

The Westerly



PPW& PWV Newsletter No.39 – 31st October 2022



Hampton Park Community Garden

Rev. Mat Harry (Deacon)



When I was the minister at Uniting Place we developed the Hampton Park Community Garden onsite. There was a large section of the church grounds that were fenced off, raised garden beds established, disability access provided, seats and tables under a lovely shade sail, a hothouse, shedding and lots of other infrastructure. This became a wonderful place for the community to gather and relationships to grow and be nourished. (See Video https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ba4_KTPYwC8)

This was established collaboratively with lots of different partnerships with community organisations. This garden became a wonderful example of what could be achieved collectively and therefore lots of visitors came from other areas to be inspired by what we did. Typically visitors would ask me to give them a tour of the garden and an explanation of how it came about.

Here is the thing... Because I was so caught up in the day-to-day running of the garden – and all other things “Uniting Place” – when I took people around the garden I saw the weeds. I would look around the garden and see all of the things that needed doing. Problem with a garden is that there are always things to do. I would apologise and say things like, “excuse us, we need to clean this section up.” The response was one of shock from the guests because when they looked at all of the garden they were impressed and saw the garden in totality. They would see all of the things we had accomplished and all of the wonderful things that were going in on the garden.



Whereas, **when I looked at the garden I saw the things that needed to be done, others looked at the garden and saw all of the things that had been done.** My focus was skewed! I was taking for granted what we had accomplished.

Maybe this is true for you in many areas of your life as well. **So often this is true for congregations.** Church communities do lots of great work for the community. Both the individual congregants and the congregation through its missional activities. Yet, just like me in the Community Garden, we don't always recognise the good work; the relationships of trust; the resources the congregation has. Most congregations are filled with wonderful faithful, loving, caring and giving people – a true community asset.

I wonder if your congregation is a true community asset, yet you see weeds rather than the fact that it is a community asset? Maybe your congregation's self-perception needs a refocus. Having people external to assist a congregation in this is a great idea. Keep blessing others in practical creative ways as you respond to Christ's call.

Gardens & Sheds

Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTTCHEER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

The group were talking about “coping” when Tim said: “I’ve had a lot of struggles, but I know that God is with me. Even though I should pray more”.

“Do you think God would love you more if you prayed more?” I replied. Tim looked at me blankly for a moment then said tentatively, “... no?”

“Tim, do you believe that God isn’t waiting for you to become a better version of yourself – that God loves you exactly as you are?” “Oh!” he exclaimed straightening up in his chair, “really? I mean, of course, that makes sense, but... I’ve just never really thought of it like that.”

A staff member interjected; “Wait... I kinda thought that was the point. Isn’t there always a Sage or Master or someone that you’re trying to please?”

How often do we find ourselves trying to please someone, only to find that we can never quite do, or be, enough?

The staff member continued: “But you’re saying God loves us exactly as we are”.

Me: “Yes”.

Staff member: “Well that’s just blown my mind!”

Good News can really sound that simple; that we are loved. Exactly as we are. And that should blow our minds!



Volunteers for Sunshine Men’s & Women’s Sheds programs

We are looking for some reliable volunteers to assist Fiona Bottcher (author above) with the **Men’s and Women’s Sheds** programs at Sunshine Uniting Church (corner of Withers St. and Devonshire Road, Sunshine). The Sheds programs are social support groups for participants, accepting people whatever their background. Volunteers do not need special skills, just a willingness to help and care for people in the community. There may be occasional outings. Both programs are moving to the same day (Wednesday or Thursday) but Fiona needs more support to do this. We would also like the foyer and church space to be more open and welcoming and this also requires someone else to be around. **Tasks:** Can be flexible and adapted to your needs and abilities but might include - Opening and setup of the space. Shopping. Welcoming and talking to participants and others showing interest in the program. Assisting with meals and activities for the day. Some administration tasks. Cleaning and tidying up. **Skills:** Willingness to help. Care for people in the community. Current Working With Children card. **Hours:** 9:00am to 3:00pm one day per week. We are happy to be flexible. Presbytery is willing to reimburse travel costs. Lunch will generally be provided. Sunshine Uniting Church is situated on the edge of Sunshine shopping precinct and is near train and bus hubs. If you have questions or are interested, please contact Fiona Bottcher 0421 027 467 or feigh.b@gmail.com or Bruce Missen 0419 004 329 or bruce.missen@ppw.victas.uca.org.au

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 in two weeks. 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.



PLANT TOGETHER, GROW TOGETHER SUSTAINABILITY & COMMUNITY CONNECTION

By Sydenham - Caroline Springs UCA

If you visit Sydenham-Caroline Springs Uniting Church you will be surprised to see flourishing vegetable plots alongside the driveway to the car park. Then, when you step out of the car and walk towards the church entrance you will pass by more flourishing vegetable plots. In the corner of the yard two self-constructed compost bins are working their magic on food scraps.

Over the last few months, there has been exciting changes happening. This small multicultural, intergenerational congregation has willingly embraced change and explored new ways of reaching out to members of the local community. Also, members are focused on ensuring that as a church they do their part in developing climate change sustainability. So out of the desire for environmental sustainability and the longing for greater community connection "Town Well Community Garden" was seeded with the theme "Plant Together, Grow Together".

Thanks to the hard work and enthusiasm of many, numerous vegetable garden plots have been developed around the church building and grounds. The Community Garden was launched on Saturday 6th August. This was combined with a free community breakfast at the church. On Sunday 23rd October congregation members had great fun harvesting some of the produce – three types of cabbage, broccoli, snow peas, celery, carrots, spring onions. The ladies cooked (at the church) a beautiful chicken stir fry using the freshly picked vegetables and everyone enjoyed a yummy meal after worship.

TOWN WELL COMMUNITY GARDEN

'Plant together, grow together'



Sydenham-Caroline Springs Uniting Church



FAITHS FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

Sue Strong (PPW Climate Action Task Group)

On Thursday, October 13th, an open letter, addressed to our prime minister was published. Here is the letter and it was signed by over 100 signatories who lead many faith communities in our Pacific region. To see who signed it look at this link, [Open letter climate justice - ARRCC](#)

Dear Prime Minister Albanese

We are grateful for your Government's efforts to take the climate crisis seriously. Yet Australia is a wealthy country that profits from exports that are causing the crisis. We hear the cries of anguish from those most vulnerable in the human family who are losing their lives, livelihoods and homes through climate-fuelled disasters.

We humbly and respectfully request that Australia:

- **Stops approving new coal and gas projects**
- **Ends public subsidies for coal and gas projects**
- **Fully respects First Nations peoples' rights to protect Country**
- **Re-starts contributions to the United Nations Green Climate Fund**
- **Assists extractive industry workers to prosper through jobs in sustainable industries**

Actively participates in creating and endorses a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty. The current level of warming is not safe. This moment in history calls for an urgent, courageous, visionary response, especially from those in power. Australia's leadership in this response, as part of its First Nations Foreign Policy, is vital for the vulnerable communities and ecosystems who depend on it.

In support of this letter there were services held in Australia and the Pacific region. Our presbytery held two: in Melbourne and Geelong. It was heartwarming to be a part of an effort that combined so many faiths and here are some photos and reports on the two services.

GEELONG <https://climatesafety.info/faiths-for-climate-justice-gathering-in-geelong/>



MELBOURNE <https://www.facebook.com/groups/122662799375/permalink/10160135342389376/>





engage all generations

ONLINE

10th November 2022

9:30-4pm (AEDT)



Time & Location

10 Nov, 9:30 am – 4:00 pm AEDT
Online event

Guest Speakers:

Core Siebel

Tammy Preston

Andrew McDonough—Intergenerational dynamics in Deut.

Alison Sampson—Entering the Biblical story-verse

Beth Waldron Anstice—Better Value than Sermons

Alasdair MacDougall—Art & Worship

Nurture and Spiritual Guidance of Children

Dive deeper into the spiritual development of children. Grow your own capacity to nurture children.

This unit explores the historical and current interest in the spiritual life and development of children. It examines links between Scripture, theological thought, spiritual and psychological development, and ministry with children in the context of family, church and broader society. It has a particular focus on protection of, and respect for, children in pastoral, educational, missional and congregational settings. The unit seeks to develop richly theologically informed practice in relation to the spiritual nurture, formation and care of children.

For more information visit: pilgrim.edu.au

stirling.edu.au



Lecturer

Beth Barnett

Beth Barnett has a background in various sectors of education, pastoral ministry and mission across many denominations and parachurch groups and contributes in the international conversation on child theology and intergenerational faith formation. Beth has taught in children and families ministry, biblical studies and pastoral care across several Melbourne theological colleges. Beth writes resources and hosts cohorts for professional development and peer learning in intergenerational ministries.

Dates: 23-25, 28-30 Nov 2022 (9am to 4.30pm each day)

Venue: Pilgrim Theological College,
29 College Cres, Parkville, Victoria, 3052

Enrol: Pilgrim College (03) 9340 8892
erlinda.loverseed@pilgrim.edu.au

Stirling College (03) 9790 1000
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RCL Reading 23rd October

Joel 2:23'... be glad and rejoice in the Lord your God, for God has given the early rain for your vindication, God has poured down for you abundant rain, the early and the later rain...'

They cast a positive vision for the people's future. The rains will return. The vats will overflow with new wine. The threshing floor will be filled with grain. (*Preachers might like to consider the devastation being the rain itself, with the widespread flooding disaster in Victoria*). "Your old men shall dream dreams," said Joel, "your young men will see visions." In addition to prophetic critique, the prophets offered pastoral comfort. They kept the dreams of God's people and his kingdom alive in times of disaster and discouragement. Walter Brueggemann captures this dual role of the prophets when he says that the prophets both criticized and energized. On the one hand, they disturbed the status quo. They questioned the reigning order of things. They viewed the normal state of affairs in a different light, and advocated a new way of seeing and living — personally, socially, spiritually, economically, politically, in short, in every dimension of life. The prophets afflicted the comfortable and the complacent. But they also comforted the afflicted. They intended to "generate hope, affirm identity, and create a new future," says Brueggemann. They offered more than a negative critique; they were also about positive affirmation and encouragement. "Do not be afraid," says Joel. If you've ever felt despair over a hopeless situation, the prophets have a word for you. Yes, they dished out the vinegar; but they also gave us honey for the heart. Pastoral comfort invites us to the long haul of patient endurance.

(adapted from Journey with Jesus, by Dan Clendenen)

At this time, we hold in our minds and hearts all those affected by the floods and pouring rain and rising rivers. From suburban Melbourne to regional Victoria - floods this past week have caught residents off-guard as waters inundated homes and properties. Many scrambled to salvage what they could and face an anxious wait to see what will remain when they are allowed to eventually return home.

We pray for ...

Those whose lives have been devastated,

Those who are feeling vulnerable and weak

Those who are stranded

Those who are facing both long-term and short-term needs

Those who are homeless in this crippling time

We pray also for all those who are meeting needs at this time:

Volunteers and community workers

Those working to rescue people who are stranded and feed the hungry

Those supplying food, water, equipment, money and urgent supplies

Those working to clear roadways and homes that have been damaged

Police officers, emergency personnel, medical and social welfare responders

Those seeking to offer protection from theft and fraud.

We pray that each of us will play our part in responding to the overwhelming conditions of this time, and particularly in reaching out to those who will be struggling to rebuild their lives.

We pray too, that we will continue to urge the Government to play its part in strengthening structures that will heal our land, restore creation, and relieve those suffering homelessness and poverty.

We make all our prayers in the name of Jesus, who reached out always to those most in need. AMEN.

This prayer (adapted) is from the Sisters of St Joseph website.

We have been working hard in trying to support communities affected by the floods where we have been able to safely gain access.

We have been in relief centres in Shepparton, Bendigo, Echuca, Geelong, Maribyrnong, Seymour ...

Short Videos and Stories about Advent & Christmas

Intergen Team—SA Synod

Explaining Advent or different traditions. All-age resources for worship & carol services.

Saddleback Kids

A series of short animated videos of the Christmas story

- The Story of Christmas (Mary and Joseph) [tinyurl.com/CFFT-StoryOfChristmas1](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus is Born) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI>
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Shepherds) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJIC57EvYFo>
- The Story of Christmas (Jesus and the Wise Men) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zk1LhngROCM>

According to Kids

Fun creative re-tellings of the Christmas story performed by kids

- Christmas According to Kids [tinyurl.com/CFFT-ChristmasAccordingToKids](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- An Unexpected Christmas [tinyurl.com/CFFT-AnUnexpectedChristmas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- The Christmas Story [tinyurl.com/CFFT-TheChristmasStory](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- Star News Bethlehem [tinyurl.com/CFFT-StarNewsBethlehem](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- When God Was Born [tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhenGodWasBorn](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)

What's in the Bible?

A YouTube channel with videos designed to walk kids and families through the entire Bible using puppetry! Here are some Christmas focused videos.

- Why do we have Christmas Trees? [tinyurl.com/CFFT-WhyChristmasTrees](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- Who is Santa Claus? [tinyurl.com/CFFT-WholsSantaClaus](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- Why do we call it Christmas? <https://youtu.be/u9JMpH8dPF4>

Links are not hyperlinked.
For [resources](#) go to SA Synod.



Lost Sheep

Great Christmas stories from Andrew McDonough

- Jesus was a Refugee, Tonight in the Palace, The Three Wise Camels, Jed & Roy McCoy, Bethlehem Town [tinyurl.com/CFFT-LostSheepStories](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)

Just Because

Fun & helpful Christmas videos

- Bethlehemian Rhapsody [tinyurl.com/CFFT-BethlehemianRhapsody](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- 12 Days of Christmas [tinyurl.com/CFFT-12DaysOfChristmas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- Advent in 2 minutes [tinyurl.com/CFFT-AdventIn2Minutes](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)
- The First Christmas (Bible App for Kids) [tinyurl.com/CFFT-TheFirstChristmas](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v3656G6tWuI)

November Education Events

10th Nov 9.30am - 4pm	Intergenerate AUS Engage All Generations Conference	
12th Nov	PPW Presbytery in Council @ Hoppers Crossing UCA	
14th Nov	Applications for CPE 2023 Close	
19th Nov	PWV Presbytery Meeting	
23-25, 28-30 Nov	Nurture and spiritual Guidance of Children—Intensive Beth Barnett @ Pilgrim Theological College	



Preventing and Responding to Family Violence: A Faith Leader's Practice Guide and Toolkit

This Faith Leader's Practice Guide and Toolkit shares the best of Australian and international research evidence on the factors that cause and reinforce family violence in faith communities. This guide also looks at what works to address these factors and the role of faith leaders and communities in responding to and preventing violence.

In this guide, we also look at what works to address these factors and the role of faith leaders and communities in responding to and preventing violence.

Webinar launch [here](#).

A FAITH LEADERS PRACTICE GUIDE AND TOOLKIT
Preventing and Responding to Family Violence
By Naomi Graham



9th–11th December 2022

A Generous Openness:
How can I discover and act on my deepest, most authentic desires?

9th–11th December 2022

A weekend prayer retreat hosted by Northcote Uniting Church

Santa Casa Retreat Centre (Anna House) 33–35 Flinders Street, Queenscliff VIC 3225
www.santacasa.org.au. Arrival from 2pm on Friday 9th, with opening session at 7.30pm
All meals are included. Dietary requirements can be accommodated. **\$200 per person** including meals and accommodation.

Contact Missional Spirituality
Pastor Anne Pate: 0407 908 729
annepate@hotmail.com or call