

Newsbeat

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP EAST



SEPTEMBER HEADLINES

CORNISH COLLEGE:
CONNECTION TO COUNTRY
& ECO-AWARD

TAMIL CONGREGATION
(MALVERN EAST UC): HOPE
IS KEY

LAY PREACHERS EDUCATION
DAY

FIVE LEAF ECO-AWARDS

MT WAVERLEY UC: VISION
FOR AN INTERCULTURAL
FUTURE

MURREMBEENA UC: 20TH
ANNIVERSARY COMING
TOGETHER

BENTLEIGH UC: NUTRITION
MATTERS

LEIGHMOOR: CONTINUES
COMMITMENT TO
ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

LAY PREACHERS

THE SYNOD SCOOP

SEPTEMBER 2023 ISSUE



Port Phillip East Presbytery

WHAT'S HAPPENING

An insight into what congregations,
schools & members are doing

CONNECTION TO COUNTRY

Lainey Foster, Communications Manager from Cornish College shares with us how one beautiful book created recently by their three-year-old group at the Early Learning Centre connects with their Place and Bunurong Land. It's titled, "Our Island Ritual".

Cornish College's longstanding commitment to educating about the First Peoples of Australia is well-documented in the College's Reconciliation Action Plan and the implementation of this plan is evident in all areas throughout the school.

Each week the children visit the island, which is part of the College wetlands, for *Dhumba-dha Biik*, which means Talk Country. On these visits they are asked to think about the following - what do we do on the island to remind us this is Bunurong land and how do we look after land, water and each other?

The book contains photos of the children engaging with nature on the land and their thoughts on those two questions. As always, there is a great deal to learn from the wisdom of children and, although they had

only been at the school for a short time the children's statements clearly reflect their understanding of the importance of being custodians of the land and their connection to place.

By spending uninterrupted periods of time on the island, the children have not only learnt about the philosophies of First Nations People, but also have the opportunity to physically practise caring for country. The comments made by the children in the book reflect their love of going to the island, enjoying the experience of a campfire, delighting in wading through the lake and viewing all the wildlife.

The children have developed understanding and respect for the First Peoples through the ritual of coming together. Singing the Bunurong Song further supports their growing understanding of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander culture, while acknowledging Boon Wurrung language and the important meaning of the words.

This book has provided a beautiful memento for the children and their families.



HOPE IS KEY

Tamil Congregation of the Uniting Church has been through some ups and downs like many churches over the years but it's their desire to see people loving Jesus, and spreading his shining light that keeps them going.

The Tamil Congregation of the Uniting Church was originally formed to bring the Tamil speaking members to worship together in 1992. In 1994 we became part of the Uniting Church umbrella under Rev Dev Anandarajan. We originally worshiped in St Davids Uniting Church in Oakleigh, where we started with only one service on the third Sunday of the month. This was gradually expanded to all four Sundays, with the fifth Sundays being a combined service with the Balkara community. We had several ministers after Rev Dev left to take up a ministry position in another congregation.

In 2015 we left the Balkara parish, and under the guidance of Rev Greg Crow moved to Malvern East Uniting Centre at Serrell Street, Malvern East and continuing to worship there. After the COVID close down, it was difficult to restart the services. Our members live in a 50 km radius from the church and as many were getting on in years, they were finding it difficult to get to church.

Therefore, since 2022 we have only had one service on the third Sunday of the month. We do not have a permanent minister but rely on the good will of visiting preachers. During this time Rev Crow has been very helpful in guiding us and giving us all the support we need.

In our heyday (before COVID) we had the following activities conducted by our congregation:

- Sunday school
- Bible study each week at different members' residence
- Annual camp- which everyone looked forward to attending. We usually had approx. 50-70 attendees for each camp and a visiting preacher lead the activities.
- Youth ministry
- Annual Church Dinner

Unfortunately all the above has now come to a stop, and we have only the one service and no other activities. Nevertheless, we are hoping to restart our Annual Church dinner before end of this year.

Shantha Vivekanantha

“Spiritual Growth requires constant tug of war. We are always caught up between on what is and what will be.”



LAY PREACHERS EDUCATION DAY

The Presbytery's Mission and Leadership Development Committee (MLDC) includes in its brief the equipping and support of lay leaders in PPEP. Lay leaders undertake many tasks of worship, witness and service in and on behalf of the church. Some of these lay leaders are pastors in a specific place for a specific time; others preach and lead worship locally, while others are supply ministry agents in churches without an ordained minister. Lay preachers fill many ministry positions, but does the specified ministry continue to be relevant in the UCA? Or are there changes afoot?

The Lay Preachers' Association Education Day on Saturday, 23rd September, will explore these questions, while providing opportunities for Lay Preachers, lay worship leaders and other lay ministry agents to enhance their gifts of leadership.

The registration form and program are available on the [Presbytery website](#), with a great photo of participants at the National Lay Preachers Conference this year.



Face-to-face at the
CENTRE FOR
THEOLOGY AND
MISSION

or on-line by ZOOM

SESSIONS ON:
- Intergenerational
Worship
- Lectionary Deep
Dive
- Learnings From
Teaching
- Future Of Lay
Preaching

SPEAKERS:
Chris Barnett
Robyn Whittaker
Stephen Burns
Duncan Macleod

SATURDAY 23 SEPTEMBER 2023

LAY PREACHERS EDUCATION DAY

9.30am to 4.30pm - Cost \$20 face-to-face \$10 Zoom

Don't miss this opportunity to join with other Uniting Church Lay Preachers, Lay Leaders and Worship Leaders in exploring ways to enhance your work in the ministry of preaching.

VICTAS

LAY PREACHERS'
ASSOCIATION

[Registration and
Programme links
available here](#)

LAY PREACHING 60 YEARS

The original plan was to recognise Margaret Reid's 60 years as a lay preacher in 2020. But we all know how many plans for that year went astray! Finally, the Presbytery was very happy to recognise Margaret's service on 20th August this year at the same service celebrating Murrumbeena UCA's 20 year anniversary.

One Sunday morning in January 1960, Margaret led her first worship service as Local Preacher On Trial at Hillcrest Methodist Church, one of six churches in the Oakleigh circuit. Her own minister at Murrumbeena Methodist Church, Rev. Wilfred Manzoney, was present and wrote a critique on the service and encouraged her to pursue lay preaching.

More opportunities to preach followed this first one and when she accepted a short-term transfer to Tasmania by her employer the Bank of New South Wales, she was welcomed by the Burnie Methodist Church, and quickly added to the preaching roster for the churches in Hobart, Devonport, Newtown, Glenorchy, Sandy Bay and the Huon Valley.

On her return to Melbourne and the Murrumbeena Methodist Church she was again part of the lay preaching roster for the Oakleigh circuit.



Following Union in 1977, Margaret continued to serve as a lay preacher in the local congregations which included the congregations that came together to be Koornang and then Murrumbeena Uniting Church.

Margaret no longer leads worship in Murrumbeena, but she is involved with the worshipping community at the Nellie Melba Retirement Village where she resides.

NATIONAL LAY PREACHERS' CONFERENCE: FELLOWSHIP & DISCIPLESHIP, TESTIMONY & STORY, LEARNING & SHARING

Silvia Yang attended the National Lay Preachers' Conference in Brisbane in August. Her experience confirmed her desire to be recognised by the UCA as a Lay Preacher. She is currently a candidate for the specified ministry of Lay Preacher, studying worship and preaching in the UCA through eLM.

How useful was the conference for me?

This conference provided me with a deep understanding of the Lay Preacher's role in the UCA and how crucial the role of preaching is. The congregation understands the bible passage depending on how the preacher interprets and communicates that message to the congregation.

I learned that Lay Preaching is a Specified Ministry involving preaching and leading worship. I had thought that the term 'Lay Preacher' just referred to a preacher who does not have the qualifications to be a minister or pastor. Lay Preachers should not be confused with people recognised occasionally as lay worship leaders or preachers. After attending this conference, I was able to comprehend more fully the scope of the role of Lay Preacher and felt more responsible for what I am studying to become.

Sessions and networking

The 3-day conference program was packed with keynotes, lectures, and workshops.



Levon Kardashian took sessions on Mind Language, and preaching from the margins



VicTas Lay Preachers have a laugh together.

I attended the sessions on testimony, mission, children and the gospel, ethics, and different approaches and contexts for worship and preaching.

They were taken by well-informed UCA speakers like Sharon Hollis. Deidre Palmer, Levon Kardashian, and Alex Sangster.

Additionally, I enjoyed networking with many of the participants and presenters, as well as meeting Alastair Davidson and Maiava Alesana who are lay preachers from Yarra Yarra presbytery in our Synod.

I also met with other CALD lay preachers from Queensland, like Rina and Rita, and we shared stories from our own lives about how we have experienced God. Truly, this sharing makes us into a community of faith.

What did I gain from the conference?

Day by day during the conference, my passion for knowing God grew more within me, and I realise that by performing the role of Lay Preacher, I will be able to meet my need and eagerness to know more about God. As Rev Paul Clark affirms 'preaching in the church means preaching in the world'. I, a future lay preacher, will take God's Word back to the World God so loves.

Finally, my greatest take-away from this conference is nothing less than confirming my perception of the importance of Fellowship & Discipleship; Testimony & Story; and Learning & Sharing in my ministry as a Lay Preacher.

LIFE, LOVE AND LEARNING AT ORMOND

Ormond UC is a small congregation in the City of Glen Eira. It sits at the edge of the Jewish heartland. There are a number of small groups within the congregation supporting members in a variety of ways.

Life - dealing with COVID and beyond.

When lockdowns struck, Ormond attacked with vigour. Worship resources were delivered to all the congregational members with no internet access, to members who lived within 5 km of the church. Services of worship were also streamed live via Zoom to great effect. Zoom coffee and catchup followed each service.

The Pastoral Link Network was given a shot in the arm. Contact people were reminded to contact their list of people regularly for a chat over the phone. Many people reported that long conversations occurred as people tried to inject life into their changed existence during lockdowns.

Instead of our usual October visit to Arthurs Seat (named Big Day Out), we had a Zoom garden appreciation get together. Funds were raised for Frontier Services as usual – not quite as much fun as face to face sausages and salads with a beautiful view. But in lockdown what can you do?

After the lockdowns, we realised that a lot of our congregation were no longer able to attend regular worship services due to ill health. So, we continued to deliver weekly worship resources (with a face to face chat) to these people.

Love – the community of Ormond

Just before COVID became “a thing”, one of the Home Groups wondered how to support the people in the area who were doing it tough.

Yes, Ormond makes use of the Uniting food voucher program – but what else could we do. This small group contacted the City of Glen Eira, and the Church Council to gain permission to install a “Little Free Pantry”.

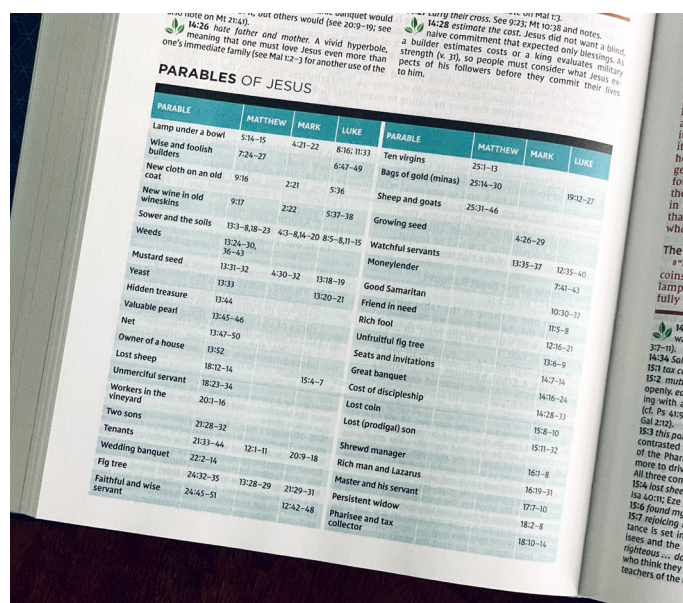
As lockdowns started the group insured that a small garden “shed” was installed on the corner of the property with the signage “take what you need, leave what you can”. What a blessing this has turned out to be during such a difficult time – a time where people lost jobs and had wages significantly reduced. Community members from the Ormond area regularly give freely and community members in need take as they need.

The original setup team continues to access one-day old bread from a local bakery, and keeps an eye on how stocks are going.

The Climate Action Group pondered how to use Ormond’s significant frontage on North Road. A competition within the congregation was held and the resulting poster for all traffic on North Road to see, reads “Unite for Stronger Climate Action Now”. Also, the group contacted a number of primary schools in the area in order to display the students’ reflections on climate action through art. This artwork from Murrumbene Primary School is installed in a purpose built display case under the climate action banner.

Learning – Ormond Learning Hub (OLH)

A few years ago the idea of Ormond as a place of learning about the faith was born. A small group was set up to organise this. Learning on various topics has occurred face to face in the church as well as by Zoom, particularly during lockdowns and the colder winter months.



Unsplashed: Tim Wildsmith

This is the fourth year of the Ormond Learning Hub (OLH) which now runs three courses per year (three week courses at the beginning and end of each year and a six week course in winter). A variety of topics have been tackled over these years: a dive into the New Testament, a look at the pre-history records in Genesis, a presentation on the theology of caring for the environment, and a look at faith and aging,



In August the OLH concluded its latest six week course: **'What is the Kingdom of God Like: Reading the Parables of Luke'**. Participants enjoyed learning about what makes the parables of Luke unique and what they tell us about the Kingdom of God.

Themes include care for the poor, liberation for the oppressed, inclusion, grace and present day salvation.

The parables reflect the mystery of the kingdom in such a way that close readings of very familiar stories such as 'The Good Samaritan' and 'The Prodigal Son' yield challenging and inspiring insights.

Stay tuned for information about the November course. If you have any questions regarding the Ormond Learning Hub (OLH) don't hesitate to get in touch with Facilitator Brad Denniston at bacdenniston@gmail.com

Through all of these challenging topics there have been opportunities to pre-read presented documents, listen to presentations, discuss the tricky issues and come together in prayer.

We have been fortunate to have the services of an extremely gifted and thoughtful presenter, Brad Denniston, and the church is very grateful for his input.

Heather Baxter
Ormond UC

TRINITY BRIGHTON MILESTONE

On Saturday 28 October, Trinity Uniting Church, Brighton will be celebrating 170 years since the establishment of the church, which began as a small wooden Congregational chapel in Male Street in 1853, with the current brick building in Black St completed in 1875.

Sunday, 29th October will be a day of gathering past, present and future members of our congregation together for our morning church service followed by a lunch and a musical performance in the afternoon.

So if you have had an association with Trinity UC Brighton, they would love for you to come and celebrate this extraordinary event! Don't miss out!

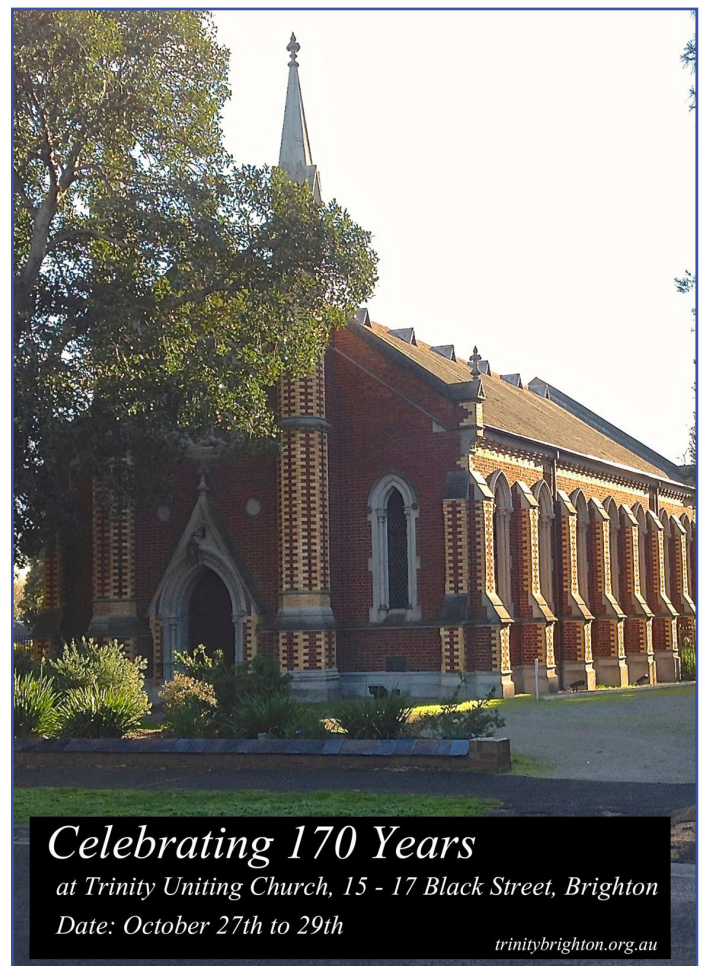
There will be no charge for the concerts, but any donations are welcome, of course.

Please contact the church for further details phone: 9592 4716 or 0414788431

Email: doxamoxa@gmail.com

Address: 15 Black Street, Brighton,

By Merrowyn Deacon & Jen Verwoert



Celebrating 170 Years

at Trinity Uniting Church, 15 - 17 Black Street, Brighton

Date: October 27th to 29th

trinitybrighton.org.au

PPE PRESBYTERY IN COUNCIL MEETING

The theme of journeying informed much of what happened at the August Presbytery Meeting, held at Glen Waverley UC.



On Saturday 19 August we had our August Presbytery in Council meeting. With 46 members and visitors we held a hybrid meeting at Glen Waverley UC. Tom Spurling, the Presbytery Chair, led the call to worship and an opening prayer. Rev Mike You (Minister at Endeavour Hills) and his wife Hee-Jong led the presbytery in song, beginning with the opening Hymn, ***“Where the Spirit is there’s freedom”*** by Jonas Jonson.

The reading from Genesis 13:8-12, was read in Dutch by Presbytery Minister-Pastoral, Anneke Oppewal, while Romans 8:26-39 was read in English by Tracie Mulia, Pastor at St Andrew’s Gardiner. Rev James Douglas from St Luke’s Mt Waverley, delivered a reflection by video on ‘journeying’ based on the story of Abraham and Lot returning from Egypt. James used the passage to reflect on Craig Mitchell’s conclusion of his placement.

Tom led the Liturgy of Release for Craig Mitchell from his role as Presbytery Minister-Church Development. He, Anne Kim, as Presbytery Secretary and Rev Nigel Hanscamp, as Synod representative, recognised and acknowledged Craig’s dedication and his work at the Presbytery and at eLM. The Presbytery released Craig from his responsibilities from his duties as Presbytery Minister Church Development of Port Phillip East Presbytery. effective from this month.

The Presbytery welcomed with acclaim the appointment of Rev Jay Robinson as the new Presbytery Minister Team Leader commencing in January 2024. We also welcomed Virginia Lavaki, who was inducted as the Younger Generations Multicultural Communities Coordinator at eLM, and will be living in Port Phillip East Presbytery.

Rev Ross Pearce (Minister of Frankston congregation) and Kelly Skilton (Younger Generations - New and Digital Ministries placement at eLM) shared stories about the Somers Camp and their beautiful experience with the Camp people.

After the break, Robin Yang facilitated discussions of the Act2 project following the presentation by Jess Hateley Browne from the Act2 Project Team. The participants joined to small groups and people on Zoom were divided into breakout rooms for further work on the Collective Discernment Response form. The participants were encouraged to express and deliver their thoughts and opinions to the Act2 project team.

On behalf of the Presbytery Ministry Team, we would like to thank the Glen Waverley UC congregation for hosting the meeting with such a lovely hospitality, and well equipped IT facilities. A special thanks for the members who spent their precious Saturday morning to assist in the meeting. We also thank Rev Mike You and Hee-Jong for leading songs and music, Rev James Douglas for his devotions and prayers of thanksgiving and intercession. Thankyou to Rev Ross Pearce, and Kelly Skilton for sharing about the Somers camp. A big thankyou also to Ji Zhang for the photos he took of the meeting.

Anne Kim



MOUNT WAVERLEY UC: A VISION FOR AN INTERCULTURAL FUTURE



Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you fulfil the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2)

Where to from here? is the 21st century million-dollar question. Our congregation understands that change is coming and we are learning how to embrace it. A difficult task at hand, but we are doing our best to embark on this new journey with the best of our abilities. Nothing is promised apart from the continuation of the mission of Christ at Mount Waverley and beyond. We commit to welcoming and building relationships with people of all cultures, races, spiritual beliefs, and sexual orientation – with hospitality as the centre of our mission as the community of Christ. While we witness the transition, we continue to build community and relationship in this time and space. We believe in hope and walking in God's grace will keep the church on the way to a promised end.

Our vision for the future is to have regular intercultural services drawing on elements from a variety of cultural traditions, that are appreciated by participants from diverse cultural backgrounds, making a very inclusive church. We will also support regular services from specific cultural traditions. Our intercultural services would be more reflective of our culturally diverse community than our current aging, predominantly Anglo congregation. This will take time to develop and will evolve over time.

We are very proud that our two former congregations who amalgamated in 2021 had the courage to embrace a new vision of an intercultural future following much discernment and very good spiritual guidance from our two ministers at the time.

We are currently planning more shared worship and mission activities with our neighbouring Fijian (MFUC) and Korean (Bethel) congregations.

Here are some of our current activities:

CAFÉ

Our café began in 1997 serving home cooked meals for a reasonable price to the community and donating all profits to local charities.

Our customers comment on the warm welcoming atmosphere they find, and especially enjoy the passionfruit sponges! When this venture began the committee had no idea the café would be so popular, and now there are more than 40 volunteers who help, and many people who have enjoyed sharing time together at the café. To date our total donations total over \$245,000. A good effort from all involved.

KIDS HOPE AUSTRALIA

We have twelve mentors involved in the Kids Hope program at our neighbouring Park Lane Primary School. It is part of our call and ministry to reach out to children who may have learning difficulties due to various reasons – to give them hope of a better future. It has been over ten years since our church entered the program and both the school and mentors are enjoying working together for the wellbeing of these young children.

Rev Semisi Taulii



FIVE LEAF ECO-AWARDS RECOGNITION

As we celebrate the Season of Creation in September, we are also celebrating three churches who have finished their Five Leaf Eco-Awards. The awards are comprehensive and encourage greening in five different areas: the buildings, worship, actions by congregation members, outreach and community leadership.

To get a Basic Certificate you need to complete actions in all five areas. In addition, there are other Eco-awards that focus on a specific area such as: Eco-Worship Award, Climate Activism Award, Advanced Eco-Church Building Leaf Award, Advanced Eco-Congregation Leaf Award, Advanced Eco-Outreach Leaf Award. The top award is the Five Leaf Eco-Award.

Leighmoor Uniting Church will be presented with their Basic Certificate on 10 September at their usual service. They have very been passionate on climate issues as a church.

Over the last few years they have implemented initiatives to help raise community awareness and reduce their carbon foot print. Some highlights include installing twenty solar panels, installing rainwater tanks, planting seedlings every year at a Trust for Nature property in Nagambie and sending a letter to all their neighbours outlining what the church is doing to care for the environment to encourage the neighbours to join in taking action. Read more about what Leighmoor is doing on the next page.



Heatherton Dingley Uniting Church will be presented with their Basic Certificate and Eco-Worship Award on 8 October at their usual service.

They have been on the journey to become environmentally friendly for a long time. In 2012 a 4kW solar panel system and solar hot water system were installed. In 2021 energy efficient lighting was installed. In 2022 they applied for a grant through Sustainability Victoria's Community Climate Change and Energy Program to replace four old gas heaters in the church with two energy efficient split system reverse cycle heaters/air conditioners, which happened earlier this year.

In addition, Caring for Creation has been a theme for six worship services over the past year. In 2023 they started a bi-monthly Dog Church service, where they think about how dogs can connect us with God and encourage us to care for the broader natural world.

St Leonard's Uniting Church, Brighton Beach will be presented with their Basic Certificate and Eco-Worship Award on 29 October at the 10am service. The LEAF group at St Leonard's has continued to be active this year.

- Initiating environmental breakfast events with guest speakers. In June, Brad Denniston encouraged attendees to consider Christian theology related to climate action, while in August we learnt of the good work of the agronomist Tony Rinaudo known as the 'Forest maker'.
- St Leonard's were involved in putting together the bookmark and PowerPoint for the Presbytery for National Tree Day this year, which encouraged many other congregations to celebrate the day.
- It was also encouraging to see nine children from the church who responded to the environmental movie, "Blue Back"; some spoke about the movie in Church and all contributed to a small art display

If you would like to demonstrate your commitment to becoming an environmentally friendly church and apply for a Five Leaf Eco-Award either fill in the survey at fiveleafecoawards.org or email details of what you have done to fiveleafecoawards@gmail.com or contact Jessica Morthorpe 0409 503 369. .

Every small thing we do makes a difference.

Rev Deacon Andrea Mayes
Heatherton Dingley Uniting Church with assistance from Vivienne Mountain and Geoff Serpell

LEIGHMOOR UNITING CHURCH CONTINUES COMMITMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION

Leighmoor Uniting Church has received a prestigious environmental award for its climate and environmental action commitments.

The Five Leaf Eco-Awards Basic Certificate acknowledges the many actions the church has taken, including investing over \$2,200 in energy efficiency and insulation projects over the past 12 years, installing 18,000 litres of water tanks and 20 solar panels, enabling renewable energy for heating and lighting and sustainable water sources for their tennis courts and church gardens.

Congregation members gathered to list the actions they can take as individuals, regularly share their garden produce with each other, and distributed 1,000 flyers to neighbouring houses to raise awareness of their environmental actions and encourage others to join in. The church displays climate action banners on its buildings and has a host of useful information and resources on its updated website. The congregation has also sent letters to politicians and banks asking for an increase in climate action and an end to lending money for coal and gas exploration.

Sermons and worship services at the church have included caring for our earth for our generation and future ones, and celebrating National Tree Day. Members have also been involved in extensive annual tree planting projects to protect flora and fauna on a Trust for Nature covenanted estate.

Congregation member Michael Soward says, *"We are very passionate about climate issues as a church, and over the last few years we have taken multiple initiatives to help raise community awareness and reduce our carbon footprint."*

He continues, *"It is a great honour to receive this award at Leighmoor Uniting in our attempts to make a positive contribution to what is arguably the greatest challenge confronting humanity."*

He acknowledges that there is still much more to be done, but concludes, *"Although our contribution may be small as an individual church, united with other parishes we can have a huge influence and impact on our environment, community, and government. The Five Leaf Eco-Awards further encourage us all to take action on climate change."*

Sally Hibbert from the Anglican Parish of St Stephen and St Mary at Mount Waverley (who received their Five Leaf Eco-Awards Basic Certificate in June this year) visited Leighmoor to present the award to the congregation. She said, *"It's wonderful to see what another church has done, and to be able to share our story so that both communities can aim higher and work towards the next awards in the program."*

The Five Leaf Eco-Awards are an ecumenical environmental change initiative for Australian churches and religious organisations founded in 2008 to assist, inspire and reward churches for environmental action. The Five Leaf Eco-Awards are non-competitive, with churches completing tasks from a list of flexible criteria to earn each certificate.

There are currently seven awards of varying difficulty available. The Five Leaf Eco-Awards operate nationally and across denominations.

Jessica Morthorpe



Sally Hibbert with Leighmoor Church Council members, Barbara Hughes, Michael Soward, Jenny Longmuir, Rev. Heeyoung Lim. Priya Bonney. Holding the award: Geoff Serpell.

FIVE LEAF ECO – AWARDS FOR CORNISH COLLEGE

Cornish College is very proud to have been recognised by the Five Leaf Eco-Awards National Ecumenical Environmental Awards program.

Jessica Morthorpe, who founded this program in 2008 for Australian churches, schools and religious organisations, is a consultant with the Uniting Church of Australia and has travelled all around Australia visiting churches and schools to see their environmental actions.

In her speech at the award ceremony, Jessica said that she was deeply honoured to be able to officially recognise Cornish College's environmental achievements with the presentation of three prestigious awards; the Basic Certificate award, the Eco-Worship award and the Eco Outreach award. Jessica said the College's application was a delight to read.

Even more exciting for the College is that if they can complete a few more criteria, Cornish College may become the first school in Australia to complete the criteria for the prestigious Five Leaf Award, the pinnacle of the program.

Being a recipient of these awards has connected Cornish College to a network of churches, schools and religious organisations around Australia working to care for the environment and create a better future for us all.

Lainey Foster



NUTRITION MATTERS FOR US ALL

Bentleigh UC has been exploring what it really means to live a well-balanced, healthy lifestyle, with professional advice from health dietitian, Karen Lovell. Here's how that advice has impacted their service to the community.

This winter, Bentleigh's Mind Body Spirit Wellbeing program invited community health dietitian, Karen Lovell. She presented on 'Nutrition for Wellbeing'. Karen helped us explore eating awareness and the importance of nutrition to holistic health and wellbeing.

We gained a deeper appreciation of how nutrition matters for us all - and of the challenges faced by the more vulnerable in our community to access nutritious food.

We reflected on ways that sharing what we have, can make a real difference to others' health and wellbeing. This inspired our church's Social ConnXions group to hold a fundraising stall during a Sunday morning tea.

Brimming with enthusiasm, our church folk set about providing a wide range of items for sale, including beautiful pashminas from Nepal, pot plants, cupcakes, knitted hats and scarves and various 'as new' gifts.

Our stall raised \$570 for the Uniting Winter Share Appeal to help provide food security, safe shelter and support for people in crisis.

Dorothy Andrew & Glennys Morgan





THE SYNOD SCOOP

Want to know more about what is happening in the VicTas Synod? Here is a deeper look into what is on offer: an annual invitation to pray and reflect on our shared call to care for the earth - our common home and the good creation of God, resources we can use in intergenerational worship, and an explanation of how you can have a say in the future shape of the UCA through responding to the Act2 project.

SEASON OF CREATION

The 2023 Season of Creation takes place from 1 September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4 October (Feast of St. Francis of Assisi) under the theme, Let justice and peace flow.

The prophet Amos cried out, **"But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!"** (Amos 5: 24)

This year's theme invites people to join the river of justice and peace, to take up climate and ecological justice, and to speak out with and for communities most impacted by climate injustice and the loss of biodiversity.

For further information visit, uniting.church/season-of-creation-2023/

The resource is also available too via uniting.church/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/Season-Of-Creation_2023_Final.pdf

INTERGENERATIONAL WORSHIP

Spill the Beans new lectionary, December 2023-November 2025: The inspiration is to connect the worship of the church more systematically with events that are happening around and outside the church. This includes 'world' days, particular seasonal events.

[Click here to view more](#) or visit the [Spill the Beans website](#).

ACT2 AND THE FUTURE

Hopefully these links have helped you catch up to where we are in the project timeline – **the discernment phase**. During this time we get to consider specific ideas and possible directions to go.

There are fortnightly opportunities to 'drop in' to specific workstreams that focus on directions for local communities of faith and discipleship, and options for our governance and resourcing.

There are also sessions available that address areas of specific focus, like community outreach, chaplaincy, specified age ministries, experimental communities, and church communities of varying sizes and expressions. There are twelve different focus groups running, and we are all invited to participate in these discussions. However, I want to particularly highlight the discussions that are connected with digital communities:

Focus Group 8 – Online Communities or communities with effective online ministries. This discussion is being facilitated on **Thursday September 28, at 7:30pm AEST**.

Focus Group 12 – Church plants and experimental communities. This discussion is being facilitated on **Thursday October 5, at 7:30pm AEST**.

By Kelly Skillton

If you are interested in any of the conversations, it is important that you register.

If you have any more queries, the Act2 team is the place to go: uca.act2@nat.uca.org.au

DINNER PLUS



St David's Parkdale UC have found a way to create a gathering that involves everyone...and there is yummy food!

There are eight of us in a cell/connect group that has been meeting fortnightly for the past 12 years.

Our church has undergone a lot of change over the last few years and this year our small group thought that it was time to change it up. After some consideration we thought that our group would host a dinner once a month at the church. There is no cost for those attending - it is completely hosted by our small group.

The name, "Dinner Plus", comes from the obvious serving of a meal followed by some short input and then discussion with those around you at the table. To finish we close in prayer.

Our plan has been to make this a special time for all, with a focus on welcome and hospitality. One long table connects us all together as a group. Di Douglas, one of the convenors said *"We have had lovely feedback from those attending. We started in the middle of winter and have had 35 - 40 people at each dinner with all ages represented."*

For people new to the church they have found a sense of welcome and connection, for others who have been coming to the church for a long time it has been nice for them to reconnect with everyone. Di Paul said *"This new event for our church is connecting people of all ages together and we have been pleasantly surprised by how popular it is"*.

The night starts at 6.30pm enabling those coming from work to make it in time. Given that we started in the middle of winter we make sure that the room is warm, it's set up for when people arrive with music playing. We even have craft activities for the kids and the young at heart. The aim is to finish by 8pm but people have been enjoying the night and stretching this out to 9pm.

By our second dinner we were starting to get offers from others wanting to share in the work and bring some food. Di Douglas has managed the menu and enabled people to be given an allocation of food to bring, but there is no expectation for this to happen. The team are happy just to provide a place of welcome and an opportunity for those who come to leave the world behind for a few hours and enjoy each other's company with some focussed discussion.

Please contact Di Douglas on 0418 502 298 for more information. It's early days yet but this concept is working at the moment for St David's Parkdale. Who knows where it will go in the future but for the moment we like it!

Byron Douglas
Church Council member

Also: Parkdale Church is celebrating 100 years

This year it is 100 years since the formation of what was then the Parkdale Methodist Church.

Come celebrate on Sunday 29 October at 10am - 128 Parkers Rd Parkdale followed by a light lunch afterwards



20th ANNIVERSARY OF COMING TOGETHER

What is now Murrumbreena Uniting Church began in 2003 when four local UCA congregations took a momentous step in coming together. This is their story.

Between 20 July and 10 August in 2003, four local UCA congregations around Murrumbreena undertook a process that culminated in them coming together in one building. Mind you, there were many many meetings, conversations, arguments, agreements, plans and dreaming that took place well prior to July 2003.

The process involved each congregation celebrating their community in a final worship at their usual place of worship. This was followed by another celebration again as they all came together in what was originally called Koornang Uniting Church and is now Murrumbreena Uniting Church.

On Sunday 20 July 2003 the St Giles community gathered in their building for one last time before joining with everyone else. On Sunday 27 July 2003 it was Neerim Road's turn, followed on Sunday 3 August 2003 by St David's and on Sunday 10 August 2003 Tara Grove met for the last time.

On Sunday 17 August 2003 all gathered again at the building that was to be known as Koornang Uniting Church, which had been St Giles Presbyterian Church. The Moderator Rev Alistair Macrae was the preacher, the choir sung, instruments of all sorts were played,

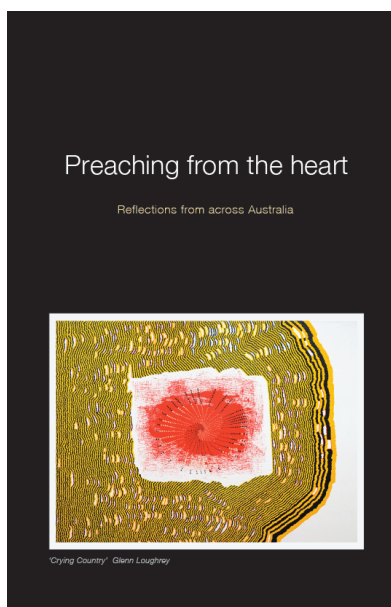
symbols were exchanged, and the beginning of what Murrumbreena Uniting Church is now began.

This year, over July and August, the people of Murrumbreena UC celebrated all that has taken place over that time as they recognise the 20 years that have passed since this all took place. On Sunday 20 August 2023 many gathered to celebrate where they are now and what the future holds as they continue to be the church in this place and at this time. Rev Alistair Macrae returned as the guest preacher for the day, with many other guests, including Rev Anneke Oppewal from the Presbytery. As expected,, such a celebration included a special shared morning tea which was fabulous.

Rev Jay Robinson



REFERENDUM RESOURCE



It is now available on the CMN as a pdf which can also be downloaded from the 2023 Synod

website. [Click here](#)

www.nswact.uca.org.au/events/synod-meeting-2023/proposals-and-reports

Preaching from the Heart is a resource for churches, ministers and members as they think about the upcoming referendum on The Voice to parliament for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island peoples. It is a collection of sermons, called for sermons from preachers across the nation that 'proclaimed God's Word of spirit and truth to their congregation about the gift to the Australian people in the historic Statement from the Heart and the referendum.'

Editors Rev. Dr. Garry Worete Deverell, and Bishop Philip Huggins with John Bottomley from CMN selected 19 sermons for inclusion in the book. The decision was taken to get the text out and in front of people before the referendum voting starts, rather than publish it only as a hard-copy book; the original idea. Sandy Yule, one of the contributors, pointed out that, *"Preaching from the Heart will be as important after the referendum (whatever the outcome) as before. It gets into issues that have proved too hot to handle for our political leaders."*

SAFE CHURCH

Each congregation is required to have a Safe Church contact person. A poster which includes the contact's name, photo and contact details should be mounted on the wall at child height. The poster is a downloadable resource.

[To view the Safe Church website click here](#) or simply visit safechurch.ucavictas.org.au where they have more details and more printable posters for your use.

COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

The four studies in Community Mental Health Support are the work of congregation members of the Creative Ministries Network. The studies are to encourage congregations to develop their potential for offering community mental health support in tough times.

Each study was developed for a Zoom gathering of the Network's house church. They are interactive, featuring personal accounts and faith sharing of members' struggles with the mental health challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Each study includes personal stories, inviting participants to reflect on their own stories in the context of God's story recounted in the Bible. Each study concludes with a simple ritual or prayer. Participants are invited to share their own experiences of the tough times we all encounter at work and in life. The studies offer a safe framework incorporating silence and respect for the personal wisdom of every member's experience.



To order, please phone John Bottomley on 0407 443 239 or email: johnbottomley@netspace.net.au

SYNOD STAFFING NEWS

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania are looking for two people to work in the eLM Unit. (equipping Leadership for Mission) in the following positions.

- Younger Generations, Education and Strategy coordinator
- Multicultural Ministries Coordinator

If you are interested in either of these, for a position description, or more information, please contact

nigel.hanscamp@victas.uca.org.au

Applications for both close on 29 September.

There have been two new appointments at eLM, based at the Uniting Church Centre for Theology & Ministry (CTM) in Parkville.

- History of Christian Practice & Belief

Pilgrim Theological College is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Kerrie Handasyde to the position of Coordinator of Studies: History of Christian Practice and Belief. Kerrie is an experienced teacher who is already accredited as a Senior Lecturer within the University of Divinity. She is known to many at Pilgrim through her work with the Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies and in coordinating Academic Skills.

- eLM Executive Assistant

Catherine Xenos started as eLM Executive Assistant from Monday September 11. Catherine will be working closely with Rev Duncan Macleod as Executive Officer, and with Robyn Whitaker, acting Head of College, Pilgrim Theological College.

Uniting AgeWell sees spiritual care as being at the heart of what they do. They are keen to grow their Spiritual Care Team.

Uniting AgeWell have vacancies (P/T and F/T) at a number of their Residential Aged Care facilities in both the Eastern suburbs of Melbourne and in North & South Tasmania. Uniting AgeWell are looking for experienced, compassionate and spiritually mature Chaplains (Spiritual Care Practitioners) to work as integral members of the care teams.

If you would like to be part of a successful, growing, values-based organisation, they would love to hear from you!

Please visit the Uniting AgeWell website or contact Judy Fry on 0455 45 45 38 for more information.

DIARY DATES

Full face to face session at Port Melbourne
Tuesday 10 October - [Click here to register](#)

Creative Spiritual Practice – Endeavour Hills UC

Thursdays 7-9pm
Hosting Cothumos spiritual art journalling
Further info cothumos@gmail.com

Mission Meals Project

Thursdays 5.30 - 7pm
St Kilda South Port, 325 Dorcas St, Sth Melb.
Contact Rev Alex Sangster 0411 292 273

Celebrating 100th anniversary at Southern Mornington Peninsula Uniting Church

Sunday 17th September
Contact Jill Fearon via email for details
jill_f@optusnet.com.au

Robin Shohet Webinar: on Being a Supervisee

Tuesday 26 September at 5 pm - 9 pm
[Click here to register](#)

Code of Ethics training

Wednesday 20 September at 7 pm
Via Zoom - [Please register here](#)

VCCEM Volunteer Training

Heatherton Dingley UC Craft and Home Produce Market

Saturday 14 October at 10.30am-1pm

The Food Truck Cabaret Night

Sat 14 October at 7pm
Balla Balla Community Centre
7-9 Selandra Blvd, Clyde North
\$20 per ticket or thefoodtruck00@gmail.com
for further info.

One Day Retreat for Ministry Agents

Thursday 26 October
The Balnarring Uniting Church

PreachFest

1-3 November
Further details go to [PreachFest website](#)

Vic/Tas Synod Meeting

18-21 November, 2023
Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road
Contact Synod Logistics Coordinator Sarah Manase on sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au



CASEY CARDINIA EMAIL UPDATE

The Casey Cardinia Regional Mission project is taking shape. If anyone in your congregation is interested in keeping up to date with the latest news on the Casey Cardinia Regional Project, subscribe to our email list using the QR code or [clicking on this link](#). For further details, contact Rev Robin Yang.

Uniting in Prayer September

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.

September 03 Murrumbidgee congregation - Rev Jay Robinson, Chair Alison Campbell Rate

September 10 Narre Warren North congregation - Rev Bruce Crowle, Chair Wade Clark

September 17 St Columba's Noble Park congregation - Rev Bruce Monro, Chair Greg Wyatt
Keysborough Samoan congregation, Noble Park- Chair David Iolu

September 24 Ormond congregation - Karel Reus (Supply), Chair Mardie Townsend





**WE BELONG
TO THE DAY**

1 Thessalonians 5:8

Synod
2023

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Expressions of interest are being sought from people interested in volunteering for Synod 2023, November 18-21 at Box Hill Town Hall. Duties might include assisting members in and out of the building, to navigate the meeting app log ins, providing directions and answering questions, helping set up the Hall, or helping with admin. We're looking for people who are over 18, are COVID-vaccinated, hold a Working With Children Check, have good attention to detail, great people-skills and plenty of enthusiasm, patience and understanding.

If this sounds like you, put your hand up and send an email to **Sarah Manase** at sarah.manase@victas.uca.org.au



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

A PRAYER FOR OUR CHILDREN

Grace and peace to you,
our children.
We will always give thanks
for you.
We pray for you constantly
because we love you.
We love you just as God
loves you.
We know, children of God,
that God loves you so
much.
There are no words to
express it.
There are no wonders we
can perform.
But, we know that the
power of God is in you.
We can see it upon your
faces.
You remind us of God's
love.

Teach us to see the
world as you do.
Surprise us with the
wonders you see.
Show us what gifts God
has given you.
And we will bless you,
and protect you,
and we will always give
thanks for you.
We will bless you in the
name of our God.
We will bless you again
and again.
Grace and peace to you,
our children.
Grace and peace to you
who show us God's glory
shining through your
faces.
Amen.

Prayer supplied from [Worship blogspot](#)



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



03 9558 4710



www.facebook.com/ucappep.org



www.ucappep.org



PO Box 696, Noble Park, VIC 3174

Email secretary@ucappep.org

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