

The Westerly



PPW& PWV Newsletter No.35 – 21st July 2022



A Census Then and Now

Rev. John Evans (PPW Acting-Chairperson)

At the end of June, the preliminary results of the 2021 Census were released. There are now apparently 25,422,788 Australians; with 50.7% being female and 49.3% male!

Perhaps more significantly for our two presbyteries, the census revealed that only 43.9% of all of these Australians indicated that they were Christian, while the number who claimed 'no religion' rose strongly since the 2016 Census to 38.9% of the population. Christians for the first time since early colonial years (when indigenous religion would have dominated) are now again a minority in Australia. As to the Uniting Church results, I understand now only 2.7% indicate that they are associated with our church. In 2016 this figure was 3.7% and for 2011 it was 5%. Again our numbers are declining.

All this comes as no surprise as we reflect the vast changes that have been occurring in the life of congregations across our presbyteries. Certainly, the Census reveals the extent of the challenge we now have in sharing our faith in Christ across our land. However, perhaps we should not see all of this being gloom and despair. There was after all, another census 2000 years ago for the then Roman Empire. We of course don't know the results of that population count, but we do know it was not a particularly easy exercise for a young couple from Nazareth. The count was then not online, or even required a complicated form. They needed to make an arduous journey to their crowded ancestral home, Bethlehem. In the context of this adversity, both Mary and Joseph held true to the task they believed was placed upon them to have and raise a child and thereby give hope for their people.

Surely, if nothing else, our recent census, also gives to us a task (difficult though it may seem) to keep the rumour of God alive, and through our life and witness hope for our increasingly large and diverse nation.



Bruegel 'The Census at Bethlehem' 1566: detail



Rumour of God Alive

PPW Transitions:

Rev. John Evans (PPW Acting Chairperson)



The Rev Paul Blacker finished as Interim Chairperson of the Presbytery of Port Phillip West on Sunday 17 July, 2022. We thank Paul (and his congregation at Melton) for taking on this role over the last year or so. His wisdom and enthusiasm for the task has been greatly appreciated. Thank you, Paul. We hope and pray he can now enjoy a well-earned retirement as he finishes both in this role and at Melton (when the long service leave has been completed!)

The Rev Dr John Evans will be the new Interim Chairperson. John will be in the role till the end of this year – and hopefully, a new ‘permanent’ chairperson will then be appointed at the November Presbytery in Council Meeting! John is a retired Uniting Church Minister. He lives in Brunswick, and when not undertaking supply, attends the Brunswick Uniting Church. John has had over 35 years ministry experience in city, rural and institutional placements. He has been a General Secretary (in WA) and a previously a presbytery chair. He currently serves on the Presbytery’s Administration, Property and Finance Committee, and for a season was the supply Presbytery Minister Administration in in the Presbytery.

Share Sunday

Rev. John Clarke (Director of Mission)

This year the focus of the Share Sunday resources is hospitality around the theme of

‘God’s kind of hospitality’

The 2022 resources include:

A sample service outline

liturgy

reflection

hymns

PowerPoint presentation

Stories of people supported by the Church’s commitment to serve those on the margins.

The resources are available to download from the Uniting Vic.Tas.

Website at: <https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/congregations/download-share-sunday-resources-form/>



Plan a Share Sunday appeal in your congregation, faith community or school and raise money for UNITING.

Uniting

...to inspire people, enliven communities and confront injustice.

From the Editor: If you missed an Edition of The Westerly back editions are available at [Newsletters – Presbytery of Port Phillip West \(ucappw.org.au\)](#). Next Edition August 3rd. Any submission are due the Monday before publication. Always happy to receive your stories, poems, book reviews, photos, and theological reflections from across both our presbyteries. Rev Linley Liersch Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au.

Uniting Church National Historical Society

“Growing up Uniting” Book Review by Clive Jackson

Growing Up Uniting: The Proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Society Conference, ed. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Hoppers Crossing, Vic., Uniting Church National History Society, 2021).

Perfect bound, Paperback, 226 pages.

If you didn't grow up attending a Uniting Church, this book should interest you.

It should interest you even more if you did! What is special about the UCA? What is different about the church? The UCA has much to offer the Australian community today.

This book is a journey into the experiences of eighteen people who have been influenced by belonging to the UCA. These people include theology teachers, clergy, lay people, youth leaders, musicians, historians and more.

The book is the proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Society Conference held in Parramatta and online in June 2021. It is published by the Society with editors Patricia Curthoys and William Emilsen, and with a foreword by the Society's president, the Rev. Associate Professor Glen O'Brien. It was launched by President-elect of the Uniting Church Assembly, the Rev. Charissa Suli.

The conference proved to be a watershed, where its theme, 'Growing Up Uniting' combined reflections and learnings from the past, with a focus on the present, and a commitment to a more positive future. There are refreshing and encouraging discussions on intergenerational relationships, multi-cultural opportunities, education, roles such as Deacon, and the church today.

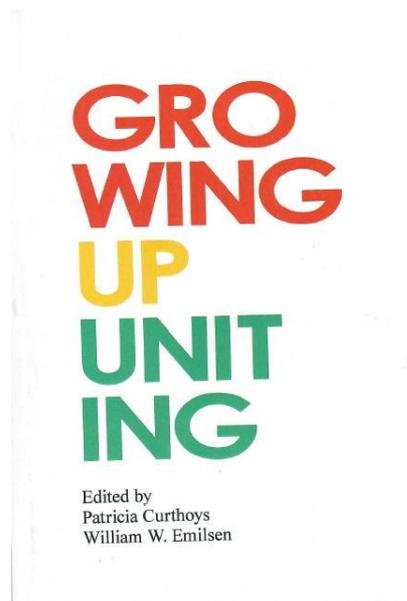
This book is recommended reading for every member and adherent of the Uniting Church so that they are more conscious of the church's influences, and more able to communicate its values to those who are starting their journey with the church, or are simply searching.

This is not a book of history. It's a book with the future in mind.

**GRO
WING
UP
UNIT
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The Proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Society Conference, are available for purchase, for \$30 (including postage) from Bob Coote, the UCNHS Treasurer. Please e-mail Bob at bandybc@gmail.com if you would like to purchase copies. Preferred payment is by direct transfer into the UCNHS Account, including 'Proceedings' and your name as the reference.

BSB: 032-828
ACCOUNT NO.: 301985
ACCOUNT NAME: Uniting Church National History Society.



A Methodist Minister in Politics: making public policy

Rev Brian Howe AO

At this second talk in a three-part series, Brian will reflect on his 19 years in politics 1977-1996. In the years of the Hawke and Keating Governments, as a cabinet minister, he was responsible for many important reforms.

Sunday 14 August 2022 at 2.00pm Free event

Church of All Nations, 180 Palmerston Street Carlton

Or register for an online link by email to: ken.barelli@bigpond.com Enquiries: Mobile 0418 317 942

VicTas Uniting Church Historical Society



Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTTCHE (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

I have a top that I only wear a few times a year - on days that celebrate Australia's First Nation's culture and peoples, or days commemorating important First Nation's events. Like many of you, I do it to increase awareness, and to be an ally.

On these days, I'm very mindful of my limited role as an ally. I don't speak for First Nations people; I simply support and draw attention to the issues and try to amplify First Nation voices where possible.

But it also reminds me of my own privilege. When I take off the top at the end of the day I can forget about "the fight" until the next date comes along. I don't live "the fight" day in and day out.

During NAIDOC week this year, I decided to make the physical act of taking off the top an act of prayer:

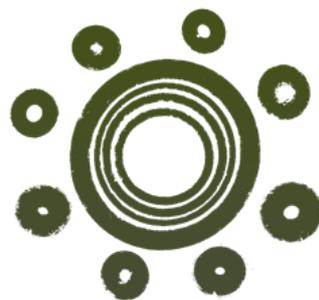
God, help me to keep my eyes open to injustice every day. May I have the courage to be the ally you call me to be, with ears to listen and a heart willing to learn.

May we, the Church, continue to get up, stand up and show up. Day after day. Amen.



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.



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

Your congregation and small
groups could visit

Narana

Uniting Church in Australia
Aboriginal Cultural Centre

410 Surf Coast Hwy, Geelong Vic



Narana
Aboriginal Cultural Centre

Is your Superannuation fuelling global warming by funding coal, oil and gas projects? Jamie Thom (PPW Climate Action Group)

Have you ever considered the carbon footprint of superannuation? The following graphic compares estimates of the carbon footprint in tCO₂e per year (tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent) for an individual with average super balance of \$32,631 (Source: *Future Super: Carbon Transparency Report 2020*) with savings that can be made by going car free or composting food waste or switching to a plant-based diet or using green energy or recycling or using a keep cup.

CARBON FOOTPRINT



Of more concern, our superannuation may be fuelling global warming by directly or indirectly funding coal, oil and gas projects. To help individuals navigate the world of finance, Sue Ennis and I from the ARRCC Divestment Working Group <https://www.arrcc.org.au/go-fossil-free> have developed a series of small group sessions covering various aspects of finance and reducing our carbon footprint in *Banking, Superannuation, Insurance, Utilities* and *Shares*. Organisations the working group has decided to engage with include Market Forces and Responsible Investment Australasia and the online sessions include short videos with representatives from both of these organisations. During these workshops we look at putting pressure on our financial institutions to divest from fossil fuels. However, we are not financial advisors and participants are encouraged to seek their own independent financial advice.

Come share, learn and discuss what actions we can take by attending one of these **free 90 minute** multi faith online interactive workshops about **SUPERANNUATION** on **Thursday 11th August 2022** either at 12 NOON - 1:30 PM AEST or at 7:30 PM - 9:00 PM AEST.

Please register **prior** to the online session that you wish to attend using the following link: <https://www.trybooking.com/BTMLM>. Comments from some of the participants in these sessions.

“I looked into one of my super funds ... and found it rates very badly in terms of fossil fuel investment. I am now thinking about what to do about it”

“I was not aware which banks were funding fossil fuel companies”

“Found videos [made for these workshops] very helpful.”



**CLIMATE ACTION CONGRATULATIONS to ... AIREYS INLET Uniting Church
for their stance on climate action!**



**PPPW AND PWV PRESBYTERIES
COMBINED**

MINISTERS RETREAT

Registrations are now open

<https://www.trybooking.com/CACRB>

Sunday Sept 4 - Wednesday Sept 7
2022

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 **Church 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

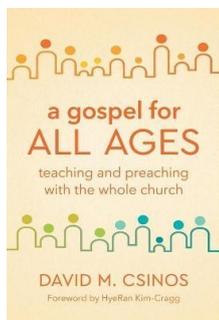
“Imago Vita” is a set of Australian photographs selected for personal and group reflection. The set is diverse and may be used for a range of purposes – community-building, story telling, identifying needs, dealing with change, discussing choices, exploring hopes, revealing strengths. There are 86 images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



August Education Events

- July 26th** **Ethical Ministry Refresher (Code of Ethics) Session 1 2022**
10—1 Hopper's Crossing UC <https://www.trybooking.com/CAMUF> 
- July 28th** **Ethical Ministry Refresher (Code of Ethics) LAST Session 1 2022**
6.30—9.30pm Zoom <https://www.trybooking.com/CAMTP>  
- August 6** **Worship Leader Training @ Glen Waverley UCA**
10am-3pm  
- August 13th** **PPW Presbytery in Council** 
- August 19th** **PWV Presbytery at Norval Campsite**
& 20th 
- Sept 4th - 7th** **PPW & PWV Minister's Retreat—Book NOW**
Norval, Halls Gap  

Zoom Book Huddles



Interested in engaging further with the NEW [A Gospel for All Ages: teaching and preaching with the whole church](#) book by Rev. Dr. David Csinos? Why not express your interest in being part of a Zoom Huddle! For *those who preach* (regularly or occasionally), *those involved in worship leadership* (regularly or occasionally) and *those interested in influencing a more intergenerational approach to worship*, each Huddle will meet for one hour fortnightly over three sessions (commencing late August). Huddles will provide the opportunity to gather with peers in order to both *engage the theoretical* and *explore actual implementation* of the book content for your own context. Click here to express your interest – [A Gospel for All Ages: Huddles](#) or e-mail chris.barnett@victas.uca.org.au for more information.

Worship Leader Training Day

Saturday 6 August, 10am-3pm

Glen Waverley UC

Hosted by Port Phillip East Presbytery

We have an excellent Worship Leader Training Day coming up on Saturday 6 August.

The keynote input will be on the book of Jeremiah which features in the Lectionary from mid-August. Rev Dr Monica Melanchthon from Pilgrim Theological College will be the speaker. There are 10 electives including the Season of Creation, Intergenerational Worship, Sing a New Song, Writing Prayers or Worship, Messing Church, and more. Elective leaders include Alex Sangster, Anneke Oppewal, Mel Perkins, Chris Barnett, Alane Hearnshaw, Duncan Macleod, Alison Campbell Rate and others.

Program details here - <https://ucapapp.org/worship-leader-training-day/>

