

Reflecting on 'Synod intercultural Forum 2021'

Rev Jeanne Beale (Deacon) PPW Presbytery Minister

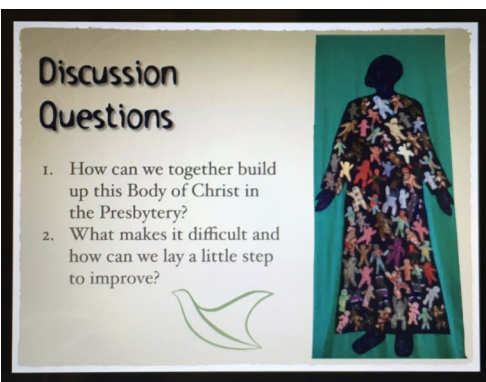
Just as the previous day's Gondwana Country event invited people to take time to do the "yarning" with our indigenous brothers and sisters, so to, our vast and many cultures that have come to make Australia home. The invitation is simply to be listened to and engaged with and live "in relationship" with each other; taking the time to get to know and understand the other.

As a "White Anglo", it is tricky for me to write this reflection; several of our representatives from other cultures were invited to do so, but as it is often the case, demand on their time as spokespeople for the minority is spread far and wide, and thus I have been invited to bring this reflection. I do sit comfortably in the intercultural space having been a migrant and enjoy a substantial variety of cultures within my family, however, English is my first language, and I am aware of the privilege that this offers me in Australian society.

Rev Dr Jong Soo Park (SIF Chairperson) opened the proceeding by inviting us to create an **intercultural "brave space"**.

Our Moderator: Rev Denise Liersch, offered a devotion that held within it the invitation to change the understanding of intercultural to an "all church being"; not just for those from 'other' cultures – **all of us together**.

Rev Dev Anandarajan (Intercultural Leadership Development Coordinator) presented a challenge for all leaders in the UCA to achieve Intercultural Competencies – Intercultural training is for all of us in the UCA. We spent some time in breakout rooms to talk about the last Synod meeting: discussing what we valued most, what we might like to see continued and what might be a new area/emphasis to help deepen our intercultural journey together.



Rev Ikani Vaitohi (Chairperson of the Synod Ministry and Mission Committee) shared a diagram outlining the Governance of the Synod-based Ministries and Operations and where SIF fits within the overview of Synod.

The final speaker was Rev Hoon You (Presbytery Minister-Mission Development – Tasmania) who shared his understanding of how SIF relates to Presbyteries. Hoon spoke of the Presbytery of Tasmania, where there are no specific ethnical congregations (as there are in Victoria), he offers the understanding of Intercultural as resembling colourful parts of the body of Christ.

My take home this year: is to encourage every member of the UCA, when you hear the term "Intercultural" to hear yourself as included. We are, after all, all integral parts of the body of Christ.

Synod Intercultural Forum 2021

The Inn-keeper of Jericho

Rev. Philip Liebelt [UCA Minister, Immortalised by Ingram Spark, 2021]

Book Review by Carol Sykes (Warrnambool Uniting Church)

When I was studying the craft of writing at school, we focused on developing the setting, characters, plot and theme, as well as considering our audience. The stories in the Bible often leave us wondering about the details we aren't given and are left to imagine. Many of the characters are named in a generic rather than personal way, such as 'the inn-keeper' and 'the woman at the well'.

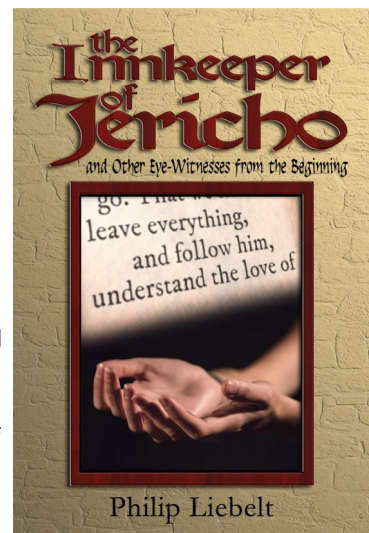
In this collection of eye-witness stories from the New Testament, Philip brings to life some of those characters, giving them a greater sense of immediacy and providing insights into their world, their thoughts and their emotions. Sometimes, Philip weaves together strands from different stories to give us a more complete picture, whilst staying true to the essence of the original ones.

These stories have been designed for oral presentation. Oral story-telling adds a different dimension to reading for ourselves and, in our listening and watching, we can find new perspectives. We are also drawn into the story as the teller engages directly with us or asks questions to prompt our thinking.

The lead story in this collection tells the "Good Samaritan" story through the eyes of the Innkeeper at Jericho, whilst "Zacchaeus: the Backstory" gives an insight into why someone might have chosen to be a tax collector and how that impacted on his life. The humour of the "Former Apprentice Devil" sheds a different light on the temptations Jesus faced. In the story of "Philip's Nephew's Lunch", we hear how a mother might have reacted to her son telling what she thought were untruths about the feeding of the multitude. There is a sense of real people here and we can relate to their emotions and, in some ways, to their experiences. In the story of "Jairus", we see the man behind his official status and hear his view of the woman who touched Jesus - in a way that adds to our understanding.

The interactions between characters who have seemingly minor or fleeting roles in the Bible stories is quite fascinating. There is also a challenge for us to take something from these stories into our own lives and faith discoveries.

Available from philipliebelt@gmail.com for \$15 plus p & h. Or from online booksellers.



Preparing for Advent

Wednesdays Nov 10, 17, 24

Looking for Advent ideas? Keen to be a bit more creative this Advent season? If so, this FREE 3-session *Preparing for Advent* series is for you! Suitable for *anyone* – including, but not limited to, ministers, pastors and lay preachers - multiple sessions of one hour in duration will be offered each day (Nov 10, 17, 24). To register your interest and indicate your preferred timeslots, go to [2021 Preparing for Advent](#). For more information e-mail chris.barnett@victas.uca.org.au.



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!](#)



Grief and Loss seminars

Lockdown has been hard! After nearly two years of unrest, and a constant shifting of the goal posts, many of us will have unresolved grief and loss issues that have been 'on-hold' during the lockdown, and others may be somewhat ambivalent about the security of the roadmap ahead and the continuing presence of Covid cases.

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West is offering two on-line seminars that seek to offer an opportunity to name the grief and loss impact that Covid-19 (and the lockdowns) have had on each of us, as well as provide a pathway for dealing with our unresolved concerns. Each session will be 2 ½ hours in length and 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.) It is great artwork sponsored by the UCA. 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.

This ceremony will offer attendees the opportunity to celebrate the lives of those who have died and give thanks for those who survived. Included in this ceremony will be a time to offer gratitude and thanks to emergency service providers and health and healing services. All welcome (Restriction limits permitting).

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/>

Safe Church Training

For those who have commenced working/volunteering with the Uniting Church 2020/21 and have not done this training before. Online zoom session

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>

Note: A NEW national child safe training program in the new year, all leaders will be required to attend.



What if COVID changes the Church?

Rev. Linley Liersch (PPW Mission Development Strategist & Education)

It may seem that our church is dying...

What if our Church will never be the same again?

What if we no longer have the strength to serve as we did before?

What if when we return we can't face the church rosters?

What if we can no longer travel outside on a cold winter night for meetings?

What if, as a church, we cannot sustain mission, outreach and hospitality any longer?

What if we don't have the energy to save the old cocoon of traditional church, with all its structures and large leadership demands?

And the old ways of doing things need to be let go of...

What if new ways of being church are being born?

What if we let go of the old ways of doing things... and instead chose ways of joyfully serving ?

What if we stopped forcing people to come into church and instead worshipped in the midst of people?

What if instead of catering fellowship group at the church ...

we took the church to the café and supported the local business post-COVID ?

What if we gave up all the mission programs we run ... and instead told our neighbour why we believe in God and why God is so important to me? And let that story sit with them in the depths of all they are experiencing.


What if we no longer went out for meetings at night but zoomed each other?

What if we continued on-line worship as a meaningful cornerstone to our faith?

What if we sold our buildings that burden us and were a people of faith in our community?

What if we forgot the words to Holy communion liturgy and broke bread at the pub and gave thanks to God!

What if this new way of doing church was lighter, simpler, and more joyful!



PRESBYTERY
OF **PORT
PHILLIP
WEST**

Website: [Presbytery of Port Phillip West \(ucappw.org.au\)](https://ucappw.org.au) has been up dated with Essential Safety Measures. Also COVID Update links to Synod.



Website: <https://victas.uca.org.au/churches-faith/presbyteries/western-victoria/>
PWV Policy documents are available.



Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

Building genuine relationships can be awkward when we're challenged by new perspectives and boundaries. Stepping out of our comfort zones is confronting, even as we know that it's at these growing edges that our lives become enriched.

I had a good taste this kind of discomfort when I first met patients in the palliative care ward. It was a very different experience from being with people living with mental illness and disability, and I wasn't prepared.

My first interaction with a dying man who was alert and angry, struggling with pain and a weak body that would occasionally spasm uncontrollably, was at its best messy. I struggled and squirmed as I searched for the "right words" to say. By the time I left his room I'd decided I was a hopeless pastoral care practitioner and that I should never work with palliative care patients again!

I didn't give myself any room to be a beginner, to be "new", and to learn from the discomfort I felt when entering a relationship with one who experiences the world so very differently to me.

To be humbled and awed by the invitation to simply be present. To witness. To love. To be blessed.



Pop-up Vaccination Hub at Crossroads Church Werribee by Neil Tolliday 9 October 2021

On Wednesday, September 1, Crossroads Uniting Church Werribee was the venue for a pop-up Covid Vaccination Clinic. Clients of the housing workers at Uniting Wyndham came, together with a large contingent of Samoan and Tongan people, encouraged by an Islander Church Pastor, who was there to greet his people.

Rev Annetia Goldsmith says: "I was there to observe the steady stream of people attending during the day. This was organized by the State of Victoria through IPC Health. Being aware that vulnerable clients are needing to be vaccinated, they asked Uniting to accommodate a pop-up clinic."

"I feel that we at Crossroads are able to serve our calling to be hospitable. Even though we can't meet as a congregation, it's really good that our buildings can be used for God's purpose," says Annetia.

Deb Gorsuch, Housing Support Worker at Uniting Wyndham said: "It was a good day's service to the community. Overall it was successful. IPC Health had two nurses, who were kept busy. IPC Health will be back for a second dose."

On Wednesday 13 October, the Pop-up Vaccination Clinic at Crossroads UC Werribee will administer second dose vaccination, following up the successful program on September 1.





Education Events

- 3rd Nov **Navigating the Landscape: Building Intercultural Communities**
9:30 am—5 pm
- 10th Nov **Preparing for Advent**
Book a time that suits you [2021 Preparing for Advent](#)
- 12th Nov **Sacraments Training – Replacement Session (Geelong Region)**
10 am –2 pm
Expression of Interest. Please contact Jeanne 0432284279.
- 17th Nov **Grief and Loss Seminar 1 – Stages of Grief**
7:00 - 9:30pm
Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>
- 17th Nov **Preparing for Advent**
Book a time that suits you [2021 Preparing for Advent](#)
- 18 Nov **Safe Church Training**
2:00 - 4:30 pm
Booking link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BUTLE>
- 19th Nov **Grief and Loss Seminar 1 – Stages of Grief**
10 - 12:30pm
Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>
- 21st Nov 2021 **Road Trauma Memorial Ceremony (Geelong Memorial)**
10:30 am
Hearne Pde, Eastern Beach
- 24th Nov **Preparing for Advent**
Book a time that suits you [2021 Preparing for Advent](#)
- 1st Dec **Grief and Loss Seminar 2 – Different Types of Grief and Loss**
7:00 - 9:30pm
Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>
- 3rd Dec **Grief and Loss Seminar 2 – Different Types of Grief and Loss**
10 - 12:30pm
Booking site: <https://www.trybooking.com/BVCAP>



Worker vaccination records required

ALL VICTORIA: As of this Friday (October 15), it is mandatory to gather and record vaccination status information on any person working anywhere other than from their own residence. This applies to all paid staff and volunteers, including those holding worship in-person or virtual (digital). What do you need to do? What proof is required? How is this to be recorded? With only days to act, it is imperative you act now to ensure you are legally compliant.