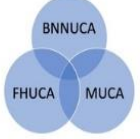
 <p>Whitehorse Uniting Cluster</p> <p>The Uniting Church in Australia Congregations of: Blackburn North / Nunawading; Forest Hill; and Mountview (Mitcham); in a shared ministry together</p> 	<h1><i>Cluster News</i></h1> <h1><i>February 2022</i></h1>
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Welcome to the February Cluster News.

After a break from this Cluster News over January, we begin a new year with new editors. Anne and Elaine have very big shoes to fill and thank Lynne Rosenthal for her wonderful work in producing the inaugural monthly editions. Lynne has kept us informed of the progress made as we inch toward more opportunities to enjoy worshipping and sharing together. Our hope is that this monthly bulletin will assist us all to feel informed and connected. We would love to hear from you with contributions, reports and photos and with news of upcoming events.

The Regional Council met on 3rd February, beginning the new year with gratitude to new office bearers: Chair, Daryl Hawkey (FH), Secretary, Joy Williams (FH) and a new position of Minute Secretary, Jacinta Selvaratnam (FH). We thank the retiring Chair and Secretary, Rob Jackson and Lynne Rosenthal of Mountview, for their wonderful guiding of the Council throughout its first year. Our Ministry Team, Rev Tina Lyndon Ng, Rev Peter Cannon and Rev Pete Rivett, remains a source of wisdom, counsel and encouragement as we continue into uncharted waters.

The Ecclesia Ministry with Phil McCredden is also helping us move forward. The findings from the recent Congregational Survey in which we had the opportunity to share our thoughts and hopes will be brought to each congregation at gatherings during March, just another step on the way to envisioning how best to love God and neighbour.

Introducing Daryl Hawkey, Regional Council Chairperson.



Daryl has been a member of the Forest Hill Uniting Church for 50 years, first when moving to Vermont and continuing after moving to Blackburn. Over that time, he has held many positions including Sunday School Superintendent, Youth Leader, Chair of the Congregation, Church Council Chair as well as representing Forest Hill on various committees. After retiring as an Executive Director of Rothschild Asset Management, Daryl was a consultant on a number of industry governance boards. For five years he served on the board of Prahran Mission as a member and Chairperson. Until recently he was a member of Melbourne Rotary and now pursues his interest in history as a member of the Royal Historical Society and attending lunches and lectures and singing in the choir at his club. Travel has always been a great interest and particularly since retirement, Daryl and Julie have travelled overseas frequently to discover new places of interest and adventure. With the

restriction on travel now, he has been exploring more of Victoria and interstate on short excursions. Daryl enjoys working in his large garden, getting together with his family and grandchildren, and viewing films and TV series. He is currently a member of the Forest Hill Church Council and its representative on the JNC.

**Re- introducing Joy Williams,
who we met in the September Bulletin and who is
currently Regional Council Secretary.**



I have been part of the Forest Hill congregation for over 45+ years; then of course part of the Methodist circuit. It has certainly been an interesting journey. I am now retired, but my profession was that of Kindergarten Teacher. I had numerous positions including working for governments ...local, state and federal. I also worked for the Uniting Church for 25 years working to establish, manage and support the early childhood centres operated by the congregations and agencies. Thoroughly enjoyed working in the rural communities setting up mobile services.

I have 3 adult children, all married and settled in their own communities. I am the proud grandma of 7 grandchildren ranging from 18 to 10. Also, Paull, my partner is a big part of my life as well. These days I spend many hours in my garden, enjoying the roses, orchids, veggies and my chooks. I regularly say 'my garden is my sanity'.

Thank you, Daryl and Joy for your leadership.

**Lenten Study 2022 - from Rev Tina.
Please register early for the Lenten study
so I can prepare materials. We are**

**hoping 10 people can attend each group.
Places are filling fast.**

**The movies are inspiring, and the
discussion will be great. Please phone or
email Rev Tina 0423 715 590 to register.
I need to finalise numbers by the next
combined service. The study will be a
movie followed by discussion and BYO
snack or meal. It will be about 2 hours
long.**

Forest Hill Sundays

**6th March at 4pm - Babette's Feast.
13th March at 4pm - Julia and Julie
20th March at 4pm - The Stranger
27th March at 4pm - Molaki
3rd April at 4pm - Les Misérables**

Blackburn North Nunawading and Mountview

Wednesdays: -

**9th March at 10am - Babette's Feast -
Blackburn North Nunawading
16th March at 10am - Julia and Julie -
Mountview
23rd March at 10am - The Stranger -
Mountview
30th March at 10am - Molaki -
Blackburn North Nunawading
6th April at 10am - Les Misérables -
Blackburn North Nunawading**

It is ok to swap between groups if you need to

HOSPITALITY is our theme for Lent this year.

*How quickly the seasons of the church year come
around! In few days we will celebrate the
exuberance of pancake Tuesday, followed by the
quiet reflexion of Ash Wednesday as we begin
the season of Lent, our time of preparing for the
pinnacle of Easter.*

*This year as we follow the theme of Hospitality
- such a wide and deep area to consider in our
studies and devotions,*

*Lynne Rosenthal of Mountview (our retired
Regional Council Secretary and Cluster Editor)
has been inspired to share this delightful story of
hospitality she has experienced*

A bed for the night

Back in the day when I was a young traveller,
living and working overseas, my girlfriends and I
were crammed into our little Morris van, as you

do, driving over hill and dale in Ireland. It was wonderful fun. We loved it. It was summer time but the light was fading when we decided to find a place to pull over to make a meal and sleep for the night. Not all of us could sleep in the little Morris and it was my turn to sleep 'out', on the ground. No problem, beautiful weather, a good sleeping bag and sleeping under the stars. What's not to like? We had a system and it worked really well.

We'd noticed lights on in a simple little farmhouse up on a small hill. We always felt good about this because we knew someone else in the little house was probably also snuggling into their bed. We were still getting settled when a farmer came wandering over to see if we were ok and, of course, we were but he insisted that we'd be far more comfortable joining he and his family in the little house. 'Oh no' we said, we couldn't do that but he gently insisted, saying he and his wife wouldn't be able to sleep if they knew visitors to his country were not well looked after. So off we went to join them and what a wonderful night it was! The children were gorgeous (we could hardly understand them), we laughed and swapped stories. I have never forgotten it. When we experience hospitality, it warms your heart and stays with you.

Lynne Rosenthal

Thank you, Lynne, for writing of this experience for us. Do others also have experiences of Hospitality to share? The Editors would be delighted to receive them for the March News.

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Don Sinclair

The Forest Hill Uniting Op Shop official reopening was held at 2 on 22.2.22.

Julie Hawkey, Chair of Church Council welcomed the approximately 75 guests and outlined of the history the church from its beginnings on a forested block in 1865 and its transition through the years as the area's demographics changed. The hall built in 1905 served many activities over the years and in 2007 it found a new purpose when the Op Shop was born as an "opportunity" to support community needs. Julie expressed the confidence that as this has been a mission of the Forest Hill church, so it will be embraced by the emerging Whitehorse Cluster churches.



Don Sinclair with Rev Denise Liersch

Don Sinclair, Chair of the Op Shop Committee, reminded us of the origins of the OP Shop, set up in the heritage listed hall and of the recent refurbishment which has resulted in a light, bright, welcoming space for local people to shop and chat. Don referenced some of the groups which have recently received funds from the profits: - Uniting East Burwood Centre emergency relief program for local residents, "Ongoing Change" (a group which addresses anger management) and the Tongan Relief fund.

Don thanked the committee and many volunteers for their contributions over the years and presented a challenging goal of raising 1 million dollars by the decade's end!!

Rev Denise Liersch, Moderator of the Synod, addressed the gathering, thanking all who have been involved in this community support over the years. Denise and Don then unveiled the plaque which will be hung in the Op Shop. Afternoon Tea was served and all were invited to view the new version of the OP Shop.



Being Church in times of COVID

A reflection by Cherril Randles 23 Jan.22

In a recent online service by the Rev Dr Margaret Mayman from St Michael's UCA,

Melbourne, she mentioned about the challenges the Church and people are facing in this time of COVID. A paraphrase of her reflection is followed by some personal observations.

"We begin this year not knowing what changes, for better for worse, lay ahead for us. Omicron is overwhelming us and our social and health systems here and around the world. As our lives have been turned upside down for nearly two years, special events and celebrations and our church gatherings have been postponed again and again, we all need to intentionally foster joy and live life fully and abundantly.

However, our world is much less about joyful living. The fact that our world is, on the whole, still much less than a celebration, should not keep us from joyful living. But to a large extent it does. We don't have to do everything. We do need wisdom to know what is ours to say, to do, to care about and to act upon. Then In the midst of all this, we may know joy and bring joy to others. We still may have to meet outdoors in small gatherings, have zoom meetings and keep in contact on the phone. However, they happen. May these occasions and connections sustain us."

A new change is that many of our families are being hit with Omicron and this may cause more anxiety for us in our day by day lives. I have had four grandchildren who have suffered COVID and others who have been in isolation due to close contact in their workplace. For many of us there is now not as much joy or energy in our lives or special events or holidays, to look forward to. As well there are increasing health issues.

These may cause feelings of regret, or I can't be bothered and a longing for the times of joy and connections we once shared in our church and our general living. This has also meant some families are separated from celebrations because they are not vaccinated.

With energy levels low amongst some of our members because of age, it is also impacted because of COVID, family concerns with COVID

and our lives different because of COVID. How we meet with family and friends and what we are able to do when we gather for church and what we can do in our church community, has changed. We no longer meet in our Ministry teams, except for the Finance and Property Ministry, which affects our natural connections for our Connections and Care, Circles of Care. Perhaps more understanding and emphasis needs to be placed on these changes when we plan for the future.

The question is how does this impact on our Church's responsibilities to our people?

Let's Play

Peter Cannon

As I write this, two of my grandchildren are staying with me. They are a delightful presence, full of life, unconcerned with the troubles of the world. They are young and love to play. They bring out the playfulness in me!

We have a lovely Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Roly. Roly is delightful. He loves to play, chasing the ball and bringing it back, playing hard to get and just keeping an eye on his territory. He too brings out the playfulness in me!

When we grow up, we are expected to take things seriously yet the desire to play remains. In fact, researchers notice that animals who play, especially with others, are smarter and do better. The suggestion is that play is good for us. And we desperately seek it when we miss it. We watch the tennis, the Olympics, we play sport or go on holidays. We walk with friends or share a coffee.

One of the ways I love to play is to laugh with friends. I find this happens most when we share meals and tell our stories. We make light of things, we joke, we laugh and we play with life.

COVID has impinged on this. Yet I have been able to meet with others over Zoom, on video

calls and still chat on the phone during lockdowns. I played with new ways. Some I found easy and others hard. Some worked well while with others, mistakes were made; I learnt more.

Who can forget the story of the lawyer presenting a case to a judge over Zoom while wearing a cat face! We all laughed! Even the judge! A serious situation but we can still play!

I have learnt to play with photos, the garden, phones, video, worship services, the way we do church, the way I relate and connect to friends and family and with life even more! This playfulness has given me permission to make mistakes and try again. And like foods, some I like a little and others a lot, I have found the same with much about church. But variety, as with foods, is the spice of life!

The other week we had a play with church. Originally, we had hoped to share food during the service, including Communion as part of this shared eating; a bit like the early church. Omicron put paid to that idea so we continued to play with ideas. We had worship outside under the trees and on the grass. Less music but more sharing. We had byo lunch fellowship. Somethings worked and others didn't but the delight on peoples' faces was evident. We played and church was fun!

We are on a journey together. We don't know what will transpire but we can do this together. We can still have fun. We can play, explore, make mistakes and laugh. We can try, risk and encourage each other along the way. We can share our stories in so many ways. We do this as we open up to each other and to God.

Let's play!



Mountview 9.30 a.m. Daniel Farnsworth

Welcome to Daniel Farnsworth

You will notice a new name on our “March Worship” list. **Daniel Farnsworth** is in his final stages of Ministry Formation with the Uniting Church and will be with us for most of the year, working with our Cluster Ministry Team across the whole range of ministry. We warmly welcome Daniel and look forward to a mutually rewarding time together.

World Day of Prayer on Friday 4th March at St John’s Catholic Church Mitcham.
Morning Tea at 10am. Service at 10.30am.
All are invited.

Worship in March

2 March

Ash Wednesday.
Forest Hill. 2 p.m. Rev Peter C

6 March. Lent 1

Combined Worship
& Communion at Mountview 10am
Forest Hill 9.30 a.m.

13th March

Blackburn Nth/Nun 9.45 a.m. Bob Laslett
Forest Hill 9.30 a.m. Rev Tina
Mountview 9.30 a.m. Daniel Farnsworth

20th March

Blackburn Nth/Nun. 9.45 a.m. Communion
Rev Pete
Forest Hill 9.30 a.m. Communion. Rev Tina
Mountview 9.30 a.m. Communion. Tom Rose

27th March

Blackburn Nth/Nun 9.45 a.m. Rev Pete
Forest Hill 9.30 a.m. Rev Tina

Whitehorse Regional Council
Membership

Blackburn North/Nunawading Uniting

Elaine Hewson 0425 709 089
Anne Smith 9899 1932
George Manuofetoa 0404 884 140

Forest Hill Uniting

Daryl Hawkey (Chairperson) 0419 607 085
Julie Hawkey 0488 460 875
Joy Williams 0402 491 013

Mountview Uniting Mitcham

Rob Jackson. 0413 599 047
Lynne Rosenthal. 0415 286 855
David Rowe 0411 268 680

Ministry Team

Rev Peter Cannon
Rev Tina Lyndon Ng
Rev Pete Rivett
Ministers On Call contact 0403 225 257

The Regional Council members meet on the first
Thursday of every month.

Happy Holidays

We wish **Peter and Helen Cannon** a wonderfully refreshing and relaxing holiday. The Editors are hopeful of photos for this Bulletin!!

