



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

PO Box 4308
Balwyn East VIC 3103

9th September 2022

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

On this significant day for the Commonwealth, we join in solidarity with the people of Britain as we mourn the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth. As we have heard from innumerable radio, television and social media commentaries, many of us have only vague, or in many cases no memories of a time when we have not had a Queen as Head of State. No doubt there will be changes ahead, and we share with people of all faiths in praying for peace in our time.

Presbytery Ministry

A letter to all members of Presbytery on 20th July announced the conclusion of the ministry in Yarra Yarra of our Presbytery Minister Ministry, Rev Liz McMillan, who has accepted a call to the role of Presbytery Minister Wellbeing in the Canberra Region Presbytery. We will be sad to say goodbye as we wish Liz well in her now role, Presbytery and Synod, and will have an opportunity to say this and to thank her at the next Presbytery meeting on 19th October.

The Standing Committee has appointed members of a Joint Nominating Committee, chaired by an appointee of the Synod Placements Committee, to seek a new Presbytery Minister for this role.

In the meantime, the Standing Committee has approved a profile/position description for the new combined role of Secretary and Presbytery Minister Administration, and this is ready to be presented to the Placements Committee once there is assured funding for the role.

Chairperson	Lisa Carey	03 9857 1006	lisa.carey@pyy.victas.uca.org.au
Presbytery Ministers	Liz McMillan	03 9857 1002	liz.mcmillan@victas.uca.org.au
	Sunny Chen	03 9857 1001	pyy.pmc@victas.uca.org.au
Secretary	Geoffrey Grinton	03 9857 1003	pyy.secretary@victas.uca.org.au

Presbytery meetings

The pattern of alternating Zoom and “in person” Presbytery meetings seems to be working well, with the most recent meeting having been held at Greensborough on 27th August. As usual, the agenda covered a wide range of issues, and some significant decisions were made.

The key item was a presentation by Rev Rachel Kronberger to introduce the Assembly Continuing Witness project. Rachel spoke about the Assembly invitation to presbyteries and other interested groups to consider three confessions of faith that had been suggested to the Assembly for formal adoption by the Uniting Church as ‘Continuing Witnesses’. The first document for consideration in the current triennium is the Confession of Belhar from South Africa, which claims our common humanity in the Gospel. After the introduction members engaged in small group discussions and were invited to respond to an online survey. Several groups provided feedback comments to the plenary session.

Another significant item was a discussion about the Vermont congregation. A report from the Standing Committee about the future of the Congregation outlined the process that had been followed leading to the proposal that recognition of the congregation be withdrawn. Following comments from members of Presbytery and from Vermont members, the Presbytery gave thanks for the long presence and witness of the Vermont congregation, and resolved to cease to recognise the congregation from 1st October 2022. The Standing Committee will continue to oversee a number of practical actions that will be required to ensure satisfactory arrangements for ongoing activities on the site.

The Presbytery also approved the formation of an Intercultural Working Group. This will be chaired in the first instance by Rev Salesi Faupula.

The next meeting will be on Zoom on 19th October, followed by an in-person meeting on 27th November. More details will be provided closer to the meeting.

Annual Surveys

Congregations who have not completed the online annual surveys have all been notified, and we trust that the returns have now been completed. Church Council Secretaries are asked to double-check that your congregation has completed both surveys.

Presbytery leadership

In the next few weeks we will be preparing the Call for Nominations for presbytery leadership positions in 2023–24. Like many voluntary

organisations, our strength comes from the willingness of many people to contribute of their time and energy. However, this is also a weakness as we see more and more people declining to play an active role in leadership. The reality is that we struggle to find people to fill our committees, to work on specific projects or task groups, or to develop new skills through becoming involved with something new.

Please think about those in your congregation who may be able to make a contribution so that you are ready to make nominations.

SYNOD ENEWS

Do you receive the regular Synod eNews mailings? These are essential reading for all congregational leaders. If you do not yet receive your own copy, you can be added to the mailing list by sending an email request to the Synod Communications team at communications@victas.uca.org.au.

UNDERSTANDING THE UCA

Have you ever wanted to gain a better understanding of who we are? The eLM unit is now offering a training course for anyone for wishing to understand more about the Uniting Church - and particularly for those needing to meet the Core Competency "Work within the doctrine, ethos and polity of the Uniting Church" for Ministry of Pastor roles and Ministry of Lay Preacher. The study units are online with assessment and group tutorials, and from 2023 will be offered a couple of times a year. Contact Mel Perkins, Lay Leadership Coordinator, at mel.perkins@victas.uca.org.au.

READING THE BIBLE WITH MARGINAL COMMUNITIES

The Synod intercultural Forum has arranged a Zoom forum on this topic on 11th October, from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The speaker will be Rev Dr Monica Melanchthon, Associate Professor of Old Testament, Pilgrim Theological College. More information and bookings: <https://events.humanitix.com/synod-intercultural-forum>.

A QUARTERLY CONVERSATION

The "Quarterly Conversation" is a new initiative of the Congregation of Mark the Evangelist (Nth Melb UCA) which seeks to foster conversation in the community on important social and political themes. Our hope is that, through these conversation groups, we will broaden understanding of – and engagement in – what is happening in Australia society. The conversations will be held quarterly, and have as their basis the corresponding issue of the [Quarterly Essay](#) – a widely-known journal which treats important community and national issues

in a single extended, focussed essay. For more information, visit www.marktheevangelist.unitingchurch.org.au/quarterly-conversations.

SYNOD ADVISORY PANEL MEMBERS SOUGHT

The new Synod Nominations Advisory Panel ((SNAP) is enthusiastic about its task, of which one aspect is, ‘To proactively seek to identify persons who are qualified and available for appointment to Synod committees and task groups, and other bodies as appropriate’.

Uniting Church members are being invited to nominate colleagues they believe would be suitable to be part of the recently formed Synod Nominations Advisory Panel. The panel is looking for enthusiastic people who are qualified and available to bring their particular skills and gifts to committees, task groups and other bodies. As part of the Synod’s commitment to diversity, members are particularly encouraged to nominate people under the age of 50 and those from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

To do this, the Synod needs your help to find those wonderful UCA people who might consider serving the Synod on a group, who would bring particular gifts and skills to a group, and who are not the usual people we all automatically think of and might consequently be overlooked for an opportunity to share their skills with us. As we continue to be mindful of the Synod resolution regarding greater inclusion, both of adults under 50, and also of Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) communities, the Synod is particularly keen to hear of those who fall into this category.

They would love to hear about people who could be interested in serving the Synod on one of its committees or task groups, but would also consider being part of the network of people who could be approached when a vacancy is highlighted.

Please offer yourself, or send the names of others to SNAP, by email to clare.boyd-macrae@victas.uca.org.au.

SHORT AND LONG TERM FOSTER CARERS NEEDED

Uniting VicTas are seeking foster carers for 0–18 year olds, who are open to providing emergency, respite, short or long term care in the East. Their Foster Care Program provides you with the training and advice to support your care of vulnerable children and young people in our community. You'll also receive a Care Allowance to help meet the basic costs of the child/young person in your care.

If you think you can support a child or young person, the Recruitment Team would love to hear from you. Call the Foster Care Recruitment Team on 03 9051 3048 or visit <https://unitingvictas.org.au/foster-care>.

BOOK REVIEW: GROWING UP UNITING

Growing Up Uniting: The Proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Society Conference, ed. Patricia Curthoys and William W. Emilsen (Hoppers Crossing, Vic., Uniting Church National History Society, 2021).

If you didn't grow up attending a Uniting Church, this book should interest you. It should interest you even more if you did! What is special about the UCA? What is different about the church? The UCA has much to offer the Australian community today.

This book is a journey into the experiences of eighteen people who have been influenced by belonging to the UCA. These people include theology teachers, clergy, lay people, youth leaders, musicians, historians and more.

The book is the proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Society Conference held in Parramatta and online in June 2021. It is published by the Society with editors Patricia Curthoys and William Emilsen, and with a foreword by the Society's president, the Rev. Associate Professor Glen O'Brien. It was launched by President-elect of the Uniting Church Assembly, the Rev. Charissa Suli.

The conference proved to be a watershed, where its theme, 'Growing Up Uniting' combined reflections and learnings from the past, with a focus on the present, and a commitment to a more positive future. There are refreshing and encouraging discussions on intergenerational relationships, multi-cultural opportunities, education, roles such as Deacon, and the church today.

This book is recommended reading for every member and adherent of the Uniting Church so that they are more conscious of the church's influences, and more able to communicate its values to those who are starting their journey with the church, or are simply searching.

This is not a book of history. It's a book with the future in mind.

(Book review by Clive Jackson, UCHS Committee member, tel 0466 601 741)

The Proceedings of the Third Uniting Church National History Conference, are for purchase, for \$30 (including postage) from Bob Coote, the UCNHS Treasurer. Please e-mail Bob at bandybe@gmail.com.

*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.