

Newsbeat

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



MAY HEADLINES

REFLECTIONS FROM
REV SAM JOO &
BELINDA CLEAR

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OUR CONGREGATIONS

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EXTRAVAGANZA

MAY 2023 ISSUE



Port Phillip East Presbytery's

An insight into what congregations,
schools & members are doing

EASTER CELEBRATIONS AT WESTERNPORT

Churches, Balnarring, Crib Point and Hastings provided reflective opportunities to participate in Easter celebrations.

They commenced with Lenten studies prepared by Presbytery Minister Dr Craig Mitchell and conducted by Rev. Nigel McBrien. On Maundy Thursday evening a service at Crib Point was conducted by the Rev. Nigel McBrien who reminded us of the command Jesus gave to his disciples that they should love and serve one another.

Good Friday services were conducted at Balnarring and Hastings who also hosted the Stations of the Cross in the Hastings township. On Saturday, the Balnarring congregation facilitated a community market, a first for the church and the community. As dawn broke on Easter Sunday Westernport and Anglican congregations gathered at the Balnarring Beach for a service around a sand cross and for communion and hot cross buns in the nearby rotunda.

Morning services, with many visitors, were conducted at Balnarring UC and at Hastings UC to celebrate the risen Lord.

A highlight of the Easter period was the Balnarring UC Community Market held on church property on the 8 April. The market was a celebration of all things local with a focus on community connections with the church. Stalls showcased local talent in food, beverages, arts, craft and community.

Despite some showery weather, fifteen stallholders set up their tents and displays which attracted a huge crowd of locals and holiday makers.

Balnarring church members cooked a delicious BBQ, welcoming many visitors to the church. This led to several visitors attending their dawn service and the Balnarring church service on Easter Sunday.

Colin Watt



GOOD FRIDAY – WAY TO THE CROSS

Mt Waverley Chadstone Interchurch Council organised a Good Friday Way of the Cross walk, documenting Jesus' journey through life.

More than 150 people representing over a dozen local churches, as well as visitors, participated in the Good Friday Way of the Cross service organised by the Mt Waverley Chadstone Inter-Church Council.

Station One was located in the Mt Waverley Uniting Church in Virginia Street. From there the group processed through the streets to a local grassed area. Each of the eleven stations featured a banner on which was printed a painting by Mt Waverley artist Paul Gahan illustrating a particular stage of Jesus' journey. A gospel reading, a reflection and a prayer were presented while a church member played the part of Jesus carrying his cross - he was anointed, betrayed, received the purple robe and crown of thorns, nails were driven into the cross, and a shroud placed on him.

As the group walked between each of the stations, the people either sang a hymn or a chant. Close to thirty members and clergy from the local churches were directly involved in the procession.

The last station was held back in the church followed by buns, tea/coffee and fellowship.

Ros Faichney, Mt Waverley Chadstone Inter-Church Council



DAWN SERVICE AT PARKDALE BEACH

Congregations have gathered at dawn for ecumenical services on Easter Sunday.

Five churches, including Heatherton Dingley and Parkdale Uniting churches, gathered early Easter Sunday morning. They were joined by members from Parkdale Church of Christ and Mentone and Beaumaris Anglican churches - St Augustine's and St Michael's. With a windy and slightly wet start at 6.30am, they were just in time for the sunrise. Parkdale UC provided the music, Rev Deacon Andrea Mayes provided the message, while the Anglican churches led communion.



Members at Parkdale Beach, on a windy wet morning. Celebrating the return.

A CULTURAL EXTRAVAGANZA

The Cook Islands Uniting Church, Clayton, has a close relationship with the UCA partner church, the Cook Islands Christian Church (CICC). Many of its ministers come from the CICC, and they value the history and traditions of the church in the Cook Islands. COVID prevented them from celebrating the bicentennial of the first arrival of the gospel in 2021, but they are making up for it in October this year.

Each year the Cook Island members celebrate the arrival of the Gospel in the Islands with a Public Holiday. The Gospel initially arrived on the outer island of Aitutaki on 26th October, 1821. In October 2021 big celebrations were planned for the bicentennial of this auspicious occasion – but COVID intervened and Cook Islanders (and others) based overseas were not allowed back home.

The year 1823 saw the arrival of the Gospel on several other islands being Atiu (19th July), Mitiaro (21st July) Mauke (23rd July) and finally the main island of Rarotonga (25th July). Palmerston, the last of the inhabited islands, welcomed the Gospel on 25th May, 1863. The islanders strongly believe that there is a living God that they believe in, one who has pulled them out of their old ways to a life of eternal blessings for which they are thankful.

Each of the 1823 Islands are planning celebrations in July this year. Rarotonga is celebrating on 25th July with the celebrations centred around the CICC Headquarters at the Takamoa Theological College and the nearby Avarua CICC church.

Planning has been proceeding for many years and special headstones and plaques have been erected in the grounds of the church.



On the following two days another village on Rarotonga, Arorangi, will celebrate the bicentennial of the arrival. Tinomana Enua-ruru-tini Ariki (Paramount Chief) accepted the Gospel on 26th July, 1823. Because he was the first Ariki on Rarotonga to burn his gods, this confirmed how much he truly had accepted the Gospel into his heart. He then encouraged his people to do the same the following day.

This July the village of Arorangi is planning a big two-day celebration of the Bicentennial. To help cover the costs, a fundraising team travelled around Australia and New Zealand in March and April seeking funds to cover the cost of monuments, plaques, story boards, and catering – for approximately 3,000 people each day.

The fundraising team included the current Ariki or Queen - Paramount Chief Tinomana Tokerau Ariki – and Rev (Papa) Tinirau Soatini the CICC Minister from Arorangi plus five Committee members. All up the contributions from Australia were approximately \$200,000 – a considerable contribution towards their \$500,000 budget.

The CICC will hold its General Assembly 9th – 16th July thus allowing delegates to stay on for the celebrations in the outer islands and Rarotonga. This will be followed by the Constitution Celebrations concluding early August.

This event will be a cultural extravaganza with many churches participating. It will be a very busy time for our Cook Islands congregations across.



Members of Cook Islands congregations across Melbourne joined together for an Easter service.



Queen and Papa Soatini are welcomed to Clayton, showing the tivaevae around the walls.

TRADITIONAL EASTER GARDEN

At St. Martin's Beaumaris Uniting Church, the Easter Sunday service always includes a traditional Easter Garden, which is celebrated with a morning cuppa. The Garden is created by Wendy and Geoff Hinde, with the help of a few friends, and has become an annual feature for their Easter celebrations.

Nick Toovey & Sarah Manase



HOLY WEEK AT ENDEAVOUR HILLS

Endeavour Hills UC (EHUC), like many other congregations, struggled with COVID mandates, but almost 18 months down the track, they have made necessary changes that have turned out for better.

It has been almost 18 months since we have reopened for services after lockdown but in some ways we feel like we are still getting started again. We have formed a worship committee to help us to better plan special services as we were still going a bit ad hoc after COVID.

Our first project was to celebrate Maundy Thursday by holding a 'Last supper and Passover meal' led by Rev Mat Harry and Rev Mike You.

The flat bread, figs (Fig jam - thanks Jenni Porch), dates, Hummus and other assorted foods helped to put us in the picture and after a colossal effort by some of our members we had 34 people, from 2 to 92 years of age, as well as being a multi-cultural group.

We celebrated a Maundy Thursday "Last Supper" Service, and all members, or close associates with EHUC came to share with us. We had not thought we would get that many when we first planned it but lucky we put in the effort to get numbers before catering. The tables were placed end to end and went the full length of the church. Good Friday and Resurrection Sunday were also well attended - we felt especially blessed.

Wesley Porch & Sarah Manase



CALLED TO BE WITNESSES OF CHRIST & TESTIFY TO HIS NAME

Rev Sam Joo writes on Pentecost and the church. Exploring the Greek language and the Book of Acts, he shares a frank reflection.



For the last couple of weeks, many things have come together to help me form this reflection.

The first spark was when a quote from a book was shared among a group of ministers.

“The church does its best to celebrate Easter, all the way leading up to and the actual day of it, but not a day after.”

Everyone present in the circle quickly shared a nod in agreement and also share the waves of complex emotions that followed immediately.

And soon after, I was asked whether I could write a reflection on Pentecost and the church.

It didn’t make sense to me that we would celebrate Pentecost without understanding the true meaning of Jesus’ death and resurrection. Pentecost and the birth of the church are not only about the outpouring of the Holy Spirit but everything that preceded the event as well. It was never a separate and isolated episode.

The church that exploded into existence was not only a group of believers who prayed and received the Holy Spirit. A quick study of terms used to describe believers in the first century gives us a better understanding of who these people were and what kind of church they became.

In Roman times, the followers of Jesus were called the followers of the Way. Of course, this comes from Jesus saying, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”

Soon, the believers were called saints, who were now set apart for the way and as they applied themselves to the way of holiness.

Another term to describe the followers of Jesus was “disciple”, from the Greek word μαθητῆς (mathētēs) –translated into “learner” or “student”. The twelve were close to Jesus, learning from the teacher as they lived with him, and travelled with him during his public ministry.

There is also the mention of “apostles”, from the Greek word, ἀποστόλος, (apostolos): one who is sent. This not only relates to the Great Commissioning at the end of the gospel of Matthew but even during his public ministry, there are a couple of episodes where Jesus sent out his followers to heal the sick and cast out demons.

While I was compiling this list of terms that described the first-century Christians, I stumbled on an article that was published by an online tabloid newsagency describing how the Roman roads helped the rapid spreading of Christianity, though their journey was from long and sustained persecution to be acknowledged as a widespread religion, the article listed some of the terms that I was wondering about. Again, it sparked my thoughts further.

When you put these terms together and you can quickly gather that a follower of Jesus should learn and live the way that Jesus has taught and commanded. However, the sense of being commissioned and sent out is always there. It is not only that we learn and become holy and godly within our community, but Jesus had commanded us to go out. So for all intents and purposes, the movement that started with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ was never about being Bible-smart and having diplomas about how amazing of an insight we might have. It was never about having attractive worship music that would be the envy of other churches.

Instead, it really came down to what Jesus called us to be in the Book of Acts.

“It is not for you to know the times or periods that the Father has set by his own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”



The oblivious disciples, having seen the Jesus who is now risen, wanted to know when the glory would be restored to the kingdom of Israel. And I wondered whether this is what we are doing when thinking about what churches should be in the twenty-first century. We might be saying to ourselves, “We have the risen Lord on our side so we need a bigger church building! A louder and more crowded church! We need a church that reflects the glory days of Israel.”

Instead of thinking about what we should be doing as a church, I wanted to think about what Jesus has called us to do. I am willing to go so far as to say, for this very purpose, the Spirit was given to us, that we would be witnesses of Jesus Christ, in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

For your Greek vocabulary list, I will throw in another one. The Greek word for witness is $\mu\alpha\rho\tau\upsilon\rho\alpha$ (martus).

Did you just flinch when you read that? Yes, our English word “martyr” comes from that word. We too quickly associate this word with a conviction-filled death, but in reality, it really had a focus on you giving testimony and witness, albeit some faithful witnesses in history made their death part of that witnessing. Despite what might feel like a case of excessive commitment, I thought it was obvious that we were called to be witnesses of Christ who will testify to the name.



And then, the final spark for this reflection came with a friend’s song suggestion, a song titled **“I Speak Jesus.”** In its chorus, we sing:

Shout Jesus from the mountains

Jesus in the streets

Jesus in the darkness over every enemy

Jesus for my family

I speak the holy name

Jesus

Your name is power

Your name is healing

Your name is life

Break every stronghold

Shine through the shadows

Burn like a fire

I just wanna speak the name of Jesus

Over every heart and every mind

‘Cause I know there is peace within Your presence

I speak Jesus

[From “I Speak Jesus” by Jesse Reeves, Dustin Smith, Abby Benton, Kristen Dutton, Carlene Prince, Raina Pratt © 2019. Here Be Lion’s Publishing, Integrity’s Praise Music. Administered by Capitol / CMG Publishing.]

Well, after all that, my mind is pretty set for this Pentecost. I want to be at a church where there will be a great outpouring of God’s spirit - a church where not only will we stand together as followers of the way, students of the scripture and all its statutes, but a church that is already running out into the world to proclaim the name of Jesus.

I want to see a church that will witness the life, death and resurrection of Jesus - a church that will testify, witness, and speak Jesus.

Rev Sam Joo



An Evening of Listening and Conversation

The Uluru Statement and the Voice Referendum

Tuesday 30 May, 7.30-9.00pm Glen Waverley Uniting Church

Cnr Kingsway and Bogong Ave, Glen Waverley (Parking station in Bogong Ave)

"We ask Australians to accept our invitation to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future. We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution and a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making and truth-telling about our history."

The Voice proposal arises from an invitation to the people of Australia from *The Uluru Statement from the Heart*. This is an opportunity to hear what gave rise to the referendum and consider the vital issues and questions raised by First Peoples.

Speaker

Rev Dr Garry Deverell is a trawloolay man from lutruwita (Tasmania). He is Lecturer and Research Fellow in the School of Indigenous Studies in the University of Divinity, based in Melbourne. Garry's publications include *Gondwana Theology* (Morningstar Press). He is an canon priest of St Paul's Anglican Cathedral in Naarm/Melbourne.

The event is co-sponsored by Port Phillip East Presbytery and the Victorian Council of Churches.

The event will also be live-streamed. Details to come.



UNIVERSITY CHAPLAINS ON DUTY



We are privileged in Port Phillip East Presbytery to have five of the six university chaplains that Synod supports. Now when we say “support”, we actually mean each of these chaplains is supported and released to do ministry in these settings by the congregation who employs them. Here in PPE we have all our chaplains connected with Monash University, shared over three campuses – Clayton, Caulfield and Peninsula.

Chaplaincy at any university in Australia looks very different from campus to campus. In Port Phillip East, Presbytery Mandy Lake serves as a Presbytery appointment on the Peninsula Campus in Frankston and Caulfield Campus Jay Robinson gives four hours a week as part of her placement at Murrumbeena UC. One of the campus similarities is the presence of food. The best way to the heart and attention of a university student is to offer some sort of food and to offer it for free!

The biggest challenge for chaplains at a university campus is to be seen and recognised, hence the blue t-shirts and labelled jackets, enables chaplains to walk around offering fun interactive things, as well as food, that grab the students’ attention.

Mandy, with help from members of the High Street Frankston UC, runs a weekly pancake breakfast on campus with some 150 or so students and staff being fed each week. It’s been a bit more of a challenge for myself at Caulfield campus. Caulfield did have a large number of international students who are only now slowly returning to campus. Food is a bit harder to offer on campus, but there is always room for biscuits, sweets and fun.

The best way for chaplains to be seen and recognised on campus is to become part of the university calendar of events and get involved in RUOK Day, Diversity and Inclusion week, Open Day, Stress Less Week, Mental Health Awareness days and basically anything the university runs.

Chaplains get creative around what our presence at these events can look like, but we have as much fun as the students do. We wonder and chat, we support where we can, we advocate when we need to or are asked to, and we get involved as much as we can.

All of this is not that easy, but that’s just what university chaplains do.

Rev Jay Robinson



IT MUST BE PANTO TIME!

Pantomime is an English-style, bright, joyful, and funny telling of a traditional children's story. The sets and costumes are full of colour and there are traditional characters, such as a pantomime dame – a man playing the role of a woman, and Daisy the Cow. Best of all, pantomime includes loads of audience participation and is fun for people of all ages.

Back in 2019 as part of our community outreach, the Village Church supported a group of our playgroup and church families to help establish 'Mt Eliza Community Pantomime'.

The church has helped infuse this community group with values like community, life, joy, and we hope it provides happiness to those who participate and those who attend a production.

Having done productions of *Aladdin* and *Jack in the Beanstalk* on either side of the pandemic lock down years, we're incredibly excited to announce a new production of *Cinderella* on the long weekend in June.

The Mt Eliza Community Pantomime team have been hard at work getting this production ready for the stage. It is a vibrant show of colour, music and loads of traditional pantomime jokes and puns.

Will Cinderella get to the ball?

Will she meet and fall in love with her Prince Charming?

Or will Cinderella's ugly stepsisters, and their conspiring mother, the Baroness Hardup, spoil the day?

WHEN:

Friday 9th June: 7.00pm

Saturday 10th June: 1.00pm and 5.00pm

Sunday 11th June: 12pm

LOCATION

Mount Eliza Community Hall (90-100 Canadian Bay Road, Mount Eliza)

Rev Cameron McAdam

For more details please head to Mt Eliza UC [website](#) or please email ucame@hotmail.com.au

To book your tickets please click on the below link - trybooking.com/CGDVW

Three working bees were planned during the school holidays, sets have been painted, costumes stitched or altered, and props made, including a rather large pair of fancy knickers.



Mount Eliza Community Pantomime is having a ball with

Cinderella

by James Barry

JUNE
9th @ 7pm
10th @ 1pm & 5pm
11th @ 12pm
2023

Mount Eliza Community Hall

Tickets: www.trybooking.com/CGDVW

Adults \$25 Children \$12 Family \$65 (2A, 2C)

Proudly supported by The Village Church Mt Eliza



Springtime for hymn singing

Congregational singing blossomed in the 19th century

Join in singing at Auburn Uniting Church

Introduced by Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood

Pianist Bruce Macrae and guest choir

Attend live or email for a link to ken.barelli@bigpond.com

81 Oxley Road, Hawthorn

Sunday 4 June 2.00pm | Free event – all welcome



VicTas Uniting Church Historical Society

THINKING ABOUT THE FUTURE

St John's Elsternwick UC is a congregation in transition, discerning ways to remain viable and to continue to play a meaningful role in our local community into the future.

We have maintained supply ministry since our last Minister, Rev Philip Liebelt retired in November 2019. Rev Lynette Dungan and Rev Karel Reus have both had extended and much appreciated time with us, and continue to challenge and inspire our thinking.

Our congregation has always had a strong focus on social justice issues with an annual social justice fundraiser lunch, Side Door Hub, and outdoor displays. Until very recently we operated an Opportunity Shop shopfront on Glenhuntly Road in Elsternwick for 23 years which enabled us to donate over \$570,000 to various causes and charities, and to assist many disadvantaged locals with cheap and sometimes no cost goods such as clothing and kitchen items.

We have been responsible for stewardship of five properties (excluding the leased Op Shop shopfront), including three larger, multi-space properties (one of which was sold in 2021) and two manses.

We view partnerships as extremely important, and have worked diligently on these over the years with varying success. We recognise that our small congregation can only do so much, and when we can support partners to do good things, we multiply our benefit to the local community.

Our key missional partnership is with the Caulfield South Community House, a not-for-profit organisation which has leased one of our larger properties for many years. The Community House provides a range of community support and wellbeing services and programs consistent with St John's values and objectives. With over 5000 participants joining in nearly 50 different programs offered during 2022, our investment in leasing the property to the Community House is having a substantial positive impact in a residential area with few services, and we receive a significant rent income too.

Two years ago we engaged the Community House to manage the hiring out of spaces available in the two larger properties, removing one onerous task from our congregation. We are currently exploring other opportunities to further enhance our partnership.



At our April Church Council meeting we discussed our proposed priorities for the coming twelve months, and confirmed we will aim to:

- complete a major program of maintenance and renovations in two stages using funds set aside from the proceeds of the property sale under the Money for Mission Fund program;
- explore possible sale of the second manse which is currently commercially rented;
- advocate for the renewal of the Community House lease which expires in January 2024;
- re-introduce activities impacted by COVID-19, such as Cuppa and Chat and social justice events;
- trialling, in cooperation with the Community House, new creative programs such as craft, hobby and drama activities facilitating conversation amongst participants;
- explore alternative Op Shop type activities (to the traditional shopfront model) and other practical outreach activities; and
- trial alternative worship / spiritual reflection processes and alternate locations to our current options which include Sunday morning services and Sunday Nite Live once per month.

St John's has encouraged further engagement with the local community through our Peace Tree, our Jack Campbell memorial peace garden and through special displays from time to time on our front lawn area.

At this important time in Australia's history with the impending Voice referendum we believe that the central Uniting Church could develop key messaging and banners / display boards which could be displayed by all Uniting Church congregations and other Uniting Church entities across Australia choosing to do so, to promote a 'Yes' vote. Congregations such as St John's and other entities could be asked to contribute funds to facilitate such an initiative.

We invite and would value and appreciate any suggestions / ideas / information on innovative ways to manage the Treasurer function within our congregation

Michael Forbes

Please forward your feedback to
stjohns.elsternwick@ucappep.net

FRIENDS THAT LAST A LIFETIME

Rev Mark J Dunn, retired since 2016, writes how a friendship in ministry can turn into support, guidance and encouragement.

As we head towards another Anzac Day, I was honoured to be the guest speaker for the friendship group at the Village Church, Mt Eliza, where my friend Rev Cameron McAdam is the Ministry Team Leader. Cam and I go back to his student ministry days when he and Georgie were members with us at Doncaster (Pilgrim UCA).

Ten years ago I was deployed with 180 soldiers and offices to support the peacekeeping mission in the Solomon Islands. For four months in 2013 I covered everyone's welfare needs and nurtured their spiritual well-being with a dynamic weekly Chapel service supported by a passionate Platoon of Tongan soldiers - my choir!

While training, working, eating, sleeping, exercising and relaxing together away from all the normality of home, you develop a particular bond with your 'flock'.

I taught the 6 week 'Faith Under Fire' ADF course to an enthusiastic group and baptised a Corporal who wanted to know a deeper sense of God in her life.

Rev Cam was Supervisor with regards to welfare and he listened and reflected with me fortnightly about what was happening and my engagement with this very different

expression of ministry. It is an honour to be positioned to serve in uniform alongside those who serve our nation - in so doing, we're serving God and expanding ministry on the margins. Please uphold our 40 UCA ADF Chaplains, as well as members and veterans in your prayers.

Rev Mark J Dunn (Army Chaplain Ret'd) still serves as Deputy Command Chaplain, (LTCOL) Australian Army Cadets.



PENTECOST REFLECTION

Belinda Clear explores our theme this month a little further and shares her ideas and reflections with us. We hope you have a good read.

In her beautiful retelling of the Pentecost story, Laura Alary writes:

“It was like the old story of the Tower of Babel – but in reverse! Instead of being scattered, people were coming together. Instead of confusion, there was understanding. Instead of one language shattered into pieces, there were many languages telling one story.”

The story of Pentecost at its heart is a story of a community who comes close to God and God comes close to them. In what was far from a sedate scene the disciples discovered different “languages” they could use to communicate. The joy of what the Spirit had enabled in them compelled them to go out and share what they had experienced. The Spirit ignited the hearts and imaginations of the disciples in a new way and ignited the hearts and imaginations of others in their community.

Often when we reflect on this story we think about the variety of spoken languages that might have been present, but I wonder if it was more than that. I wonder if the disciples being given the gift of different modes of communication meant that God’s story of love began to be communicated through figures and statistics, music, painting, sculpture, dance, carpentry, laughter, play, and so much more. Each of these “languages” would have opened up a different way of being in the world for those present.

Just as the disciples weren’t able to stay locked away keeping that warm and fuzzy joyful feeling to themselves, neither should we. It’s about our vocation in the world and about what we do with that, it’s about how we witness and what we are witnessing to. The joy and the gifts and skills that the Spirit has given us are not just to benefit us personally, but to help us to join in God’s story of love in the world, in a way that is uniquely ours!

I have been reflecting on a quote from *Fuller Youth Institute* which says: “You have a vital part in your church’s story. No matter what your role is.” It reminded me of a beautiful story by Bob Graham, *How To Heal A Broken Wing*. The story is set in the busy city where an injured bird lies on the pavement, its wing broken. Everyone seems to be too busy or too preoccupied to notice the injured bird, except for a small boy called Will. He picks up the bird, takes it home and nurtures the bird back to health ... with the stunning final illustration being the bird flying off into the city again.

As well as being a story of hope and the impact of a little bit of kindness, this story is also an illustration of “bystander effect”; a phenomenon where the more people who are around in a moment of crisis, the less likely it is that someone will intervene. This is most often because everyone thinks that someone else will step in. It takes bravery, kindness and empathy to go against the tide, but *How To Heal A Broken Wing* shows us that all it takes is one person taking one small step to make a huge difference and allow the injured bird to thrive.

So, what does helping an injured bird have to do with our church community?

The truth is that there are *no bystanders* in churches that are thriving. In thriving churches each person shows up in their own unique way. Such churches thrive because every person who is involved recognises that they have skin in the game, they are a part of a team and they play their part. This can be anything from serving on committees, reading the Bible, praying for people, phoning people up to say ‘hi’, sending a letter or a card to someone, so many different things but they all count!!

As we journey through this Pentecost season, my prayer for us all is that the Spirit might warm our hearts with tongues of fire; reigniting our passion for sharing the gospel in our own unique ways.

Belinda Clear



UNTINIGWORLD PROJECTS IN AMRITSAR AND DURGAPUR, INDIA



Dr Sureka Goringe, National Director - UnitingWorld, writes how small changes and a little effort can create big dreams and life goals. From small rural villages to city life.

A 'study centre' is when you create a space for children from the poorest, most marginalised families to come together after school to receive coaching and help with homework.

Then you realise that these kids have no access to extra-curricular activities, so you start weekend groups for sport, craft, dance etc.

You get to know their families, and the struggles they face. You realise that many of them don't know what they are entitled to from the government, so you run awareness sessions for the parents on how to access pensions, health care benefits, education benefits, small business support. You help them sort out their identity documents and paperwork.

As the families form a sense of communal identity, you help them organise to make change for the village; working bees to clean up rubbish and lobbying local government for services.

People want to improve family income and save money, so you help the women put together self-help groups who form a savings club and access government micro-finance grants. Young adults are supported to access the national skills training program.

Years go by, and kids who came to the study centre have graduated college or gone into business. Some have come back to the village as social workers in the same project. Children who discovered sport in your study centre have won medals at district and state level. Women are more organised and empowered and fighting even harder for a better future for their children. The village is a different place to when you started.

This is the story of what the Diocese of Amritsar and Durgapur of the Church of North India have been doing across dozens of communities. It's what UnitingWorld has been supporting them to do for 15 years.

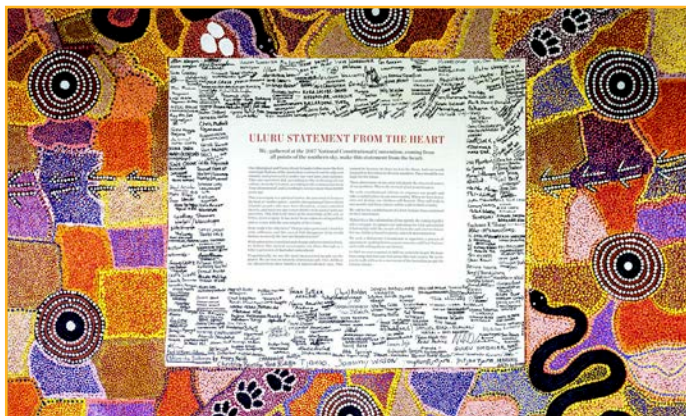
I have just spent two weeks meeting the people from these communities - rural villages and urban slums. I have seen the kids from the study centres sing and dance, I have met the graduates who told me with shining eyes of what they are doing now. I have spoken with the mothers who tell tales of loss and struggle, determination and hope, pride and gratitude. I have met with the community workers who are eager for the next phase - supporting adolescents with career guidance, life skills, navigating relationships, family planning and stopping child marriage.

I think this might be what good news to the poor, release to the prisoners and the liberation of the oppressed might look like.

My hope is that we get to partner for another 15 years. There are always more villages.



TALKING THE VOICE SOMERS CAMP



Our congregation wanted to be better informed about the *Uluru Statement from the Heart*. The Prime Minister committed the government to give Australians the opportunity to vote at a referendum on a constitutional amendment to provide First Nations people with a Voice to parliament. The senior-most member of the *Creative Ministries Network*, Barry Mitchell, agreed to provide us with an information kit.

With his wife Jenni, Barry put together a Powerpoint presentation for us that sets out clearly what is involved. Healing, justice, and reconciliation are central to Barry's faith, so his presentation drew on information from reputable sources to inform us. The final slide asked us to reflect together on what The Uluru Statement and the referendum mean for our faith.

Now we better understand this is a vital issue for Australian Christians to respond to faithfully and prayerfully. That is why we are making this resource available to any who also take their faith seriously in forming their personal response.

We believe how Australians vote at the forthcoming referendum is vital for the future of our First Peoples and our nation.

Download the Powerpoint file from the Presbytery website and use it as you best see fit to support your congregation's members to take up the invitation of the Uluru Statement: 'We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.'

[Download link here.](#)

Rev Dr John Bottomley
Creative Ministries Network

Somers Camp welcomes students from Grade 3 to Year 9 to come along as campers on our week long camp in the first week of the winter school holidays; Monday 26th June - Friday 30th June at Lord Somers Camp on the Mornington Peninsula.

Somers Camp is a Uniting Church youth and children's camp that provides a jam-packed week of exciting activities, fun games, songs and laughter. We prioritise creating an environment for children to feel free to be themselves, while exploring their Christian faith and God's love for them.

The Somers experience is full of fun and an incredible community feel. With daily devotions and worship, arts and craft, song and dance and so much more - we guarantee a good time and friends for life.

For further details please see flyer on page 17 or visit www.somerscamp.com.au

CORNISH COLLEGE UPCOMING EVENTS

Cornish Fun Run/Walk

We're very excited about the first ever Cornish Fun Run/Walk to be held on our beautiful 100 acres.

A wonderful opportunity for everyone, individuals and families, to come together for a wonderful community event here at Cornish, whilst supporting the Fatuquero School in Timor-Leste.

When: **Sunday 7 May**, 9.00am at Vicki Steer Green, Cornish College

Family entry \$25 or Single entry \$10

Run 3km/6km or Walk 3km

[Click here](#) to register or get further details.

Cornish Bush Chapel

Next bush chapel is on **Sunday May 21** at 3pm. The theme will be the story of Pentecost.

If you have time, please have a think about the following question:

'Have you ever felt so full to the brim that you have experienced the absolute need to get out into the world and share a message?'

Think about that question in its widest terms and, if you feel comfortable, come prepared to share your story for 2 minutes.



SOMERS CAMP

WELCOMING STUDENTS IN GRADE 3 – YEAR 9



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MONDAY 26TH JUNE – FRIDAY 30TH JUNE 2023



Highly dedicated and trained leadership team. ALL staff hold current WWCC



Lord Somers Camp
150 Lord Somers Road
(enter via Gate A on Parklands Ave)



Fully catered onsite.
3 main meals and 3 snacks every full day of camp + more



Registered Nurse onsite 24/7
PLUS first aid qualified leadership team



Camper Registration
Grade 3 – Year 9 students



Slushie Registration
Year 10 & Year 11 students



[somerscamp_uc](#)



[Somers Camp](#)



admin@somerscamp.com.au



www.somerscamp.com.au

QUEENS GUIDE AT UNITING BY THE BAY

Jasmine Pole of Uniting By the Bay – Chelsea Carrum Uniting Church was recently awarded her Queen's Guide Certificate at the annual award ceremony at Government house. Being a member of the congregation since she was born, we took joy in helping her achieve this peak award in Guiding and have appreciated the contribution that she has made (and continues to make) to our Church mission.



Jasmine Pole

Jasmine spent in excess of 60 hours of community service working on Church projects as part of the vast list of requirements that she had to complete to achieve this award. Thankfully her volunteer work hours had been completed before the challenges of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns.

A major block of hours were spent working as part of the team of volunteers that takes our Stable “photo booth” and costumes to events for people to dress up and have free Christmas Nativity photos taken.

She attended the Frankston Festival of Lights as well as the Kingston Community Carols. Jasmine has been involved with our stable outreach since she was young, but as a competent young woman, her contribution is invaluable at these very busy events.

She also worked many hours in our op-shop based at Carrum. This not only contributed to the valuable outreach and service that the op shop provides to our local community but it was also lovely to watch the friendships develop between Jasmine and the other volunteers. It is a requirement that all our volunteers in the op shop have WWCC which enables us to have youth volunteers work in our lovely shop.

In the past we have also had kids from the local school work in the shop too. Another Girl Guide is now volunteering at our op shop to complete the volunteer work component of her Queen's Guide Award.

Another aspect of Jasmine's work to complete this award was to develop skills in an area of her own interest. Jasmine is a developing artist and we have benefited from the work she has done to explore this interest. She experimented with making a mural as part of her Queens Guide and has since worked alongside another artist in our congregation, Elizabeth Alexandreou and the Sunday School kids to make several murals displayed at our two buildings.

Outside the sphere of our Church Jasmine completed the “leadership focus” of the Award which required her (amongst other tasks) to be a leader at a different Girl Guide unit for a year as well as run several themed nights for her own unit – lockdowns provided many challenges through this time, but she rose to the challenge running weekly meetings and themed nights over Zoom and contributing to GGTV – a youtube channel set up by the Girl Guides with weekly episodes which was initiated within a week of the lockdowns starting.

We at Uniting By the Bay would like to congratulate Jasmine on being recognised for her hard work.

Fiona Connell



SYNOD GRANTS 2024

The Synod Grants Program for 2024 has just been announced. Applications are due shortly for the following:

1. Mission or Ministry Program – Innovation and Collaboration

These grants will come from the Mission Reserve Fund established in 2021. The purpose of these grants is “to assist innovative and collaborative projects that creatively address missional and ministry needs arising from congregations and presbyteries.” The focus of these grants is on projects that are regional or for multiple congregation projects rather than for single congregations.

2. Ministry or Mission Program – Kilmany Trust Fund, WJ Craig Memorial Trust, Harold Hughes Estate

These three funds are, broadly speaking, to assist children, youth or families who are disadvantaged, in necessitous circumstances, or have medical or high care needs. The purpose of these grants is “to assist UCA entities who are seeking funding to support mission programs and ministries and are unable to fully fund the program from their own resources.”

3. Capital Works Program

The purpose of these grants is “to assist UCA entities who are responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of buildings on UCA property and are unable to fully pay for the proposed works including essential maintenance costs or compliance requirements.” Funds include the Early Childhood Building Maintenance Relief Fund and the Capital Works Fund.

4. Congregational Debt Relief Fund

The purpose is to assist congregations stressed by debt to reduce this debt to a manageable level.

[Download the Grant forms here.](#)

The presbytery can assist congregations in preparing grant applications, however we are unable to do all of the work for you. Completed proposals need to be submitted to the appropriate presbytery committee which then considers providing an endorsement. Once you have read and understood the grant criteria and application form, you may contact Craig Mitchell, David Higham, or Jeff Gardner to discuss your proposals. Congregations considering Capital Works Programs are also encouraged to contact the PPE Property Committee directly. The presbytery needs to receive applications by Friday 2 June.

DIARY DATES

Pieta: Darkness into Light

Saturday 6 May at 5.30am

Albert Park, Ross Gregory Drive St Kilda

Cornish College Fun Walk/Run

Sunday 7 May, starting at 9am

Start/finish Vicki Steer Green, Cornish College

Family entry \$25 or Single entry \$10

Reaching Net Zero Emissions by 2040 with Rev Deacon Andrea Mayes

Sun 7 May from 4pm at Ormond Uniting

Victorian Council of Churches AGM SAVE THE DATE

Saturday 13th May (in person & on Zoom)
9.30am-11.30am

St Peter's Eastern Hill (hall)

15 Gisborne St, East Melbourne

Contact for further details: vcc@vcc.org.au
0499 726 213.

Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry: The work of the Leader

Tues-Thurs 17-19 May, 9.30am-5pm includes morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea included at Centre for Theology and Ministry
29 College Crescent, Parkville
Cost: \$300 metro, \$260 non metro
Registrations close 12 May 2023

Cornish Bush Chapel

Sunday 21 May at 3pm

At the Vicki Steer Green - drive round to the back of the school

Home-brewed Conversations

Sunday 21 May at 4pm

at The Rogue Squire, Cnr Ferntree Gully & Jells Rd, Wheelers Hill



JOIN SYNOD 2023



Synod 2023 will be held from November 18-21 at Box Hill Town Hall.

The Synod meets about every 18 months to receive reports, discern proposals, and discuss matters that concern the general oversight, direction and life of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.

The Synod meeting includes nominated representatives from all eight presbyteries and includes a Tributes Service, which honours ministers who, since the previous Synod meeting, have:

- been ordained, retired or been received from other denominations since the preceding Synod meeting (2021).
- celebrated 50, 60, 65 and 70 years since ordination or commissioning.

The meeting will also be live-streamed and most of the sessions recorded including the Opening Worship on the morning of November 18.

WHAT IS SYNOD?

These meetings are important in defining who we are as the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania. Synod meetings are sometimes faced with challenging matters and important decisions, such as discerning who will be our next Moderator-elect, and such decisions are best made when we gather together to discern God's direction for our Church, and listen to the varied voices that make up our Synod.

SPECIAL GUESTS

Brooke Prentis - Aboriginal Christian Leader, international speaker, writer, educator, and poet will preach during the Opening Worship.

Rev Associate Professor Robyn Whitaker - Senior Lecturer in New Testament, Pilgrim Theological College, will lead the Bible Studies.

YOU ARE INVITED!

If you would like to be a member and attend, speak to your minister and/or contact Anne Kim for details on how to nominate. Any confirmed member of the UCA can nominate as a Synod member.

FURTHER DETAILS

Contact Synod Logistics Coordinator Sarah Manase on 9116 1963 or at sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au



Uniting in Prayer May

Each week congregations are encouraged to include their neighbours in their prayers. The Presbytery's prayer calendar covers congregations, schools and agencies of the Uniting Church in our Presbytery and Synod. You can check the calendar on the Presbytery website.

May 7	Coatesville congregation - Rev Graham Bartley, Chair Richard Palmer
May 14	Creative Ministries Network- Rev John Bottomley, Chair Linda Hoskins Cranbourne congregation - Rev Paul Dau (Supply), Chair Rev Tony Dungan
May 21	Dandenong congregations (Trinity & Lewa Tolu Vakalou - Fijian) - Rev Berlin Guerrero, Chairs Nigel Bitu, Ian Spencer Endeaour Hills congregation - Rev Mike You, Chair Wes Porch
May 28	Elsternwick congregation - Rev Lynette Dungan, Chair Patricia McKay Hampton congregation - Rev Ann Simons, Chair Ian Menzies



A prayer for Jesus' Witness

Spirit, come upon your church.

Course through the lives, minds and hearts of your people.

Let us have the power, to run through the familiar streets of Jerusalem, knocking on the doors of our friends and families.

Let us have the courage still,

to run out to all Judea and even Samaria, for all to hear the name of Jesus.

Let us have the strength, to run this race to the end, when your name is proclaimed to the end of the earth.

Let our actions speak the incarnate love of Jesus. Let our words speak the life gifted in and through Jesus.

Prayer supplied by Rev Sam Joo

Send your articles and photographs for Newsbeat, the Presbytery website and Facebook page, and weekly email, to Communications Officer Sarah Manase

comms-officer@ucappep.org



Visit the Port Phillip East Presbytery office at 1 Allan St, Noble Park.



03 9558 4710



www.facebook.com/ucappep.org



www.ucappep.org



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