

The Westerly



PPW& PWV Newsletter No.33 – 9th June 2022



Knock, knock, knocking that fence down...

about worldview and faith in this National Week of Reconciliation.

Rev. Peter Greenwood (Retired Minister, Corio-Norlane UCA)



Playing in a fenced yard?

Contextual theology should begin and end with “actual beliefs”. But reading scripture, shaped by 1500 years of Western protestant and colonial ‘Christian’ tradition surely needs to be reviewed. What do I actually believe? In what ways do my beliefs influence my actions?

Indigenous theological perspectives call into question some of the foundations of colonial western thought, says Uncle Terry Le Blanc. Rainbow Spirit Elders ask ‘Have Western beliefs actually negated the Aboriginal experience and restricted indigenous Christians from interpreting the gospel of Jesus through the ‘lens of their own culture’? Has the integrity of Aboriginal identity and cultural expression been undermined and even demeaned and belittled by ‘Christianity’? asks Uncle Graham Paulson. The fences are looking high and solid in the backyard of worldviews.

What about climbing over the fence and playing with the neighbours?

Two-way understanding: means reading scripture but in a way that makes room for indigenous and non-indigenous understandings of spirit, ancestors, and sacred sites and expanding the circle so that one’s actual beliefs are shaped by real relationships.

Philip Hughes says actual beliefs are evaluated by asking: ‘Are we fighting what is evil and supporting what is good?’ The fruit says Jesus. Look at the fruit trees in the backyards.

So fighting rotten fruit looks like dealing with the effects of generational trauma, stolen children, stolen land. Suicide, violence, incarceration, kidney disease, child malnutrition, family breakdown, vulnerability to disease, addiction, a denial of (constitutional) recognition. Hierarchical understanding of leadership and individuality (monarchical) Up and down stuff!

Feeding, pruning and harvesting good fruit looks like ... Strong family, law; language, Bible Translation; land rights and land management; ceremony, sport and arts; two-way education, (eg. Nungalinga College), elders storytelling, truth-telling, reparation; voice to power, treaty, walking together. Conciliar understanding of eldership (organic). Back to the circle type stuff

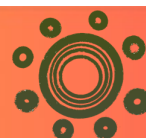
So let's knock those fences down, or at least create a gate between the backyards. There must be a Bob Dylan song about this! This makes a very big difference.

Be brave, make change. (2022 National Week of Reconciliation)



Listen Deeply

Be brave, make change



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

Introduction from Tammy Fitzgerald

Presbytery Minister Administrative Leadership & Mission Strategy. Presbytery of Western Victoria.



I commenced my placement on 1 May and am enjoying a very warm welcome from congregations and colleagues across the Presbytery and Synod. I am so encouraged by the palpable energy, compassion and commitment to serve God.

I grew up in the Uniting Church in Melbourne and was a member of the Reservoir (George St) congregation for many years. My career has included fifteen years in executive leadership roles at the University of Melbourne and Monash University and most recently four years as an executive in the Victorian Public Sector working at the Department of Justice and Community Safety, the Department of Treasury and Finance, and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions. I am delighted to have the opportunity to leverage my experience and skills to contribute to the important work of the Uniting Church, which includes ensuring we are sustainable and impactful for many years to come.



I moved to Ballarat almost two years ago and live there with my fabulous husband Lloyd and endlessly entertaining and energetic children Mason who is 13 and Grace who is 6. Our family recently expanded to include our highly spirited puppy, Miniature Groodle Ella - it's fair to say Ella has taken over our lives!

I feel blessed to have the opportunity to worship, witness and serve with you all.

I can be contacted at tammy.fitzgerald@pwv.victas.uca.org.au

How the Church's Songs Shape Us

Rev Dr D'Arcy Wood

Rev. Dr. D'Arcy Wood will introduce hymns that enrich all Christian worship. Hear invited choristers, accompanied by Bruce Macrae on grand piano **Sunday 12 June 2022 2.00pm** at Stonnington Uniting Church 57-59 Burke Road Malvern East.

The Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian musical heritage has given all churches a rich resource for community singing. Dr Wood is a leader in church music in Australia. Celebrate this free event with the Uniting Church Historical Society. Register for Zoom link option by email: ken.barelli@bigpond.com. Enquiries: Ken Barelli – Mobile 0418 317 942.



From the Editor: Rev. Linley Liersch... **Reconciliation Sunday** has passed but the reflections and learnings continue. And we look to our own local covenants with First Peoples. Presbytery eLM Ministers have been working on the **Meeting Together** workbooks for congregations, OUT NOW. Dr. Kylie Crabbe **bible studies on disability**, identity. Social exclusion and healing. Always happy to receive your stories, poems, book reviews, photos, Messy Church tips and theological reflections from across both our presbyteries. Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au.

Burnout

If you are a pastoral supervisor, spiritual director, chaplain, minister or pastoral carer, come to this experimental and reflective day. Improve your understanding of burnout and self-care, so you can better assess and support your ministry practice.

Special Guest speaker **Gordon Parker**

Author of: 'Burnout, a guide to identifying burnout and pathways to recovery'.

Professor Gordon Parker AO is Scientia Professor of Psychiatry, University of NSW. He was founder of the Black Dog Institute, and Director of the Division of Psychiatry at Prince of Wales and Prince Henry Hospitals. In 2018 he was a finalist for NSW Senior Australian of the Year. He has published 20 books and over 1000 scientific papers.

with **Marcel Koper**

Accredited Mental Health Social Worker, counsellor, supervisor and teacher.

Julie McDonald

Art therapist, counsellor and supervisor.

Joan Wright Howie

Uniting Church minister, spiritual director, pastoral supervisor and teacher.

June 24
9.30am - 4.30pm

\$205 for full day
All catering provided

\$50 For the Gordon Parker zoom segment, 10am - 12pm June 24



Register Use the code **'Thrive22'** for 15% off, available until May 27 (only on bookings for full day)

Full day: <https://www.trybooking.com/BYYSY>

2hr Zoom: <https://www.trybooking.com/BYZZW>

Venue: The Wellspring Centre 10 Y St Ashburton 3147

A peaceful location to reflect on ourselves and those we work with

A PEEK AT QUEENSLIFF UNITING CHURCH

Sue Strong (PPW Climate Action Group)

A visit to Queenscliff UC brought a warmth to my heart as I heard about what they are doing there.

QUC is a non-traditional community that meets on a Wednesday evening and emphasises contemplation, art, care of the environment and inclusion of LGBTQI folk. Their buildings are open 7 days a week as their busy op shop opens onto their chapel, and thus the church is open to the local community throughout the week.

QUC community is committed to the gospel and if they deem an issue to be important, because it fits within their values, they will work hard to ensure that it happens.

So, they have a natural bent towards climate change, care of refugees and connection with our first nation people. QUC have also worked at creating positive relationships with their federal MP, as well as the local mayor and counsellors. QUC spoke of having a profound sense of Jesus being present with people on the edge and as the earth is now on the edge, their efforts are bent towards caring for both. QUC shared that “We only care for what we are deeply connected to, so if we love the earth we will care. We need to begin with nurturing our relationships to earth and each other and then science can help.”

QUC has been on this journey for 20 years, so I asked them what advice they could offer to other communities that are just now thinking to make changes. Here are some of the ideas that were on offer:

- Have gatherings around, and be prepared to speak about, our connectedness to creation.

- Connect with the first peoples of your area.

- Get stuck into some practical endeavours (solar panels, tree planting, recycling actions, ...).

- Begin a book club that occasionally studies books about climate concerns.

- Watch the movies ‘2040’ and ‘Regenerating Australia’.

- Have an art show based on a theme (say, sustainability).

- Ensure your church uses green energy (see GreenPeace’s list.)

- Get off gas and install a battery.

- Create positive partnerships with the local community.

A final word from QUC

The need for change is urgent, but it will take time. Make sure you work with people who are passionate about our environment, excited by the work and who will be constructive. YOU CAN DO IT!

CLIMATE ACTION CONGRATULATIONS TO Western Heights UCA

Western Heights UCA (in Geelong)
with their banner front and centre
of their property.



Meeting Together



We believe that meetings can be rewarding, enjoyable and worthwhile, whether the issues that we face together are large or small. The Meeting Together workbook will assist councils, committees and groups in the Uniting Church to work more collaboratively, to understand the role of their group and leadership in the wider life of the church, and to deal with poor behaviour in meetings.

It can help to build the capacity in our members to meet and work together well, to respect and listen to one another, and to value each person's voice. It looks at the Scriptures and what we believe, the Basis of Union, the Manual for Meetings, and other resources. The booklet includes 14 short sections that can each be used to start discussion, plus resources for community building. These resources are an invitation to pause from what we do, and to have conversations about why and how we meet.

Meeting Together workbook [Downloadable](#) version & Imago Vita cards.
Launch Video available: [Meeting Together Resources Launch on Vimeo](#)

Imago Vita – Images of life

“Imago Vita” is a set of Australian photographs selected for personal and group reflection. The set is diverse and may be used for a range of purposes – community-building, story telling, identifying needs, dealing with change, discussing choices, exploring hopes, revealing strengths. There are 86 images and an activity guide providing some suggested activities for group conversation. The photo file is a 78mb PDF. We recommend getting them printed on a colour laser printer/copier (such as Officeworks), then laminating them and cutting them to size. Copyright information in the group activity guide.



Education Events

June 12th **How the Church's Song Shape Us**
Rev. Dr. Darcy Wood, Choristers & Pianist Bruce Macrae

June 19th **UCA 45th Birthday Celebrations**
@ Williamstown Uniting Church - Electra St. Rev. Dr. D'Arcy Wood

June 22nd **Messy Church Matters Chat**
1 – 3.30 pm Chris Barnett & Linley Liersch on zoom



June 24th **Burnout** @ Wellsprings Centre, Ashburton & zoom
9.30– 4.30pm Gordon Parker, Marcel Koper, Julie McDonald, Joan Wright Howie



June 30th, 1st, 4, 5, 6 July **Queer Theology Intensive @ Pilgrim College**
J Inkpen & Penny Jones [Pilgrim Theological College Handbook 2022](#)

June 30th **Synod Opening Service @ Wesley Place**

July 1st—3rd **Synod Meeting @ Box Hill Town Hall**



Synod 2022

Like Leaven in the loaf

Synod Bible Studies 2021

Discerning the Path Home
AN EXPLORATION OF THE INTERSECTIONS OF
IDENTITY, DISABILITY, SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND HEALING

Rev Dr Kylie Crabbe

Equipping Leadership for Mission | Uniting Church in Australia
UNITED BY SPIRIT AND LANGUAGE



Covenant commitment

Living the Covenant Locally is an initiative launched by the Uniting Church Assembly inviting Second Peoples to engage in learning, theological study and action to deepen our relationship with First Peoples. Second Peoples are being asked to grow our understanding of the injustices faced by Australia's First Peoples and to commit to work for a more just Church and nation.



TAKE RESPONSIBILITY



Listen Deeply



DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS



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