

Life—death—Life

Mel Perkins (eLM Lay Leadership Development Co-Ordinator)

Life-death-life. We can see this cycle when we look back to the Biblical stories of the Israelites and their journey with this God they are coming to know. This wondrous Being who desires to be in relationship with them, offers them life – and, we see that at times, the people are happy living in this life. Until something happens ... Then individuals or the community runs out of courage, or faith, or hope, and forgets their relationship with this God of life. And so death comes – death of relationship and death of community, as they are separated from God, and they let go of the life God offers. But God, being a God-of-life, does not leave them there, and calls them back into spaces that have more life, back into relationship with God again – for that is where life is. We see this repeated again in the disciples' relationship with Jesus, and again in the fledgling Christian community.



Life-death-life. This cycle is also so much a part of our natural world. Creatures and plants live and die, their bodies nurturing that which comes after. Seeds and caterpillars too, change – their old selves 'dying' for the new life to occur. Sometimes it can become too easy for those of us who live in urban environments to lose touch with the natural life-death-life cycle. It is important for us all to be called back to the natural spaces, for they remind us much about the life that God offers us, and the death we often must go through to access greater life.

Life-death-life. As Christians we revisit this cycle every year as we remember the life, death and resurrection of Christ – where God in Godself faces the ultimate cycle of life-death-life so that

we, and the entire universe, might have life in all its fullness.

What does it mean then for us to stand in solidarity with a world in pain, to stand in solidarity with our struggling earth, both experiencing death and reaching out for life? It means that we must open ourselves up to the cycle of life-death-life where God calls us into something that is true and honest and the reality of all of our lives. God calls us into life. Our lived existence calls us into death. **And God calls us into life again and again – this is our hope, and God's hope for the world.**

Easter

A tale of two presbyteries...

Daryl Peddler

PWV Lay Preacher Rep.

Active Lay Preachers 45
Candidates ?
Retired 8



While (due to the Covid pandemic impact) our experience in 2020 was different to that previously, many Lay Preachers continued to be involved in leading worship, often by electronic means (e.g. 'Zoom').

Three, recent, initiatives are specifically worthy of mention:

Based in Warrnambool, but with linkages elsewhere (especially to Stawell), the Discipleship Learning Community initiative has provided the opportunity for a regional base for Lay Education (including Lay Preacher training);

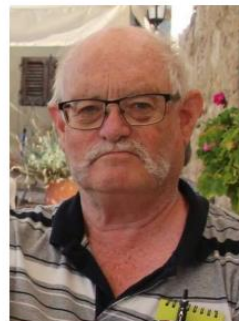
Our Lay Preachers enthusiastically accepted the invite of Chris Barnett (Intergenerational Ministry – Children and Families at eLM) for involvement in 'Lay Preacher Huddles' as a method of sharing and considering initiatives in their ongoing development as Lay Preachers;

The Presbytery has formed an 'Education Task Group'; two of the five members are Lay Preachers.

Rob Coulson

PPW Lay Preacher Rep.

Lay Preachers 20
Own congregation only 4
Candidates 5
Retired 17



Like other Presbyteries worship services were significantly disrupted due to COVID19 restrictions. Many Lay Preachers, however, remained active by assisting the preparation of on-line worship and also providing sermons and prayers to congregations without a minister in settlement. There are a number of congregations without a minister, some waiting placement whilst others are not in a financial position, thus Lay Preachers play an important role in providing worship leadership on a weekly basis.

During 2020 we began to conduct Lay Preacher "Chats" via Zoom with the assistance of Presbytery minister Rev Linley Liersch and Mel Perkins from CTM. We are planning on continuing this valuable meeting.

Whilst no formal face to face training days were conducted during 2020 it is planned to resume these this year, subject of course to restrictions.

The Presbytery is grateful for the work that Lay Preachers undertake in leading worship and sharing the gospel message.

Pastoral Note from the PPW & PWV Presbytery Ministry Teams.

We are observing a lot of fatigue at this time in our ministry agents and our lay leaders. Many fellowship and missions have not restarted in 2021, especially if they involve food. It may be a time to discern what ministry and mission we allow to die off and what we choose to bring to new life ?

COVID UPDATE:

Please note every worship centre and all religious ceremonies needs to keep electronic records having a **QR Code** by **April 23rd 2021**. If people are collecting paper records someone will need to upload these following the gathering. Register for a QR Code page 5: <https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/9480/vic-covid-faqs-march-25>

Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTTCHER (SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

This Easter, I have heard sermons and reflections from people I wouldn't usually hear, mainly because I've been holidaying with my family, away from my home church.

I know what "flavour" of Easter I like, and so this Easter Friday, on a beautiful morning in the shade of trees, I found myself feeling tense and uncomfortable as the people gathered joyfully celebrated the broken body of Christ on the cross.

I didn't want to tip-toe past the violence of the crucified Jesus and I left that place feeling annoyed and angry.

But over Easter Saturday and Sunday, as I heard more voices that I wouldn't usually hear, I realised that the poking and prodding of these "other voices" made me pay attention and think deeply about my own beliefs and narratives, and the way I defend them.

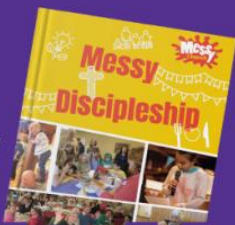
When Jesus came with a message the mob didn't like they were angry. We are all drawn to those voices we know will affirm our hard-won beliefs. *Opening our ears, and our hearts, to receive "the other", those that poke and prod us, is the hard work of true reconciliation. And it is where we are also likely to find Easter hope.*



Sacred People Sacred Earth: A Day of Global Interfaith Climate Action in many UCA congregations. March 11th at 11am Crossroads Werribee UC members joined with folk of the local Islamic, Catholic, and Baha'i communities and the Werribee River Association. Bells were rung, shofars blown and gongs were struck at the eleventh hour on that day; symbolizing Earth's eleventh hour of apocalyptic danger. The event was organized world-wide and locally by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change.



Messy Discipleship Book Launch



Visit the launch and join a book club 1:30 pm on May 27, June 24th, 22nd June on Zoom.

THURSDAY
22ND
APRIL 2021
🕒 1:30PM TO 3PM

Education Events



Thur 15th April 6:30 pm **Ethical Ministry Refresher (Code of Ethics)**



Fri 16th April 9:30 am **Pastoral Care Seminar 4**



Sun 18th April **Mentor to Many Ministers—UCA Historical Society on Rev. Dr. L. Rentoul**



Thu 22nd April 1:30pm **Messy Church Book Launch**
Messy Discipleship



Thur 22nd April 6:30 pm **Pastoral Care Seminar 4**



Wed 28th April 1 pm **Ethical Ministry Refresher (Code of Ethics)**
@ Hopper Crossing (In-person & Zoom)



Wed May 12th & 19th **Mental Health First Aid Certificate**
9:30 am—12:30 pm.



June 1st—3rd **PreachFest** (On-line regional Hubs: Stawell, Warrnambool;
Save the Date Ballarat; Horsham; Blackwood; East Geelong; City t.b.a.)

Mental Health First Aid Training

12th & 19th May
9:30am - 12:30pm



Blended Online MHFA Community Course

Learn how to provide mental health first aid to friends, family members, co-workers and other adults in your community.

- **Mental health problems covered:** Depression and anxiety, Psychosis, Substance use problems
- **Course Component 1**
A self-paced eLearning component (talks 5-7 hours to complete)
- **Course Component 2**
An instructor-led component using video conferencing (2 sessions of 2.5 hours each) 12/5 & 19/5.
- Subsidised places available \$150 per person
- Contact Linley Liersch—
Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au