

The Westerly



PPW & PWV Newsletter No.54 – November 2023



Co-labourers with God

Rev. David Fotheringham [Moderator VicTas Synod – extract [Crosslight](#) Oct 2023]



I've recently found myself reflecting on the passage in 1 Corinthians 3, where Paul talks about the foolishness of one follower of Christ saying "I belong to Paul", while someone else says "I belong to Apollos", when ultimately all belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God - as Paul concludes at the end of that chapter.

Along the way through the chapter **Paul talks about how anyone involved in the work of building up the community in the love of God is a co-labourer with God.** We work with confidence that God's Spirit is in us together, and with humility about the limits of our own understanding.

This passage has plenty to say to us among the broad family that is the Uniting Church across Victoria and Tasmania. It has plenty to say about relationships with other denominations too. While I usually prefer to think of our relationship with God as being that of children or friends who are beloved of God, there is some value in the language of being **co-labourers when we are talking about the work of building up the community in the love of God** – and the point that Paul makes in this passage is that we are labourers together.

One of the key projects that I'm involved in as Moderator is the Faithful Futures Project, which is very much about the presbyteries and the Synod working together to help to plan for the Church over the next 10-15 years. ... Which brings me back to 1 Corinthians 3, and the ways in which we are all called to be co-labourers together. Presbyteries are one way of bringing together wisdom from across regions to provide oversight for those regions. The participation of members from across the regions, listening together for God's call, is what makes them work.

I also want to briefly mention the Synod Standing Committee, since we are approaching another Synod Meeting at which some of the membership is likely to change over. It is marvellous having a team of people from such a range of backgrounds, bringing together diligence, prayer, creativity and attention for overseeing the responsibilities of the Synod between Synod meetings. The current SSC includes members from regional, rural, and suburban places and forms of worship, in which worship is celebrated in traditional, creative, and various language styles. They have interests including intercultural inclusion, tech, ecumenism, camping, ministry with children, finance and property, and also manage to be involved in their wider communities through activities like the CFA, Girl Guides, basketball, environment groups and food security initiatives.

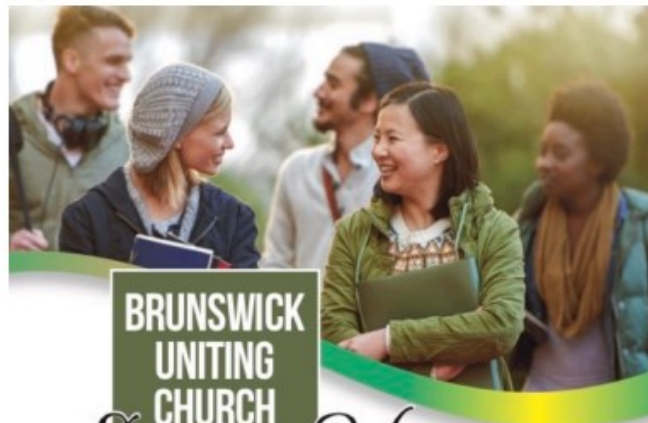
As the Synod meeting approaches, I encourage your consideration of the membership of the SSC for the next few years.

In all of our labour, our rest, and our faithful living may God bless us with humility and love, for God's spirit dwells in us together; and we all belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.



SYNOD 2023





Intergenerational Newsletter—
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BRUNSWICK
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Student House

Moving to Melbourne for Tertiary Study?

Are you interested in being part of a Christian student house in Brunswick?

Our program provides affordable housing close to universities and public transport in Melbourne's inner - north. Students explore their faith with other young Christians and actively participate in the life of Brunswick Uniting Church.

If you are interested in joining our vibrant community, and need more information, visit our website:
www.brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/student-house-program/

Or contact the student house support worker
Rev Cath James at studenthousebuc@gmail.com



Supervised Pastoral Education Unit (CPE)

Supervised Pastoral Education is a rigorous action/reflection model of learning – the emphasis is on learning directly from participation in a variety of experiences.

Train as a chaplain for schools, hospitals, prisons or for pastoral care in congregations.

Applications are now open for the Semester 1, 2024 Unit being offered by Uniting CPE – The John Paver Centre.

Dates: 2 February to 25 June, 2024.

Applications close **8 November**, with interviews scheduled for 16 and 17 November.

Supervisors are Rev Lauren Mosso and Rev Andy Calder.

Further inquiries contact Andy Calder on 93408844 or andy.calder@victas.uca.org.au

During the period **11 August to 25 September**, please contact Lauren Mosso on 0400 569 330 or lauren.mosso@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 \(ucappw.org.au\)](#). Alright I will come right and admit it, I obtained the Intercultural Borderless Community Article from PPE Newsbeat, but I thought it was worthwhile.

Rev Linley Liersch Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au. Next edition submissions **23rd October**.

Melbourne Marathon Fundraiser



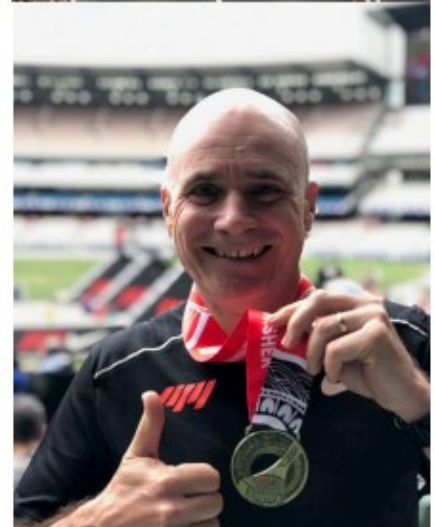
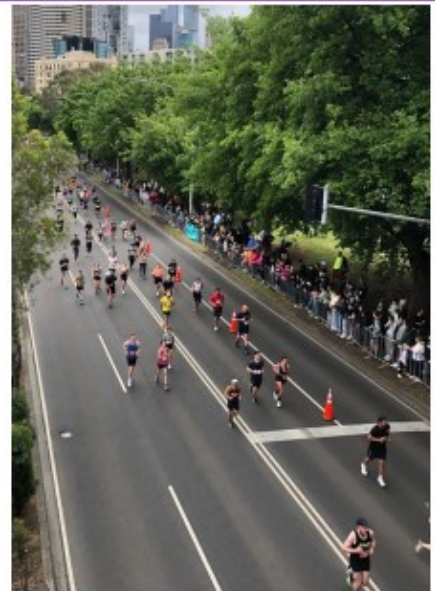
On Sunday, 15 October, **Rev Mat Harry** (eLM's New & Renewing Communities Coordinator) and his son **James** completed the 2023 Melbourne Marathon, to raise money for the Wimmera's *Street to Home* pilot program, which was rolled out by Uniting Vic.Tas earlier this year.

Mat and James' run in the marathon was featured in the Crosslight article 'Running for a Good Cause', and you can read the article [here](#).

I reached out to Mat to share some words about the day, and he wrote that it was James' first

marathon, so it was great for them to be able to have that experience together. He added that he "felt better than he has ever felt at the end of a 42km race, and finished in a time of 3hrs and 34mins."

The support received was fantastic and, at the time of writing, Mat was able to raise **\$1,623** of his \$1,500 goal, and in total, Uniting Vic.Tas was able to raise \$2,720 towards the program.



New Op-Shop @ Brunswick

I'm delighted to inform you that Uniting now have the keys for a new op shop in Brunswick, actually far more than this we will be opening a site that is a hub for our Op Shop network across the Synod.

We are moving into 331 Victoria St, and on site we will have:

- Offices for our Op Shop Leadership Team, An Op Shop, A huge sorting room, A number of meeting rooms. At the moment we have an empty warehouse.

Nooshy Farid, is our Area Manager – Op Shop Warehousing who will be responsible for the site.

We would love the opportunity to meet you prior to our move which commences in November and we are also very happy to come to a service and meet and talk with congregations and schools.

From: Jacob Miller Senior Manager Op Shops

unitingvictas.org.au



Uniting

We strongly support a First Nations voice to Parliament.



Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

The new Mental Health and Wellbeing Centre at Sunshine Hospital has recently opened. On my first day working there, I felt a bit nervous as I navigated the new security, hallways, and layout. Everything was so shiny!

Many of my most interesting and meaningful interactions with consumers have occurred in the spaces where **"two or more are gathered"** (Matthew 18:20). These moments could be when reading a whiteboard displaying the day's news or finding out about the peer support team's activities. People may not consciously seek a conversation or a listening presence, but that's often what they discover in those spaces.

However, in the new mental health facility, it's not yet clear to me where people will gather. There are no whiteboards with handwritten notes, and everyone has a television in their own room. During the few times I've been there, I've noticed just how little people are talking.



As we enter Advent, we embark on a time of newness and anticipation. We may think we know what we are waiting for, what renewal and transformation look like for us. But without the spaces that encourage conversations and interactions we didn't know we needed, we risk missing the opportunity to be surprised by Hope.



Climate Action Task Group

LAUDATO DEUM

It is 8 years since Pope Francis first published his letter entitled *Laudato Si* (meaning Praise Be), where he shared about the suffering planet and his concerns for our common home. Since that time, our efforts have not been adequate and the world in which we live is nearing breaking point. He has now written another paper entitled *Laudato Deum* (Praise God) in which he reviews scientific data and appeals to all people of good will to act urgently. He states that there is no lasting change without cultural change and no cultural change without personal change.

Please read his words here:

["Laudate Deum": Apostolic Exhortation to all people of good will on the climate crisis \(4 October 2023\) | Francis \(vatican.va\)](#)



INTERCULTURAL BORDERLESS COMMUNITY by Ennis McLeod

@ Canterbury Baldwyn Rd UC exploring with the **Synod Intercultural Forum Committee**

As host, Rev Salesi Faupula opened the retreat with worship, and an introduction to the theme: the Borderless Community. He was followed by three speakers: Rev Semisi Tauli'i from Mt Waverley, Pastor Virginia Lavaki as Younger Generations Multicultural Ministries Coordinator, and Rev Dr Ji Zhang, team-leader of the Casey-Cardinia regional initiative.



My take-away from Semisi and Nia was that being the ONE body of Christ does not mean violating other people's cultural borders, but instead lowering our own borders so that all are allowed access to Christ. Ji's presentation on the Borderless God reiterated that Christian theology has been rooted in many countries over the last almost 2000 years.

He shared some of his research into recent archaeological findings in China, which demonstrate that the Gospel of Christ was known and celebrated in China from at least the time of the Tang Dynasty (635- 832CE). The Cosmic Cross, dated to the 7th to 8th centuries, discovered recently in Luoyang, China. In it, the Cross is surrounded by the White Clouds (Daoist) and placed over the White Lotus (Buddhist). Christianity was first introduced to China by the Church of the East, between 635-832 during the Tang Dynasty. The Christ was worshiped as the Messiah, according to the early Christian scroll "Listen to the Messiah."

In the wider discussion that followed, table groups responded, reiterating the importance of the Uniting Church being a multicultural church, but charging leaders with the need to expand beyond multiculturalism to being intercultural, both in ministry and in mission.



The borderless community does not require any cultural group, or any generation of any cultural group to lose their identity. Rather, travel across borders requires recognition that the 'other' has gifts to share given by God, and that the gifts I have from God are for me to share with 'others' as well.

Conversations continued over the magnificent Tongan style feast, and the entertainment provided by Tongan and Samoan young people. We were also treated to an impromptu Fijian dance from Talatala Semisi, supported by Chadstone Fijian Church members and friends.



During the AGM, chair, Rev Lavingi Tupou, farewellled Rev Dev Anandarajan, and welcomed several younger members onto the committee. Following the AGM, Rev Leslie Guerrero from the Philippines, currently visiting the church at Dandenong, closed the meeting in prayer and thanksgiving



Events

- 10th Nov
2pm
Pilgrim College Valedictory
@ Centre for Theology & Ministry, College Cres Parkville
- 11th Nov
2pm
Climate Champion Afternoon Tea
@ Brunswick UC & Wesley Geelong UC
- 18th Nov
10am
Synod Opening Worship, Rev. Brooke Prentice
@ Salvation Army Hall, Box Hill
- 18th–21st Nov
Synod Meeting
@ Box Hill Town Hall
- 24th Nov
9.30am–4pm
Ministry Agents Retreat
@ Altona Trinity, 3018/7 Seves St, Altona 3018
- 25th Nov
PWV Presbytery Meeting
- 29th Nov
1pm–4pm
Ethical Ministry Refresher
@ St.Alban's UCA & zoom
- 2nd Dec
PPW Presbytery in Council Meeting
@ St Alban's UCA & Zoom
- Dec 8
12 noon– 2pm
Retired UCA Rev's Lunch @ Pascoe Vale RSL
Contact Mark Dunn [Email](#)



CLIMATE CHAMPIONS AFTERNOON TEA

They are being held simultaneously at **2 pm on November 11th**.

Everyone with a care about the climate and would like to gather with others who do, is invited to attend the next afternoon tea hosted by the Presbytery Climate Action Task Group. There will be two venues on offer:

Melbourne: Brunswick Uniting Church, 212 Sydney Road, Brunswick

Geelong: Wesley UC, 100 Yarra Street, Geelong

Come along for fellowship, sharing of ideas and having fun together. We hope to see you
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