

NEWSBEAT



NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST

DECEMBER 2020



Churches gather for special ceremony to commemorate a fallen hero.
Find out more on page 7.

Love is in the air...
PPEP minister celebrates as he ties the knot with Robyn this Christmas. Turn over the page for details.



A warm welcome and a sight for sore eyes

Rev Heeyoung Lim was inducted as minister with Leighmoor Uniting Church on Sunday 29 November. The COVID safe service was broadcast live to Zoom. Present were members from Leighmoor, family and friends and representatives of Korean Church of Melbourne, and representatives of the Port Phillip East Presbytery. See more on page 3.

Photography by Yongju Lee.

The First Noel after the pandemic...

AFTER eight whole months of careful waiting, we're entering our summer seasons of Advent, Christmas and Epiphany with hopes of gathering in person again in our homes, in our church buildings, in cafes and restaurants, in public spaces.

Once again, we're able to travel around Australia, catch up with family and friends, and to have a much deserved break.

As I write this, we're halfway through two weeks of increased freedom, including an outdoor mini retreat for ministers, and an induction for Heeyoung Lim at Leighmoor Uniting Church with 36 people in the building and just as many watching online.

On Sunday December 6 we'll be watching expectantly as Premier Dan Andrews announces the arrangements for a COVID safe summer in the state of Victoria. I

anticipate that we'll be entrusted with further freedoms of assembly, along with continued

responsibility for careful planning and patience. The pace of change should slow down for a while!

As we meet together and pray this summer, let's remember that the good news of Jesus has always been for the whole of creation, for all people everywhere, in good times and hard times. Have a COVID safe Christmas and an encouraging new year!



by Duncan Macleod
Presbytery Minister:
Team Leader

'Let's remember that the good news of Jesus has always been for the whole of creation, for people everywhere, in good times and hard times.'

Duncan Macleod

Wedding bells chime for David and Robyn

On December 5, Robyn and I are going to be married. We've had to make multiple versions of plans for the wedding, but we're delighted to be able to have 52 people there (the density limit for the church), and others joining us for the celebration online. Two years ago I was given Robyn's number by a mutual friend of ours; my kids encouraged me to call. We met, and found ourselves sharing lots of attitudes and interests together. Robyn is a lecturer in dietetics with a deep interest in the Indigenous community, and an involved member of an Anglican church in Diamond Creek. For our wedding, my sons are going to be our "best people"; their relationship with Robyn is blossoming too. We got engaged just before the first lockdown, so while this hasn't been the year anyone expected, there have been many blessings for which we're deeply grateful.

The happy couple...
Robyn Delbridge and Rev David Fotheringham



*Robyn and David
together with Matthew and Cameron
warmly invite you to celebrate
The Wedding of Robyn and David
Saturday, December 5th at 3:00 PM
online at*

www.turbo360.com.au/david-and-robyn/

While we'd love to have you there in person, given the pandemic, we're delighted to share this celebration online.

In lieu of gifts, we invite you to donate to the UNHCR COVID-19 appeal at <https://www.mycase.com.au/page/237975/robyn-and-davids-wedding>

*David is minister at High Street UC, Frankston



Come join the carol singing

IF you're in need of some realtime church, particularly for the festive season then why not join High Street Uniting Church, Frankston for their Traditional Carols in the Park on the Sunday night before Christmas; a Family Christmas Celebration in Beauty Park on Christmas Eve, and Carolling in the Streets later that evening.

All are welcome, but due to current COVID restrictions numbers will be limited, so please contact the church if you are interested in joining in. Links available on the Frankston Uniting Church website <https://www.frankstonuniting.org.au/>

I can, or I can't..?

IT'S becoming increasingly difficult for people, congregations, presbyteries and organisations to stay abreast of what is and isn't permitted as restrictions ease. The Synod Coronavirus Crisis Team has gathered FAQs to provide easy answers here: <https://bit.ly/VicTasCOVIDFAQ>



*Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*

These words from Isaiah 43 shaped the presbytery mini-retreat for ministers and lay workers held at Mornington on 26 November. Meeting in small groups for two-hours, we received the gifts of face-to-face meeting, words and questions to prompt reflection, and the gradually brightening bayside blueness.



by Dr Craig Mitchell
PM Church Development

Anneke Oppewal invited us to reflect on our experience of recent months and where God might be doing a new thing. This image was a window for reflection on light and dark, chaos and order, change and opportunity - God in the midst of all. A reflection by John O'Donohue

from his book *Benedictus* was apt for our coastal setting. Earth and water hold us and sustain us in times of letting go, holding on, and venturing forth. Solid and fluid. Nurture and adventure.



Breathing fresh air. Gazing over the waters. Conversation with colleagues. Space to listen. Time to write. Place to walk. All good gifts on this day.

*May the nourishment of the earth be yours
May the clarity of light be yours
May the fluency of the ocean be yours*

John O'Donohue, *Benedictus*



A warm welcome for Heeyoung Lim

From front page.

Cover picture: Murrumbidgee minister Jay Robinson, Heeyoung Lim, Ineke Gyles (preacher), Tom Spurling, and Leighmoor chair Fiona Wailes.

Left: Presbytery Chair, Tom Spurling saying prayers at the induction at Leighmoor Uniting Church.



Kelly Skilton & Craig Mitchell chat on Zoom

Collaborating in Mission, Developing Leaders, Growing Disciples

A developing conversation

Craig: Kelly, the Presbytery agreed to set up a new Mission. and Leadership Development Committee earlier in the year. What is this new thing?

Kelly: It is a step forward in our presbytery establishing a community of support and collaboration in mission, leadership and discipleship. What does it mean to be lifelong disciples actively doing mission in our day-to-day work and life?

Craig: I don't often get excited about committees. Are you excited about this?

Kelly: Yes! We are looking at ways that we can encourage conversations and look at what it means to collaborate with those on the ground with gifts and skills, to be able to bring some new voices to the table, to be able to work alongside one another, to look at what it means to build relationships across the presbytery through new kinds of structures – not just six people sitting around a table voting on things.

Craig: So there's a focus on participation?

Kelly: Yes, but it's not just about people participating in presbytery – it is about us as presbytery participating in the lives of our churches.

Craig: Some people are over the word "mission". What has this got to do with local churches' mission?

Kelly: The word "mission" is important for me because it is about our common purpose – to be sent out, to share in the bringing of the Kingdom of God – that can be seen in lots of different ways in our churches.

Craig: OK, how does this connect with presbytery vision and strategies?

Kelly: This new work will become part of our presbytery strategies, but it is also about how we create and engage in networks where we can collaborate together as leaders.

Craig: What is that going to look like?

Kelly: We want to connect with and include people with gifts, skills and passion for mission, leadership and discipleship from right across the presbytery – inclusive of our cultural diversity, younger as well and older people, women and men. We want to make sure that all voices are welcome.

Craig: What's in this for congregations? For local leaders?

Kelly: This is about resourcing them. It is about being active, getting moving, and also supporting what is already happening. This is about connecting people to the bigger picture, and having a space where people can give and receive.

Craig: So this is not just about presbytery telling people what to do? It is about people learning from one another.

Kelly: Yes. As well as forming the new committee, we hope to establish four networks or hubs in priority areas. We'll still working on what those are. At the moment we're talking about Growing Disciples, Local Mission, Leadership Development and New Faith Communities. We'll be presenting a proposal to the presbytery about this early in 2021.



Prayer

Open our eyes
God,
and let us see
with 2020 vision
what you require of us.
To let go of the old
and watch for the new thing
you come to do amongst us,
out there on the fringes
of what we know,
bringing to light
what we may not otherwise
have noticed,
and calling us
to see the vision
of a world where angels sing,
where people struggle to find
a voice.

Amen

by Anneke Oppewal
Presbytery Minister: Pastoral

"Forget the old things, I've come to do a new thing..."
Isaiah 43: 18-19



IN THE world of ophthalmology twenty-twenty vision is about seeing things clearly. Seeing at every distance with crystal clarity and focus. About being able to see things as they are, unaided.

When the year 2020 started some joked about this. I know a number of people who work in eye hospitals either as medical personnel or in admin functions and talk of 'the year of 2020' brought smiles to their faces. 'That would be good', someone said, 'if it was a year where we would see more clearly'.

And we did. We saw shifts and changes we never thought possible. We came up with creative solutions to challenges we had never anticipated and mastered skills we, only weeks before, thought were surely beyond us. We learned to say: 'I don't know where we'll be in a week, a month...' and not be daunted or to even try look further than that.

We learned to see the world in a different light and found deep wells of resilience and adaptability we didn't know existed in ourselves and in our communities.

And Christmas, even with the lifting of restrictions, will not be about doing what we've always done but looking at things differently, with fresh eyes.

And that may take us closer to a 2020 vision of Christmas than all the running around and hard work we're putting in to take it as close as we can to what we knew before.

Kicked out of our comfort zone, we are asked to look again at what it means that when God comes the spotlight is on those challenged and struggling on the fringes of society. Calling us to go there and see him, vulnerable and crying.

Little white church opens its doors again

Heatherton-Dingley UC has decided to resume church services at the Church. Cnr. Kingston and Old Dandenong Roads, Heatherton - all welcome, if you are in need of a live service in your vicinity. They will be holding the first face to face service on Christmas Day at 9am.

Also an on-line carol service available to watch on YouTube (search church name) on Sunday evening, 20th December should you wish to tune in.

Worship in the great outdoors

"We are experiencing a liminal space in many churches at the moment. While some congregations have recommenced worship, many other congregations are taking their time to make the decisions about how to safely go back to worship. Some will be waiting until after Christmas.

The delightful dilemma that may be stalling us is: 'how do we keep online worship and start up face-to face worship'? All of us appreciated the extra people attending worship online. How else do we reach out them?..."" This resource from Rev. Linley Liersch, Mission Development Strategist, Presbytery of Port Phillip West, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, provides practical encouragement toward the creative possibilities for Outdoor Worship this Advent Season. <https://uniting.church/outdoor-worship-this-advent-season/>

by Chris Barnett, Intergenerational Ministry - Children & Families, Synod of VIC/TAS



Festive fundraiser for Fusion

OUR Fusion Christmas Items are an opportunity to connect and reflect. All proceeds will support the work of Fusion Australia, helping young people and their communities thrive.

Advent Calendar & Devotional

Count down the days until Christmas with this Australian made set of Advent pieces and accompanying devotions from Fusion workers around Australia.

Family Advent Downloadable

ADVENTure into the Christmas Season with your family. This downloadable booklet includes:

- Activities to help your family connect, sustainably decorating your home with supplies around the house!
- Prompts to help your family discuss the Nativity story.
- Four weekly reflections on: Hope, Peace, Love and Joy.

Group packages and discounts are available for Churches wanting to use this content to support families.

For more information, contact fundraising@fusion.org.au or call (03) 9579 3955.

Fusion Christmas Cards

Share a message of hope with friends, family, colleagues and neighbours this Christmas. In a world filled with uncertainties and fears, our Fusion Christmas Cards are designed as a reminder of the Good News, God enters our reality, bringing new life.

As an octogenarian sometimes you receive a call to be useful. I was asked by the local kinder to pay a special visit to their breakup celebration.

I had some experience in being appropriately attired and turning up to give out gifts for each one from my huge sack. On the appointed time, I was being transported in a large van to the kinder. On the way we passed some shops. I happened to spot a friend outside one. I wound down the window and waved, sending him my best 'Ho! Ho! Ho!' He replied in three precise but jovial words, 'Silly old fool!' I proceeded on to where I would be appreciated! The stage of life you are fortunate to reach in latter years has joys and concerns. One problem I have is attempting unwise short cuts. The other day I was working in the front garden and went down via the rail which has been erected to save me from stumbling. On the way back I tried to take a short cut back without grasping the rail. I turned round suddenly and fell on the concrete, injuring my hand and arm as I fell. I was prostrate and could not get up. A couple were inspecting the 'for sale' sign on the flat over the road and were asked by my anxious wife if they could help. The kind, strong man stood me up and sat me on a chair. No real damage except to my dignity. I could hear my friend's words ringing in my ears: Silly old fool!



**by Bill Pugh
retired UCA
Minister**



Advent Calendar & Devotional

Flat-packed \$27
Preassembled \$38

Count down the days until Christmas with this Australian made set of advent pieces.
Journey towards celebrating the birth of Jesus with daily devotions from Fusion workers around Australia.

Pack includes:

- Plywood Star, Stable, Mary and Joseph and Calendar base
- Printed copy of Fusion Advent Devotional



Family Advent Downloadable

\$6

ADVENTure into the Christmas Season with your family. Downloadable pack includes

- weekly reflections on: hope, peace, love and joy.
- activities to help your family connect and sustainably decorate your home with supplies around the house

This downloadable is for personal use.
For group packages, please e-mail fundraising@fusion.org.au



Fusion Christmas Cards

\$3.50 each
\$15 for a pack of 5

Share a message of hope with your friends, family, colleagues and neighbours this Christmas.



Justice tree planted for historical hero

Churches regather for outdoor ceremony



THE Social Justice and Mission Group - Mt Waverley and Chadstone Uniting Churches - gathered at the High Street Road Uniting Church for a tree-planting ceremony recently.

The service honoured the memory of Dag Hammarskjöld, the UN's second Secretary-General. Special welcomes were accorded to Rev Semisi Tauali'i and to Clovis Mwamba, his daughter and grand-daughter. It took the form of a tree planting.

Clovis appears in our UN video**, speaking of being in the Congo when Mr Hammarskjöld was killed in a plane crash there in 1961.

Four people presented a short eulogy, with Marge Kennett and David Langley emphasising the Secretary

General's selfless and visionary peacemaking endeavours, cut short by his untimely death.

One such plan was for West Papuan self-determination, but with Hammarskjöld gone, it was

not adopted. As part of the speech, Clovis prayed that this wrong of 59 years ago might be put to right. Immediately



Hammarskjöld addressing the UN before his untimely death [UN News].

Photos by John Poppins

Pictured from top: The group gathers, Faye Gregson and Grace Easton plant the Banksia Marginata, Rev Semisi Tauali'i shares the reading, Congolese guest Clovis Mwamba, The plaque, painted by Faye Gregson, depicts the symbols for the Congo - the okapi - and West Papua - bird of paradise and is erected by the planted tree, Dag

prior to the planting, Semisi said, "May the seed of Hammarskjöld's untimely death grow in to an ever enlarging tree for peace, justice and healing for our world".

The Banksia Marginata was then planted by Faye Gregson and Grace Easton in the small garden at the NW corner of the hall. Steve Carre read an excerpt from a Hammarskjöld speech, then all assembled and sang "What does the Lord require of you", from Micah 6:8. Words to live by, which Dag Hammarskjöld certainly did if his epitaph on the crash-site memorial is any guide: "The only value of life is its content... for others. Apart from any value it may have for others, my life is worse than death. Therefore, in my great loneliness, serve others."

** The full video of this service can be accessed by Googling high street road uniting church on YouTube.



VIRTUAL REALITY and WORSHIP: A Synopsis

DOES the digitalization of worship and fellowship undermine Christianity's profound belief that God meets us in time and space?

The pandemic has turned our lives upside down resulting in digitalized worship streamed, zoomed and recorded online. Was this just a pragmatic response to COVID restrictions or has it some greater significance? It certainly caused some consternation. The UCA Assembly gave us permission to worship and celebrate Holy Communion only until March 2021, and some denominations forbade the celebration of Holy Communion online. These communications imply that online worship is not quite kosher. In a 'little essay' I have argued that these tentative and somewhat confused messages relating to the digitalization of worship is due to our lack of theologizing about the digital community. We commonly take 'virtual' to mean 'almost'. Therefore, when we speak of Virtual Reality we assume it means not the genuine thing. But in

computer-speak 'virtual reality' means "not physically existing as such but made by software to appear to do so." When we conclude our digitalized gathering with others

we know it has been genuine and real. The digital community is the fourth communication revolution which began with language followed by writing, then the printing press and now digital communication. The conceptual challenge it presents to us is not unlike the 586 BC Exilic experience that resulted in the Synagogue; or the first Christians' experience of the Resurrection; or the Pauline concept of the Body of Christ; or the printing press! Read the full article: <https://bit.ly/WhitakerVirtualWorship>



by Peter C Whitaker
Retired UC Minister

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.ucappep.org. Here's the prayer list for the next eight weeks:

In our prayers

6 December	Armada - Rev Fiona Winn & chair Bill Rush All retired clergy and their spouses
13 December	Balkara Parish (Oakleigh & Clayton) - Parish chair Robert Jones St David's Oakleigh minister Peter Wiltshire, chair Pat Murnane Clayton Cook Islands minister Toko Ongoua
20 December	Beaumaris (St Martin's) & Black Rock (St Andrew's) Beaumaris minister Scott Finlay & chair Jenny Small. Black Rock minister Di Paterson & chair Barry Arnold.
27 December	Bentleigh & Burnley (St George's) Bentleigh minister Julie Hall & chair Glennys Morgan Burnley minister Moles Tamate & chair Jean Palalagi
3 January	Berwick (St Andrew's) Minister Wendy Snook, Youth & Family Ministry Mat Pendle, chair Joy Jackson
10 January	Brighton (Trinity), Brighton (St Leonard's), St Leonard's College Trinity minister Kevin Kim & chair Helen Wells St Leonard's minister Kim Cain, chair Peter Hunkin St Leonard's principal Stuart Davis, chair Jen Neate, chaplain Judith Watkins
17 January	Carrum/Chelsea Uniting by the Bay & Cornish College Supply minister Robert Johnson, chair Marie McIntosh Principal Nicola Forest & chair Max Verbene
24 January	UCA Day of Mourning Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Interim Chairperson Mark Kickett
31 January	Caulfi eld Indonesian - Minister Lingky Widodo & chair Sely Kapa Somers Leadership Training : Chaplain Hannah Dungan & Somers Core team

