



Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Presbytery of Yarra Yarra

PO Box 4308
Balwyn East VIC 3103

8th February 2021

Notes and news for Yarra Yarra Congregations and Institutions

As usual, the newsletter contains a number of items which may be of interest to your congregations. Please identify other items relevant to your community, and promote the issues and events listed below through your own newsletters and other communication channels as appropriate. There is much going on, so please take a few minutes to review.

Please ensure that items for the next edition are sent in by the end of the month. It is helpful if you can provide text, rather than copies of fliers which need to be transcribed and summarised. Please include contact information for those seeking more information.

PRESBYTERY NEWS

This is a time of change for several parts of the Presbytery. As noted below, a number of congregations are welcoming new Ministers into placements, and as they are adapting to changes, most of us are also experiencing changes as we slowly resume worship patterns which involve meeting together in our various churches.

One of the interesting findings from the congregational returns that have been received is that a high proportion of those who have responded so far have reported increased numbers of members. It is not possible to say if this is related to the events of the past year, but it is nevertheless interesting to speculate about how our society does respond to catastrophic events such as the pandemic.

On the other hand, it is a concern to see that several of our very small congregations have decreased numbers, and that there are some (not all small) who have not been able to appoint a Secretary for their Church Council. We need to continue to think about when a congregation needs to be restructured as a Faith Community, providing support for a group of people who are “worshipping together and seeking to relate to the [Uniting] Church for nurture and support” without the complexity and the many responsibilities of a congregational structure. Another alternative could be to consider the amalgamation of such groups with a nearby larger congregation. This will need to be a deliberate focus for the Presbytery, especially for those groups which do not have numbers or finance adequate to support a placement.

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| Chairperson | Lisa Carey | 03 9857 1006 | lisa.carey@pyy.victas.uca.org.au |
| Presbytery Ministers | Dan Wootton | 03 9857 1000 | dwootton@victas.uca.org.au |
| | Liz McMillan | 0419 884 736 | liz.mcmillan@victas.uca.org.au |
| | Sunny Chen | 0423 273 813 | pyy.pmc@victas.uca.org.au |
| Secretary | Geoffrey Grinton | 03 9857 1003 | pyy.secretary@victas.uca.org.au |

Presbytery Inductions

It was a joy to share in the induction of Rev Ray Gormann at Carlton in January, and we now look forward to several more inductions over the next few weeks.

As indicated in the last newsletter, Rev Swee Ann Koh has taken up a placement at **Manningham** on 1st February, joining Rev Claire Dawe in a team ministry. The induction service is to be held on Sunday 14th February at 2 pm in Doncaster at the church at 20 Westfield Drive.

We are also pleased to be able to welcome Rev Gi won Kang to **Deepdene**. The induction has been arranged at short notice, and will take place at the Deepdene Uniting Church, 958 Burke Road, Balwyn, at 2:30 pm on Sunday 21st February.

An induction service is also being planned for Rev Carlynn Nunn, who has commenced her placement as Chaplain to the **University of Melbourne**. The placement is also associated with the congregation at Wesley in Lonsdale Street. The induction will take place at the University on Wednesday 17th March at noon, to fit in with the academic year. Numbers will be limited, so if you would like to attend, please contact Rev Sunny Chen for details.

Also during March, **Sophia's Spring** congregation in Fitzroy will welcome Christina Rowntree. Information about the induction service will be published once details have been finalised.

Congregation Details Update

The number of responses has been disappointingly small, so if you are a Church Council Secretary, please respond as quickly as possible to complete the Contacts Update Spreadsheet. A fresh copy is attached to the email with this newsletter. Let's see if we can get a 100% response by the end of February. Remember to attach a copy of your most recent annual report.

Our Presbytery Minister Administration retires

As announced at the last Presbytery meeting, our Presbytery Minister Administration, Dan Wootton, will commence a period of Long Service Leave prior to retirement at the end of February. We are grateful that he has agreed to attend the Presbytery meeting in March, when we will be able to recognise his service to the Presbytery and to the wider Church. Details of transition arrangements will be published shortly.

Presbytery Meeting

The first meeting of Yarra Yarra Presbytery for 2021 will be held by Zoom on Saturday, 13th March, commencing at 9:30 am. Further details will be circulated to members of Presbytery in the first couple of weeks of March. This meeting marks the change-over for all of our committees and other appointed groups, with new members taking up their roles immediately following the meeting. These changes will be recognised during the meeting, and there will be a chance to acknowledge changes for the chairman roles in three of the committees (Resourcing, Ministry Formation and Lay Preachers).

Changes to the Assembly meeting

By now many people will be aware of changes to the format of the meetings of the 16th Assembly, which will take place during July 2021. Putting the safety and wellbeing of members of the Assembly first was the key driver in making this decision. When considering the risks associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Assembly Standing Committee believed that meeting face-to-face could not be planned with sufficient certainty. The meeting will therefore take place online from 17–18 July 2021. The decision for a shortened meeting was taken with a view to reconvening in a face-to-face Assembly meeting in 2022.

NEW ILLUMINATING FAITH RESOURCES

New [Illuminating Faith](#) resources for Lent 2021 are now available. These include [a service order for Passion Sunday or Good Friday](#), based on the St Mark's passion narrative, and a series of Lenten Studies on Isaiah's Servant Songs – '[God's Servant, Served](#)'. A complete list of Lenten studies available through *IF* is available from the 'God's Servant, Serve' web page. For more information contact Craig Thompson at craig@christologia.net.

PASTORAL CARE SEMINARS

The Presbytery of Port Phillip West is delighted to offer a series of Pastoral Care Seminars to our Presbytery community and beyond. This series of seminars seeks to equip participants with the skill of listening with empathy – a skill that bridges the wide caverns of communication break-down. Some of the shyest of people have walked away from these seminars empowered to care for others. These Zoom-based seminars offer a selection of skills that have the power to transform the way we listen to others. They are ideal for anyone who wishes to enhance their pastoral skills. They have been designed to enrich

existing relationships, as well as teach valuable listening skills that will be of use in all avenues of life. An initial seminar of three hours for everyone will be followed by three further seminars on various topics. All are offered free of charge. Bookings can be made at <https://www.trybooking.com/BOERN>, or for further details contact Narelle Collas at Narelle.Collas@ppw.victas.uca.org.au.

SUICIDE PREVENTION SYMPOSIUM

The Suicide Prevention Australia Symposium 2021 presents a unique opportunity to bring the brightest minds together and latest thinking to promote excellence in suicide prevention. This online event provides a gateway to unite suicide prevention experts to showcase evidence-based solutions and robust discussion, focused on solutions for saving lives. Held on 19–22 April 2021, this online symposium will attract around 500 delegates to hear from international keynote speakers, participate in workshops and collaborate with their peers. For more details, including costs and registration information, refer to the web page at <https://symposium2021.suicidepreventionaust.org/>.

*If you have information that you wish to have distributed through this newsletter, please ensure that it is submitted by the start of the month in which the item is to appear. I plan to try to send newsletters out in the third week, so that means if your event occurs early in the month, you will need to have it submitted by the start of the **previous** month.*

The newsletter is sent to Church Council Secretaries and Presbytery members. If you should not be receiving it, please contact me at pyy.secretary@victas.uca.org.au with the name of your congregation and the name of the correct person.