

NEWSBEAT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PORT PHILLIP EAST PRESBYTERY



September 2024

Threads of Love:

Presbytery in Council joyfully come together

**REV BARBARA ALLEN:
NAVIGATING THE
LOSS OF YOUR PET**

**LECTURE: CHRISTIAN
UNITY, CHRISTIAN
WORSHIP**

**COMBINED SERVICE
AT MOUNT WAVERLY**

**SACRAMENTS IN
THE UCA TRAINING**



**Wanting to reduce the carbon emissions at a property your congregation owns but don't have the funds?
Then read on....**



SERF Fund Now Open for Applications

At the November 2023 Vic.Tas Synod meeting, it was resolved to establish a **Synod Emissions Reduction Fund (SERF)** "to be accessible to Congregations and Presbyteries for any spending that will reduce emissions in their operations and activities".

The Synod has set aside \$100,000 as the initial funding for the SERF to enable Congregations and Presbyteries to decarbonise.

The three main considerations when applying to the fund are:

1. The SERF is focusing on assisting the Synod's target of *Zero Emissions by 2040*. This means that priority will be given to buildings and activities that are likely to still be part of the Synod by 2040.
2. The funds will be directed to applications that make the most significant contributions to reducing emissions. This means the amount of emissions being reduced will be considered, and not any subsequent cost saving measures that may be gained.
3. Due diligence. Applications must consider any other ethical issues that may relate to their application, for example; a supplier of a product who may be implicated in criminal activity, human rights abuses, or excessive environmental destructions.

If you're not sure, just ask us. The SERF is dedicated to helping applicants work through these considerations with the help from the JIM Cluster.

SERF will be accepting applications for the current round until Thursday 31st October 2024. Further application rounds will be initiated depending on the funds remaining in the SERF.

TABLE OF Contents

6

BARBARA ALLEN INTERVIEW

Barbara reflects on her latest book, and her time spent as chaplain for Lort Smith Animal Hospital.

8

TEAM-ING WITH LIFE

New eLM resource for teams, new and established!

9

MANY THREADS MAKE BRIGHT WORK

News from August's Presbytery in Council meeting

10

RADIO DAYS, COATESVILLE NIGHTS

Coatesville Uniting Church's annual variety show delights again

12

CHRISTIAN UNITY AND WORSHIP

Notes on Rev Dr Robert Gribben's lecture on Worship in the UCA

14

TRIPLE THE JOY AT MT WAVERLEY

Combined service with Mount Waverley, Melbourne Fijian uniting churches and Canterbury UCA Tongan Congregation

16

CORNISH AT THE OLYMPICS

The Cornish College community congratulate Jacqui Gurr and Chloe Stevens

17

APPOINTMENT OF DR SIHOMBING

Announcement by Rev Duncan Macleod, eLM

18

ELSTERNWICK-CAULFIELD SOUTH

Partnerships and community outreach at St. John's

19

SACRAMENTS IN THE UCA

Online training course on sacraments commences with huge enrolment

You're invited...

A WESLEY CONVERSATION



with Rev Dr Garry Worete
Deverell about *"Doing
Theology in an Aboriginal
Frame"*

*Garry is a trawloolway man, author,
theologian and Anglican Priest.*

Please join us on **Monday 9th of Sept**, at **CTM Café, 29
College Cres, Parkville & online via Sonderverso.**

Doors @ 7:30pm

Conversation @ 8pm

Drinks and Nibbles Provided

THE
WESLEY
CENTRE





FROM YOUR COMMS OFFICER:

Spring is for the plants.

It's something I have to remind myself, sloshing around in soggy shoes on days the weather man *promised* would be bright and sunny.

For many of us, it's been a rough winter, replete with dour predictions and grumbly sentiments to match the grey skies. Over winter, three separate sermons at my own church featured predictions that the Church itself was on the very brink of death.

And yet, everywhere I go, I keep meeting congregations who are not just alive - they're thriving.

This month, I've had the opportunity to visit buildings filled with life, the squeals of happy little children, and wonderful community activities. I've been swept up in hugs that have soothed my soul, and had deep conversations about healing. I've attended classes, sung along with raucous hymns, and my goodness, I've eaten some amazing lunches.

If we're on the brink of death, then we're sure going down awfully noisily and joyfully!

Years ago, my approach to theatre was turned on its head forever by an article by Linda Hutcheon titled *Adaptation*. In it, Linda argues for the value of daring adaptations of stage plays – particularly Shakespeare's works – by reminding us that *adaptation is a symptom of survival*.

Change is not a sign of death. Painful as it may be, change is a symptom of growth, of progress, and of thriving against the odds. Oh, change is still exhausting, painful, and sometimes you feel as though you're walking against the driving rain on sore, cold, wet feet - but this is *growing* weather.

I hope this edition of *Newsbeat* illustrates to you, as it did to me, a Body of Christ in the middle of a growth spurt – filled with life, reflection and activity as well as brilliant, deeply thoughtful and kind people.

Happy Spring and God bless you,

Naomi Cardwell.

COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER, PORT PHILLIP EAST PRESBYTERY

Broken heart, shared heart, healing heart

Rev Barbara Allen on pets, grief, and what our friends can teach us about God's creation.

By Naomi Cardwell | Photography Supplied



Rev Barbara Allen and Ruby the Dog

“They teach a lesson of forgiveness, loyalty... unconditional love.”

Recently, I confessed to a friend how much I still miss my cat, and they laughed (lovingly) and suggested I get over it and get another cat. Sitting down with Rev Barbara Allen to discuss her latest book, *Broken Heart, Shared Heart, Healing Heart: Navigating the Loss of your Pet*, I expected to hear some kind of instructional guide for how, exactly, to “get over” losing a pet. What unfolded instead was a profound and warm conversation about what it is that makes us human.

I meet Barbara at her home for a cup of tea and one of her delicious brownies. At my feet, Harry the dog noses around - a compact little chap, with curling, silken fur and a gentle manner. It takes me a moment to realise that Harry is blind. He doesn't seem bothered in the slightest, either in his snoozy leisure time or in his professional life as a Story Dog, helping children with their reading skills.

Barbara explains that Harry is a rescue, one of many companions who came home with her over five and a half years in her pioneering role as Chaplain for Lort Smith, the largest animal hospital in the southern hemisphere.

Her placement wasn't without controversy, she says, with many questioning the purpose of expending a minister's time in an animal hospital. “I think they thought I was spending my time patting dogs on the head,” she

laughs. But her tenure was filled with front line ministry in a very real sense. Such is the nature of the brief lifespan of our intrepid little friends that a minister's skill was quickly recognised to be indispensable.

Clients who might never set foot in a church sought out her services, bringing with them profoundly existential questions that struck straight at the heart of Christian theology. “Grief is grief,” she tells me emphatically. Whether it's for a fellow human or a furry friend, grief stirs up memories, stories, and a particular kind of yearning to understand the nature of God.

“The church still has a way to go in acknowledging (the loss of a pet)”, Barbara says, remembering a broken-hearted lady who came to her after her own minister rebuffed her request for a prayer to remember her companion. The fact is, pets occupy a central place in homes

and families, and the pain of their loss is often profound.

“(Pets) just love you the way you are,” Barbara explains. “They don’t look at your bank account, they don’t look at where you live, they don’t look at what you wear... it’s about loving you. We try to live that way, but they bring us back to that”.

Leaf, the cat, pops in for a brief visit – a cosy little tabby with a kind and curious face, who walks with a friendly tail in the air and a slow, cranking gait. Another rescue, Leaf’s welcome is a testament to the attitude of forgiveness Barbara says abused animals often exemplify to humankind. “They teach us to be better human beings, if we allow ourselves to learn from them”.

She tells me the story of Rosa, a dog Lort Smith’s staff found heavily pregnant and tied up with a string of rosary beads outside the hospital.

Examination by a vet uncovered evidence too upsetting to print here, that Rosa had endured torture at the hands of the human owners who had abandoned her. “This dog, who

should have hated humans... she never snarled, she never barked at anyone,” Barbara recalls.

In fact, Rosa received regular fan mail from children at the local school and a group of refugee children, whom she helped to acculturate to the idea of dogs as friends by letting them learn to pat her.

“They teach a lesson of forgiveness, loyalty...unconditional love,” Barbara tells me.

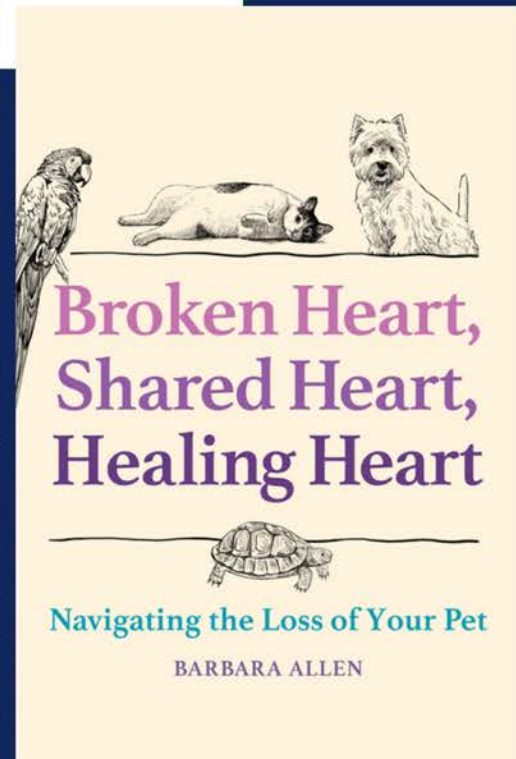
Of course the loss of these brave little souls, who set such a high standard for love in our lives, is keenly felt. Like so many others who have talked with Barbara, I’d believed my grief for a lost pet was somehow trivial.

Reading *Broken Heart, Shared Heart, Healing Heart* I’m touched by Barbara’s thoughtful, wise and witty discussion of the experience. “John Wesley told us ‘the whole world is your parish’,” she says to me. Understanding that there’s room in God’s heart for how much I miss my cat, I suddenly feel as though the Kingdom of Heaven has a little more room for me.



“Broken Heart, Shared Heart, Healing Heart” is available now at The Avenue Bookstore, which you can visit using the QR code above, pending its wider Australian release.

Harry the dog, Leaf the Cat, and the cover of Rev Barbara Allen’s book





Rev Anneke Oppewal Discussing "TEAM-ing with Life" at Presbytery in Council, St. David's Parkdale.

TEAM-ing with life!

By Naomi Cardwell

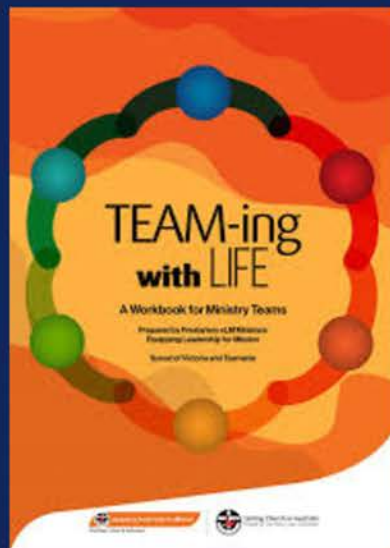
As the demand for ministry in our broken world continues to expand, projects and congregations of the Uniting Church are increasingly led by teams of people, rather than a solitary minister working alone. This means there has never been a more important time to step back and think intentionally about the art of teamwork.

And help is at hand! eLM - equipping Leadership for Mission - uses a cooperative approach with multiple regions to resource each presbytery to

meet its particular mission strategy. Our own Anneke Oppewal became our Presbytery eLM representative at the beginning of 2024, and was integral in the development of *TEAM-ing with Life*, a workbook designed to help teams nurture a healthy, productive and empowered life together.

TEAM-ing with Life is a fantastic resource, whether your team is a newly-formed powerhouse or a seasoned squad. And best of all, it's free! The hard copy, available through the Presbytery office, is beautifully-produced with nice large print. There's plenty of space to jot down notes, and the workbook encourages readers to use the resource at a pace that suits them best. The electronic copy - available online using the QR code in this article - is easy to download and a fantastic resource on the go.

With so many projects flourishing, and so much life among our congregations, it's wonderful to have support like this in getting the foundations right. I found *TEAM-ing with Life* to be a thoughtful, well-organised asset that led me to consider factors in teamwork I'd never thought about before. "The people who have worked on this have had a lot of joy ...putting it all together," Anneke says, and this is evident on every page. *TEAM-ing with Life* lives up to its name - it's an easy, enjoyable, and vitally important resource that we may all freely access any time.



Get your copy of 'TEAM-ing with Life' as well as 'Meeting Together' at no cost, by scanning the QR code above, or contacting the Presbytery office.

Many threads make *bright* work!

By Naomi Cardwell
Photography by Ennis Macleod



What a pleasure it was to gather for the Presbytery in Council meeting at St. David's Parkdale on 17th August!

Events like these, which are the culmination of so much hard work and prayer from so many diligent people, feel like a big family meal—an opportunity to pause together for refreshment, encouragement, and reflection.

Rev Mike You opened, conveying to us the imperative from the 17th Assembly: *weave threads of love across all cultures and boundaries*. I imagine weaving at its most joyous and productive as an inherently communal activity.

We set to work first in prayer and worship, before hearing news of the Assembly presented by Ennis Macleod, Rev Jay Robinson, and Rev Anneke Oppewal, including the induction of Rev Charisse Suli as President, and a report on Assembly's Act2 strategy, which you can read about in the link at the end of this article. Rev Duncan Turuva reported about the honour he felt at being a member of Congress at Assembly.

Neville Bion then spoke about the assistance he offers congregations with Essential Safety Measures and property safety, an obligation we owe to the communities to which we belong.

Rev Anneke Oppewal discussed the launch of *TEAM-ing with Life*, which you can read about in more detail on page nine, and Rev Robin Yang updated us on upcoming Safe Church workshops.

After a delicious morning tea, it was time to focus on two particular threads, with the introduction of one new, and the reiteration of our esteem for one vibrant thread already featured in our cloth.

As Dr Daniel Sihombing's ministry formation period comes to a close, the Presbytery voted joyfully in support of his ordination and enjoyed a Q&A about his life in faith, which has taken him from Indonesia to Australia, from political journalism to theology, and into a deep appreciation of the values and vibrance laid out in the *Basis of Union*.

No spoilers here - turn to page 17 to read about Dr Sihombing's next

steps! Next, the continuation and renewal of Rev Anneke Oppewal's commission as Presbytery Minister, Pastoral was enthusiastically endorsed by vote, and we celebrated with one last prayer together, and a benediction with Presbytery Chair David Higham.

The hard work of ministry seems so much lighter on crisp mornings like these, when we all linger for a last hug and cheerfully toot our car-horns as we leave. We're working at this weaving business together, and it's God's cloth that we're creating, not our own.



Follow this QR Code to learn more about Act 2: Shaping the Future of the Uniting Church.

Radio Days, Coatesville nights!

Coatesville's 2024
annual variety show
had something for
everyone (and the dog!)

By Naomi Cardwell

Days later, I'm still abuzz from the fantastic evening at Coatesville United Church's variety show. The show draws visitors and regulars alike every year to enjoy Coatesville's welcoming, relaxed brand of hospitality.

The night kicks off with a yummy barbecue dinner, during which we sit at communal tables, laughing and eating together until the bell rings. Inside the church we enjoy a show that's got a bit of everything – comedy, love, even a “bit with a dog”, to borrow from Tom Stoppard!

The variety show's theme is *Radio Days*, a 1950's retrospective which MC/Singer/Drummer extraordinaire Peter Heazlewood presents as a time filled with change, ruction and excitement - where radio sang its swan song as the television phenomenon began, and the infusion of blues and soul into a



Sue Alexander and her co-star, Harvey

grateful mass-media would change the sound of music forever. And don't the blue notes hit just right at the hands of Coatesville's excellent band!

The show has everything, from Elvis to Bobby Darin, Sam Cook, Rosemary Clooney, and Buddy Holly – to name only a few!

Coatesville, of course, is a congregation who sing along. It's like a family reunion, filled with peals of laughter, hilarious banter and a relaxed, candid atmosphere. Along the way, we hear lots of fifties trivia, augmented with fascinating extra tidbits from the audience - several saw Queen Elizabeth and Prince Phillip first-hand during their historic visit to Australia in 1954. Many attended Billy Graham's evangelical crusade of 1959, an event that saw women admitted to the MCG's "men's only" stand for the first time.

There are also cleverly curated breaks between sets, featuring real

fifties advertisements. Donations to the show support Frontier Services, a Uniting Church agency that provides support services and chaplaincy to isolated, remote and rural areas in Australia. Over an incredible dessert buffet at intermission, I chat to a few visitors who have been attending the Coatesville Variety Show faithfully every year.

They love the food, the music, and the welcome equally, and they look forward to the Coatesville Variety Show every time it comes around.

The promised bit with the dog is spectacular, featuring a very well-behaved "Harvey", and his friends Sue Alexander and Charlie singing "How Much is that Doggy in the Window", to the audience's delight!

We break into a singalong by the end, full of laughs and nostalgia, before the band play us out to numbers by the likes of Bill Haley & His Comets and the Cordettes.

Thank you, Coatesville, for another fantastic evening!



Use the QR Code above to read more about the important work of Frontier Services.



The band, right-left: Phil Nanscawen, Mandy Bowes, Jonathan Gates, Ben Heazlewood, Steward Matheson, Peter Heazlewood, Peter Thomas, Norman Valenzeuela and Richard Palmer.

Christian Unity and Christian Worship:

How fares the Uniting Church?

By Robert Renton
Photography by Clive Jackson

On the 11th August Rev Dr Robert Gribben AM, Emeritus Professor Worship and Mission, delivered a lecture at North Balwyn as part of the Uniting Church Historical Society's annual program.

Rev Dr Gribben worked alongside churches in Australia and overseas to renew their liturgical provisions and in the publication of "Uniting in Worship."

He represented the Assembly on the World Methodist Council and was in charge of its international ecumenical dialogues, including with the Vatican, the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the Anglican Communion, the World Baptist Alliance and the Salvation Army.



Quoting a Lutheran pastor, he said “Our Reformation tradition says that if you want to see the church, come gather around God’s Word, gather around his table, and you will see the head of Christ manifest in his body”—if you want to see what a church believes, look at its worship.

“I want to measure our history, our present, even our future by our faithfulness to the promise in the Basis of Union—‘On the way Christ feeds his Church with Word and Sacraments, and it has the gift of the Spirit in order that it may not lose the way’.”

“Our histories have left their mark on us; old battles are still remembered, doctrinal, liturgical, missional, and they have affected the decisions we have taken since.” So early in the life of the Uniting Church the task was to work out what of the past must be let go of, and what ‘spiritual treasures’ should be passed on.

Liturgical renewal had been occurring in other churches—in the Second Vatican Council, for example, and in the Anglican communion, which had resulted in the use of modern English. We didn’t use Latin in our prayers,

but we had been praying in the language of the King James Bible, so we learned from the renewal of other churches. Priests in the Roman Catholic Church now faced the congregation instead of the altar at prayer, and the baptised people now took part in the service of worship.

What would our worship look like if our church took a new and critical look at our theology of the priesthood of all believers?

“What would our worship look like if our church took a new and critical look at our theology of the priesthood of all believers? Is not our worship leadership almost entirely in the voice of the minister?”

“Australia has some claims to be a very special country, a real mixture of ancient and modern cultures and religion. The Western and now Eastern Christian traditions of Constantine’s world are both here in numbers.”

“Our contemporary ecumenism should begin by revisiting not only those common ancestors who wrote our Scriptures, but also those who first interpreted them, thinkers like Irenaeus, a groundbreaking Greek theologian working in what is now France; and Origen of Alexandria in Egypt who began to develop what it meant that God was a Trinity. Our Christian neighbours here in Melbourne, especially the

Orthodox, both Eastern and Oriental, often opened new ways for my thinking.”

“Perhaps the fact that we chose organic union and that no other Australian or Asian church has joined us ... has contributed to our doubts about the call to unity itself, and led to our sidelining ecumenism.”

Commenting on the most widely studied ecumenical document (Baptism, Eucharist, Ministry), the Faith and Order study of the World Council of Churches, Gribben said, “Its recommendations influenced how the services of *Uniting in Worship* were composed. But what of baptism now? [It] is the secularising Protestant church that has reduced baptism to its virtual non-celebration.

It is those old church fears of Catholics on one side and of Baptists on the other ... [which] rule out any sense of mystery, or

even of acting as if we believed what the liturgy says. If a sacrament means nothing, makes no difference, why indeed celebrate it?”

“But the bigger problem is that now we think of this sacrament [baptism] as applying almost exclusively to children. We should continue to baptise the children of practising Christian parents, but also pay attention to the adults who are seeking faith.We need to take their preparation seriously—not the few quick tutorials of confirmation. They need truly to remember their baptism.”

Commenting on Act2, Gribben said, “There is no doubt that our administration needs clarification and simplification; all know that. But the worship and mission for which this very Church was created was hardly mentioned. Surely that cannot wait another three years.”

The full copy of Rev Dr Gribben’s speech will be reproduced in the December edition of *The Proceedings of the Uniting Church Historical Society of Victoria and Tasmania*, and further information can be obtained from Robert Renton (robert.renton@bigpond.com) or 042 7812 606).

For more information about Uniting Church Historical Society events generally, see the QR Code on this page:





Triple the joy at Mount Waverley!

By Naomi Cardwell
 Photography by Ian Bock

On 18th August the combined congregations of Mount Waverley Uniting Church, Melbourne Fijian Uniting Church, and the Canterbury UCA Tongan Congregation enjoyed a special service and lunch together.

Walking into Mount Waverley Uniting Church feels like coming home. I'm swept along on a tide of families laden with musical instruments, food, and joyful greetings, and deposited in the lovely old High Street Road Worship Centre.

From the well-loved pews, I admire the church's distinctly modernist stained-glass window, which sends colourful squares of light dancing throughout the space. As the service begins, two choirs rise and break into song from their places all around us,

dotted among the congregation. The effect is to envelop us in music, in hymns which are truly *alive*, leaping out of the songbook in beautiful combinations of Fijian, Tongan and English, with rich bass and refracting harmonies swelling gloriously all around.

We're treated to a sermon by Rev Dr Apwee Ting, International Relationships Manager, Uniting World. Preaching on Micah 6:1-8, his sermon seeks to answer the question, "What does God require of you?" We journey through the Bible passage together, through Apwee's anecdotes and recollections from his rich career, and explore together the practice of justness, kindness, and humility - arriving at his powerful reminder, that "hope is not an abstract concept, but a reflection of our faith." In my favourite treat for the day, young George, Frederick and Mahe Walters sing *Jesus*

Knows just What I Need, accompanied by their parents. They are wonderful singers who break into irrepressible smiles and giggles we all can't help returning.

We adjourn for lunch soon after, noisily pouring into the church hall to share from a heaping banquet of delicious home-made foods. The smell is heavenly, and the warmth among the three congregations is infectious.

There's something so evocative about the honey-coloured light filtering through the windows in the church hall, and the rows of tables of people, all laughing and exchanging bone-warming hugs. Little children weave between our legs, their laughter splitting the air as we stand to queue for cheeky seconds - and thirds!

I am offered a microphone when I try to express my gratitude, and so I give it a go, with the memories tumbling forth of being a small child once, in church halls just like this one. These are the Sunday afternoons, I try to say, that stay with you forever. These are the days that nourish you in youth, all the way through to adulthood – that serve to weave strong threads of community, safety, warmth, and love to hold us tightly the rest of our lives. I can't wait to return, and to be among this beautiful extended family again soon.



“Hope is not an abstract concept, but a reflection of our faith.”

- Rev Dr Abwee Ting

“On the 18th of August the combined congregations of Mount Waverley Uniting Church (MWUC), Melbourne Fijian Uniting Church and the Canterbury UCA Tongan Congregation strengthened the Intercultural Ministry established at the Christmas Carol, December 2017 at St. Johns Uniting Church, joined by invitations of the Canterbury UCA Men's Choir with the current minister Rev. SemisiTauli'i. The fellowship also extended to the Korean Presbyterian Bethel Church who also worship at MWUC. Subsequently the following year, joined forces with Rev. Salesi Faupula the current Moderator-Elect to ignite the flames of diversity into The Uniting Church of Australia (UCA).

This day celebrated what the Holy Spirit has combined, bringing all people from all walks of life regardless of race, ethnicity, colour or status to ensure the melting pot of multiculturalism welcomed by the UCA in 1985 continues inclusivity to unite people. This collaboration reinforced the tireless efforts foreseeable by Rev. Tauli'i, Rev. Faupula and newly ordained minister Rev. Turuva together with their respectful beloved congregations. This reminded us of the neighbour principle, that we all have a duty of care to love one another just as our Lord Jesus Christ loved us first.”

— Lesieli Taulii, Mt Waverley Uniting Church.



Jacqui Gurr

Physiotherapist,
Australian Judo team



Chloe Stevens

Director of Sports
Programs, Cornish College

Cornish at the Olympics!

By Dennis Freeman | Photos Supplied

Whilst the immediate excitement of the 2024 Olympic Games has passed, at Cornish College we were thrilled and very proud to welcome back two members of our community who were both in Europe supporting our Olympians as they made their final competition preparations.

Chloe Stevens, Director of Sports Programs at Cornish, was an athletics coach working with the Australian athletics team's jumpers and sprinters. Prior to the Games she attended a two-week training camp with the team in Montpellier, France where she was coaching and assisting with a range of activities. These included track, gym and pool sessions as well as organising massage, physiotherapy, dietitian, and sports psychologist appointments.

Following the camp, she moved to the Olympic Village in Paris where she was responsible for working with athletes to coordinate their daily schedules for training, competition, transport etc. On the day of their events Chloe assisted with their warmup and at the event, coaching and offering feedback.

Alumna Jacqui Gurr (CC2009), a physiotherapist, was supporting the Australia Judo team on behalf of the Victorian Institute of Sport, as they prepared for the Olympics.

Jacqui spent two and half weeks in Spain, Denmark and Hungary supporting the team in their final preparations. She noted that there are three athletes who have qualified – two who have qualified for their second Games, and another going to their third Olympic Games! Of these, two are from the Victorian Institute of Sport.

Congratulations to both Chloe and Jacqui for their wonderful achievements – what an honour to be involved in sport at this elite international level and, as a College, we are extremely proud of them.

Announcement: Appointment of Dr Daniel Sihombing

Issued by Rev Duncan Macleod, Executive Officer, eLM
(equipping Leadership for Mission)

Photo Pilgrim College website

Pilgrim Theological College is delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Daniel Sihombing to the position of Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Pilgrim Theological College.

Daniel will take up the Pilgrim faculty role in January 2025. He will share in the Uniting Church Studies intensive in February, and teach “Jesus, Discipleship and Justice” in the first semester, and “Christianity’s Big Ideas” in the second semester.

Daniel has taught as sessional lecturer and guest lecturer at colleges in Indonesia: Amanat Agung Theological Seminary, South East Asia Bible Seminary, Duta Wacana Christian University, and Jakarta Theological Seminary. This year Daniel assisted Geoff Thompson as tutor for Christianity’s Big Ideas, Pilgrim Theological College.

Daniel’s PhD was titled “Barth and The Shadow of Nothingness: A Post-Soeharto Contextual Reading”, awarded this year by Protestant Theological University, Amsterdam. Daniel evaluated the attitude of Indonesian Protestant churches before, during and

after the Soeharto “New Order” regime, mirroring the theological development of Karl Barth before, during and after Hitler’s “Third Reich”. Daniel’s interest in liberation theology is grounded in his own experience in grass roots activism and political journalism in Indonesia.

Daniel became a member of the Uniting Church soon after moving to Australia in 2019, and became involved in Glen Waverley Uniting Church. Daniel served on the Church Council, preached regularly, and led a fortnightly intercultural Bible study. Daniel has been providing supply ministry since 2021 in three different congregations: Monash Uniting Church, Korean Church of Melbourne, and Caulfield Indonesian Uniting Church. He has been appointed a Junior Fellow with the Wesley Centre for Ethics, Theology and Public Policy.

Daniel is currently a candidate for ordained ministry at Pilgrim Theological College and will be ordained by Port Phillip East Presbytery in December. This Pilgrim faculty role will be his first Uniting Church placement.

Dr Daniel Sihombing will take up his position as Lecturer in Systematic Theology at Pilgrim College in January 2025.



Elsternwick-Caulfield South Partnerships

By Cathy McNicol
Photos: Supplied

For many years St John's Elsternwick-Caulfield South has been reaching out to other local congregations and community groups to discuss partnerships as a way of supporting each other's activities.

Outreach has always been their mission. After 23 years they reluctantly closed their Op Shop in the heart of the Elsternwick and began to explore outreach in different ways. They restarted their 'Cuppa & Chat' morning tea through the Chatty Café network. They started a new weekly drop-in program, 'Craft and Chat' using congregational contacts to provide social connections



The church when used by St Mary's Anglican-Catholic Church

while engaging in craft and board games. Another major focus has been deepening their partnership with the Caulfield South Community House (CSCH) which operates from the former Caulfield South church complex. CSCH connects with about 600 people each week through its child care, wellbeing and community garden programs. As one of the congregation volunteers describes it, "It blows me away to be part of special care and connection offered by CSCH." Another says, "I always come away invigorated and inspired".

The partnership between St John's and CSCH has been always mutually supportive, but the recent renovation of the church into an activity centre and consequent expansion in CSCH programs, has led to fresh opportunities for St John's to also offer new, complementary programs.

Currently, two St John's volunteers lead a singing group which offers a chance to reflect on what songs people find meaningful. One also acts as a welcomer and is a member of the CSCH Committee of Management.

Supply minister, Rev Dr Lynette Duncan, ran two series



Music Melodies in the renovated church run by run by St John's volunteers.

of sessions on exploring spirituality and blessings. There is also a monthly contemplation session which invites people to take time to reflect on their inner life through images, music and discussion.

St John's is working, with Presbytery support, to secure another new lease for CSCH to enable these programs to continue, explore new forms of community outreach, and further deepen the partnership.



Sacraments in the UCA course begins!

News from the virtual classroom

By Naomi Cardwell

We gather together on Zoom from all over the state – from congregations inside the Port Phillip East Presbytery and well beyond. It’s Wednesday night, when every week more than twenty of us take part in Sacraments in the Uniting Church, a course conducted by Rev Jay Robinson and Rev Anneke Oppewal.

There are many reasons people have enrolled. Some are simply curious about the meaning of baptism and communion, and the role of the presider in Uniting Church worship. There are some Church leaders who’ve received a “tap on the shoulder” from their minister, asking them to upskill into presiding. Others are lay ministers who are seeking to be certified to continue the work they’re already doing out of necessity. One student aims to offer an alternative service at an aged care home they visit regularly, where presently Communion is only administered in the Roman Catholic tradition due to a shortage of qualified presiders.

There are farmers among us, full-time workers, retirees, parents, and grandparents too. One little window in the Zoom class contains a table of nine students who gather together every week to study.

So far, we have covered introductory material, a week on Worship in the UCA, the UCA theology of sacrament, and by publication of this issue we will have begun delving into the Sacrament of communion.

One thing I realise quickly is that this course is *challenging*. The readings are serious, the subject matter is demanding, and we are learning at a level and a pace that pushes me. The good thing is, we’re all rookies together, and there’s so much warmth and laughter spilling out from each of our little Brady Bunch squares on Zoom.

In “breakout rooms” and group discussions, we bond over the different contexts and circumstances that have brought us together. I find that I learn as much from my fellow students as I do from our homework and readings, or from Jay and Anneke’s fantastic instruction.

The course will run until 9th October and aims to equip full participants for eligibility to be considered by their presbyteries for authorisation as lay presiders. How wonderful it is to be able to learn like this together, whatever our aims, and to enjoy each other’s company so much in the process!

JUSTICE AND INTERNATIONAL MISSION CONVENTION 2024

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 5

GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD

FOOD AND SOCIAL JUSTICE



This year's JIM Convention will explore the social justice dimensions of food production and how to incorporate them into the church's life. Register now to reserve your spot and workshop preferences.

Large food corporations are producing unhealthy and addictive food products that drive up unhealthy food consumption. The foods in question cause various health problems, including obesity, cancer, heart disease and depression. Ultra-processed foods have been progressively tailored by scientists and technicians through combinations of sugar, salt, fat and flavour enhancers to bypass our natural mechanisms of appetite control. At the same time, food corporations to drive up food consumption and obesity also impact global greenhouse gas emissions.

When: 5th October 9am-4:15pm
Where: Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Cres Parkville
Cost: \$40 Metro, \$25 Concession and non-metro, \$10 Online (morning only)

 equipping Leadership for Mission
Justice & International Mission

 Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA



Letters to the Editor

I've been asked to consider a Letters to the Editor section for 'Newsbeat' and I think it's a fantastic idea, so let's give it a try!

Your opinions and contributions to our Presbytery magazine are so very welcome.

Please email your letter to comms-officer@ucapnep.org using the subject line "Letter to the Editor" if you would like to contribute. If you're not comfortable with email, leave a phone message with the Presbytery office and I'll endeavour to call and take your letter over the phone. We are unable to guarantee publication of every letter.

Gambling with our Kids' Lives

Dear *Newsbeat*,

I am appalled at the pathetic response from the Federal cabinet to much needed reforms to gambling advertising. Never was an opportunity to take a stand against the ubiquitous gambling companies more completely lost. The late Peta Murphy would be turning in her grave.

Such timidity against the powerful gambling lobby in this country will haunt the Labor government all the way to the ballot box. Our national blind spot on gambling, as often decried by Tim Costello, has also made us deaf to widespread calls across the land and both sides of the aisle to ban gambling advertising. The jury is back- not banning gambling advertising is gambling with our kids' lives.

- Nick Toovey, Beaumaris UC.



Thank you, Nick, for such a brilliant inaugural Letter.

The Wesley Centre hosted an excellent forum on gambling advertising last month, and have recommended the Alliance for Gambling Reform to anyone who would like to campaign or petition regarding this issued. Their website is www.agr.org.au, or you can check them out using the QR code pictured here.



Email your letter now!

You're invited...

Leighmoor Uniting Church are having their 170th anniversary service on Sunday 20th October at 10 am.

This will be followed by a luncheon after the service in the Church Hall.

Anyone who is interested in attending may contact leighmoorunitingchurch@gmail.com



Let there be
peace on earth
& let it begin with
me

Peace Vigil

12-6pm Saturday 21 September

- Drop in for quiet contemplation
- 4pm Reflections, singing
- Children's activities

St John's Uniting Church,
567 Glen Huntly Road Elsternwick



Funded by the Victorian Equal Opportunity
and Human Rights Commission



**Providing safety
and support for
LGBTQA people
of faith:
Improving
pastoral care**

Gain insights and strategies with leading advocate Jac Tomlins.
Hosted by the University of Divinity and the Victorian Equal
Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

FRIDAYS
13 SEP or
8 NOV
9:30AM-1PM

FREE Workshop

Venue: St Paschal Campus, University of Divinity
90 Albion Road, Box Hill VIC

Scan the QR code to register or go to:
<https://vox.divinity.edu.au/event>



PORT PHILLIP EAST PRESBYTERY STAFF



1 Allan Street, Noble Park VIC 3174
www.ucappep.org
secretary@ucappep.org • (03) 9558 4710

PRESBYTERY MINISTER - TEAM LEADER

Rev Jay Robinson
t: 0410 465 836
e: pm-tl@ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY MINISTER - PASTORAL CARE

Rev Anneke Oppewal
t: 0437 298 454
e: pm-pastoral@ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY MINISTER- CHURCH DEVELOPMENT

Rev Robin Yang
t: 0416 190 723
e: pm-cd@ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY SECRETARY

Anne Kim
(Tuesday - Thursday)
t: 0438 181 812
e: secretary@ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY COMMUNICATIONS

Naomi Cardwell
(Tuesday & Thursday)
e: comms-officer@ucappep.org

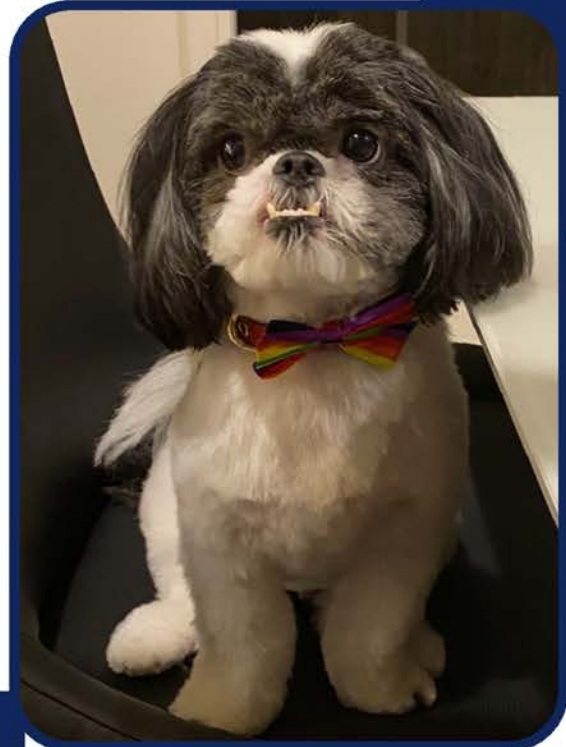
Website: www.ucappep.org
Facebook: facebook.com/ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY CHAIR

David Higham
t: 0405 435 644
e: chair@ucappep.org

PRESBYTERY TREASURER

Jeff Gardner
t: 0419 886 659
e: treasurer@ppe.victas.uca.org.au



*Coatesville Variety Show star Harvey.
Photo supplied by proud mum,
Sue Alexander*