

Cluster News NOVEMBER 2022

Welcome to the November Cluster News, connecting us across the three churches as we grow closer to becoming one congregation with one Church Council, **celebrating** our Life in Christ, with each other and **servicing** our community together.

A further exciting step along this long and winding road occurred on Saturday 26th November when Presbytery resolved to amalgamate our three congregations to form the Whitehorse congregation, commencing on 1st January 2023. Anne Smith, Julie Hawkey and David Rowe convincingly presented our story, our vision and our progress. This milestone was immediately followed the next day by the election of 3 members from each of the congregations to form the initial Whitehorse Uniting Church Council. What a weekend! To celebrate!!



As Advent approaches, we are presented with many opportunities to **celebrate** and **serve**. Some can be found here!!

We celebrate

* **Advent Studies:** On consecutive Sundays from 27th November, we will meet at Forest Hill to watch a film and over a meal, enjoy a discussion to find a connection to the theme of: -

New Beginnings.

SUGGESTED FILMS -

**THE HUNDRED FOOT JOURNEY*—SUN.NOV.27TH.

**THE WAY* (MARTIN SHEEN) - SUN.DEC.4TH.

**IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE* (JAMES STEWART & DONNA REED) - SUN.DEC.11TH.

WE HAVE THE OPTION OF A FOURTH MOVIE ON SUN. DEC 18TH.

THREE SUGGESTED ARE -

**EAT, PRAY, LOVE*, **WILD* OR **ANGELA'S ASHES*. PLEASE CONTACT REV. TINA TO RSVP, AND IF YOU CAN ASSIST WITH SUPPORT OR HOSPITALITY. 0423 715 590

We serve!

***Christmas /Gift Cards** in support of the work of Uniting, UnitingWorld, tearfund and Act for Peace (National Council of Churches) can be accessed through their websites. There will be some cards available for purchase at BNNUC on Sunday 4th December.

UnitingWorld.

www.everythingincommon.com.au

Uniting.

www.unitingvictas.org.au scroll to Christmas Cards.

tearfund.

www.usefulgifts.org

Act for Peace.

www.actforpeace.org.au/gifts

* A reminder of another opportunity **to serve**; As mentioned last month, **Whitehorse Churches Care** is in the process of planning a community **Christmas Day lunch** with Whitehorse Council support. If you would like to be involved, please speak with Cory on 0421195524."

And yet another opportunity **to serve**---

* **Frontier Services**

Regional Council has endorsed The Mission and Justice Ministry's recommendation that at our **Together @10 Services in December and January**, loose offerings and any donations in marked envelopes be for the support of the work of Frontier Services. Let's be generous!



Frontier Services explains;

Who we Are

We live in a society where people are more isolated, and there's less contact. Especially people who live in the bush. We are the companion who turns up out of the blue to lend an ear, give a helping hand, and be of service. It's the Australian way of giving everyone a fair go and helping other folk. And as Australia's oldest bush charity we've been doing it for more than 100 years.

Our Purpose-

For The Love Of Helping People

We are an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia and we do what we do for the love of helping people. Helping people is human nature. If I can help anyone I will – even if it's just a smile and saying, "Howdy". Frontier Services is about making this life connection between people. A telephone call and a chat. A friendly face. A listening ear. A helping hand. It's called mateship. And it happens on an emotional, a physical, and a spiritual level.

Our Vision

We dream of an Australia where everyone who lives in our regional and remote areas are cared for and supported and have a mantle of safety and well-being. Australian people who live out bush experience the tyranny of distance and social isolation. These include indigenous communities, isolated properties, mining communities, and other remotely located communities. And for them, we are the people who knock on the door, take the time to listen, offer a helping hand, and be of service.

Our Service in the PUBLIC space on 30th October was a happy occasion attended by people from each of our congregations. We were thankful for the sunshine in what had been a wet week! Halliday Park was a delightful space and it was great to see families enjoying the break in the weather.

Our Guest Speaker on the topic; **Building bridges and reconciliation with our First Nations Peoples.** was Eva Orr, **Reconciliation Action Plan worker with Uniting.** Eva spoke of hopeful signs she sees as she travels around the Synod as children and young people overlook colour differences and associate easily.



NEWS FROM CENTER 81

*An excerpt from Mountview's Notice sheet
6th November*



*Our Happy Halloweeners have done it again—
thank you all so much!*

*Leaflets are placed in letter boxes of nearby
homes one week before the event, to alert
residents that the Halloween Collection will be
happening again.*

*Our Young People, on the evening of a very wet
and miserable Halloween, collected from our
neighbours in nearby streets, (visiting more than
160 homes), many bags and boxes of food,
toiletries, colouring books and gifts for children,
which will be included in the Christmas Hampers,
when they are prepared in December.*

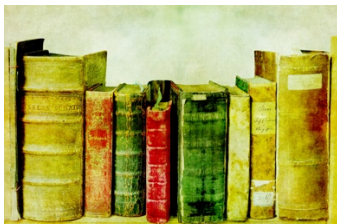
*Along with the gifts, our collectors receive many
complimentary and encouraging comments for the
outreach that they are doing. Their reward, thanks
to Helen Jackson, is to tuck into mini cupcakes,
decorated in Halloween style., a great favourite,
especially with Jubilee!*



CENTRE 81

A message from Jill.

We wish to thank all those who so very
al generously supported our Election Day Book
Sale and Plant Stall.



We were blessed with a beautiful sunny day, and a
wonderful feeling of hospitality and community
amongst our volunteers, and the many voters who
came to browse at the Book Stall which was
supplemented by a range of Shortbread, baby

knitting, and some beautiful handmade
Christmas/Greeting cards
Outside, the Plant Stall was very well patronised,
buyers having a great choice of plants
from which to buy, whilst the smell of sausages
and onions cooking wafted in the air.

To date, the total raised at the Plant Stall/Book
Sale is **\$878.80** and will be used for the purchase
of food for our Christmas Hampers.

Well done to all!



CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

It's now time to turn our thoughts to the collection
of food for our Christmas Hampers,
which will be prepared at Centre 81, during the
week commencing December 11 2022.

Items of Christmas Fare such as tinned ham,
Christmas cakes/puddings, Custard,
shortbread/biscuits, canned vegetables, canned
salmon, soft drinks, fruit juices, milk, sweets,
pasta, pasta sauce, tea/coffee, Christmas
napkins/bon-bons, and gifts for children,
mothers/carers.

If you would like to donate either money or food
to this appeal, please bring your gift to Church
(Mountview) on Sunday December 11, or to
Centre 81, on Tuesdays and Fridays, from 10.00
a.m. until 12.00 noon, or please ring Jill, on 0412
110 388, to arrange a suitable time for collection
from your home.

The Tragedy of the Earthquake in Indonesia.
President of the Uniting Church in Australia Rev
Sharon Hollis has offered this prayer.

*God of mercy,
We pray for the people of Indonesia
and particularly the people of West Java
following the recent earthquake.
Be with them as they search for survivors*

and recover the bodies of those who have died.

God of love we pray

For comfort for those grieving

For healing for those who are injured

For strength for first responders and medical staff

For wisdom for those who will plan the recovery.

Grant the people of West Java courage and strength

as they rebuild homes and businesses.

Grant them hope and resilience

as they rebuild lives and communities.

Stir up a spirit of generosity in us

that we may respond to the needs of our neighbours

with abundance and open heartedness. Amen.



Story of the Floods. Episode 2

Following Anne’s article in last month’s Cluster News, we share Shirley Griffith’s personal Story of the Floods, as told at Forest Hill on 11th November.

“I’d like to say a word about the flood victims in the Rochester / Echuca area. My brother and his wife live at Lockington, west of there and there is a small caravan park and a hall there. Both are crowded and to the south at Elmore there is a big paddock where Elmore field days are held. That is crowded also. In Lockington there is small take away business, a hotel and a supermarket; they have been marvellous providing meals for the people, and my sister-in-law and others are cooking for them as well. A niece in Bendigo does cooking for the people in Rochester. I don’t know what facilities there are at the hall and park in Lockington, but a big thank you to the people who are contributing to the welfare of the flood victims because it could be months before they can return home.

Mosquitoes are making themselves at home there too!

Please continue to pray for the people in the many parts of our country affected by floodwaters.”



A reminder that you can contribute to the Assembly’s National Flood Disaster Appeal by Direct Deposit using the following details:

Bank Name: Westpac, BSB: 032 003 Ac No: 269941

Please email enquiries@nat.uca.org.au when you make a donation, including your name and or congregation and a receipt will be provided.

“Renewal through Trust”

This was the theme chosen for **The Australian Church Womens’ World Community Day**. A number of women from our Cluster attended and enjoyed the hospitality of The Avenue UC Blackburn on Wednesday 9th November. Sr. Margaret of St Thomas Catholic Church Blackburn was the guest speaker and in her address quoted the President; *“In an old copy of a magazine for retired Salvation Army Officers, I found a quotation from Touch the World with Prayer by W.L. Deuwel which I would like to share with you.”*

“Praise clarifies your vision. The focus of your attention is drawn from the complexity of the problem to the adequacy of God’s resources; from the urgency of your need to the power of the Lord to meet your need. As you praise him, you begin to remember how he has helped you on other occasions and your faith rises in expectancy. The more you praise, the smaller the mountain you are facing appears in the light of God’s greatness. Almost unconsciously you are casting your burden on the Lord. (Psalm 55:12)”

SAMMY STAMP NEWS

2022 is shaping -up to be another good year for the U.C.A.F. Stamp Fund thanks to the support it receives from many individuals, Church groups and various businesses. As at mid-November, sales had raised \$44,524 with \$43,200 being distributed to 12 worthy causes. The latest grant of \$5,000 was given to the UCA President's Emergency Relief Appeal for flood victims. I wonder how many thousands of stamps were processed to raise that Sales total ??

With the arrival of your Christmas cards and parcels please remember to save all your stamps - both Australian and overseas - and leave them in the Stamp Box in your Church's foyer. Your ongoing support continues to be appreciated and worthwhile.

Remember - Every stamp counts for Sammy!

Jan Searle

Warm and Friendly Samoa

We chose Samoa for a short break recently. From teenage years, Daryl had always been interested in visiting Samoa because Robert Louis Stevenson lived the last few years of his life there. From Melbourne's cold and wet we were enveloped by hot and steamy as the wet season had begun early. Tropical beauty surrounded us with a few steps to the beach and lagoon, the surf pounding on the reef, the relaxation of the pool, listening to the breeze in the coconut palms – great encouragement to do little more than eat, swim and sleep. But we did venture out to see more of this beautiful island of palm fringed beaches and rugged mountains.

The opportunity to attend a church service at the nearby Methodist church to “hear the singing”, was a revealing cultural experience. In a large airy building, with the minister high up in the pulpit, the congregation of all ages gathered – all dressed

in white. As there was very little of the service in English, we were distracted by the little children who after initially sitting together, began to get restless. They moved quietly from parent to grandparent. There were brief explanations in English as the service progressed but the summary given of the sermon was obviously greatly expanded for the local congregation. We felt welcomed and included when we were encouraged to come forward to take communion. A day visit to the capital, Apia included a visit to Robert Louis Stevenson's home *Vailima* that is now a museum. He greatly endeared himself to the Samoans when he lived there with his family from 1890 – 94 and was known as ‘tusatala’ – the story teller. He was buried on Mount Vaea.



Samoan life is centred around the family and village, with the village chief still having influence on the decisions that effect village life.

In every village, the traditional fale – open sided house- is found

next to modern enclosed houses. The fale is a place of gathering for the family and village and is often used for sleeping, being particularly favoured by the elderly family members. A competition to find the best village meant that



there were colourful roadside plants and decorations and many Samoan flags.



Preaching Plan December

	<u>BNNUC</u>	<u>Forest Hill.</u>	<u>Mountview</u>
4th Dec.	Together @ 10 (C) at BNNUC		
11th 9.30	Peter (R)	Live stream	Tina
14th Wed. 1pm	Blue Christmas. Pastoral Lunch followed by Service.@Mount View		
18th (C) 9.30	Tina	Peter (R)	Live stream
6pm	Carols Plus and Shared Tea @ Forest Hill		
22nd. Thurs.2pm	@ Forest Hill Afternoon Communion Service & Carols		
24th Sat. 7pm	Christmas Eve @ BNNUC		
25th Sun. 9.30am	Christmas Day @ Forest Hill		

(C) Indicates a Communion service.

“Live stream” Indicates all options available to a Church Council including from live streaming a full service to locally led using a variety of resources (and supported by the ministry team).

(R) Indicates sermon recording available for use on SWAY and on “Live Stream” local arrangements.

Ministry Team.

Rev Peter Cannon. Rev Tina Lyndon Ng
Ministers on Call contact 0403 225 257

Regional Council Representatives.

Blackburn North/Nunawading UC

Elaine Hewson 0425 709 089

Anne Smith 9899 1932

George Manuofetoa 0404 884 140

Forest Hill UC

Daryl Hawkey 0419 607 085

Julie Hawkey 0488 460 875.

Joy Williams 0402 491 013

Mountview UC

Rob Jackson. 0413 599 047

Lynne Rosenthal. 0415 286 855

David Rowe 0411 268 680

This Preaching Plan is subject to change.

With Together Services, the Ministers may choose rostered people from any of the three churches for readings and prayers.

Travels through the lush countryside took us to a ‘sinkhole’ pool that was accessed by a steep ladder. Fellow travellers enjoyed swimming in this unique place but we chose to explore the rocky shore. We were introduced to a lesser known waterfall- a real paradise of cascading water and refreshing pool surrounded by intense green. A dramatic moment was when our guide climbed up high and flung himself into the deep water below.

Samoa has only been re-open to visitors this year as it was completely closed during the worst of COVID. The resort staff had been practicing to resume their cultural display for visitors. The result was colourful and vibrant, showing their pride in the traditional aspects of their culture – song and dance and fire wielding. Our impression was that the Samoan people are welcoming and friendly wherever you go and were particularly pleased to have Australian visitors. For us, it was a time to kick off the shoes and be looked after by smiling, caring people. Put it on your bucket list – you won’t be disappointed.

Thank you Julie Hawkey for sharing your Samoan experiences with us.

