

The Westerly



PWV & PPW Newsletter No.14 – 19th August 2021



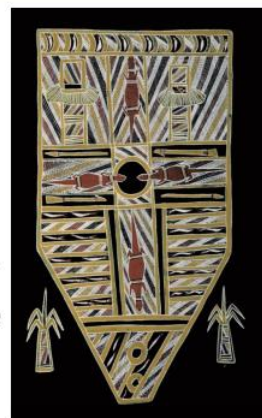
Covenant

Kym Korbe

Goa, Gunggari, Wakka Wakka woman
Co-Lead Covenanting Priority Action Group

The idea of covenanting within the Christian context is an act of hope and faith. It is much more than just a contract. It is certainly not static – it is an ongoing discovery.

The covenanting process happening in our Church is about being earnest, reflective and deliberate in our explorations of a Christ - centred approach towards walking together as First and Second Peoples. Covenanting sits beside the discipleship process – my relationship with God, my relationship with country and people, and my relationship with who I am as an emerging indigenous leader.



It is holding the knowledge that you walk on country that has been occupied for thousands of years and discovering what that walk means to you. You are never alone, because flora and fauna are there, history is there. God is always walking with you. We can be in covenant in all these things. We can be in covenant with each other.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived with God as part of our dreaming, spirituality and church life for generations. We understand the responsibility we have to the land (our country) as a life sustaining God creation. God created us all in his image and created lands for our care, and I believe if we are not in relationship with each other and the land, we are not in whole of heart relationship with God.

This year we contemplate what it means to "Heal Country", and we acknowledge that we must also heal relationships, heal people, and heal ourselves. They are one and the same—place and people.

Covenanting can remind us what it really means that we are all walking with each other—if we want to learn more about cultural heritage or make change in our country, we do this best in relationship with other people. We can seek out those we really wish to yarn with and we can really listen to what they say and really say what is true for us. **Together we can learn more about what the church can look like, what church can be in Country, wherever two or more are gathered.**

In this **video** attendees at the recent gathering of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) hosted by the Queensland Moderator shared how First Peoples are contributing to the growth and development of the Uniting Church. <https://uniting.church/yarning-circle-gathering-2021/>

Participants share about their life and ministry in the Uniting Church and how First Peoples are contributing to the growth and faith formation of all generations in the Uniting Church

Rev Roberta Stanley says, "The time has come for the next generation to become prosperous shoots on the vine."

Covenanting

What is the next covenanting step for your congregation?

Compiled by Rev Linley Liersch

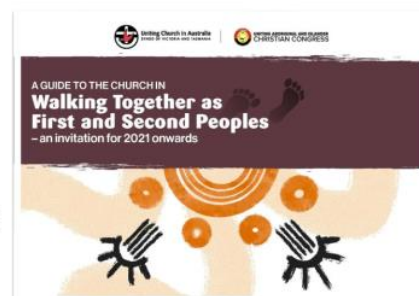


Listen Deeply

In February 2021, the VicTas Synod met online and recommitted to the covenant with the First and Second People. This guide can be found on the Synod website: [Covenanting-Guide-2021.pdf \(uca.org.au\)](https://uca.org.au/Covenanting-Guide-2021.pdf). This document had



been endorsed by Rev. William Pickett with these words: "I greatly appreciated the journey and being a part of a group that conversed about Covenanting which is an important and necessary part of First people and Second people journeying together in the Uniting Church."



The four priorities of this document are: **Listen deeply; Develop relationships; take responsibility for justice and truth telling; and keep the covenant at the heart of the churches' everyday life.** [Artist: Grace Williams] So every congregation is being invited to take the next step! Here are some possible steps for you to consider.

1. Acknowledgement of Country: An Acknowledgement of First Peoples is a way of paying respect to First Peoples. It is an important expression of the covenant which the Uniting Church has made with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). Carefully research your local Indigenous tribes or nation. Be sensitive to local Indigenous communities and culture. Create your own Acknowledgement of Country with your congregation! Here are some UCA Assembly resources a guide: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d1HiiuTDD6f_Y03gGDBu5gPfstHbn5yB/view and poster <https://resources.uca.org.au/resources/covenanting/item/3016-acknowledgement-of-country-poster>.

2. Visit your local cultural centre: Visit Brambuk in Halls Gap or Narana in Geelong. 'Narana' means a deep listening and understanding. The UCA Narana vision is to promote reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people by developing a better understanding of culture through community connections. On the roof of the Narana café is a powerful series of historical story-telling in artwork. Narana is a place where everyone is welcome to join in, heal and walk together. Organise your congregation to go visit your local centre. Ask for an Indigenous Education session. Both these centres have great walks with wildlife, artifacts exhibits, art displays, cafés with indigenous foods and a souvenir shop.



3. Walk on Country there are walks through sacred sites offered by the Indigenous Leaders of the region. They explain the meaning and importance of the land. Learn about their connection to country. Hear their stories.

4. Invite a local elder to talk with your congregation or church leaders. Speak about how you are beginning a covenant journey and would like to listen deeply and develop relationships. Create ongoing conversations in your church.



Develop Relationships

5. Visual Symbols and story telling in worship. Worship is at the heart of what we do, so including symbols in worship is one way we keep the covenant at the heart of our everyday life. Symbols such as rock, water and fire with some powerful words: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1d1HiiuTDD6f_Y03gGDBu5gPfstHbn5yB/view. Use Indigenous stories acknowledging the authors and/or artists. Reading quotes from Indigenous leaders in worship.



Keep the
Covenant at
the Heart of the
Church's
Everyday Life



Take
Responsibility
for Justice and
Truth Telling



Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

Can you remember what it was like going into our first lockdown? In an early family Zoom call my sisters and I, all working in health care settings, were consumed by permits and PPE while my niece was wondering if she could drive food parcels to vulnerable people.

There was an urgency around protecting vulnerable people, and my parents were both over 75. After listening to us for a while my mum said: "Do you know how hard this is for us? We want to help, but we're being told that the only way we can help is to stay inside!"

It's a conversation that has come back to me while witnessing places like the UK "open up". When I see pictures of people joyfully attending festivals, I wonder how costly this "freedom" is for disabled and immune-compromised people. In our own country, we're seeing vulnerable indigenous communities being seriously threatened by the virus for the first time.

Jesus is always on the side of the weak. God's kingdom is not built on the "survival of the fittest". Until we find ways to make society safer for everyone, perhaps God's love is in the hard work of staying inside.



Justice and International Mission JIM Unit have spoken with a coalition of community organisations that are looking to do a community building project, setting a new vision for the community, in the western suburbs of Melbourne and Geelong. For example, one of the projects they might look at is working to get **Green Hydrogen Production** to happen in the area as other industry shuts down. They are employing a community organiser to run the project for three years. They would be interested in connecting with Uniting Church congregations that might have an interest in being involved. Contact: Mark Zirnsack Mark.Zirnsack@victas.uca.org.au JIM or Godfrey Moase community organiser godfrey.moase@unitedworkers.org.au.

End Gambling Ads on TV: SBS SBS has played an important role in community TV for more than 40 years. But right now they're putting revenue ahead of community safety by broadcasting dangerous and addictive gambling ads. They've strayed from their core values and we need to get them back on track. We know 91% of SBS viewers nationwide hate gambling ads and want to see an immediate end to them. Send an email to key members of the SBS Board and it's managing director and tell them why SBS needs to #EndGamblingAds! [Click here to join the campaign](#)

Essential Safety Measures (ESM's) Conversations


Wednesday - 1 September 2021 at 2.00pm & Thursday - 2 September 2021 at 7.00pm










Victorian State Government legislation has over recent years progressively tightened the regulatory environment that applies to the use of non-residential buildings. The UCA is obliged to adhere to the legislative changes in this increasingly complex area. Presbytery and Synod is aware of the challenges this presents to congregations and other Responsible Bodies. Through its governance committees, Presbytery and Synod is conscious of the need to assist church bodies in understanding the obligations, and to provide help in the form of information and contractor support for the activities that must be undertaken.

Actions are required whether the building is occupied or unoccupied. Fines and prosecutions (for those directly responsible for management and maintenance of the building) can result from non-compliance as ESM's must be in place to protect persons from injury or death in an emergency.

The Presbytery is inviting your congregation to join with us in a Zoom meeting to talk about ESM's. We have prepared some easy to follow documentation that will step you through the process. Multiple representatives from congregations welcome. The Zoom link for the meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/4481763297>



Education Events

20th August 9:30—12:30 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 1 In-person at Hoppers Crossing UC & ...	
26th August	Pre-Ordination Retreat Please Pray for... PWV Lyall Reid held at Bev Pratt Chaplaincy Centre Contact Trevor Bassett if you plan to attend.	
26th August 6—9 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 2	
21st August	PWV Presbytery Meeting Zoom	 
3rd September 9:30—12:30 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 2	
3rd - 5th September	Sacred Edge—CANCELLED Reluctantly Ticket holders can keep ticket for future event, be refunded, donate.	
5th - 8th September	Joint Presbytery Retreat—POSTPONED Possibly Nov or Feb? Money will be refunded.	
Sept 14th 6—9 pm	Pastoral Care Seminar 1	
12th October	PWV Code of Ethics / Ethical Ministry Refresher Save the date	

Share Sunday Appeal - All are Welcome.

Support those struggling to manage their mental health.

[Donate now →](#)



Uniting

Share Sunday

This year, the focus of the Share Sunday resources is **mental health**, around the theme of 'All are welcome'. Uniting has just released the 2021 resources for a full worship service. These include: A sample service outline, including a liturgy, reflection and suggested hymns, PowerPoint presentation, Stories of people supported by the Church's faithful generosity. The resources are available to view and download from the Uniting Vic.Tas. website at: [2021 Share Sunday Worship Resources](#). May the resources help the congregations, parish missions and faith communities in your presbytery to reflect theologically on mental health in your communities and the great work we do as we partner together across the Church. **Rev. John Clarke—Uniting Director for Mission**