



Victorian
Council of Churches

Council News

September 2021

Victorian Council of
Churches

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Reflections

Outside the window of my study there is a cherry plum tree.

This tree acts as a signpost , In the gloom of winter it buds and by the end of August it is a mass of colour... These two actions mark the changing of seasons with one on the wane and the other about to occur bringing with it, new life on so many dimensions...

In many expressions of the Church, this season of change is celebrated as the 'Season of Creation'... a time for being thankful to our God; who's wisdom, love and compassion has given such a beautiful world to live within... For our Orthodox brothers and sisters, it's the beginning of their liturgical year....

It's also a time to recall the role of humans in this creation ... that of Vicegerents.. Those with responsibility to care, respect and ensure this gift of creation isn't damaged or abused.

As we celebrate this season, giving thanks to our God who has bestowed such a gift... May we commit ourselves again to be fitting gardeners.

- Ian

I am open to accepting invitations to come and share stories of the Council with your Church or group – I'm also happy to appear online or pre recorded you can contact me on 03 9412 8487 or email at ian.smith@vcc.org.au

News from the Council

- Council continues to work with the Victorian Church Leaders Network engaging with State Government and Department of Health Services in understanding and sharing the latest Covid 19 restrictions or information t
- Council continues to work on its priorities and activities going into 2022 as it seeks to be a voice amongst the Churches and an influence within society.
- Council is continuing to seek members of member churches to participate in Three Commissions Council currently has. Faith and Order, Living Faiths and dialogue and Social questions. If readers are interested in any of these groups, please contact the Executive Officer Rev Ian Smith, ian.smith@vcc.org.au

VCC—Contact details

- phone: 03 9412 8487

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NOTE: The Victorian Office now has a new PO Box number.

- postal address [PO Box 6804 509 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne 3004](#)

Victorian News

The Victorian Council of Churches congratulates Rev Sharon Hollis on her appointment as President of the Uniting Church of Australia.

The Council prays that Sharon will be equipped with all that's necessary for her to undertake her role.



Outgoing President Ms Deirdre Palmer presenting Rev Sharon Hollis with her Cross

The 16th Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia was held online over the weekend, with former Synod Moderator Sharon Hollis installed as President.

- image from UCA VicTas Synod website.



Vale Professor Rev Gary Bouma

The Victorian Council of Churches acknowledges the recent passing of Professor, Rev Gary Bouma,

An academic, human rights activist, and holder of the UNESCO Chair in Inter Religious Studies at Monash University.

Gary made a strong and lasting contribution to the Faith life of Victoria. He was a strong advocate for allowing all people to freely express and live within their faith traditions.

He also contributed to his own Faith Community, The Anglican Church of Australia where he was a Priest., as well as to the wider Christian community of Victoria.



President's reflection

Better Futures Forum, Australia

Three brief reflections by Bishop Philip Huggins from his closing reflection Tuesday 17 August 2021

... We pray for mercy - for divine compassion - so that, yes, "Love finds a way".

[Read More >>](#)



Helping Afghanistan and our Afghan communities here in Australia

In the last few days, Taliban forces have taken control of all Afghanistan's major cities. Almost 390,000 people have been displaced, and tens of thousands now need urgent humanitarian assistance.

NCCA and many other organisations have written to Government seeking commitment. Australians have joined in with open letters and pleas to the Federal Government for support and compassion. Raise your voice too.

[Read More >>](#)



Act for Peace

Update from Act for Peace's partner in Afghanistan

- Prayers - please pray for the people of Afghanistan
- Afghanistan Emergency appeal - help provide urgently needed food, shelter, and health supplies to displaced families in Afghanistan

[Read More >>](#)



NCCA (con't)

Ahead of the Season of Creation

Season of Creation

Wednesday 1 September through to Monday 4 October

Ahead of the celebration of God's wonderful creation we have the sobering IPCC report and the uplifting Catholic Social Justice Statement 2021-22.

[Read More >>](#)



Safe Church Program

Sharing resources to ensure Safer Churches

- National Child Protection Week: 5-11 September
- AASW Webinar Recording: Using legal and psycho-social interventions to respond to Elder Abuse

[Read More >>](#)



Ecumenical Conference

Ancient Futures: the Renewal of Religious Life in the Australian Church - A three day event hosted by the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture (ACC&C) in Canberra.

When: Thursday 4 - Saturday 6 November 2021

Registrations close: 25 October 2021

[Read More >>](#)



Creation care workshop

'Reframing climate and creation care communications for Christians'

The Brisbane and Grafton Anglican Deans are co-hosting an online workshop. All interested clergy, lay people, communications staff and key church advocates are invited to join this workshop.

When: Wednesday 29 September 2021

[Read More >>](#)



[NCCA \(con't\)](#)

Myanmar's ravaging hit of COVID-19 along with human rights violations is a matter of serious concern.

"Myanmar faces one of the world's highest fatality rates relative to its population, yet it is probably an undercount, something which the military junta has implicitly acknowledged," said Mathews George Chunakara, CCA General Secretary

[Read More >>](#)



Christians United for Afghanistan - Church Support

As the crisis in Afghanistan unfolds, Christians, and followers of Jesus, from across these lands now called Australia, alongside a wider public movement, are being moved to speak boldly to our national leaders to provide urgent action for the well being of Afghan refugees. The Uniting Church has joined other Christians in Australia calling for urgent action by signing onto the call for *Christians United for Afghanistan*. This call joins your own Christian voice to the sector wide calls, and asks our Australian Government to follow the lead of Canada, in offering 20,000 additional resettlement places for refugees fleeing Afghanistan, to provide security for Afghani's in Australia on temporary protection visas or in detention, and to increase our humanitarian aid for refugees and asylum seekers in the region.

[You can read more and sign the petition by clicking this link.](#)

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September Calendar 2021

Season of Creation

- 1 [Indigenous Literacy Day](#)
- 2 1991: Council for Aboriginal Reconciliation Act passed by Parliament
- 7-13 [National Child Protection Week](#)
- 7 [National Threatened Species Day](#)
- 9 [R U OK Day](#)

[Read More >>](#)



WCC calls for prayers for people of Afghanistan



[Philip Potter’s spirit and profound direction of ‘only connect’ resonates with peacemakers](#)

Absorbing Philip Potter’s profoundly simple direction for the ecumenical movement—“only connect”—those gathered for an online tribute to the former World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary tapped into the still-growing legacy of a remarkable man.

[Read more](#)

[Ecumenical forum emphasizes the need to work together for peace on the Korean Peninsula despite COVID-19 and other challenges](#)



Participants in a meeting of members and partners of the Ecumenical Forum for Peace, Reunification & Cooperation on the Korean Peninsula (EFK), held





**World Council
of Churches**



[Faith communities are playing essential role at World Water Week 2021](#)

As World Water Week 2021 is underway, this year's online version has brought unprecedented participation as well as an even stronger role for faith communities.

[Read more](#)

[In Sheikh Jarrah: one mother speaks "the children are not living the childhood they deserve"](#)

Nufuz Hammad is trying to have a normal Saturday at her parent's home in Sheikh Jarrah, the neighborhood in East Jerusalem recently in the news because of court cases concerning attempts to evict Palestinian families from their homes.

[Read more](#)



[International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony celebrates five years and a growing vanguard for peace](#)

In the years since it was founded in 2016, the International Centre for Inter-Faith Peace and Harmony in Kaduna, Nigeria has been building a cadre of peacemakers who are witnesses to inter-religious peace and harmony. It also continues to serve as a physical symbol helping Muslims and Christians work together more effectively.

[Read more](#)





World Council of Churches



Happy Birthday, Dear WCC!

23 August 2021

You are very much needed. You are very much appreciated. You are very much discussed. You are bringing the fellowship of churches together through prayers, discussions, reflections, and actions in consensus.

On Small Beginnings

20 August 2021

When I read about Zerubbabel launching efforts in rebuilding Jerusalem I nod with a smile. Zechariah 4:10 says: "... Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin" (New Living Translation). Zerubbabel reminds me of a small nation that also started humbly, but whose efforts, despite the choir of doubters, have been greatly blessed by the Lord.



Ecumenical Institute of Bossey: English Summer Course

<https://oikoumene.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000mp11QvW9W3c/G0000XemuYr8oeyY/Ecumenical-Institute-of-Bossey-English-Summer-Course>

WCC (continued)



Prayers and resources for coping with Coronavirus

<https://www.oikoumene.org/resources/covid-19-resources>

Communication for Social Justice in a Digital Age

Dates : 13 September 2021 - 15 September 2021 This symposium will focus on the impact of digital transformation on communities and societies, and the actions needed to secure a just and inclusive digital future. Bringing together research, experiences from different regions and communities, expert input, and ethical and theological reflection, it will identify opportunities for action as a contribution to the 11th assembly of the World Council of

[Read more](#)

 Christian Conference of Asia

**ASIA REGIONAL
CONSULTATION ON
STRENGTHENING
INTERFAITH ACTIONS
IN HIV RESPONSE**

SEPTEMBER 21-22, 2021
VIA ZOOM | WWW.CCA.ORG.HK

 FOR MORE INFORMATION,
FOLLOW LIKE AND SUBSCRIBE TO
CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA



Justice in Mission.....Uniting Church Austral-



During the 2021 Season of Creation, from **1st September through to 4th October**, thousands of Christians on six continents get together for a time of restoration and hope, a jubilee for our Earth, and to discover radically new ways of living with creation. This year, the theme for the season is '**A home for all? Renewing the Oikos of God**'. Visit [the Seasons of creation website](#) for more information.

You can also search liturgical resources from many denominations by [clicking this link](#).

Five Leaf Eco-Awards

The Five Leaf Eco-Awards are an Australian ecumenical environmental change program specifically designed for churches and religious organisations. Using a series of non-competitive awards the program assists, inspires and rewards faith communities for taking environmental action and becoming more sustainable in response to God's call to care for creation.

The Five Leaf Eco-Awards encourage holistic action for the environment covering five areas: Building, Worship, Congregation, Outreach, Community Leadership

There are currently six awards available in the program– two introductory awards and four advanced awards. To earn an award, churches simply complete actions to fulfill the criteria of that award, and are then presented with certificates of recognition for their achievement. [You can begin the process by filling out this survey on the website.](#)

Christians United for Afghanistan - Uniting Church Support

[A toolkit for Churches to engage with Congregations is also available, click here.](#)

Book Launch - Cloud Climbers: Declarations through Images and Words for a Just and Ecologically Sustainable Peace.

Colonial invasion, nuclear weapons, pandemics and the entanglements of war with fossil fuel extraction and climate change, challenge our capacities to act with hope for an ecologically just and peaceful future. Framed around artwork by William Kelly and Benjamin McKeown and ekphrastic poetry by acclaimed writers Bella Li, Susan Fealy, Alex Skovron and Andy Jackson, this book reflects the conviction that the arts, literature, activism and scholarship can together contribute to the kinds of cultural shift requisite for a peace that flows from and extends to human relations with the natural world. As well as artists and poets, the contributors include activists, Indigenous, ecological, feminist, legal, theological and religious scholars.

When: Tuesday 28 September, 6:30pm - 8:00pm (AEST)

Where: Online

Registrations: [Here](#)

Asylum Seeker Resource Centre

The end of the rental moratorium



For those people seeking asylum with no income and no access to JobSeeker payments, the pandemic continues to create a perfect storm of disadvantage, putting people's safety and wellbeing at risk.

Already facing financial stress and unable to pay their accumulated rental debts, the end of the rental moratorium is now putting entire families at risk of becoming homeless.

[Find out more about how we're helping people seeking asylum during this time.](#)



PALESTINE ISRAEL
ECUMENICAL NETWORK

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism



This important new document has emerged that aims to present a comprehensive description and understanding of what antisemitism is and is not. The Jerusalem Declaration is largely in response to the inadequacies and misuse of the [Working Definition of anti-semitism](#) of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which has been adopted by many countries as the standard definition.

As this new declaration points out however, *“The IHRA Definition” (including its “examples”) is neither clear nor coherent. Whatever the intentions of its proponents, it blurs the difference between antisemitic speech and legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism. This causes confusion, while delegitimizing the voices of Palestinians and others, including Jews, who hold views that are sharply critical of Israel and Zionism.*”

Read [The Jerusalem Declaration](#).

*“The **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism** is a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today. It includes a [preamble](#), [definition](#), and a set of 15 [guidelines](#) that provide detailed guidance for those seeking to recognize antisemitism in order to craft responses. It was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a*

Jewish Christian Muslim Association



DONATIONS

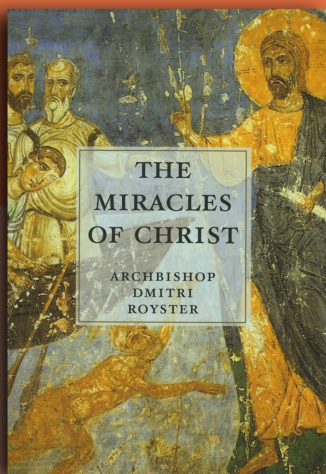
JCMA is a not-for-profit organisation and donations go directly towards delivery of our many events, forums and conferences and to support our workshop programs in primary and secondary schools. As a listed harm prevention charity we have DGR (Deductible Gift Receipt) status. Your donations are tax-deductible (donations over \$2 are tax-deductible). If you would like to make a donation to help support the work of JCMA please go to our website <http://jcma.org.au/donation>.

JCMA Membership

JCMA is a membership based organisation for Jewish, Christian and Muslim people of faith. If you would like to find out about joining JCMA as a member you can go to our website at <http://jcma.org.au/jcma-membership> or call Ginette Everest on (03) 9287 5590 or email to: memberships@jcma.org.au.

For more information and details on any events see website: www.jcma.org.au

New Book from SVS Press



By the signs, wonders, and miracles He performed, Jesus manifested His compassion for His creatures and the ultimate reason for His coming into the world, i.e., His healing and restoration of mankind. The Miracles of Christ concerns itself with this vehicle of God's self-revelation.

The miracles are studies within the framework of the Church's lectionary; that is, in the order in which the people of God hear them read aloud in church as a part of the proclamation of the Word. The book is in three parts. Part one deals with the miracles recorded in St Matthew's and St Luke's Gospels, part two with the signs of the Gospel of St John (most of which are read in the Paschal season), and the third part surveys the miracles recorded in St Mark's Gospel. It is this shortest Gospel that sharply condenses the whole story of Christ and points repeatedly to His saving death, burial, and resurrection.

His Eminence Dmitri Royster, retired Archbishop of Dallas and the South of the Orthodox Church in America, and author of Six SVS Press titles, fell asleep in the Lord on 28 August 2011

.can be purchased from: SVS Press <https://svspress.us>

<https://svspress.com/miracles-of-christ-the/>

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY – September

1. 2021 Leaders to Go September 11 On-line 12.15pm-3pm AEST

Australia's premier event for leaders influencing other leaders in ministry with children and their families, [Leaders to Go](#) will be more accessible than ever before as it moves on-line! As well as engaging with the amazing Susy Lee, author of [Raising Kids Who Care](#), there will be plenty of opportunity to connect with other leaders from all around Australia.

Click here for [More information](#) and/or here regarding [Registration](#).

2. Father's Day

[Father's Day resources \(Strandz\)](#)

[Father's Day ideas \(Salvation Army\)](#)

[Father's Day worship ideas \(Re:think Worship\)](#)

[Prayers for Mother's and Father's Days \(Building Faith\)](#)

[Kidzone: check after Sep 1 for Father's Day edition \(Kidzone\)](#)

3. National Child Safe Week (Sep 5-11)

[Child Safe Sunday resources \(UCA\)](#)

[I feel safe when...colouring-in and art activity \(UCA\)](#)

[We are a safe church when...on-line forum for ministry agents \(UCA\)](#)

[National Child Safe Unit: training and resources \(UCA\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe resources \(UCA\)](#)

4. via Messy Church

[Psalm 40: multi-age liturgy \(MC Aus\)](#)

[Discipleship goes Messy: article \(UCA\)](#)

[Extreme Crafts: 80 activity ideas for the adventurous \(BRF\)](#)

[Messy Vintage: faith, fun and fellowship for older generations \(BRF\)](#)

[Messy Discipleship: Messy Church perspectives on growing faith \(UCA\)](#)

5. via Grow Ministries

[Woven Together: resource for families \(Grow Ministries\) NEW](#)

[Grow Together Family Newsletter + sample \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

[Equipping faith at home \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

[Tips for faith at home \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

[Faith at Home \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

6. 2021 Season of Creation +

[2021 Season of Creation \(Season of Creation\)](#)

[Children and Creation Care \(eco congregation Scotland\)](#)

[Season of Creation: Early Word/Children's Addresses \(UCA\)](#)

[Faith Ecology Network: 10 things to do \(Faith Ecology Network\)](#)

[Faith Ecology Network: a Uniting Church lens \(Faith Ecology Network\)](#)

7. via Fuller

[Listening across generations \(Fuller\)](#)

[Learning to listen to teenagers \(Fuller\)](#)

[Identity, belonging and purpose: podcast \(Fuller\)](#)

[Superhero films as modern-day identity parables for Gen Z \(Fuller\)](#)

[How parents can have better conversations with teenagers \(Fuller\)](#)

8. Ministry Matters +

[Scripture & Trauma \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Planning creative worship \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Three things families need \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Ten things I've learned about trauma \(Sojourners\)](#)

[Caring for mental health in congregations \(Ministry Matters\) venues\)](#)

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facebook :

Council News is the official newsletter of the Victorian Council of Churches

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The Victorian Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

*** If you have an event that you want others to know about then contact at vcc@vcc.org.au excluding January we plan to publish a Council News each month ***

We're on the web!
www.vcc.org.au



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Facebook

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The new Office

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Access to the building is via the right hand drive to the rear double glass doors.

If you wish to visit please ring 9412 8487 or 0408 313 610 and arrange at time.