

# The Westerly



PWV& PPW Newsletter No.25 – 17th February 2022



## Facing the Unknown

**Angie Griffin [Minister, Hamilton - Grange Cluster – Leaving the patch!]**

Beginnings always have a mix of emotions including excitement, anticipation and uncertainty. Then the learning begins yet again on this new path shared with new people and new ways. Inevitably there comes the time for Endings - leaving, moving on and away from what has now become familiar and comfortable. Here too there is a mix of emotions – sadness, not wanting to let go and uncertainty of what will lie ahead.

A quote I came across recently, source unknown, reads:  
*Nothing holds greater power in our life than the Unknown. Whether big or small, the Unknown beckons us to move forward, explore new ways of behaviour and living, touch Life at new points, connect with the ground of our Being. The Unknown pulls us towards new life experiences, new knowledge and new human relationships – a renewed and revitalized life.*

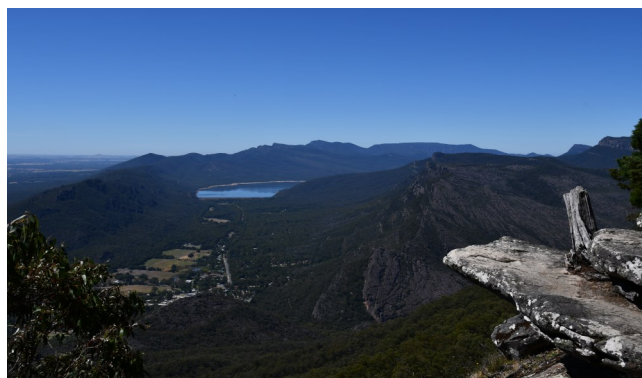
I encourage everyone, as individuals and communities to 'move forward with faith, hope and trust, wherever the Unknown beckons you; step out of comfort zones and be ready to explore new ways, touch life at new points.'

Therefore, I pray that you will move forward knowing fully and deeply that **'God has not given you a spirit of fear but one of power, love and sound judgment.'** (2 Tim 1:7)

I offer you this quote from Wendell Berry which I have held onto since a retreat I attended some 8 years ago:

*We travellers, walking to the sun, can't see ahead, but looking back the very light that blinded us shows us the way we came, along which blessings now appear, risen as if from sightlessness to sight and we, by blessing brightly lit, keep going toward that blessed light that yet to us is dark.*

**John 12:46 I have come as Light into the world, so that everyone who believes in Me will not remain in darkness.**



**Every Great move forward in your life begins with a leap of faith, a step into the unknown.**

The World Needs Prayer

# World Day of Prayer for England, Wales & Northern Ireland.

World Day of Prayer International Committee



**THEME:** The World Day of Prayer theme is **"I Know the Plans I have for you".**

**ARTWORK:** by Angie Fox of Norfolk following the theme given, she used several images to depict the key words as follows: Freedom: an open door to a pathway across an endless open vista; Justice: broken chains; God's Peace and Forgiveness: the dove of peace and a peace lily breaking through the pavement; Over all, a rainbow which has come to represent all these things from the story of Noah through to the modern day. It is a symbol of the overreaching love of God.



**England, Wales and Northern Ireland are three parts of the United Kingdom (UK), within the group of islands known as the British Isles.**

**PEOPLE:** Although there is much that we share, we are also diverse, with different languages, cultures and governments. We have a population of 70 million people.

**DIVERSITY:** Diversity is now a way of life in our towns and cities. Whilst there are some wary of immigration, most of us who are second and third generation immigrants feel ourselves to be well-integrated and sometimes struggle when asked, 'Where do you come from?'

**POVERTY:** A 2018 United Nations report described the levels of poverty in Britain as unacceptable, with 14 million people in the UK found to be living below the poverty line.

**RELIGION:** Many of our cities have beautiful ancient buildings, dating back to medieval times, including cathedrals and churches built by our Christian ancestors. Today We have rich cultures in multi-ethnic communities. Bevis Marks synagogue in the East End dates back to 1701; Woking, in Surrey, is the home of England's first mosque, built in 1889 by a Hungarian immigrant; Neasden's Hindu Temple occupies a huge site in North West London. There is a building in London's Brick Lane that has been a Methodist chapel, a Huguenot church and a synagogue, and is now a mosque. There have also been huge shifts in terms of religious observance. Like much of Western Europe, the general picture in terms of church attendance in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is one of decline, particularly in the mainstream denominations. Yet despite this, the church is often at the forefront of projects to help those in need, such as food banks, homeless shelters and work among refugees. The church, too, has been reinvigorated by recent immigration.

**WOMEN:** Even though, we celebrated the progress women have made in our society, we still struggle to combat violence in our homes, improve the lives of those living in poverty and support those with disabilities, physical, mental and emotional.

**HEALTH:** In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared that a viral disease named as COVID-19 had swept into at least 114 countries and killed more than 4,000 people. It was then declared a pandemic caused by a coronavirus. The outbreak reached the UK, and as most people the world over, the inhabitants of the UK lived in social isolation to slow the transmission of COVID-19.

**Currently, WDP National Committee includes 18 different Christian denominations. We allocate over 40 grants to national and international charities.**



# Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)



I'm often asked if I can pray for people, especially in the psychiatric wards. And it's often the people I least expect to ask who do. Those who've shown no interest in religion and have only bad things to say about the Church.

It usually happens as our encounter is coming to an end. A person leans forward, sometimes reaching out to touch my arm, and with pleading eyes will ask: "Can you pray for me, please?"

Of course, it's an honour to be asked to pray for someone, but sometimes I also feel a bit uncomfortable. I can't help wondering: does this person think that my prayer will somehow bring a miraculous recovery?

I've come to realise over time that sometimes people long, more than anything, to be thought of. Those words that can sound so trite coming from a politician, "in my thoughts and prayers", can mean the world to someone living with extreme isolation or loneliness.

John Wesley famously said: "Prayer is where the action is". For some, having someone offer an open heart to their suffering, a shoulder for their burden and their Selves in prayer feels nothing short of a miracle.

**God's love in action.**



## East Coast Flood Appeal

Dear friends,

I am calling for support from across Victoria and Tasmania to join in a national appeal for communities affected by record-breaking floods across the east coast of Australia.

**The national appeal has been launched by Uniting Church in Australia President, Rev Sharon Hollis.**

<https://uniting.church/east-coast-flooding-emergency-appeal/> (Or click on picture below).

Over the last few days, thousands of people and communities have been affected by intense rains and flooding across the eastern coast of Australia. The rains continue to move south, affecting the lives and livelihoods of communities across vast areas of the east coast.

I am inviting the VicTas Uniting Church community to contribute to the National Disaster Relief Fund and to join in prayer:

***"We pray for those whose lives and livelihoods are impacted.***

***We pray for communities supporting each other.***

***We pray for emergency and relief workers giving of themselves to those most affected.***

***We pray for friends and neighbours reaching out from afar, to give support in whatever ways they can."***

Grace and Peace, Rev. Denise Liersch [VicTas Moderator]



# The Church as ~~Triumphant~~ Salt” Sally Douglas (Coventry Press 2021 , 148 pp)

Book Review by David Carter [PWV Chairperson]

One of the stories of Augustine of Hippo was that he heard a voice saying “tolle lege” (take up, and read) and it was this act of reading Romans that led to his conversion.

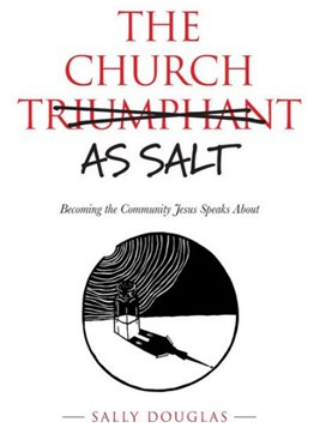
*“Without realising it, metaphors shape and create meaning for us. Dominant metaphors for the church, for more than a millennium have been large. In hymn, art and architecture the church has been imaged as triumphant .... (in what follows) we will return to investigate a metaphor that Jesus uses in the Gospels.”*

Last year, in the mist of pandemic lockdown, Rev Dr Sally Douglas (Richmond UCA) wrote this slim, compelling reflection on reimagining church communities. It comprises seven short chapters, full of content, thoughtfulness and application. Each chapter concludes with questions and prayer resources.

Her book is salted with quotes from some of the early, non-canonical, leaders of the emerging Christian communities. Sally is an engaging, and provocative theologian and her fine resource is grit and cleansing for individuals and groups exploring ancient/new church expressions.

The Presbytery of Western Victoria is being encouraged to take it up and read to help the important act of reimagining church in these post-Christendom times. *Who knows what such a listening and practicing conversation might lead to in the continuing conversion of the church?*

Highly recommended.



## Training for Church Councils 2022

*All members of church councils, paid employees, ministry agents, candidates and POD's*

- Session 1: Thursday March 17, 2022 6pm – 9pm Zoom and in person at Hoppers Crossing**  
Governance in the UCA – overview  
Congregations – purpose and responsibilities, role of elders/leaders  
Healthy Church Councils - Good Governance  
Meetings – working well together, making good decisions, roles of office bearers, consensus decision making, conflicts of interest
- Session 2 Thursday March 24, 2022 6pm – 9pm Zoom and in person at Hoppers Crossing**  
Practical issues for Church Councils - employment, finances, property, placements, mission, Relationships with Ministry Agents Presbytery, Synod, Assembly – purpose, membership responsibilities and key committees, relationships and processes with Church Councils.
- Saturday March 26, 2022 9.30am – 4pm In person only**  
**Understanding and Responding to Conflict run by Rev Terence Corkin** (Former UCA Assembly General Secretary) & Julie Kuhn Wallace (From the USA Uniting Methodist)

**Costs:** Cost for all 3 sessions PPW Individual Discount \$40 Non PPW \$90 PPW Group Rate: up to 12 people \$300 Non PPW \$750 Individual Saturday Session PPW \$30 Non PPW \$80 Individual Night Sessions PPW \$10 Non PPW \$15

**BOOKING:** Booking via Trybooking; <https://www.trybooking.com/BXHD>



# Ecological Conversion

By Richard Arnold (& From the PPW Climate Action Working Group)

The world has only this decade to limit the increase in global warming to no more than 1.5 C.

To go beyond this, even by half a degree, would lead to catastrophic droughts, floods and extreme heat (UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)).

**Faced with such a scenario, how should Christians and other people of faith respond?**

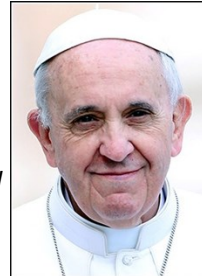
**Pope Francis** in his encyclical on ecology and climate, *Laudato Si' – On Care For Our Common Home*, quotes Benedict XVI in calling for an **“ecological conversion”**: “

*The external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.”*

*“For this reason,” Pope Francis adds, “the ecological crisis is also a summons to profound interior conversion. It must be said that some committed and prayerful Christians, with the excuse of realism and pragmatism, tend to ridicule expressions of concern for the environment. Others are passive; they choose not to change their habits... So what they all need is an ‘ecological conversion’, whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them. Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience.”*

Jesus began his public proclamation with the call "Repent!" By this he meant **turn around** or **convert** from “old ways” and turn to the way of love. The church can give leadership by calling people to a **new way of loving our environment** (by the way, we can learn much from Indigenous societies).

It is about each of us having an attitude – loving all God’s created beings in every moment and celebrating that we are all part of a glorious, inter-dependent web of life.



All Christians need an 'ecological conversion', whereby the effects of their encounter with Jesus Christ become evident in their relationship with the world around them.

— Pope Francis —

AZ QUOTES

(Extracts from “Living Water” [www.thelivingwater.com.au](http://www.thelivingwater.com.au) blog page and Roland Ashby)

## Prayer for Climate Action:

**God of life**, you call us to be participants in the web and wellspring of life:  
to be nurtured by the planet;  
to be nurturing of the planet;  
to cherish the world and all that lives.  
But we have failed and creation groans under our weight.

**God of love**, we pray for those people, communities and nations already suffering the devastating effects of climate change; and we pray for the diversity of life on earth, so much of it already threatened by our actions.

**Creator God**, we pray for us all, that we might restore our relationships with each other and work together to heal the earth.  
Renew us in your grace for the sake of your creation. **Amen.** [Extract: For full prayer [Uniting](#)

## CLIMATE CONCERN CONGRATULATIONS !

### PORTARLINGTON

2 social justice services

Hosted a musical experience called ‘Music for a warming world’

Are in conversation with the local community with respect to establishing a community garden

Recycle batteries and ink cartridges.

**A big WELL DONE to this church!**

Dear Congregations,

**PPW & PVW are both calling for nominations for VicTas Synod meeting.**

**2022 Synod on 30th June – 3rd July 2022 at Box Hill Town Hall.**

*All attendees must be fully COVID Vaccinated prior to attending the meeting.*

*Vaccination Certificates will be requested upon entry.*

Accommodations deals are offered in nearby hotels.

**Presbytery of Western Victoria** needs 8 Ordained and 8 Lay Persons

Malcolm Boadle email: [Malcolm.Boadle@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:Malcolm.Boadle@victas.uca.org.au)



**Presbytery of Port Phillip West** needs 9 Ordained and 12 Lay Persons

Heather Loader email: [Heather.Loader@ppw.victas.uca.org.au](mailto:Heather.Loader@ppw.victas.uca.org.au) {Prior Nominations already confirmed}



The meeting of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania occurs approximately every 18 months and consists of around 300 members appointed by presbyteries and reporting bodies. It meets over four days to worship, enjoy fellowship, receive reports and make decisions regarding the general oversight, direction and administration of the Church's worship, witness and service.

Skills: Mature Faith, Spiritual discernment, (emerging) leadership, familiarity with Consensus, UCA structures and meeting procedure, computer skills to access reports and view videos, ability to read large quantity of reports and remain smiling, or a willingness to give all the above ago - by the grace of God!

In the election of lay members, we are encouraged to include, where practicable, at least one third men and at least one third women. We were also asked to encourage young adults and members from a culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) background to consider nomination. Persons who have not attended previous Synod meetings are also be encouraged to nominate.

# Education Events

March 8th  
5:30 - 7:30pm

## Discipleship Learning Community - **STARTING**

TUESDAY AFTERNOONS March—June EXPLORONG WORSHIP in the UCA.

Forms: <https://ucappw.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/DLC-brochure-for-2022.pdf>



March 11th - 14th

**Uniting Faith & Family Camp** Rego: <https://www.trybooking.com/BWMAE>

**Messy Church Camp** Forms: [docx \(ucappw.org.au\)](https://ucappw.org.au)

March 16th  
7:30pm

**Welcoming Church Catch-up** [Mat Harry & Linley Liersch]

Use same Zoom links as you did for the "Developing a Culture of Welcoming"

March 17th 2pm



March 17th, 24th  
7—9 pm

**Training for Church Councils** (Part 1 & 2 On-line & Hoppers Crossing)

<https://www.trybooking.com/BXHD> [Narelle Collas & Linley Liersch]



March 26th

**Conflict Resolution Workshops** (Part 3 In-person @ Hoppers Crossing)

Guest Speaker Rev Terence Corkin <https://www.trybooking.com/BXHD>