



CHRISTMAS STORY TRAIL

Rev Angie Griffin Grange Cluster Congregations (Hamilton)

Advent 2020, Hamilton Uniting Church picked up on an idea from the Advent Huddles offered by Chris Barnett. We called this the **CHRISTMAS STORY TRAIL** as a way of the community joining in a fun activity leading up to the Christmas season.

The CHRISTMAS STORY TRAIL gave a chance to learn about the Christmas story and to remember what Christmas is about – **the ‘good news’ of Jesus birth**. Using two local venues we provided ‘colouring in sheets with 4 ‘fill in the blanks’ lines of the Christmas story’ per week of Advent. The sheets had space for children to draw a picture based on the 4 line words. The finished works would be displayed publicly with the display window filling in week by week.

At each week’s Church service mention was made of the activity with a screen shot of the story lines to build the story. Below is the format we used..

- Week 1 Joseph and M - - - ; Travelled on a D - - - - - ;
To the town of B - - - - - ; But here was no room at the I - -
- Week 2 They were given a place in the S - - - - - ;
Their baby was born and laid in a M - - - - - ; Surrounded by all the A - - - - -
They called the baby J - - - -
- Week 3 A song was sung by A - - - - - in the sky
The song was heard by S - - - - - in the fields
They went to see the baby J - - - - - ; They told others the G - - - News
- Week 4 In the far E - - - ; The M - - - travelled to find the child; A S - - - led the way
They gave gifts of frankincense, myrrh and G - - -.

Unfortunately the community uptake (due to COVID) was poor, which was disappointing. However, I would say the concept has merit and with greater access to schools and other venues, it would be worth running with or adapting the idea. Rev. Linley Liersch adds: “Mission outreach like this often have to planned for a few years in a row to build up support.”

ADVENT-ure

Ordination of Lyall Reid

Rev. Trevor Bassett (PWV PM)



On Saturday October 16th it was a great joy for the Presbytery of Western Victoria to celebrate the Ordination of Lyall Reid at Ballarat Central UC. Lyall came to the Presbytery as an approved candidate from NSW in 2018. Lyall is an officer in the Australian Navy and his path in ministry will see him take up Chaplaincy in the Navy.

It has been an interesting process for PWV and for the synod to have a candidate on Lyall's journey. As a candidate Lyall has been sponsored by the Navy and as such it has been a slightly different path to Ordination as he answers to both the church and the Navy. Now that Lyall is Ordained, he is offering ministry in a 2 year placement, also primarily funded by the Navy, prior to resuming his role in the Navy as a Chaplain.

The ordinand makes a brief statement on his faith and call to ministry. People surround Lyall and lay hands on his head.

The Ordination service, like everything else in Lyall's journey to Ordination, was different. In a Covid world, it was a Covid safe ordination. Fortunately, in Ballarat, we were able to have a congregation of 20 plus leaders. The service was also streamed, so a larger congregation was able to tune in. Due to Navy Chaplain Andrew Watters being in NSW, his contribution as one of the scripture readers, came over the phone. The preacher for the service, Rev Professor Stephen Burns, was also restricted to Melbourne and not able to be present in person. The sermon was presented as an epistle from Stephen read to the congregation in Ballarat by Rev Dr Graham Sutton.



Rev. David Carter (PWV Chairperson) places the stole on Rev. Lyall Reid. The stole is the symbol of being yoked to Christ.



Lyall is greeted by the Ballarat Ministry Team & Chaplaincy.

All things considered it was a great service, followed by a Covid safe afternoon tea.

Lyall has now commenced in his Placement, half time with Ballarat Regional Health Care Chaplaincy and half time with Ballarat Central UC. We are pleased to have shared in this special occasion with Lyall and ask God's blessing to be upon him in his ministry.



Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

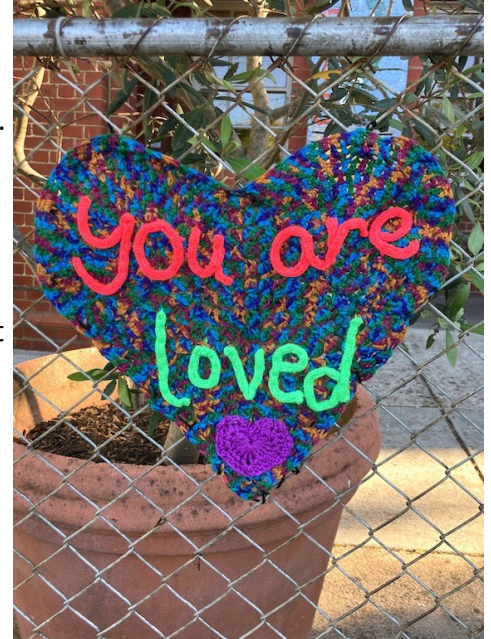
Hope has a habit of breaking into our lives when we least expect it, often when we are in what feels like utter despair.

“This too will pass” is a saying that my husband and I have used often. I like it because it doesn’t promise that things will get better, only that there will be change. And in change there is always the **seed of Hope**.

During a particularly difficult time for our family, I remember thinking: “If this is how life’s going to be, I just can’t do it anymore”. It felt like my darkest hour, a time when I couldn’t see past the vast challenges we were facing as our son negotiated the world with significant disability.

And then, almost overnight, things changed. We changed. Which doesn’t mean we avoided future challenges or hardship, or that change is always for the better, but there is this **fact: things always change**.

As we head towards Advent this year, we are constantly reminded of how much has changed and been lost. **And yet Hope is at the very heart of our Advent story, divine Hope embodied in a vulnerable child born in the image of God. Hope that prevails. Amen.**



Advent: Something is Coming!

NEW Resource *Something is Coming!* is a fresh way to engage households, small groups and whole communities throughout Advent. This new, FREE resource encourages us to pray, reflect, grieve and rejoice as we draw nearer to Christmas. Available as a downloadable resource, *Something is Coming!* includes beautiful printable characters to use in making your own Nativity scene *and* ideas for fostering engagement amongst those you gather with. May *Something is Coming!* be a special part of your Advent 2021 experience!

Check out and download Advent: Something is Coming! for FREE here: [Advent: Something is Coming!](#)



Safe Church Training

Thursday 18 November 2021
2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

For those who need to do training by end of 2021.

The Trybooking link is: <https://www.trybooking.com/BUTLE>



Surf Coast UCA—Breath Prayer Cards
Sets of scenic photos on a key-ring that have prayers you can ‘breathe’. Cost: \$15-
robyn.harper@bigpond.com

Grief and Loss seminars

Will be offered for either a morning or an evening session **Wed evenings** or **Friday mornings**.

Grief and Loss Seminar 1 – Understanding the Stages of Grief

17 Nov - Wed evening, 7-9:30pm, or 19 Nov - Friday morning, 10am -12:30pm

Grief and Loss Seminar 2 – Understanding the Different Types of Grief and Loss

1 Dec - Wed evening, 7-9:30pm, or 3 Dec - Friday morning, 10am -12:30pm

To register for any of these sessions, please go to Trybooking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>



Road Trauma Memorial Ceremony - 21 Nov 2021, 10:30am.

World Remembrance Day for Road Crash Victims

In person at “**Solace**” Victoria’s Road Trauma Memorial, in Geelong. (Hearne Pde, Eastern Beach.)
The local Uniting Churches are inviting you to a short time of reflection, remembering and prayer for those, who, as a result of road crashes: Have **lost their loved ones**. (You are invited bring a photo to display if you wish) **Continue to suffer** the effects of road trauma, and those who **care for them**. Have **witnessed road trauma** and continue to be weighed down by the saddens. Your gathering will be joining so many others around the globe as its World Remembrance Day for Road Crash Victims.

Note: This service is being run on the same day as the Victorian Road Trauma Support Services “**Time for Remembering**” state-wide ceremony to be livestreamed over zoom at 12 noon. If you would like to register to watch this service, please go to: <https://rtssv.org.au/time-for-remembering/>



Synod
2021

Synod 2021 Virtual Tributes Service

Saturday 20 November at 2.00pm.

Livestreamed on the Synod website.

We give thanks for the life and service of Ministers...

Rev. Albert Bell, Rev. Alexander (Alec) Hillard,

Rev. Boyd Granzow, Rev. Dr. Max Champion



Congratulations

Rev. Bob Ower, Rev. John Furness and Rev. David Volk
50 years of Ordained Ministry

Messy Church Matters



Rev. Linley Liersch (PPW PeM) & Chris Barnett (eLM)

Messy Church Matters met this week to talk through issues that are important for Messy Church Leaders.

When and how do you plan to start Messy Church again? All attending were starting back in December and were planning an outside Messy Church (MC).

What might an outside Messy church involve? Food would be BBQ, Fish and Chips or picnics. Picnic rugs would be set up on the ground in advance to help with social distancing. In Intercultural Messy Church groups migrant men might be asked to help cook the BBQ as a rite of passage to Australian living. Outdoor nativity scene could be set up in different locations outside e.g. shepherds sheep and angels; wise men; Mary and Joseph and baby Jesus... families could seek out the nativity story.

What can we do outside (that we can not do indoors)? Waterslides, water games, ball games. Decorate trees with Christmas lights, tinsel, stars. Put up outdoor nativity sets and then take photos of families in the scene—last year Werribee UCA put a QR code to their nativity scene to link them to their facebook page so photos could be posted. Quoits, beanbag games. Painting Christmas banner. Line dancing. Singing carols. Treasure hunts e.g. Find the stars, sheep donkeys.

What if you ran Messy Church in January this year? Usually Messy Church is ran alongside the school year and by summer families want some quiet time. After lockdown families may feel as though they have had their quiet time and are looking for fun and engaging activities to do together. (Rather than starting MC in December, stopping and starting again in Feb). **What if we offered a Messy Adventure?** To the Werribee zoo. To the beach for cricket, sand castles and surf. To parks, sanctuaries and lakes and have lotto sheets of birds, ducks, animals and plants for the children to find; find leaves of every kind. Plan a low key event where the MC leaders can be participants and join in the fun. Just remember to pack the picnic blankets, b.y.o picnic basket, aerogard, sunblock, spare hats, water and sanitiser.

COVID questions: If we have mixed vaccination groups how much can we do? It is believed that by the end of November most of the current 'number/ratio/sqm restrictions' may well be lifted. Outdoor events might be the short term answer. **What if the children are not vaccinated?** At this stage it is not anticipated that children have to be vaccinated. Many schools are taking up vaccinations too. Outdoor events might be the short term answer. Keep an eye on the Synod FAQ's [COVID – Presbytery of Port Phillip West \(ucappw.org.au\)](https://www.ucsppw.org.au/covid).

How are you encouraging Faith @ home? We often put a lot of focus on gathering families together. But how can they take part of the story of MC home with them? E.g. grace cubes and prayer stars. What could they gather up at home in preparation for the next MC? E.g. bring a stuffed toy to be part of the nativity scene. How can the gathered events also serve the wider community? e.g. Cloutie tree



St. John's Essendon UCA Cloutie tree (also Cloutie or Cloughtie from Celtic traditions), Cloutie Springs or Wells are places of pilgrimage in Celtic areas. They often have trees growing alongside them where strips of cloth or rags are tied to the branches as part of a healing ritual, at times of loss, concerning a need, or a hope for the future. St. John's people wrote prayers on strips of cloth and tied them to trees at the front of the church. A large real estate board was set up inviting members of the community to add their own prayers. A peg bag on one of the trees had spare strips of cloth for people to add their own prayers.



Education Events

12th Nov
10 am – 2 pm

Sacraments Training – Replacement Session (Geelong Reg
Expression of Interest. Please contact Jeanne 0432284279.



13th Nov
9:30 am - 1pm

PPW Presbytery in Council



17th Nov
7:00 - 9:30pm

Grief and Loss Seminar 1 – Stages of Grief

Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>

17th Nov

Preparing for Advent

Book a time that suits you [2021 Preparing for Advent](#)

18 Nov
2:00 - 4:30 pm

Safe Church Training

Booking link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BUTLE>

19th Nov
10 - 12:30pm

Grief and Loss Seminar 1 – Stages of Grief

Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>

20th Nov
9:30 am - 3pm

PWV Presbytery in Council

50 yrs ordination



20th Nov
2 pm

Synod Tribute Service



21st Nov 2021
10:30 am

Road Trauma Memorial Ceremony (Geelong Memorial)

Hearne Pde, Eastern Beach

24th Nov

Preparing for Advent

Book a time that suits you [2021 Preparing for Advent](#)

1st Dec
7:00 - 9:30pm

Grief and Loss Seminar 2 – Different Types of Grief and Loss

Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>

3rd Dec
10 - 12:30pm

Grief and Loss Seminar 2 – Different Types of Grief and Loss

Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>

8th Dec

PWV Dreaming - On the Winds of Change

Stawell UCA

