

# PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP WEST

8 April 2020



## Earth Shattering News!

Rev Linley Liersch

We are surrounded by earth shattering news at the moment. A worldwide pandemic that continues to spread fast around the world. What might we preach on this Easter that would match the power of this deadly news?

The Gospel of Matthew is filled with earth shattering life-giving news. Since the lectionary each Holy week returns us to John's gospel, so the Gospel of Matthew will take us by surprise. In fact: there are two resurrections and two earthquakes and a personal encounter with Jesus. Matthew 27:50-53 has Jesus on the cross breathe his last, as his life force goes out of him and strikes across the city of Jerusalem: the earth shakes, the temple curtain is ripped in two, graves are shattered and people are raised from the dead! The second earthquake occurs early Sunday morning as the women arrive at the tomb [Matt 28:1-15]. The angel tells of our Lord's resurrection. When the two Mary's run from the tomb scared and filled with joy, they encounter Jesus. Jesus tells them not to be afraid and blesses them so they may share in his peace. He then commissions these myrrh bearing women to be bearers of the good news. (*Icon: Myrrh Bearing Women, 3<sup>rd</sup> Century BCE, Baptistry wall mural.*)



There is a song by Christian rock group Mercy Me called 'Best News Ever!' This song proclaims that in terms of salvation we must look to Jesus on the cross because "the works already been done! That's not (just) good news, that is the best news ever!" Listen to the song 'Best News Ever' [here](#) ... The news that we can share this Holy Week is... It is on the cross, that the life-giving power of God is poured out for all. God did not let death have the last word! Our Lord Jesus is indeed risen! And Jesus' own life-force, is poured out for all, offering eternal life to all. That's the best news ever!

## PPW Congregations offering on-line worship options:

**Brunswick Uniting** is offering Live streaming every Sunday from 9:30 pm. Go to their [website](#) The link has a button on the main page which takes people to the YouTube site. [Dave Hall](#) at Brunswick has just run a children's Easter workshops on zoom using Godly Play.

**Belmont Geelong** Rev Ikani Vaitohi leads ½ hour service worship with a guitar music and the youth leading singing. [Click here](#) for further information.

**Ocean Grove** is offering Sunday worship at 10am on Zoom.us meeting ID to access is 228-583-607.

**East Geelong** has Rev Amanda Nicholas leading worship on [Facebook](#) from her manse.

**Wesley Geelong** has a YouTube channel you can subscribe to Rev. Tupe Ioelu sermon and guitar led music. Please [click here](#) to view the channel.

**Western Heights Geelong** is offering Rev Avril Hanna Jones 5 min sermon [online at vimeo](#). This site includes a Messy Church on-line option.

**Newtown St David's Geelong** Rev. Will Nicholas live streams at 10.00am each Sunday to Facebook. Please [click here](#) to access St David's Facebook page.

There are many more congregations offering Facebook options.... More next week.



The presbytery is now on Vimeo. Click [here](#) to see the videos that have been uploaded. Contact [Rev Amanda Nicholas](#) for need help uploading videos.



## COVID-19: Ideas for Faith @ Home

POSTED MARCH 12, 2020 TRACI SMITH



A lot of us are wondering how church will be the same (or different) now that we're in the middle of a lot of changes related to COVID-19. I think this is a time for us, as church leaders, to show our creativity. I think that churches and ministry people are endlessly creative, and I wanted to jump start some of that creativity. Here are some things to think about as you go about your day-to-day life.

### Faith at Home Practices to Encourage

- Create a sacred space at home to pray and meditate
- Start a regular prayer practice (create a prayer book)
- Do one of the practices in Faithful Families, such as [family Lectio Divina](#), [Washing Worries Away](#), or starting a [Nighttime Blessing Practice](#)
- Spend time outside, breathing in fresh air and listing reasons to be grateful
- Do practices from a [Faith Jar](#)
- Bake and break [bread](#) together — talk about the parable of the yeast
- Watch a [caterpillar turn into a butterfly](#)
- Make a [prayer chain](#) with gratitude or prayer requests. Watch it grow every day.
- Help children to feel secure and safe by using one of these practices.
- Draw or color your prayer requests. Post pictures and share with others, or mail to those who are isolated.
- Sing a simple song or hymn together from your faith tradition.
- Blow bubbles or fly a kite. Let them remind you of the Holy Spirit that moves in mysterious ways
- Make [origami](#) birds or butterflies as a symbol of hope and resurrection
- Feed the birds to remember how God cares for creation
- Use the butterfly hug to create calm and peace
- Remember play can be a spiritual practice
- Have people take photos of things during the week around a theme or what they think depicts the crucifixion or resurrection and send them to you for collation into a video or on Facebook or in your printed material.
- Drop off food and supplies to older adults and those in isolation
- Give a phone call to those who are staying at home, use a phone tree if you have one
- Donate to [local organizations](#) who continue to serve the most vulnerable
- Don't label people as overreacting or underreacting. Practice [compassion](#)

## #The Easter Message – an interactive Easter journey for young people

This is an initiative of eLM in partnership with UCAYouth aimed at 16+ older youth and young Adults and getting them interacting on-line over the Easter weekend.

#TheEasterMessage is a simple attempt to re/discover meaning across the Easter weekend, allowing young people to form a temporary community of travelers.

Full details are [available here](#). You need to scroll down the page to see the details.

#TheEasterMessage is free, secure, and targeted at young people aged 16-25.

# Traditional Easter Biscuits (& not a bunny in sight)



## Ingredients

3 cups (450g) plain flour  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg  
225g salted butter, at room temperature  
1 cup (220g) caster sugar, plus 2 tablespoons extra to sprinkle  
2 eggs  
3/4 cup (110g) currants  
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

## Method

1. Sift the flour and spices into a bowl. In a separate bowl, beat butter and sugar with electric beaters until thick and pale, then add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each addition. Fold in the flour mixture in 2 batches, then stir in currants and zest. Shape into a disc, enclose in plastic wrap and chill for at least 2 hours.
2. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper.
3. Divide dough into 4 portions. Roll out 1 portion to 4-5mm thick (keep remaining dough covered and chilled), then cut with a fluted 6cm round biscuit cutter and place on the trays. Repeat with remaining dough, re-rolling the trimmings to make about 40 biscuits. Chill for a further 15 minutes.
4. Preheat the oven to 180°C.
5. Sprinkle biscuits with extra sugar. Bake for 10 minutes until firm to touch but still pale. (Rotate trays halfway through baking, if necessary, to ensure even cooking.) Cool on trays for 5 minutes, then transfer to a rack to cool completely. The biscuits will keep in an airtight container for 3 days.

## Mission/Service Projects (where kids participate in the work of Jesus)

Learning is more than Bible knowledge. Following Jesus is more than Bible facts. Here are some ideas for helping children participate in the work of Jesus.

### Challenge kids to do some Spring cleaning at home.

This is a way to honour your parents and share in Jesus' work of making things new. Get kids into the cleaning action too!

### Plant a garden with the goal of sharing the harvest with neighbours.

This is a great way to connect with your neighbours too. Add a note Hebrews 13:16 Do not neglect to do good and share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

### Invite children to write an encouragement letter

Help them remember their [School Teacher](#), [firefighter](#), [police](#), or any everyday heroes. We have linked some colouring pages that make it easy.

### Encourage kids to video call their grandparents or elderly friends from church.

### Plan for the children to lead their own [prayer ministry](#).

Parents or church leaders could post to Facebook for request. Then allow the children to pray over those needs each Sunday.



## 9 minutes @ 9

Prayer points for this week:

- ❖ For those who may not be coping mentally with social isolation.
- ❖ For those stuck between being thankful for still having a job to go to, and yet terrified they still have jobs to go to.
- ❖ Pray that God will help us to continually walk in love.
- ❖ Pray to help those who are feeling lost... isolated from family and friends.
- ❖ We pray Lord to fill our hearts with your abiding joy and that we may rejoice in life's circumstances, in times of plenty and during times of hardship.

If you would like to share your prayer points with us to be included in this weekly newsletter please call Jeanne on 0432 284 279, or click [here](#) to email Jeanne.

Keeping you all in our Prayers.



# Connect in new ways

Rev Fran Barber

It's a really difficult time as we seek to find different work patterns and routines – as well as devise new ways of worshipping and connecting pastorally. Remember to look after yourselves spiritually, emotionally and physically so you can look after and lead others. Perhaps your usual daily or weekly prayer routine has gone out the window (and maybe also your day off!) – try to recapture them and bring them into your new routine. Use phone or zoom to keep connected with one another to collaborate, share learnings and frustrations in this period.

The following are resources for continuing to worship and connect in new ways – many of you will be a step or ten ahead with ideas (please continue to share them with colleagues!). This is a time to experiment, and give ourselves permission not get it right the first time.

## Technical resources

1. [Synod Covid-19 worship resources](#) – which includes an array of items, including a list of UCA churches sharing their online worship and personal devotion material you're free to use.
2. [How to Livestream your worship services via YouTube or Facebook](#)
3. [Zoom](#), if you're not already used to it, is a good platform for 2 or more to gather for meetings, pastoral contact, or worship. There's also some good online education in zoom through that link which would be of use after the Covid-19 turmoil.
4. [100 ideas for ministers and church leaders](#) – for your own self-care, but also great tips for pastoral engagement and prayer life for your community.

## Theological resources

1. Some theological reflection on the coronavirus and fear of death from UK scholar and theologian Ian Paul's blog link [Psephizo](#)
2. [Holy Smoke](#): a podcast conversation about the possibilities for a theological response from the churches amidst the crisis.
3. A reminder that [By The Well Podcast](#) is a lectionary preaching resource that, at this time, could also be used in place of a sermon, or for home based devotions.
4. [Liturgy in the time of plague](#): a discussion about the issues around celebrating communion online
5. [Ministry in this Strange New Land](#): a pastoral word to ministers from an Archdeacon in England.

# bear in the window

Rev Linley Liersch



**Have you heard that there was a call in Queensland for people to put Teddy Bears in their front windows?** This is so that Mum's, Dad's and children can 'Go on a bear hunt'. Adding fun and exercise together. It has been starting in my street too. I have added a Bible quote to mine! Galatians 6:2...

This idea has gone viral ... and one thing is certain — teddy bears and rainbows are beginning to pop up in gardens, windows and on fences around the

world to create some social-distancing magic for children during the global coronavirus pandemic.

