

CROSSLIGHT



OCTOBER 2020

ON HOLD

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“IT’S INTERESTING THAT CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL RESEARCHERS ARE ALSO TELLING US THAT HAPPINESS SEEMS TO BE RELATED TO GIVING, SHARING AND ATTENDING TO OTHERS.”



Reverend
Denise Liersch
Vic Tas Synod

In the latest edition of the Loddon-Mallee Presbytery newsletter, I read this quote: “The dumbest things I’ve ever purchased was a 2020 planner.”

If we remember back to this time last year, there’s no doubt life this year has turned out to be nothing like we expected.

And here we are, coming closer to the end of a year full of the unexpected, with all the challenges it has brought along the way.

Within a few weeks, we will be celebrating the final Sunday of the Church year, before embarking on a new Church year once again, beginning with the season of Advent and Christmas.

Over this Church year, we’ve been travelling with Matthew’s gospel. We’ve heard Matthew’s themes of the promises of God-with-us, in Jesus, who lifts the burdens of the people, brings God’s mercy and calls us into his life.

Over the past couple of weeks in particular, and continuing over the remaining weeks of our year with Matthew, we hear him speaking to the situation of the original readers of his time who were living through trials and difficulties. He speaks directly to them, to answer their question: in the trials of our times, how can we live?

When life isn’t as we expected, how can we live through all these challenges, with hope, into the future?

In times of COVID restrictions, and all the challenges of isolation, economic downturn, loss of employment and income, challenges to our mental health, rises in family violence and homelessness, these are questions that echo our own.

Of course, we’re not all affected in the same ways, some far more than others. But none of us remain untouched, not least because we are called to live as

communities, held together in Christ, caring for each other as one body.

Matthew’s gospel speaks directly to us in our context, with the words and life of Jesus calling to us to hold the course together, living by all he has taught us.

If we are to ask, “what will carry us through these times?” Matthew’s Jesus answers: live by acts of mercy for the least among you, and as you do this, you love the God who loves you.

We are reminded of the words of Jesus in the beatitudes: “blessed are the merciful”.

One of the things that helps to find our way through difficult times, is to remember back to times when we’ve done this before. We remember what helped us find our way before. We draw on what we came to know sustained us or guided us through back then.

We dig deep into what we have come to know is the source of our life through our experiences of the past, and learn from the experiences of others who have done the same.

This is one of the reasons we listen to the stories of God’s people in scripture, why we listen to the cries of the prophets and the stories of Jesus – over and over again. It’s because they reconnect us into the source of our life. They tell us who we are, who God is, and how God-with-us is for us. They tell us of the preciousness of life, especially of the most vulnerable, and of God’s dream of wholeness of life for even the least of us.

As we hear the stories of Matthew’s gospel through this season, and as we ask the questions of what will carry us through these times, we hear Jesus telling us: live in humility, live as a community marked by love for your neighbour, live by acts of mercy for the most vulnerable amongst you, and as you do, “you do it for me”.





In challenging times, we can often find ourselves turning inward and closing down, attending to our own needs and those of our closest community. Jesus encourages us to find our way through difficult times in a different way altogether: by turning our focus outward to others around us, knowing we are part of a much bigger community, turning our hearts and love toward each other.

This is a countercultural way of living: not to seek happiness through attending primarily to our own needs; rather to orient our lives and love toward our neighbour. Yet it's interesting that contemporary social researchers are also telling us that happiness seems to be related to giving, sharing and attending to others. Jesus asks us to turn our hearts toward those God loves, to attune our hearts to the heart of God. In this we find peace and hope in turbulent times.

For centuries, people of faith have remembered the stories of God-with-us, and practised the ancient discipline of prayer. Through setting aside time, and as a way of life, we can tap into the source of our life in Jesus, as we attend



to the moments and encounters of each day or week – and notice where we have been blessed, where we have felt joy, and recognise the ache of our hearts for ourselves, for those we love, for those at risk or in pain, and for the wholeness of our wider community.

It is in this that we are shaped and formed by Christ and sustained in the peace and love of God. It is in this, that we are empowered to live out of that experience as we share our lives with others, with our hearts aligned to the heart of God. Christ lives in us.

May the Spirit of God turn, hold and move our hearts.





Little separates Victoria and Tasmania geographically,
but thanks to the pandemic they have been worlds apart for most of this year.

By Andrew Humphries

For Uniting Church members in Tasmania and Melbourne, it's not just the expanse of the Bass Strait that has separated them in recent months.

The COVID-19 pandemic which swept the country in March has had a vastly different impact on Uniting Church congregations and services in the Apple Isle and Victorian capital.

As Melbourne congregation members reeled in July from the harshest

restrictions ever put in place by a government, in a bid to bring a second wave of the pandemic under control, Tasmanian worshippers were enjoying relative freedom.

In Tasmania, with only two new cases in three months until the end of August, congregations were able to carefully return to normal.

The Uniting Church's Presbytery Minister for Mission Development, Rev

Hoon You, has been allowed to travel since early July, allowing him to conduct mission studies and keep in touch with nearly 50 places of worship across Tasmania.

Rev You moved to Tasmania in July last year with his family and started in his mission development role the following month.

"I'm still relatively new to Tasmania, but I've been travelling around Tasmania



with my family since I started in the role,” Hoon says.

“I have been able to travel all around the island with my family, attending worship services in various congregations every weekend.

“King Island is the only place I haven’t visited, and that’s because of the border restriction still in place after many COVID-19 restrictions were lifted.

“We have obviously enjoyed a lot more

freedom, compared to the situation in Melbourne.”

It’s been a far different story nearly 500km away, in Melbourne’s inner-city suburb of Carlton, where Church of All Nations congregation members could only look on with envy at their southern counterparts, as COVID-19 restrictions bit deeply.

The Church of All Nations, or CAN as it is affectionately known, has a long

and proud history of providing faith and assistance to some of Carlton’s most vulnerable residents, something that was tested during the dark days of the pandemic.

“There has been a parish mission for over 150 years in the Carlton area,” CAN council chair Sue Clarkson says.

“Our role as a parish mission means that we do very locally focused mission work and the congregation has done

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outreach into the local community almost since its inception.”

In fact, according to CAN’s executive officer for community support, Cheryl Lawrie, serving the local community forms the cornerstone of the church’s work.

But COVID-19 restrictions in place since March, with only a short return in June to any sense of normality, have meant major and dramatic changes to the way CAN supports the local community.

The restriction on the number of people who can gather together has been an obvious brake on the sort of work CAN has always done.

“Before COVID-19, we were working strongly with the community and with vulnerable people within that community,” Cheryl says.

challenge, but I was also amazed at the capability of the many people who made the transition quickly to a different way of doing things.

“Different congregations had different methods, but they were all finding ways to ensure that that connection happened.”

In Melbourne, Sue and Cheryl quickly realised the pandemic’s emergence was going to present a major challenge, particularly for some of the congregation’s more vulnerable members.

“We have many congregation members who fall into that ‘vulnerable’ category and when COVID-19 came we had to shut down fairly quickly in terms of face to face worship,” Cheryl says.

“It’s been difficult for everyone and we have a number of congregation

“I’VE BEEN IMPRESSED WITH HOW EVERYONE HAS KEPT ACTIVE AND JUST GOT ON WITH THINGS.”

Cheryl Lawrie

“We had programs, including community meals, emergency relief, a drop-in centre and a family learning program. The family learning program was essentially a homework club which extended to include the parents of the children involved.

“We also worked closely with the mothers on health, education and welfare and that extended into an African women’s program.”

For Tasmanian worshippers, the introduction of restrictions in March meant some dramatic changes, including an end to church services.

“Immediately, our presbytery team made resources available through our website and on Facebook, providing alternative options for Sunday morning worship without actually gathering together,” Hoon says.

“Some congregations also started using telephone and email communication as a means of keeping everyone connected, including with the wider community. In some ways it was a

members who live alone, but I’ve been impressed with how everyone has kept active and just got on with things.

“It’s all about trying to find different ways for people to connect and we have continued with a presence online and we send material out each week.

“We’ve done things like Zoom meetings and what’s been fantastic about that is we have had former congregation members join us from places like Timor Leste, Japan and Rwanda. We also set up a pastoral care team, which meant that everyone in the congregation gets a call every couple of weeks.”

Unlike their Uniting Church counterparts in Melbourne, Tasmanian congregation members were allowed to return gradually to physical church services in July, with some restriction on numbers in place.

“Many of our churches were able to restart services, while implementing social distancing measures according to a Synod check list,” Hoon says.



Stage Four restrictions have forced Melburnians to remain indoors.



“Our numbers have been affected, but we are gradually getting back to the pre-COVID-19 days, albeit with some differences.”

Hoon says it is now a different type of service in some communities.

“For example, the Clarence congregation decided they would record the music and hymns the day before each service and then play it, instead of singing in public during the actual service,” he says.

What Hoon quickly found when services resumed was the boost it gave to congregation members.

“I can tell you that those members who rejoined physical services are really enjoying seeing each other’s faces again,” he says.

In Melbourne, though, CAN’s congregation has been unable to worship together, meaning other arrangements have needed to be put into place.

“We decided early on that we couldn’t offer live streaming services, mainly because we only have an interim minister at the moment, but we do have a network arrangement with other city churches,” Sue says.

“We’ve been directing our members to some of those churches which are offering streaming services.”

In Tasmania, Hoon says the need to pivot quickly and adjust ways in which the church served the community became increasingly important as the pandemic began to change everyday life.

At Welsey’s Nobucks Café in Hobart, for example, simple changes meant it could continue to provide a vital service to some of the city’s most vulnerable people.

“At Nobucks café, which is run by the congregation and Uniting Tasmania, pandemic restrictions meant they had to change the way they provided food to the city’s street people,” Hoon says.

“Restrictions meant they couldn’t serve food as they normally would, but they were able to make it as a wrap, which allowed people to pick it up, so that service was able to continue, even though it was in a different way.”

At CAN’s Carlton headquarters, Cheryl says they had never been busier as they

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continued to serve the community as best they could during the various stages of restrictions and then the full lockdown from early August.

“We’ve really worked full-on since March, when the pandemic first hit, and even more so when the lockdown came in,” she says.

“We have had a doubling of people who require our services and that’s become more complex because of the number of COVID-19 cases in the housing towers around us and the fear around that.

“So we had a dramatic increase in people needing support, as well as people who can’t access support by other means.”

“I HAVE WITNESSED IN TASMANIA HOW GOD’S PEOPLE ARE FAITHFULLY TRYING THEIR BEST AND SLOWLY DISCOVERING SOME OPPORTUNITIES.”

Hoon You

Cheryl admits the situation since March required a major readjustment to the way CAN operates as more people sought its assistance.

At times, the pandemic’s impacts have stretched CAN to its very limits.

“We hand out vouchers one morning each week and we distributed about \$2000 in vouchers in a three-week period,” she says.

“There was one day in which we handed out \$750 in vouchers, yet normally we would hand out about \$2000 worth of them a year.”

On the Apple Isle, Hoon believes some positives have emerged from the experience of living with COVID-19.

“I think we have seen a strengthening of relationships among our church communities,” he says.

“We’ve been able to focus on who we are as a church, and the faith community, and acknowledge that we’re not necessarily limited by a physical

building. “Our members have been resilient and I’ve been thankful to see that.”

While some might label the situation a crisis, Hoon prefers a more positive focus on what has happened since March.

“In Korean language, there are two aspects to the word ‘crisis’, ‘위기(危機)’; ‘위’ means danger but ‘기’ means opportunity,” he says.

“(The pandemic) has never been a testing of my faith because I still believe God is guiding us.

“I have witnessed in Tasmania how God’s people are faithfully trying their best even in this crisis and slowly discovering some opportunities. My attitude was one of how can we best deal with this.”

In Melbourne, though, reintroduced stage 3 restrictions in July, quickly followed by the imposition of the much harsher lockdown laws, presented a different story.

“Normally, every other day of the year we want our community to gather together and have community meals because we know that that will create a better community,” Cheryl says.

“Because of the pandemic, though, we know that what will create a good community and a healthy one doesn’t involve a great deal of inclusion (any more).

“We know that social inclusion is about meeting face to face, and now we can’t do that and that is so contrary to any sense of what normally provides us with community wellbeing.”

Despite what has been an incredibly difficult year, Cheryl said CAN volunteers were determined to focus on what positives might have emerged.

“I think this is the perfect time to evaluate what we have been doing,” she says. “We know we can’t return to whatever was normal before and it’s simply a different world now.

“We’re treating that as a positive, in the sense that there are some things we can let go of now.

“Now we have the opportunity to say we can’t do something the way we used to, but here is another way to do it.”

Through it all, Cheryl says she has seen the very best qualities emerge in people.



“We’ve seen people step into things they probably thought previously they wouldn’t be able to do and we’ve been able to watch and nurture some of that,” she says.

“I’m just in awe of our staff because they have been brilliant, flexible, agile and hilarious and there has been a really lovely sense of a shared vision. I genuinely believe that if you turn up and look for the best in people, then something good and beyond our expectations can emerge and I think that’s what has happened here.

“There is a real dogged determination to make it work.”



UCA Presbytery Minister
for Mission Development,
Rev Hoon You.
Image: Brad Harris



Fare share

By Andrew Humphries

It's the sense of community support and generosity from various agencies that have reaffirmed Cheryl Lawrie's belief in the fundamental decency of human beings.

The Church of All Nations' interim executive officer for community support points to the outstanding work done by two organisations as proof of how the dark days of the COVID-19 pandemic can bring out the best in people.

The Australian Muslim Social Services Agency and vegetarian restaurant Lentil as Anything stepped in to help CAN get much-needed food and resources to many of the area's most vulnerable residents.

"We were able to pick up, in collaboration with AMSSA, some huge food provisions to get to people in the community," Cheryl says.

"The other great thing is our collaboration with Lentil as Anything.

"They are serving meals from here three days a week on a pay-what-you-can basis and this has been an amazing way for people to get hot food."

With a communal dining arrangement at CAN no longer feasible during the pandemic, Cheryl says some simple changes mean people are still able to enjoy access to meals.

"It's all done in takeaway containers and we have a contact-free delivery system, with a marquee set up at the back of the church where people can pick the meals up," she says.

"We also have a group of volunteers who deliver meals for us.

"That's been great and it's lovely to feel like we are able to offer something that is nourishing and warm and ethical."

Continually checking on the wellbeing of residents is also part of CAN's ongoing support work.

"We've got one staff member who does wellbeing checks for us and she

calls people to see how they are going," Cheryl says.

"She spoke to someone on one occasion who said they hadn't spoken to another person since Melbourne went into stage 3 restrictions in March.

"So there is that real sense of social isolation among residents and that real fear of what might happen when they walk out of their front door.

"These are people who may have English as a fourth or fifth language, so they may not understand exactly what they are allowed to do as part of the restrictions."

Cheryl remains determined, though, to focus on the positives as much as possible during such an anxious time.

"What's been fantastic is the collaboration between the core group of volunteers and the residents of the towers," she says.

"Some of those volunteers are also clients and they are putting their heart and soul into making this work.

"This church is known in the community as being there for the community, and it's hard not to overstate the importance of that." 🍕



HOW YOU CAN HELP

The work of CAN's community support is largely funded by the congregation and people within the community.

There is some local council support for food relief, which they are hugely grateful for, but most of the funding for emergency relief, particularly at the moment, comes from members of the community who recognise the importance of the service.

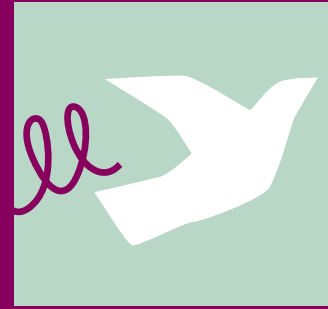
At the moment all of their donations are going directly to food relief for the local community unless earmarked for other projects.

To make a donation to allow CAN to continue its much-needed work, [click here](#)



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Send your Christmas cheer and support those in need.



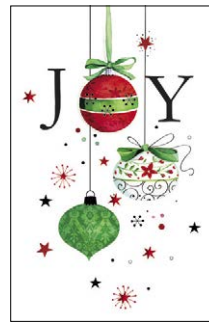
1 Peace

Sentiment: May the spirit of peace and goodwill be with you this Christmas and throughout the coming year.



2 Nativity

Sentiment: May peace, joy and happiness be yours at Christmas.
Bible verse: Immanuel - "God with us". Matthew 1:23



3 Joy

Sentiment: May the joy and peace of Christmas be yours throughout the year.



4 Dove

Sentiment: Wishing you peace, joy and hope this Christmas and throughout the New Year.



5 Wreath

Sentiment: Warmest wishes for a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year.



6 Mixed pack (Joy Wreath and Dove Joy)

5 cards of each design

Joy Wreath sentiment: Peace and Joy. Merry Christmas.
Dove Joy sentiment: May the hope and peace of Christmas be yours throughout the year.

Each pack of 10 cards is only \$10.00

Proceeds from card sales will support individuals, families and communities in crisis this Christmas.

Please visit unitingvictas.org.au/christmas-cards or call **1800 668 426** to order Christmas cards.



Uniting is the community services organisation of the Uniting Church in Victoria and Tasmania.



Uniting

“WHILE IT MIGHT BE ASSUMED THAT PRAYER IS ‘NATURAL’, THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT PRAYER IS EASY.”



Rev Dr Sally Douglas
Minister, Richmond
Uniting Church
Honorary Research Associate
and Associate Lecturer
Pilgrim Theological College

Why do we gather, online or in person, as church? What are we here for? For ministers and congregations, COVID-19 has brought a sharp halt to much of our busy work and created opportunities to engage with such questions. While being busy can make us feel important, indispensable even, pausing to attend to these core questions is crucial.

In [Everything Belongs](#) by Richard Rohr and [The Contemplative Pastor](#) by Eugene Peterson, both authors suggest that what people are longing for in church is meaningful connection with the Divine. We might describe this as learning how to “tune in” to the vibration to God. We might call this prayer. Recent news reports indicating that web searches for the term “prayer” have increased significantly during COVID-19, bears witness to the truth of these authors’ claims.

While providing things like food security can be an important aspect of being church (as it is at Richmond Uniting), there are also good secular programs offering food security. What these secular services cannot offer is opportunities to engage with the strange story of Jesus and to explore how people might authentically “tune in” to the Source of all, who loves them and calls them by name. Imagine if we reclaimed prayer as core work for ministers and congregations?

In order to do this, we would need to create spaces for people to explore what prayer is and how to do this in meaningful ways. This would require all of us, lay and ordained alike, to engage in the frightening work of attending to our own prayer lives. Learning to be still and open to Spirit is difficult. It is confronting, in part, because this inevitably entails facing hard things about ourselves and the communities we are part of. In order to live more deeply into Christ’s wholeness, we need

to acknowledge our brokenness, so that Spirit can pour in with her cleansing and healing.

On a practical level, prayer can also be frightening because people don’t know how to pray authentically. While we “say” prayers and tell one another “I will pray for you”, as a church we have often not created spaces for people to ask questions about what prayer is, to talk about the fact that prayer can feel empty, or to discuss the reality that there are a whole range of prayer styles that will better connect with different personalities, at different times in life.

While it might be assumed that prayer is “natural”, this does not mean that prayer is easy. Walking comes “naturally” to most people. However, as toddlers learn to walk, they need encouragement, couches to cling to, hands to hold and (hopefully) someone to scoop them up when they fall. We are doing ourselves, and one another, a disservice when we do not create spaces to safely discuss prayer, to experiment with prayer practices, to fall over, to learn and to be supported.

One of the life-sapping consequences of not prioritising practices of prayer as a church is that people are often left with the shallow notions of prayer that they were taught as children, or have seen in movies, in which prayer is caricatured as reciting some words or bringing a shopping list of issues to God that we want fixed. Such practices are not likely to sustain in the long dark night of the soul, or in the midst of a global pandemic.

Daring to reclaim the centrality of “tuning in” to God in authentic prayer might be the greatest gift we can offer in our anxious world right now. Furthermore, it is something we can engage with and share even in the midst of lockdown.

[Here is a resource](#) for the curious. 🌐



You're only *young* ONCE

There's no time like the present and, in many respects, there's no time like your twenties. First job, getting hitched, having a baby – all of these and more often happen before we hit 30. But this year, those seminal milestones aren't what they used to be. And many young people are suffering as a consequence.

By Mikaela Turner

There are many stages to our lives, but one is the primary focus of our nostalgia. The time when we could do what we wanted, when we wanted. When freedom seemed endless and opportunities were unlimited. That all-too-brief window between total dependency and incredible responsibility. Young adulthood.

When you're young, time doesn't feel like a luxury, but a standard. You can travel the world, go to university, switch degrees, stay out all night, hike

a mountain, whatever takes your fancy. There are no school-drop offs, no mortgages, no back problems.

It's a time that also comes with incredible change and major milestones – graduations, weddings, first full-time jobs, babies. And milestones are celebrated for good reason, they generally indicate the beginning of a new chapter.

They are the markers that guide a person's life. They are what we remember when we grow up.

So what if you had these milestones taken away from you? Or at the very least irreversibly altered? How would you cope? Would you cope? We ask this because it's happening – and people aren't coping. Mental health is a big problem for all communities and all demographics – be it cultural, social, gender or age.

COVID-19 has ended a lot of lives and severely disrupted countless others. And the extent of the latter group is largely unknown. We spoke to three twenty-

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Lucy Maudsley
has spent most of her
pregnancy in lockdown.
Image: Carl Rainer



From P14

some things and a teenager who have had their world turned upside down thanks to the severe restrictions brought on by the pandemic.

Lucy Maudsley, 25, is currently pregnant with her first child. Now at 37 weeks, she's spent the majority of her pregnancy in lockdown. All the things she imagined doing before her life completely changes forever have become impossible, even illegal.

She describes the loss of these possibilities as a form of grief. "I mourn the things that I've missed out on doing," she says.

"I had a list of all the things I'd do with my maternity leave, like going to a nice restaurant with my fiancée or going on one last getaway, just the two of us."

One such "thing" is usually a must-have event on the pregnancy calendar - a baby shower. On a surface level, a baby shower may just seem like a time when

"It just makes me sad. Not even only for myself and Brad (fiancée), but for my friends and family who I know would've loved to be sharing this experience with me."

Like Lucy, Jiny Lee, 25, was set to experience one of life's most memorable events this year - her wedding.

It goes without saying, your wedding is a day you spend your whole life picturing, especially as a girl. What kind of dress will you wear? What will the venue be like? Who will be your bridesmaids? But Jiny's December wedding won't be what she pictured and, if we can't get our COVID-19 numbers down, it might not even go ahead.

"We cancelled our venue in July because we just weren't sure whether it would be possible," she says. "I just feel like everything is on pause, in all aspects on my life, it's just all on pause."

"WE CANCELLED OUR VENUE BECAUSE WE JUST WEREN'T SURE WHETHER (THE WEDDING) WOULD BE POSSIBLE."

Jiny Lee

soon-to-be mums receive a lot of gifts and have people eat baby-shaped cake. But its importance runs much deeper.

A baby shower shows almost-parents that they have a support system, a safety-net, a room full of people who love them and their growing baby. It provides comfort to new parents who are probably terrified knowing they are about to take on the biggest challenge of their lives.

For Lucy, having this opportunity taken away from her is devastating. "To have everyone you love and everyone who means something to you in the room all at once, celebrating you and your baby is really special, but obviously that hasn't been able to happen."



Josh Choi has also experienced the screeching brakes of COVID-19.

Josh, 18, started his first year at university, but after just one day on campus he was sent home for online learning.

Anyone who has been through university will tell you, first year is a truly foundational moment. It's

when you crawl out of your safe, high-school shell and are forced to start standing on your own two feet. How involved you are, how many friends you make and how well you do, for the most part, is up to you. Plus, first year is always the best party year.

But this year, the traditional first year experience is unrecognisable. There are no campus BBQs, no student union



Main photo: Josh Choi has spent just one day at university this year. Inset left: Jiny Lee's wedding has been put on hold.



events and any new friends you might make are limited to a small square on your Zoom screen.

“I had high expectations for my first year but it’s just ended up staying home and studying online,” Josh says. “It’s not the experience I was looking for.”

“A lot of people say first year is one the best years, you’re learning university life, there are heaps of events to go to but I haven’t even had the chance to make any new friends.”

“It just feels a bit like this year has been taken away from me.”

Sean Nelson is at the opposite end of his university career to Josh. Having graduated last year, after six years studying engineering and computer science, he was looking forward to starting his first full-time job as a Network Software Specialist Graduate at Telstra.

He experienced just a taste of corporate life, spending about six weeks working in the Melbourne office, before he, like so many of us, was told to work from home. But a career is much more than simply sitting at a desk and completing tasks. Hopefully, it involves friendship, camaraderie, opportunity and new experiences. And when it comes to your first-ever job in your field of study, these things are especially important.

Sean says he had “grand expectations” for this new job. “I thought it was going to be awesome.”

“I was super excited because there was going to be so many new things I was set to experience.”



HELPFUL TIPS

(from the Australian Government, Department of Health)

STAY ACTIVE

It’s a well-known fact that moving your body improves your mood and helps decrease feelings of depression, anxiety and stress. So if you can, get moving. YouTube has millions of videos to help you work out from home, and some of them, believe or not, are actually pretty fun.

Hi!

G'day!

Hello!

STAY CONNECTED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE

This is a tough one, as it can be exhausting to organise and participate in seemingly endless online conversations. By now, we've probably all heard the term 'Zoomed out'. But maintain social connections is important to feeling safe and well. So if you can, get those tablets, phone or laptops out and keep talking.

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"I was keen to experience being an adult outside of university and I had goals I wanted to achieve."

But not long into working from home, Sean, along with all the other graduates at Telstra, was moved to working in complaints, after their call centres were shut due to COVID-19. Degrees became irrelevant and life became an endless cycle of sifting through an ever-growing pile of complaints. It was a far-cry from what Sean had envisioned for his career.

It was during those eight weeks in complaints that Sean first noticed his mental health beginning to crumble.

"Moving to complaints was devastating, he says. "I knew I didn't enjoy customer-facing work, so to be told I'd be doing it for eight weeks, I thought 'this is going to be the longest eight weeks of my life'.

"It had a huge effect on my outlook for the year."

Sean's stint in complaints happened during Victoria's first lockdown. So by the time the second wave hit and Stage 4 was

announced, his mental health was at an all-time low.

"Having that little taste of freedom when restrictions were eased in June and then having it taken away was really hard," he says.

"I'd made plans for events thinking it was all over and then it was just 'bad luck, here's Stage 4', that was really disheartening.

"If you have the mentality of 'it's only this long and it will end at this point', that gives you the motivation to stay positive and keep going, but now we've seen that they can just keep imposing more and more restrictions regardless of whether or not you've finished the last set. That puts a lot of doubt in peoples' minds about when this is going to go back to normal."

Sean is far from alone in finding this second wave harder than the first. Lifeline Melbourne manager Meredith Dalton says on July 4, when the Victorian Government announced the lockdown down of nine commission towers, there was a 22 per cent increase in Victorian

calls to Lifeline. And when Stage 4 was announced it rapidly jumped to 30 per cent. At the moment, someone calls Lifeline every 30 seconds.

"We see our service as a barometer of what's happening in the community," Meredith says. "In August, up to 40 per cent of callers wanted to discuss COVID-19 and on top of that there's been a lot of calls around issues of loneliness, isolation and anxiety."

"When something major happens in

"HAVING THAT LITTLE TASTE OF FREEDOM TAKEN AWAY WAS REALLY HARD."

Sean Nelson

the community, we can see everybody's mental health being impacted at some level. I think we all need to be careful."

Jiny says the first lockdown "didn't impact" her as much mentally. But the announcement of Stage 4 affected her much more than she expected.

"This idea of being isolated and in lockdown for another six weeks, not seeing friends or going to church, it made me feel more confined," she says.

"I think many will agree, being isolated is really tiring. There's a lot more anxiety, perhaps about your own health and your family's health, but also about not being able to socialise.

"I'm trying to normalise how I'm feeling, rather than saying there's something wrong with me. What we're living isn't normal, this isn't what we're used to, so I guess it's normal to be feeling anxious."

Meredith has worked with Lifeline Melbourne, which is run by Uniting Vic.Tas, for 11 years. But there's one demographic she's hasn't really heard from before this year - young people.

"We don't have exact numbers, but I can tell you we are taking a much larger number of calls from young people," she says. "In other years, we have received very few calls from that demographic."

It's clear something about COVID-19 lockdowns and young people don't mix. Department of Health and Human Services data from early August showed a 33 per cent increase in young Victorians going to hospital after self-harming, when compared with this time last year.

Furthermore, a mid-April UNICEF Australia survey showed that only 45 per cent of the 1000 young people who participated said they were coping well. That's compared with 81 per cent in January.

So why is this? Well, Professor Patrick McGorry AO, executive director of youth mental health service Orygen and founder of Headspace, says it may come back to this idea of missed milestones.

"For young people, this is not just a period of time, like a dead zone, it's actually such a critical time in life that you may

never catch up," he says.

"There's a general loss of confidence in the future and young people feel that especially. They've got more future than past and now they have a huge cloud over their future, certainly their immediate future.

"While this disease itself is not as dangerous for young people, the measures taken to combat it and protect older people have impacted young people very badly, economically and socially."

Josh agrees, he says "during your younger years, everyone is very social and you want to go out and explore the world, but a lot of that freedom people tell you to cherish while your young has been taken away.

Lucy's hypothesis is similar. "You so often get told that your twenties are your carefree years, your fun years," she says. "You can travel as much as you want and stay out all night if you want to, you don't have responsibilities.

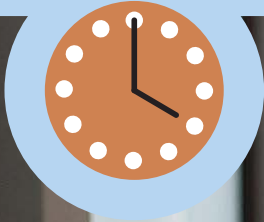
"But now that we are confined to our homes, all that's been taken away.



Sean Nelson was looking forward to starting his first job.

DEVELOP NEW ROUTINES

When so much seems out of our control, establishing routines and structure in our days can help provide stability and give us a sense of achievement at the end of the day or week.



From P18

And for so many young people, our lives revolve around friends or work or university, but now that's just gone."

Sean is one of those people whose life in a lot of ways, was centred around his friendships. So now, even with Zoom calls and Facebook messenger, he is feeling the impacts of isolation.

"It's definitely hard. You can forget about your friends a little bit and just think about yourself and how you're alone, which just exacerbates that feeling of loneliness."

"I've definitely got myself into cycles of focusing on the negatives and just feeling like this is never going to end. It's challenging to have a positive mindset when you're stuck doing the same thing day in and day out.

"In the past, if I've gotten into a bad cycle like this, seeing a friend or attending an event will help me snap out of it, but at the moment, without those options, the cycle just continues."

Despite this going on for less than a year (so far), Sean says it does feel like a huge chunk of his life.

"As a kid coming out of high school, you feel like you have all the time in the world but then suddenly you're 25 and it feels like life is just moving on," he says.

"I had this vision of getting a job, saving money, moving out. I think

Professor Patrick McGorry AO,
Headspace founder

subconsciously people have milestones in their head for certain ages and it feels like if this year is a write off and who knows about next year, you just keep getting closer to this target age where you were supposed to meet some goal, but you can't actually work towards those goals."

So what can be done? How can we throw our young people an optimistic bone, while also keeping our older folk safe? Well, it's a delicate balance but one Patrick is not sure we've got down yet.

"The media and politicians are trying to give serious messages, but no one is guarding the candle of hope here, no one is keeping that burning," he says.

**"NO ONE IS GUARDING THE
NO ONE IS KEEPING**

Professor Pat

"They are not talking about the fact that this will be temporary, one way or another it will blow over, optimism isn't being highlighted at all.

"That combined with the whiplash of new restrictions is a bad combination when it comes to mental health.

"The messaging around vaccines could be much more positive, not saying 'we don't know if it works' but rather '160 vaccines are in development and they



THE CANDLE OF HOPE HERE, THAT BURNING.”

Patrick McGorry

are looking promising’. The public needs to be given hope.”

And there is a place for hope here. We are seeing the number of new infections slowly but surely decrease. And when it comes to mental health, our governments are starting to react.

Between them, the Victorian and federal governments have put \$92 million into mental health funding for Victorians struggling to cope with this



SEEK SUPPORT

It’s important to talk about how you’re feeling. If you want to talk to someone, other than your family and friends, there are many online and phone chat support services available.

You can call **Lifeline** at any time on **13 11 14** and **Beyond Blue** has also launched a dedicated COVID-19 webchat service if you don’t feel ready to pick up the phone.

pandemic. This funding will improve outreach and allow for the establishment of community-based pop up hubs, Patrick says. “So if people are struggling and need to talk to someone, there is a way to get help.”

Perhaps in time COVID-19 will become a milestone in its own right. Five, ten, twenty years down the track we’ll probably look back on 2020 with fascination thinking, “wow, that was really crazy.”

Sean might be asked, “what was your first job like?” or Josh, “Did you enjoy university?” and they will remember COVID-19 in all its glorious disruption. Jiny might look at her wedding photos one day, a wedding with perhaps only five guests, and COVID-19 will pop up and say “hey, remember me?”

Lucy’s daughter might someday ask her what it was like to be pregnant and Lucy will be reminded of pre-natal classes on Zoom and showing off her growing bump to talking heads on her laptop.

Right now, this is strange, scary and frustrating. But one day, it will be long gone and when that day comes, it will make a pretty interesting story.

Mental Health Week runs from October 10-18. If you or someone you know needs help, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.



Helping people get AHEAD

Julie McDonald says seeking help doesn't imply there is a flaw in a person's faith.
"Nobody's relationship to their faith is perfect all the time.
We all fall and we all have challenges."

Interview by David Southwell

What is your job?

I am the coordinator of the Bethel Centre and a counsellor. Bethel is an independent and free counselling service for people connected with the Uniting Church.

Can you tell me a bit more about the Bethel Centre?

Bethel supports people in managing their wellbeing – of particular relevance in these unusual times. This could include anything from bullying to

dynamics in meetings, or relating to and communicating with others. Since being established in 1997 Bethel has always responded to issues of power and abuse in people's experience of the Church. The difference now is that while we acknowledge this still takes place we are more interested in prevention of harm.

Who else works here?

Wendy Driscoll is another counsellor and Susy Herlihy handles the operations side of things.

Has the centre been open during the COVID period?

We've been open right through the period of the pandemic. Of course we haven't been able to see people in the physical space of the Bethel building. Instead all our counselling sessions are via Zoom or telephone. The centre has become a virtual space where Wendy and I beam into people's study, kitchen or bedroom from our own homes. We are aware of the intimacy of this for our clients and for us.



At first I think we all found it strange, but now it has become kind of ordinary and everyday. Bethel has always been a place of welcome and has been a safe place to confide. Though we are not in the same room with clients we've continued to support people to relax and talk openly with a cuppa in hand.

The pandemic won't last forever. We are already starting to think about what we need to consider before coming out of lockdown. Of course we will need to continue to manage the risk but we are

looking forward to being able to return to seeing people face to face.

Have you noticed a spike in people needing counselling since the beginning of COVID-19?

There has been a rise in the number of people seeking support. While it is a noticeable rise we had anticipated that we might be inundated. However, I think the more significant rise in numbers is yet to come because right now people are doing all they can to hold on and

manage what's happening for them. People's workloads have increased. They are adapting to working from home and dealing with the challenges of home schooling along with any commitments they may have to their church communities. On top of that we are all working out how to maintain contact with family and friends so that we can stay connected. I anticipate when this turbulent time of the pandemic has passed there will be a need to process the impact COVID-19 has had.

Continued P24

How has it been for ministers during COVID-19?

Ministers in particular have had a stressful time. Many have the same challenges as we all do, but on top of that they have had to become familiar with the COVID-19 operational protocols, adapt to the online space to deliver services, work out how to conduct funerals and find new ways to manage all their communication with congregations.

Of course there have been other key people in congregations who have contributed to managing these new responsibilities and the associated stress. What is heartening is that presbyteries appear to be doing what they can to support ministers. One presbytery got in contact with Bethel. Although they were holding weekly online meetings with ministers, some expressed a need for additional support with the issues being raised. In response, we set up a weekly group for those interested. This regional group has concluded now and those attending reported that they appreciated the opportunity to check in with each other to talk about their experience of COVID and the changed environment. We are looking forward to offering future online groups and are keen to hear from anyone interested in joining a group or establishing one in their presbytery region.

Is the workload for ministers higher than usual during this period?

For many, the workload has increased. There's a sense of diversifying, in order to try to meet changed needs. Though those in regional Victoria are not having to travel such distances their time is eaten up by having to conduct online services while producing and distributing hard copy materials for those who don't have access to the internet. Many metro ministers are encountering the same challenges. Either way there is always a need and a sense of, "Well, I can't be idle, I must be engaged in earning my keep."

Are ministers able to talk about these challenges?

Yes, that's what we're hearing. There's a sense that it's OK to be vulnerable, because everybody is in the same boat. Certainly people are experiencing similar struggles, but some are absolutely thriving, because the tech stuff comes easily to them. Those less comfortable with technology are on a steep learning curve and the increased workload can certainly contribute to stress and anxiety.

Ministers already have a big job to do and I don't think congregation members are truly aware of the scope and responsibilities of their role. Some will have heard me say this before, but I am in awe of ministers and the breadth of the work they undertake.

It's different for me. As a counsellor, things are far more defined. I work each day from 9.30-5.30pm, each counselling session is contained by a 1 hour appointment and my work is defined

because she's caught something. Then while she's trying to grab my attention the doorbell will go and a driver will be wanting to deliver a parcel to one of my neighbours at exactly the time I am meant to be joining a Zoom meeting. Even though it's mundane, you're finding yourself constantly distracted by the two worlds of work and home. I think it's hard for us all. I find I have to go out for a walk every day to disconnect from that insular intensity.

What else do you think is a challenge during this period?

There's a lot of trying to orientate yourself to the environment. How do you roll with the bigger picture of what is happening in the world? We're in lockdown and then it looks like we are coming out of it, and then we're in lockdown again. I think that can lead many of us to feel really unsettled. That's something lots of other cultures all over

**“MINISTERS ALREADY HAVE A BIG JOB TO DO ...
I AM IN AWE OF THE BREADTH OF THE WORK THEY UNDERTAKE”**

Julie McDonald

by specific training. Ministers instead work six days a week, are available in the evenings and juggle multiple roles while dealing with everything from birth to death. Is it any wonder that so many endure high levels of stress?

Do you think that, for ministers and for many of us in general, it is a challenge to have the lines between our home and work life so blurred, as they are now?

I do. Suddenly, everything is in your home, it's in your private space and there isn't anywhere else to go or turn. I think that is a big issue; things can become very insular. I even find, myself, that there's a kind of Twilight Zone experience of "what is this?" It all feels a bit surreal and disorientating or discombobulating. For me, I have everything that's happening with work, and then my cat will distract me,

the world have to live with, during war and conflict for example, but in our country we aren't used to experiencing that ongoing uncertainty.

Young people are particularly struggling with their mental health during this pandemic – have you had any young people knocking on Bethel's virtual door?

No, we haven't. Traditionally, Bethel has seen few young people, however we are wanting to address that and promote the service to young people, particularly at this time. We are making contact with young leaders in the Church to hear from them and get their take on things.

Can you talk about Bethel's role in the church during "normal" times?

People often come to Bethel when things have reached crisis point. We want people to know they don't have

Image:
Mikaela Turner

KE.”



From P24

to wait until it gets that bad. They don't have to tough it out and they can come to Bethel and get the help they need before things get to that point. In fact we often find that when they do people are surprised by the support they get and the difference it can make.

What does Bethel offer, as opposed to a secular counselling service?

The most significant thing is that we understand that what has happened to someone has happened in their church community. We often work together with them to understand and grasp where their spirituality fits in respect of the conflict and hurt they have experienced. It concerns people's relationships with their fellow members in the congregation. This can be with family or friends, between a minister and congregation member or between members of a ministerial team or church council. Often, relationship issues with others bring up a person's relationship with God. That relationship is primary, intimate and really important to people. Addressing that is less common in secular counselling.

My impression is that some people might feel that to confess their problems or weaknesses shows a lack of faith or they haven't trusted God.

I think that does come up for people and I sometimes wonder how that might impact people who might not come because to come is an admission of there being a flaw in their faith. My immediate response to that is "come". I know it is easier said than done. I understand you have to face yourself in that and facing what you are probably pushing away, so we need to support people to have courage, it's worth it.

I even see that with ministers who come back who have been, I feel, amazing in their ministry and are amazing in their faith. They come for top-ups, things are going fine and then they are not doing fine. And that absolutely impacts the relationship they have to their faith. So nobody's relationship to their faith is perfect all the time. We all fall and we all have challenges



How do people normally find their way to Bethel?

The most common way people find out about us is by word of mouth. Past articles in Crosslight have encouraged people to call. We are currently trying to find new ways to promote the service.

One thing we are in the process of doing is setting up a Facebook page that we hope will spread the word about what we do and what we are offering.

I'm also excited that we're about to produce a podcast, called The Bethel Podcast, which we plan to release later this year. Rev Will Nicholas is very tech savvy and he offered to help produce it. He's based in Geelong, so we are doing it online together in a virtual studio. We are looking at different topics and challenges facing people and we're going to use pop culture and theological

references to explore issues. It will be really challenging and a lot of fun. We have invited a couple of young people to join us so we are looking forward to what they have to say.

What will be the format of the podcast?

Will and I will have a guest for each episode. Sandy Brodine, the chair of Bethel, will be our first guest. For the first episode, we felt we needed to give people an idea of where the name Bethel comes from – it's a theological reference to Jacob's Ladder. Jacob finds himself lost in the desert and there's the ladder and there's God and the angels and there's the hope that change is possible, and that Jacob can be a changed man. Bethel can be that place of hope and transformation.



Julie McDonald and
Wendy Driscoll.
Image: Mikaela Turner

Where does the pop culture come in?

We're looking at Dr Who and the idea of his vehicle, the Tardis. People don't really know about Bethel. There's this and kind idea that there is this service out there somewhere that's floating out in space just like the Tardis. We are using the metaphor of the Tardis to reflect people's experience, that once they cross the threshold of Bethel, it's not what they expect.

Like the Tardis, Bethel is bigger on the inside than on the outside. A spacious place that can surprise you, where change is possible. The aim of the podcast is to move beyond being too serious about what Bethel is or might be. It can be whatever you need, really, and it doesn't have to be hard-core or scary or serious.

Is there anything you are wanting to promote right now?

Yes, we are about to run a four-week online group for ministers starting in early November called Creative Calm. The purpose is to support ministers to develop the habit of taking deliberate time out for themselves to re-fuel and re-energise. Participants will be asked to bring their sketch book, their knitting or crochet, or whatever creative project they want to work on. In the process of creating and joining in the conversation I will be offering some strategies to support carving out constructive time for rest and reflection.

Bethel Centre is at 59 Doncaster Rd, North Balwyn, and is open Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, 9.30am-5.30pm. Telephone: (03) 9859 8700. support@bethelcentre.com.au 

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COLLEGE CHAPLAIN

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The appointment date is negotiable, but at the latest to commence January, 2021.

Selection criteria include:

- Ordained Minister (School Chaplaincy experience desirable)
- VIT registration
- Willingness to work with young people and their families



200916

The Position description is available from the College website at www.aitkencollege.edu.au under employment.

Applications including a covering letter must be submitted online at www.aitkencollege.edu.au by 30 September 2020

“I AM CONTINUALLY REMINDED OF THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING PRESENT IN WHATEVER WAY POSSIBLE, AS WELL AS THE POWER OF WORDS OF SCRIPTURE.”



Rev Claire Dawe
Minister at Manningham
Uniting Church

When the first lockdown began, we all knew how difficult funerals would be to organise and lead, but the ever-changing advice seemed to add to the complexity.

My practice, when possible and appropriate, has been to visit the person who is ailing and offer prayer support to that person and the family. I might leave a holding cross, I might offer a simple anointing, but I always share prayer and words of scripture to offer pastoral, spiritual and emotional support. I have always regarded such ministry at the end of life as being a priority, but also a great honour.

When the first lockdown began, I wrote a reflection for the congregation called “Grief and dying at this time” as a way to offer prayer, scripture and poetry and to highlight how the church would lead funerals under those first restrictions. It quickly became apparent I would not be able to offer my usual practice at the end of life and so I tried to think of ways I could equip family members so they did not feel alone or abandoned.

Of course, this does not underestimate the incredible work of chaplains and pastoral carers in hospitals and aged care homes. My aim was merely to offer “something” to the congregation to help them through such an awful time.

However, when I was approached by a nursing home to conduct an end of life prayer service during the second lockdown, I was reminded of the power of the words of scripture I quoted in that reflection. Basically, I had to use WhatsApp to offer pastoral care.

As I read the words of Psalm 23, the person who was close to death responded physically by opening his eyes. The power of those words had a profound affect on that person and his family member, who sat with him in his final moments. No holding cross or oil was required, just the sacred words of that Psalm and being present in the moment.

This profound pastoral encounter was followed by two funerals. Both, in more normal times, would have resulted in a church full of mourners, standing room only. But under the complexities of stage four lockdown, we held them in the chapel of the local funeral director with physical distancing, hand sanitiser, masks and a livestream of the service. Once again, my usual practice went out the window as I was joined by only 10 immediate family members. Despite my nervousness, they were both incredibly intimate services of worship. When the church is full, family members who aren’t used to public speaking can find the whole thing daunting at best, traumatic at worst. How often as ministers have we stood alongside a family member as they have struggled through a eulogy? Although I spent time addressing the livestream audience, and although the family members were well aware of those watching at home, their sharing of memories was a far more intimate and gentle experience for them. I have been told that the same intimacy was felt by those livestreaming. Despite not being physically able to attend the service, they did not feel excluded.

We offered a remembrance service on Zoom for those who have lost loved ones at this time, those who have been reminded of past grief and those who have been unable to attend funerals due to restricted numbers. Some are waiting until the first anniversary of a person’s death to have a funeral. Others are waiting until we can physically regather in sufficient numbers to pay their respects.

This has no doubt been a difficult time, but I am continually reminded of the importance of being present in whatever way possible, as well as the power of words of scripture. It has caused me to reflect upon which Bible stories and texts people find comforting, and which might ultimately comfort me.





In good CARE

How Uniting AgeWell has supported its clients to stay safe and thrive through the deadly pandemic.

By Cathy Withiel

Courage comes in all shapes and sizes. It's the reassuring voice of a frontline worker, worried about her own family, as she tends to a client living alone at home. It's in the tired eyes of an activity worker determined to notch up another laugh or two from residents before he finishes his shift.

And it is this collective courage that forms the beating heart of Uniting AgeWell as we hurtle along the pandemic rollercoaster ride, with all its highs and lows.

"Members of the broader community can sometimes see an organisation as a

faceless entity," explains Uniting AgeWell Chief Executive Officer Andrew Kinnersly, "but it's made up of people, in our case over 2500 staff, who are all digging deep to rise up to the demands of doing the right thing during a once-in-a-lifetime event, when there are so many things beyond our control."

He's not exaggerating. Wind back the clock to February this year. Much of Victoria had just come out of gruelling heatwaves, shocking air quality and horror bushfires. "We thought we'd never see anything this bad ever again," Andrew says. Then COVID-19 hit.



Since then, there have been more twists and turns than on a rollercoaster ride. Across Tasmania and Victoria, there have been a series of lockdowns, flip-flopping between stages two, three and the current Stage Four restrictions, each with their own sets of rules around isolation, visitors to our aged care facilities, and services to home-based clients.

And all this against a backdrop of unrelenting media coverage and political debate over the outbreaks in residential aged care and whether aged care providers are adequately prepared.

“Everything that has happened should have left us reeling, but instead it’s made us stronger,” Andrew says. “I am constantly amazed at our people’s ability to adapt and meet the challenges ahead.”

He cannot speak highly enough of the staff. “They’re amazing and wonderful! They love what they do, and it shows. Their kindness and compassion goes above and beyond. It must be soul-destroying to come home from work and hear aged care completely smashed on the nightly news. But the next day they’re back at work again, providing love and support with a smile.”

How is Uniting AgeWell achieving this?

“By being true to our mission and placing people’s quality of life, safety and wellbeing at the centre of everything we do” Andrew says, “as well as reacting early, being innovative and adding flexibility to the mix. That’s what’s helped us get it right.”

In fact, many innovative strategies will remain in place when the pandemic is over.

So, how did it all unfold?

First up, Andrew says acting quickly and decisively in getting the right people to steer the uncharted course through the pandemic was paramount.

“Not long after the first cases were recorded in Australia, we formed a special COVID-19 Taskforce, and met daily, often seven days a week, to address the challenges as they presented,” Andrew explains.

From P31

“I’m proud of the work the entire Uniting AgeWell family has done, and how responding so early on in the pandemic meant we were well placed to protect our residents, clients and staff.”

Employees returning from overseas were asked to quarantine for two weeks, well before government directions, visits to aged care communities were restricted before this was mandated, and a 30 cubic metre mountain of Personal Protective Equipment was secured for distribution to all residential sites and home care staff.

The organisation’s pandemic plan was implemented with a raft of necessary safety and education protocols around donning and doffing PPE, cleaning, hygiene and social distancing. Screening and monitoring of all staff and essential visitors was immediately implemented and residents screened daily for COVID-19 symptoms. Many on-site cafes were closed, dining rooms reconfigured



“THERE WAS NO MAGIC SOLUTION, BUT WE ARE AN ORGANISATION THAT HAS BUCKET LOADS OF KINDNESS AND THERE HAVE BEEN MANY EXAMPLES OF OUR STAFF GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND.”

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly

and dining hours extended to facilitate social distancing.

Andrew is adamant that our investment in quality, safety and risk management in recent years has been extremely important. “We have allocated resources to these areas during a period of financial distress in the sector – not because it was affordable, but because it was the right thing to do.”

Thankfully, all Uniting AgeWell residential care facilities have so far remained free of COVID-19, despite a small number of individual staff contracting the virus via community transmission. It’s testament to both the protocols in place and people understanding the important role they play in keeping each other safe.

And while it has been a marathon effort, Andrew says preparation has clearly paid off, reflected in the calm and efficient way the COVID-19 exposure



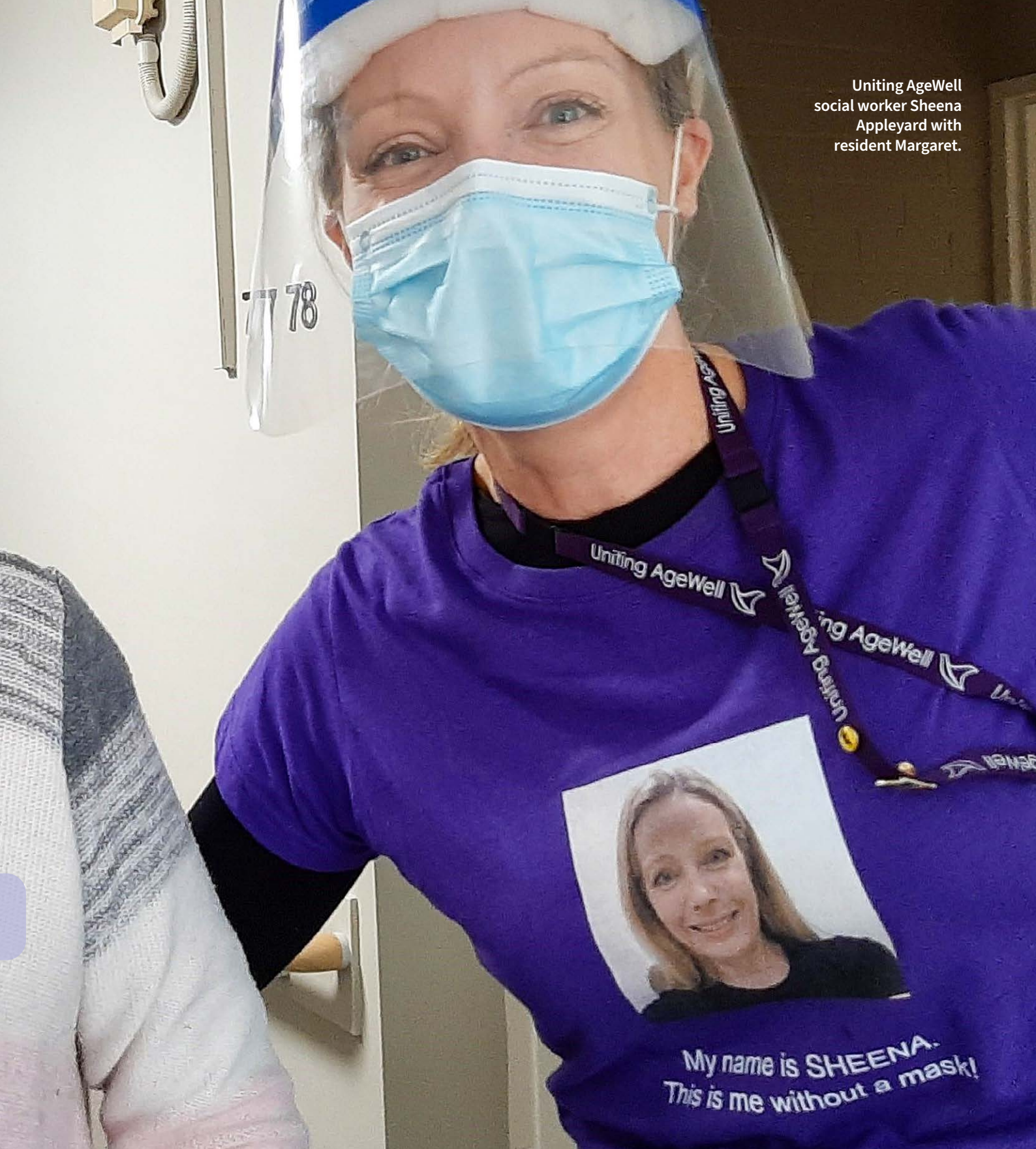
risk has been handled. He’s in no doubt that “clear, frank and frequent communication with staff, residents, clients and families has been key”.

At first the challenges seemed daunting. Corporate staff needed technical support to work from home; aged care residents needed ways to keep in touch with family; and home-based clients also needed ways to connect with friends and relatives as well as access

allied health and social support services with AgeWell Centres now closed. The answer was technology. But, with limited stock and the clock ticking, the question was “how?”

“We had always planned a rollout of laptops and smart phones, but it suddenly needed to happen within days,” Andrew says. “We didn’t have enough stock, so we had to go on a massive buying spree. And then we had

Uniting AgeWell
social worker Sheena
Appleyard with
resident Margaret.



to get in more IT support to teach staff to become more computer-savvy to make the whole thing work.”

And it did! One hundred tablets and 50 smart phones were rolled out across 20 residential homes and for staff to use with clients across both Victoria and Tasmania. Next up, 500 tablets were made available to home care clients with the greatest need, with staff available to teach these clients how to use them.

Andrew says so many positives have emerged, with many practices to be continued into the future. Staff were upskilled and many residents reported feeling more connected with family and friends than ever before.

It was also a way to connect with clients geographically spread across sparsely populated areas of Victoria and Tasmania. Using Zoom across the board for telehealth is also proving popular,

with usage jumping from one in 100 clients to one in 10 since the start of COVID-19.

Corporate staff have found, with technical support, they were able to work efficiently and effectively from home, which augers well with regard to more flexible working arrangements post COVID-19.

Special thanks must go to the Synod IT team for their efforts to firstly enable

From P33

remote working for all corporate staff, and secondly to assist in providing connectivity between residents, clients and families. “They have been wonderful!” Andrew says.

Technology can only go so far, and staff got creative in finding other ways to keep aged care residents happy and in touch with their families.

“There was no magic solution here,” Andrew says, “but we are an organisation that has bucket loads of kindness and respect, and over the past months there have been so many examples of our staff going above and beyond. I feel for our residents, it is at times like this they need a hug from family most. But I know that our staff do their best to compensate for this.”

He’s not wrong. Lifestyle staff have created decorative love windows, where residents chat to family on the other side of the glass via mobile phones or boom speakers.

Then there are human greeting cards, where staff take photos of residents posed with cards saying “hello, I’m fine” which are being posted to social media and emailed to families to reassure them.

Staff at all residential facilities are sending families regular newsletters, crammed with photos of how residents are keeping busy and happy. They also email and phone families at least weekly to keep them in the loop.

And residents are keeping happy, and feeling like they’re making a positive contribution to society, too. They recently raised money for the Cancer Council of Australia through a number of Daffodil Day morning teas and events, and they’ve been sewing masks for Stitch in Time, part of the Uniting Church’s national call for volunteers to make reusable fabric face masks for the most vulnerable in our community.

Then there’s the side to aged care that the media doesn’t always seem to see – the bucket-load of kindness and respect that underpins everything.

Staff often dress up in weird wigs and fun outfits and play the silly goat, simply to inject an extra layer of fun into the day.

Continued P37





David Hamilton, 87, chats to his wife, Marion, through the love window at Uniting AgeWell's Kalkee Community, Nangatta.

WHOLLY SPIRIT



Uniting AgeWell Director of Mission Rev Clare Brockett (above) says spiritual care is much needed at this time.

She says Uniting AgeWell chaplains are listening deeply and reaching out to connect with residents in a variety of ways. Elders are enabled to face their anxiety, loss, or distress and discover options for exploring meaning in their lives.

“Being ‘seen and heard’ invites residents to use spiritual resources which lead to transformation in their lives,” Clare says.

Providing reflective space, cards and fridge magnets of hope, phone calls and personal emails are just some of the ways chaplains are showing their care towards their colleagues – recognising the challenges they are all facing in workplaces, where concern about the spread of COVID-19 to vulnerable people is a daily lived reality.

“Chaplains and the wider Uniting AgeWell staff are living out the Synod’s Mission Principle, ‘respond in compassion to human need,’ in abundance! Often with flexibility and creativity, sometimes with humour, and always deeply moved by the trust shown in them,” Clare says.

“The work of our chaplains is grounded in their faith, gives expression to the body of Christ, and provides holistic care. In acknowledging a variety of religious and spiritual beliefs, traditions, and practices, chaplains are recognising the sacredness of every person, the humanity of every person, and what it means to be in

relationship, with self, with others, with the Sacred.

“In one-to-one conversations with residents, families, and staff, chaplains hear how people make meaning, find their purpose in the world, feel connected (or not), and find a sense of belonging. These are key concepts of spirituality in aged care.”

Clare says the pandemic has highlighted many issues about the place of older people in society, and the provision of aged care. Our understanding of personhood has never been more important.

“Staff are seeing the impact of people feeling disconnected; from themselves, from families and friends, from the ways they make sense of life, from God or the Sacred. They sit with residents, face to face or via phone or zoom, acknowledging anxieties and the sense of loss and tedium caused by the restrictions,” she says.

At the same time many residents of aged care homes, and people supported by Uniting AgeWell home care services, are showing their resilience; accepting that being separated from family and friends is for their protection. Many of them earlier in their lives, lived through hardship in families, saw economic struggle, and other long-term consequences of national and global crises.

Clare says staff across Uniting AgeWell are showing teamwork at its best. The collective skills of staff are much needed, and the kindness and generosity being shown to each other make the days a little more manageable. 🌟



Uniting AgeWell direct care worker Rosemary Lucas has been there for clients Ross and Ros Tucker through bushfires, heatwaves and now a pandemic.

From P34

And now that they find themselves looking rather confronting dressed from head to toe in PPE, some are using humour and kindness to deflect the situation.

Luckily there are some clients who are comforted by the sight of carers in full PPE. One of them is Beryl, who says “they’re dressed from head to toe in plastic to protect me, but I’d recognise them anywhere by the smile in their eyes and the kindness in their voices”.

One of the great learnings from the pandemic, Andrew says, is the ability to come up with new ways of doing things when the old way is simply no longer an option.

“And I am incredibly proud of how staff have done this when it comes to our home-based clients,” he says.

For starters, with some 80 per cent of clients living alone at home, about 800 welfare calls are made each week to check if they are OK, or if they need anything.

With AgeWell Centres closed in Victoria

The number of home care packages being taken up has increased significantly, with many clients choosing to receive grocery shopping, having pharmacy orders picked up or getting meals delivered.

One client used her home care package to buy a computer tablet, and is now Zooming with friends and family on a regular basis – as well as having her grocery shopping done for her.

Another has bought a mobility scooter to make it easier for him to get to and from his dialysis appointments, while a third has installed ramps and an electric bed in their unit to make life in isolation a whole lot easier. Uniting AgeWell is also installing smart home alert systems for many clients to give them, and their families, greater peace of mind.

There have been many learnings from, and reflections on, the pandemic journey.

“I’D RECOGNISE THEM ANYWHERE BY THE SMILE IN THEIR EYES AND THE KINDNESS IN THEIR VOICES.”

Beryl, Uniting AgeWell client

and only now starting to reopen in Tasmania, leisure activities and health services are being brought to clients’ lounge rooms instead in order to maintain wellness and wellbeing during “iso”.

Staff are delivering activity bags crammed with arts and crafts, word games, puzzles and more to clients’ homes. Some are taking creativity to new levels by recording their own musical CD and whodunnit plays for inclusion in the bags.

“And because the packs are individually tailored to each client’s needs, staff are getting to know them a lot better,” Andrew says.

He says being agile and flexible are key to AgeWell’s team of client advisors finding ways to adjust and increase home care services to help clients get through the pandemic.

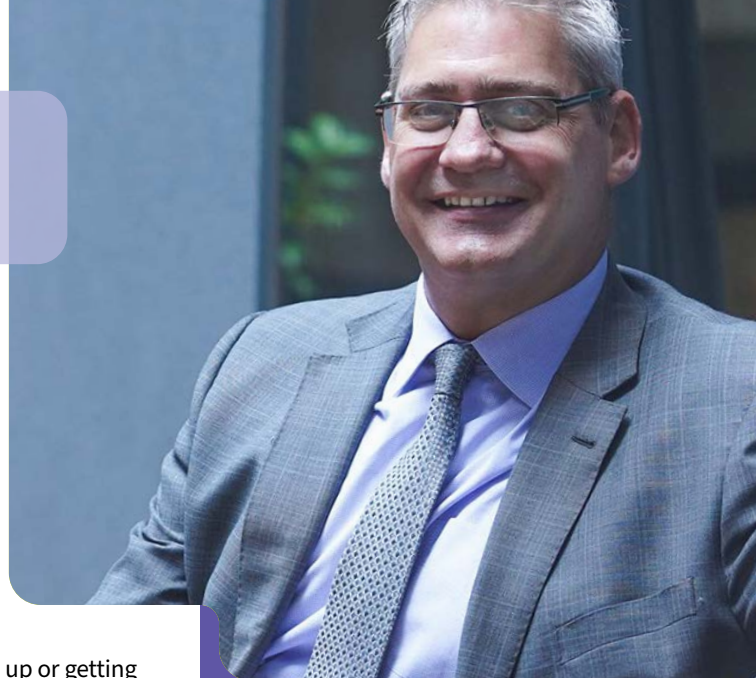
“From the outset, the Uniting AgeWell Board and Executive made the decision to invest heavily in our infection management and control protocols, in additional staff and training, and in technology to keep the people in our care safe and connected with family and friends,” Andrew says.

“But perhaps the most heart-warming affirmation and something we have all learned afresh, is how much Uniting AgeWell staff are appreciated.”

Residents, clients and their families and friends have sent hundreds of messages of thanks over the past six months.

Their heartfelt messages described staff as “selfless angels”, “champions” and “brave heroes”.

They were appreciated by staff – many of whom read them through smiles, laughter and tears.



REMAINING VIGILANT

Uniting AgeWell CEO Andrew Kinnersly says the Aged Care sector should have pushed harder for a more consistent national response to mitigate risk in aged care.

“I was personally disappointed that the national debate during April/May was about aged care visitation, when it clearly should have been about infection control and preparedness across all facilities,” he said.

“That said, I am thankful for Uniting AgeWell’s decision to implement risk reduction strategies well in advance of Government directives.”

However, Andrew sounds a note of caution.

“It is very important to understand that whilst our processes and protocols have helped protect residents, clients and staff to this point, we are only part way through what is shaping up as an ultra-marathon.

“Whilst there is any level of COVID-19 community transmission, there remains a high level of outbreak risk to all aged care facilities, and as such we all need to remain hyper-vigilant.

“Our hearts go out to residents, families, and staff from the organisations that have experienced significant outbreaks – it is a highly contagious and wicked virus.”

“We have taken an uncompromising approach to resident and client health, safety and wellbeing and have invested well over and above the funding allocation received from Government to ensure this outcome.”

“I am also very grateful to the Uniting AgeWell Board for their support of this approach and also for not deferring core business initiatives necessary to meet future needs, such as the expansion of services and building projects.



WRITE OF

A minister discusses a part of the

By Rev David

Minister at High Street

“THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN IS LIKE A FIELD, WHICH SOMEONE SOWS SEED IN. THEN IN HIS JOY HE GOES AWAY, BUT THE HARVESTERS COME AND HE HAS AND BU

Matt

I suddenly have a new favourite parable: the little parable in Matthew 13 in which Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field that somebody found, and then bought the whole field. It's now my favourite parable because I have just begun to understand the protagonist to be God, and us to be the treasures.

A few verses before, Jesus illustrated the kingdom of heaven with parables that involved a mustard seed that someone planted in a field, and yeast that a woman mixed into flour. In those images it is clear that God fits the protagonist, sowing the word of the gospel in us, though even that includes some profound insight: it suggests that the kingdom of heaven's "King" is a woman kneading the dough, a man out in the fields – a very earthy kind of royalty.

I think I've only ever heard the parables that talk about someone finding a treasure and a merchant

finding a pearl in the sea. I've always found it a bit odd about how we miss the chance or after missing it either way the important story is that should be the tale, I've always found it a bit underwhelming.

What I love about it is seeing that the Kingdom of Heaven is as the ones about the yeast. The Kingdom of Heaven is what the "King" is being equated with. In all, the gospel is a story of God taking on earth among us ... and a fisherman here, a woman by a well. And Jesus literally gave his life – for the treasure. Indeed, you could say the whole field!

And God continues to find the pearls of great value.

Passage

Bible that especially speaks to them.

Fotheringham,
Uniting Church, Frankston

“THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS LIKE TREASURE HIDDEN
IN A FIELD. SOMEONE FOUND AND HID;
HE GOES AND SELLS ALL THAT HE HAS
TO BUY THAT FIELD.”

Matthew 13:44

Interpreted as being
difficult to find faith by
much searching, but
the implied moral of the
parable is to value it. As a moral
parable, it is about that rather

But these parables now
often work in the same way
as the mustard seed and
the Kingdom is illustrated by
the weeds, rather than
the treasure. After
all, the Word of
the living flesh, dwelling
in the world, finding treasure! A
tax-collector there, a
man. We are the treasure!
Jesus gives his all – he gives
up treasures that he finds.
He would say that he buys the

continues to search,
and loving, seeking out
at any price, seeking out us.

Like the fisherfolk sorting through the
nets looking for fish that bring joy. This is
what the Kingdom of God is like! And in
this Kingdom of God, God invests in each
of us: she works in a little yeast, he plants
a mustard seed.

I always found the use of a mustard
seed for an illustration perplexing,
because mustard bushes are widely
seen as weeds. After all, a mustard
seed is so tiny that it can get mixed
up among the seeds that you want
to cultivate, and then this great weed
of a mustard bush springs up in the
middle of your cultivated rows. Yeast
isn't universally seen positively, either.
But then, sometimes God works into
our lives things that are not just simple
and good. I'm all too aware that it is
often the difficult things that we need to
work through that become the greatest
sources of growth for us.

And through it all, we are treasured –
because that's what the kingdom of God
is like. ☺

POSITION
VACANT

Prison
Chaplain

DHURRINGILE PRISON

The **Prison Chaplain**
provides ministry to
prisoners, their families
and prison staff. As a
representative of the Uniting
Church in Australia, the role
includes providing pastoral
care and leading worship.

Dhurringile Prison is a
minimum security facility
with an operational capacity
of 328. It is located in
the Presbytery of North
East Victoria and situated
about 30km south west of
Shepparton and 160km
north of Melbourne.

This is a part time role,
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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



At the COL' FACE

Colac escaped relatively unharmed during the first lockdown in Victoria. But that wasn't the case second time around. Here's what happened next.

By Andrew Humphries

When Prime Minister Scott Morrison addressed the nation on March 18, he announced the first battle in the war against a silent health enemy that had emerged only weeks earlier.

In the seven months since, every Australian has become all too familiar with a virus that has turned the country upside down.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on our health system, taken an axe to the economy and changed society in ways that will be felt for generations.

The impacts have taken a frightening

toll on our mental health and wellbeing.

In regional Victoria, towns such as Colac have been hit hard, with residents enduring onerous restrictions and experiencing the same fear that has gripped smaller communities around the country.

That fear became all too real again early last month, when Colac was hit with more than 20 COVID-19 cases in just a few days.


For the city's Uniting Church minister Stephen Ratcliffe and church council chair Mike Holland, the pandemic has

presented challenges on many fronts and posed some fundamental questions for them and the church. How could a physical connection be kept with the congregation, when ongoing restrictions meant an end to church services?

How could they make sure congregation members were doing OK in virtual isolation?

How would the congregation, and the Uniting Church itself, emerge from such a difficult time?

Seven months on, the Colac congregation continues to be heavily

A photograph of a Gothic-style church with a prominent steeple. A white sign with black text is superimposed over the center of the image, tilted at an angle. The sign reads "CLOSED DUE TO COVID-19". The church has a dark stone facade, a large arched window with a circular pattern, and a red door. The sky is blue with some clouds, and there are green bushes in the foreground.

**CLOSED
DUE TO
COVID-19**

From P40

impacted by changes wrought by COVID-19. Traditional avenues of worship and faith have disappeared and a brave new world involving greater use of technology, including live streaming, has taken their place.

But that's not necessarily a bad thing, according to Stephen.

"I see live streaming of services as something that will continue, whatever else happens," he says.

"It might be that we have lost some of our congregation members at services, but live streaming means they can now stay at home and watch from there."

Even the humble telephone and email have taken centre stage in communicating with the congregation as face-to-face interaction has become much more difficult.

But that loss of personal interaction nurtured by Sunday services and other gatherings poses other problems, as congregation members risk becoming isolated, leading to mental health issues.

In a Public Health Research & Practice paper published at the end of June, academics Ben Smith and Michelle Lim described the effects of COVID-19 on health, the economy and social engagement as "swift and far reaching", suggesting even at that relatively early stage it had had "dramatic mental health impacts".

Those impacts were certainly felt in Colac, as the safety net of inclusion disappeared for many Uniting Church congregation members.

Mike knew that without regular lines of communication, some members were in danger of slipping through the cracks.

Among the most vulnerable were the congregation's elderly members, about 20 of whom reside in aged care.

As medical experts began to gather information on who COVID-19 affected the most, it quickly became apparent that the elderly were most at risk, particularly from a health perspective.

But no less important have been the mental health impacts on them.

As council chair, Mike felt a strong sense of responsibility to make sure that all was done to keep the congregation's elderly members connected to the church.



"The issue of a duty of care towards them was felt pretty strongly among the council members," he says.

That duty of care saw a small team of volunteers step up to make sure contact was maintained with elderly congregation members and anyone else struggling to cope.

Now, every member of the congregation is on a contact list and receives a regular phone call to check on their wellbeing, while early last month the council began to look at ways

to better meet the specific needs of congregation members in aged care.

So with steps in place to look after the congregation's wellbeing, what about its minister?

How is he coping?

Stephen says he has found the absence of certainty around when things will return to normal the hardest thing and admits to concern about whether some congregation members will return to the church.

And if they do return, what sort of



a church will they find when Australia emerges into a post-Covid world?

Stephen acknowledges that is a much harder question to answer.

After all, we have no idea how fundamentally society itself will have changed when COVID-19 no longer impacts us on a daily basis.

While Stephen has no doubt the church will continue to endure, he is not so sure exactly what it will look like post-pandemic.

“One of the obvious questions I have

Continued P44

HALL HANDS ON DECK

By Andrew Humphries

While most of his time in the past six months has been focused on helping the Colac Uniting Church congregation deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, a project bubbling away in the background is giving council chairman Mike Holland plenty of cause for optimism.

A major renovation of one of the historic buildings adjoining the church is due for completion next year, while the creation of a community garden is also part of ongoing plans.

“We have three halls and the oldest one is what we are working on,” Mike says. “There was a building added to it in the 1920s and then another one in the 1960s.”

While they will become an important focal point for both the Colac church and regional congregation members, Mike envisages both the rebuilt hall and garden bringing joy to the wider community.

“The building work is being set up with a very strong missional intent behind it,” he says.

“It’s more than just a paint job on an old building that needs it and we’re getting fantastic support from the Synod Property Services Unit, so it’s all being very professionally managed and supported.

“The project is really highlighting part of our mission work within the community.”

Mike says the project is based on the Uniting Church continuing to have a presence in Colac for many years to come.

“We’re still nervous about sustainability, but we are planning on the basis that there will be a Uniting Church in the community for the next 25 to 30 years,” he says.

Mike is also looking forward to seeing the community garden take shape.

“We’ve got quite a lot of space around the church and we thought we might put something in like a labyrinth and a ‘biblical’ garden, fruit trees and even some vegetables,” he says.

“We’re told there is quite a lot of interest in it and it’s all about moving out of our immediate orbit and creating something the whole community can enjoy.”





From P43

is will our older members, who are the mainstay of our attendees, feel safe enough to even return to worship when it is declared safe to do so?" he says.

"This thought is compelling us even more urgently than before, to rethink how we will best minister to our communities over the next couple of years."

As he considers the broader question of how he can best fulfil his role as his congregation's spiritual leader, Stephen's faith remains a constant in such difficult times.

That faith has provided great strength during the pandemic and he has learned a valuable lesson along the way.

Sometimes, something as simple as a positive outlook can make a huge difference.

"I think that's where God's love and trust for the future of everyone speaks to me about not worrying about those things and just doing what we can with the time that we've got," he says.

On a personal level, one major change for Stephen and his wife Mele, also a Uniting Church minister, was that the cancellation of services suddenly made Sundays an obligation-free day for them.

As a minister for 32 years, it meant a

whole new routine for Stephen.

"When COVID-19 restrictions began in late March, what was normal became abnormal, and what was unfree became free," he says.

"It's not that my overall workload decreased, it's just that Sunday mornings became days for family worship or watching other church services online."

Stephen says it's been a pleasant

“ONE OF THE OBVIOUS QUESTIONS I HAVE IS WILL OUR OLDER MEMBERS FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TO RETURN TO WORSHIP?”

Rev Stephen Ratcliffe

change as it has provided an opportunity for he and Mele to refresh themselves spiritually, partly because of the change towards providing a more socially distanced and separated form of ministry.

For Mike Holland, COVID-19 represented the biggest test in his three years as church council chair.

The former Colac High School principal has a track record of getting things done and knew an action plan needed to be put in place immediately to deal with one of the most significant health issues in our history.

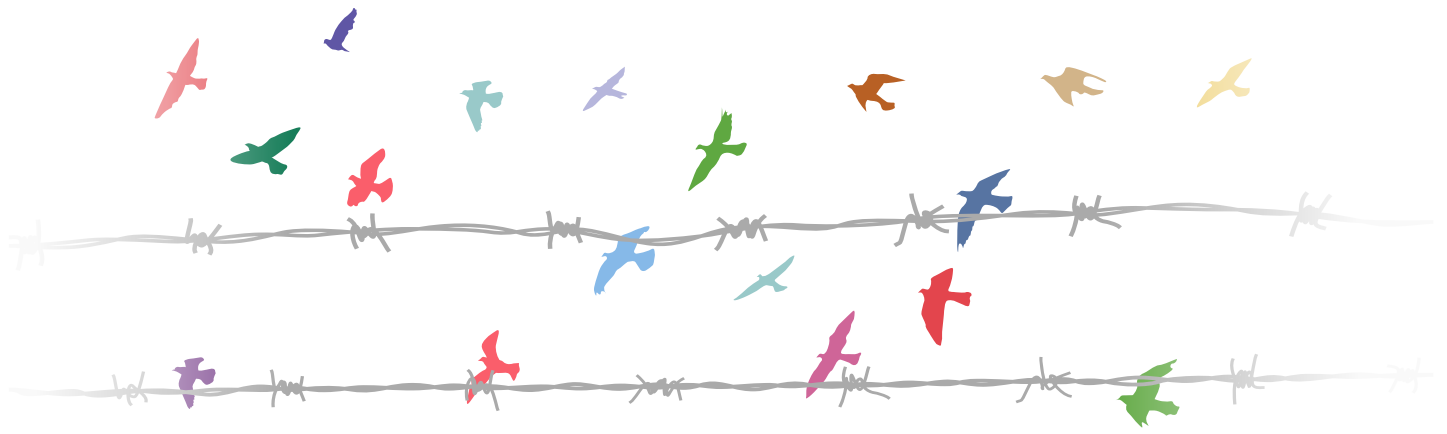
His educational background meant Mike was more than familiar with concepts like risk management and emergency action, but even so, COVID-19 represented a whole new frontier.

"It was a major challenge because it was obviously new to people and represented a different sort of risk management scenario, but we worked through it well," he says.

As Colac's Uniting Church congregation members move towards the end of a year like no other, Stephen says COVID-19's emergence has taught him a great deal about resilience and how people will come together and support each other during the toughest of times.

Stephen says he couldn't be prouder of his congregation.

"They have demonstrated that they really know how to care for each other and they really have stepped up during a difficult time," he says.



Rights and wrongs

Why Sri Lanka's Tamil refugees and asylum seekers seek your support to help them avoid further persecution.

By Peter Coghlan and Sue Longmore

As much as the world seems to have stopped this year and gone into collective hibernation, the reality is depressingly different.

Human rights abuses continue, just as they had before COVID-19 distracted attention and, worse, life-saving support.

One such minority group whose desperate plight seems to have been forgotten is Sri Lanka's Tamil population. This community has a long association with the Queenscliff Uniting Church, which has for many years worked with the Queenscliff Rural Australians for Refugees to support and give voice to refugees and people seeking asylum.

Last year, a social food project called Tamil Welcome Feasts was featured at the QUC. Initiated by Sri Lankan Tamil refugees, with support from QUC and QRAR, nine monthly feasts brought together more than 600 people to experience the food and culture of Sri Lankan Tamils, and to listen to their stories of lived experience. Some of the stories surprised and shocked attendees.

Persecution of the Tamil population at the hands of the Sri Lankan government is not new. It has continued unabated, and largely unreported, since it sought independence as a separate state more than 40 years ago. A ceasefire was signed in February 2002, but the persecution of Tamils continued.

Sri Lanka is ruled by recently re-elected president Gotabaya Rajapaksa and prime minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, Gotabaya's brother. Their re-election came despite – or, more likely, because

of – their “campaign of fear”, as it was described by the Human Rights Watch.

To give you an idea of what the Rajapaksa brothers are capable of, in 2009 they played key roles in the armed forces killing thousands of men, women and children on the beach at Mullivaikal. Tens of thousands of bodies littered Mullivaikal and the area to its north-west. Many surviving Tamil rebels were tortured, mutilated and executed.

Continued persecution has led to many fleeing Sri Lanka over the past 10 years, with some landing on Australia's shores. As at August 2020, more than 2000 Tamil refugees in Australia had been recognised as UN convention refugees and granted Temporary Protection Visas. A further 962 were still awaiting their application interviews or results.

The QRAR, which is a member group of the Combined Refugee Action Group, is aware of many more Tamils and asylum seekers in the Home Affairs “system”, and anecdotally, the disproportionate number of rejections.

Those forcibly deported back to Sri Lanka have faced a resumption of persecution immediately upon their return. A Tamil refugee who escaped some years ago, said: “When a refugee is returned by Home Affairs to Sri Lanka, a representative of the International Organisation for Migration meets the returned person at Colombo airport.

“Sri Lanka's Criminal Investigation Department then takes the person into custody and asks questions because the

original departure from Sri Lanka was illegal. Out of fear the person will not want to tell the CID the real reason for leaving as this will impact on the person and his/her family.

“A bribe might help. The person may be bailed and then face ongoing court visits to report. However, you may not be bailed, but punished brutally, especially if your name is within their system – for being a freedom fighter in the past, or working as a social activist for the Tamil people. Your file might still be there.”

The importance of support and advocacy for Tamil refugees is greater than ever before. The Australian Government continues to deport Tamil refugees, despite the warnings of advocates, reputable refugee organisations and the United Nations Rapporteur on Human Rights.

The Australian government's response to this inhumane treatment of refugees returned to Sri Lanka has been to praise the Sri Lankan government's efforts to thwart any asylum seeker attempt to leave Sri Lanka. Former Prime Minister Tony Abbott “donated” two old Australian war ships to the Sri Lankan navy for this purpose.

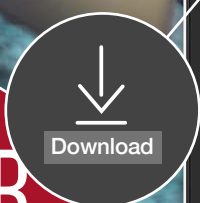
For more information, visit [Queenscliff Rural Australians for Refugees](#) and/or [Combined Refugee Action Group](#).

Peter Coghlan is co-convenor of the Combined Refugee Action Group and Sue Longmore is convenor of the Queenscliff Rural Australians for Refugees.





**BUMPER
DIGITAL
EDITION**



DEAR VALUED READER,

I hope you have enjoyed this expanded **47-page issue**. Regrettably, this edition is not available in its regular hard-copy format, as was the case in June. Stage 4 lockdown restrictions currently in place in metropolitan Melbourne, where Crosslight is printed, means we are unable to distribute this edition. We appreciate your loyalty and engagement and apologise for any disappointment this has caused. However, if you who would like a hard-copy version, this edition can be downloaded as a PDF and printed out at home. Simply follow these three easy steps:

- 1.** Go to the top left hand corner of the screen and click on the **download arrow** (see above).
- 2.** If you are using Internet Explorer, hit the **Open** tab that will appear at the bottom of your screen.
If you are using Google Chrome, double click on the **icon** that will appear in the bottom left corner of your screen.
- 3.** Click on the **print** icon that will appear either at the top left, or top right, of your screen.

The next edition of Crosslight is due in December and, if lockdown restrictions permit, we will be printing and delivering hard copies to your regular destination.

Stephen Acott
Editor

Crosslight is a bi-monthly magazine produced by the Communications and Media Services unit of the Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the editor or the policies of the Uniting Church.

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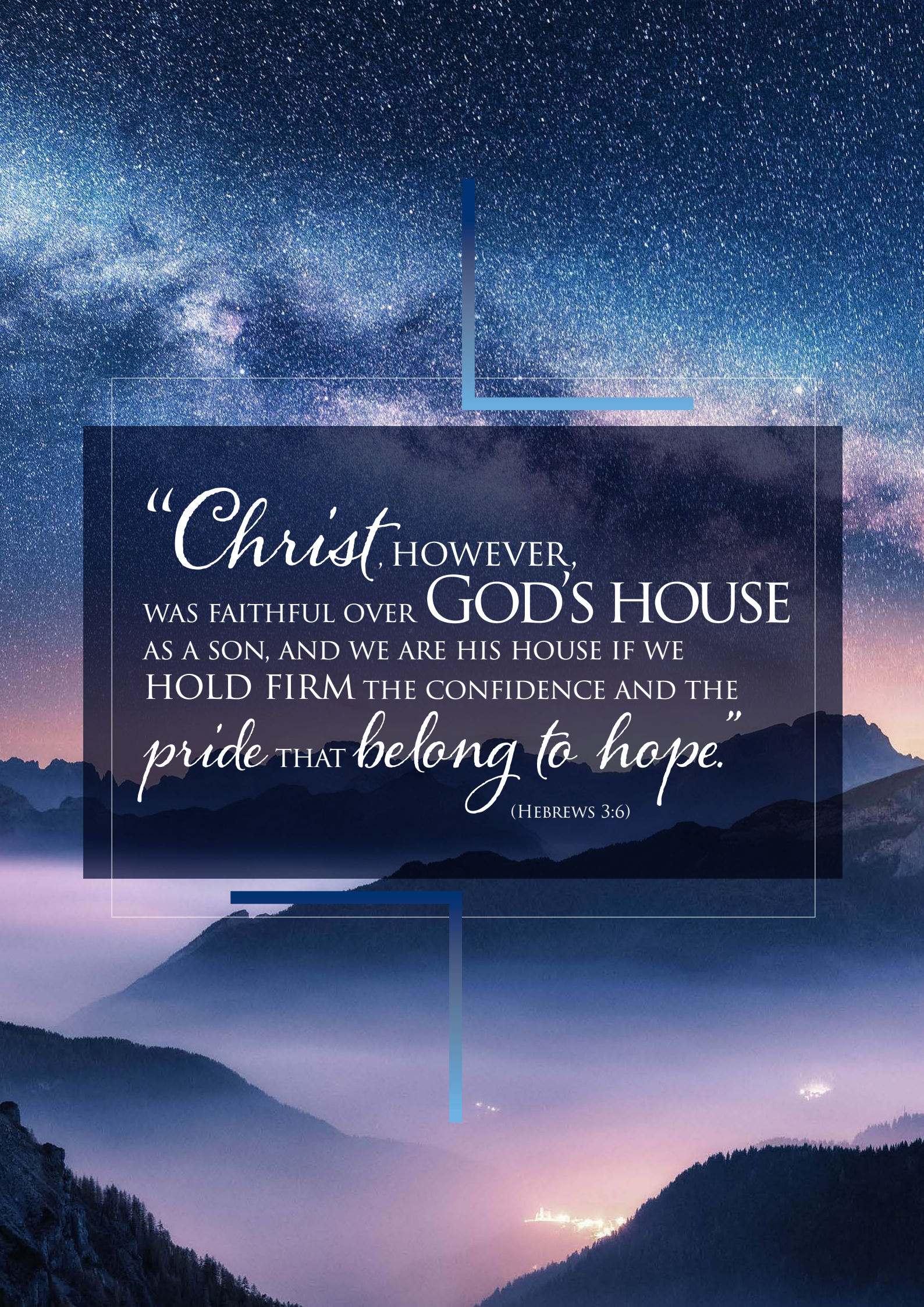
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“Christ, HOWEVER,
WAS FAITHFUL OVER **GOD’S HOUSE**
AS A SON, AND WE ARE HIS HOUSE IF WE
HOLD FIRM THE CONFIDENCE AND THE
pride THAT *belong to hope.*”

(HEBREWS 3:6)