service on October 30 to celebrate the completion of awards. Members of PPE were present and we congratulate Ennis Macleod, Paul Dau, Juli Lincoln and Andrea Mayes on receiving their awards following their study. We also note that Andrea has now completed her theological studies and moves to the next stage towards ordination in the Ministry of Deacon once she has her placement finalised.



# Position Vacant

## Presbytery Administration Officer Presbytery Secretary

Applications are called for the paid part-time (0.6) position of Presbytery Administration Officer/Secretary.

The position has three key aspects:

- Secretary of Port Phillip East Presbytery.
- Administrative support for the Presbytery Minister team, committees and working groups within the Presbytery.
- Administration for events run by the Presbytery.

A position description is available on the PPE Presbytery website, [www.ucappegp.org](http://www.ucappegp.org)  
Applications should be made in writing to the Presbytery Secretary, Ian Firth, by 5 pm, Monday 30 November, 2020.  
[secretary@ucappegp.org](mailto:secretary@ucappegp.org) or  
PO Box 696, Noble Park, VIC 3174.

For enquiries, contact Duncan Macleod,  
Presbytery Minister – Team Leader  
[pm-tl@ucappegp.org](mailto:pm-tl@ucappegp.org) , 0439 828 718

## In our prayers

AT the end of each year the Presbytery sends out the prayer calendar for use in worship.  
It is also uploaded onto the Presbytery website [www.ucappegp.org](http://www.ucappegp.org). Here's the prayer list for the next four weeks:

<b>1 November</b>	Uniting Agewell Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kinnersly, the General Manager team, Director of Mission Clare Brockett, and Alisha Fung, chaplain at Noble Park.
<b>8 November</b>	Wheeler Hill congregation Rev Charles Sundaresan Bakhtar
<b>15 November</b>	Western Port Parish - Hastings, Balnarring, Crib Point congregations Rev (Deacon) Nigel McBrien The UC Camp at Merricks Lodge
<b>22 November</b>	Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Moderator Denise Liersch, General Secretary Mark Lawrence, Associate General Secretary Isabel Thomas Dobson
<b>29 November</b>	Newly ordained ministers and ordinands Andrea Mayes who is awaiting placement



*This poster, also on the PPEP website, was created by the UCA National Safe Church Unit for congregations and church leaders to see at-a-glance the key points on child safety in our church communities.*

**Presbytery meeting dates**

**\* Wednesday, November 11th, 7.30pm**  
A meeting link will be shared around in the weeks preceding.

*If you would like to submit a news item for the Presbytery's monthly Newsbeat newsletter please send all articles and images to [newsbeat@ucappegp.org](mailto:newsbeat@ucappegp.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.ucappegp.org](http://www.ucappegp.org) and [www.facebook.com/ucappegp.org](https://www.facebook.com/ucappegp.org) for news, events and more....**