



# Cluster News

## JULY 2022

### Welcome to the JULY Cluster News.

Here we are in the second half of 2022!! We wonder how that happened! If we stop to look back over the month, we might see that there have been many June events in our lives which make time fly!! The winter solstice marked the shortest day and we can look forward to lengthening and (gradually!!) warmer days. The process of forming our Whitehorse Cluster is also gradually fostering warmer relationships. As we begin to work on Stage 2 of forming one congregation, we enjoy social gatherings and our "Together @10" monthly services. The Cluster Trivia Night held at BNNUC was deemed a success. The shared meal gave opportunity to chat together and the Trivia questions gave us an insight into the private lives of the Regional Councillors!!! You really needed to be there!!



M.C. George Manuofetoo



### Trivia Night

If you weren't there – you missed a fun night! The organisation by the Manuofetoo family and the warm hospitality of Blackburn North/Nunawading UC, combined to provide an atmosphere for meeting with others and participation. Touches of the Manuofetoo family's input were everywhere from the welcome by Chris and Le'ikina to the table markers of numbered balloons floating aloft and the decorated prize bags of goodies. George was MC and ensured that Regional Councillors presented their questions and answers and he oversaw the granting of points to tables with the final scores. Regional Councillors presented a variety of topics for their list of 8 questions. Some tables seemed to dominate in finding the correct answers (inside information??) Competition between tables was keen but always friendly. After our brain teasing, we enjoyed a shared meal that began with a choice of delicious soups provided by BNNUC members. Thank you to all involved in the organisation of the Trivia Event.

*From a participant!*

**Another opportunity** for us to get to know each other better is looming!! Forest Hill folk are reviving their custom of **Dinners for 8** where host families invite others to their homes for a meal and conversation. This time it will be **Lunches for 8** on a Sunday and include our three congregations. The hosts will invite guests and suggest a contribution they may make to the meal. August 21<sup>st</sup> will see the first of these Lunches so watch for your invitation and RSVP ASAP!!!

## **Forming our Cluster**

### **Now it's time for your input**

Members of all 3 church councils met on Wednesday night, 20<sup>th</sup>, with our consultant, Phil McCredden, to move into Stage 2 of becoming a Cluster. Our three congregations have similar ways of operating so there will be duplication of many functions once we are one congregation. How will that work? We've identified areas requiring thought and discussion.

These are: Pastoral Care, Communication, Administration, Property Management, Finance, Ministry Team, Worship, Mission Justice and Outreach, Documentation of Proposal, Ministries, One Church Process. There may be some adjustment to these groups.

We need to begin thinking about these key areas now to determine how we see ourselves working as one congregation so the discussion is important for our future.

Small groups will meet to discuss one of the topics each. Some people may wish to be involved in more than one group. The groups will be led by a Regional Council member and you will be asked for your views.

Would you like to be in a group?

This is the time for your input. We want your involvement. Groups will contain members from each congregation and a series of questions will help to prompt your discussion. Simple! The recommendations and suggestions from each working group will help to create the "Proposal" which each congregation will be asked to vote on

**"Do we want to become one?"**

The process may sound daunting but we will work through it and try to discern the Spirit leading us. Joining a group is not a long term commitment. Some groups may only meet once.

Groups will meet in July and August so we need to get cracking so that work on the "Proposal" can happen in September. You may be contacted by a council member who will invite you to join a group or you are welcome to contact one of us to volunteer. We can't do this without you.

*Lynne Rosenthal*

## **The Kids Hope Program at Forest Hill** is

in its eleventh year. From the beginning our Op Shop has enabled our Program to, at times, go above and beyond the one-hour-weekly mentoring by our dedicated team of mentors. Their financial support, along with gifts from congregation members, has...

- paid for kids to get to school camps (including once an extra 3 refugee kids)
- helped finance the running of a few Holiday Fun days at the church.
- Covered some of Corry's costs in supplying resources for events or admin (e.g. Annual Pizza Lunch, Printer ink), contributed to the supply of Christmas hampers for Kids Hope families, including
- \$50 gift cards to spend over time at the Op Shop.

As I wrote in a 'Kids Hope Corner' in recent Newsletters, our Op Shop had a visit from Gail Cameron, CEO of Kids Hope Aus in late June. She came to meet some Op Shop Committee members and volunteers to say a personal 'thankyou' for \$1,000 they gave to Kids Hope Aus. Now the Op Shop Committee have decided to give Kids Hope Aus ongoing and significant annual support, while keeping their purse open to our Kids Hope Program as before. So, my sincere thanks to the Op Shop volunteers for their work in enabling this ongoing contribution.

Without this national program - Kids Hope Aus – we at Forest Hill UC would not be permitted to work in State Primary Schools...that is really the bottom line. Without Government recognition of the Kids Hope Aus training and child safety standards, which are reviewed and upgraded annually, churches would not be welcome to run their Programs. The Programs of course strictly recognise the secular nature of Education in Schools, but the relationships that are built with the school, the kids and their families speak volumes of the love of God for all...especially the most vulnerable...actions speak louder than words! The Principal at Burwood Heights PS once told a Volunteer afternoon tea that our "Kids Hope is the best program in my school"!

We are aware, through Kids Hope Aus, that Vermont Primary is very keen to have a Kids Hope Program to support some vulnerable kids in their school. But I cannot be Co-ordinator in two schools. *Kids Hope Aus links one church with one school, to provide mentors who work with one child for one hour each week.* Kids Hope mentoring is investing in our future generations, giving some kids without much hope, a chance to see possibilities of a different way.

If you could spare one hour a week for a child who desperately needs a positive adult role model, please speak with me to find out more. Burwood Heights PS would always use more mentors, and perhaps Mountview/Blackburn North Nunawading could help something to happen for Vermont PS... with my support.  
Corry on 0421 195 524

My mentors can tell you how rewarding it is to make a difference in their child's life. If you would like to know more about Kids Hope Aus... check out their website... it is well worth a look!

*Corry Skilbeck*

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**Two Views of Synod.**

Our cluster had two members, David Rowe and Rob Jackson, at Synod 22, and they were asked for their impressions.

*Reading the biography provided by David Rowe in the May Cluster News, it is not surprising to learn that he was again present at the 2022 Synod!*



**David Rowe.**

***David, how many Synods have you attended?***

Too many to remember – and twice a Victorian representative at Assembly. I was a representative of Presbytery at Synod for at least 10 years.

But in 2022, attended as one of two representatives of the Property Trust.

***What were your responsibilities?***

To be there for the presentation of the Property Trust report (which I did not have to write) and to be ready to answer questions. Fortunately, the questions were few.

***How many moderators have you seen lead Synod? Which was best?***

I've lost count! But all have been different and brought different strengths to the role.

***What for you were the highlights of this Synod?***

The installation of a new Moderator is always a highlight. And as usual, there are important discussions and decisions.

- the re-appointment of the General Secretary (Rev Dr Mark Lawrence) for a further 5 years.
- consideration of the application of the Voluntary Assisted Dying legislation in Tasmania (the implications in Victoria were a topic several years ago).
- again, the good Bible Study, this Synod led by Rev Dr Sean Winter, Head of Pilgrim Theological College, from the Song of Solomon, “Come Follow Me”, the Moderator’s theme for this Synod.

Not one word of complaint was uttered about the long 12 hour working days – 9.00am to 9.00pm + travelling time!

*Our other representative was our special Tech guru.*



**Rob Jackson.**

**Rob, how many Synods have you attended?**

I don't know – every Synod since 2000.

**Has it always been as part of the Tech team?**

Always, beginning as a learner, not as the chief.

**How long have you been the leader?**

It goes back into the dim past! My title is Director of Visuals, and I lead a team with 5 others.

**What for you were the highlights of this Synod?**

- the coffee cart produces good coffee
- the tech worked well

**Why was this significant?**

Well, it was the first time a hybrid model had been produced, with both in-house and live-stream. It was a challenge, and a lot more work. Last Synod was live- stream only, because we were in lockdown, and previously the production had been in-house only.

**Any further impressions?**

- The long days – 14 hours for the Tech crew, To allow for setting up and packing up each day. Then, two days prior were for bumping in and a half day after for bumping out. After that, the conclusion only comes after the Tribute Service, over a fortnight later.
- The discussion of the Tasmanian legislation, which showed the church at its best, being compassionate and understanding. The final resolution echoed the Victorian resolution just as the legislation echoed the Victorian legislation.

*Thank you, David and Rob, for your contributions to the wider church community*

*and congratulations on jobs well done.*

**STOP PRESS! Church in the PUB(lic space) –**

**Dr Susan Carland and Marie Claire Njang - special guests!**

Come and hear Dr Susan Carland and Marie Claire Njang in conversation with Rev Peter at our service next week. We will be

exploring faith in the public space, how it inspires and guides.

We will discuss ways to build respect between people of differing faith and even no faith. We will be doing what we are exploring, faith in the public space.

**Details: -**

**Where:** Mitcham Hotel, Cnr Whitehorse and Mitcham Rds, Mitcham.

**Parking** is available behind the hotel, off Mitcham Rd.

**When:** Next Sunday, 31st July from 11:30am until around 1pm.

**Cost:** No entry fee. Just come. We are encouraged though to purchase a coffee/tea or your lunch as the hotel is providing staff to cater as needed. This is not a requirement.

**Do I need to book or RSVP:** We have booked tables but as the venue need to ensure sufficient staffing, your reply to Lynne Rosenthal will assist planning. : [lynnerosenthal@gmail.com](mailto:lynnerosenthal@gmail.com) or 0415 286 855.

Please reply asap but preferably by Monday 25<sup>th</sup>. You can turn up on the day but there is no guarantee a table will be still available.

**Worship beforehand:** A prayer service at your usual place of worship will be led at your usual worship time (9:30am or 9:45am). It will be shorter than your usual worship. You can proceed from there to the Hotel.

**About our guests**

**Dr Susan Carland** is known to many of our community as the daughter of Ken Carland. She has built a significant public profile as a lecturer, author and guest commentator on numerous current affairs programs such as the ABC's, "The Drum". She was the host of SBS's "Child Genius". She is a woman of the Islamic faith, teaches gender studies, politics and sociology at Monash University and has a passion for feminist issues within Islam. She belongs to the "Benevolence" Islamic community, who are often engaged in interfaith work with the Manningham Uniting Church.

**Marie Claire Njang** is CEO and founder of Melos Childcare for all Projects, a not-for-profit organisation that subsidises childcare for migrant and refugee families who wish to engage in in the labour market and improve their financial stability. (Check the website at, Meloso Childcare for All Projects (mcfap.org.au). She is also the founder of Student Employment Services, an online employment platform that provides employment services for current and past students in Australia, as well as international students. She is a childrens' book author, with her first book, "Our Skin" to be launched in the coming weeks. Marie Claire is a member of the Ringwood Uniting Church.

**Some Q&As about Church in the PUBLIC space.**

**Why are we doing this in a pub?**

Our community has changed. Once, the church was the centre of the community but now it is on the fringes.

In the beginning, the disciples were sent out into the spaces people lived. We are now in a similar era whereby we too need to leave our comfort zones and engage people in their world.

**Will this be worship?** Yes but it will be very different to what you have normally experienced.

**Will there be singing?** No. Our worship will suit The public space we are in while respecting those around us who do not wish to participate.

**What will happen?** We will meet in table groups that will have prayers and activities for that table. Table groups will be free to follow the suggestions or not. We will listen to the conversation of our guest speakers. Their conversation will stimulate our questions and ideas for discussion in our table groups. Some questions for our guests may be raised if circumstances permit.

*Rev Peter*

**Preaching Plan. July, August**

BNNUC      Forest Hill.      Mountview

**July 31. Church in the Pub. 11.30am – 1pm**  
Prayer Services lead by members at each campus will be held at the usual time for each campus (9:30am or 9:45am).

**Aug 7 Together @10 at Mountview Communion**

**Aug 14. Tina. Peter Livestream**

**Aug 21. Livestream Tina Peter**

**Aug 28 Peter Livestream Tina**

**Sept 4. Together @10.at Mountview Communion**

**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.