

PRESBYTERY PORT PHILLIP WEST

13 AUGUST 2020—NEWSLETTER NO.13



Fearful Times

Rev. Bruce Watson

Matthew 14:25-27. And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, **"Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."**

When I was a youngster, although I lived in Geelong which is on Corio Bay and close to the Bellarine Peninsula, I never spent much time in the water. Actually, our family went to a farm near Kaniva every school holiday because our grandparents lived there.

Instead of playing in water we would be out in the paddocks or playing tennis in the summer on a home-built court which the galahs or cockatoos would ruin with their beaks. However, on return to school from the farm I would be expected to participate in the school's swimming program. But it would be at Eastern Beach and the water could be deeper because of the tide. I remember becoming anxious by the minute as we approached the pool. Would I have to go in? How deep will it be this week? Would I have to put my head under the water? My fears got in the way of me enjoying the beach and learning to swim.



Photo from 'Unsplash' by Vidar Nordli-Mathisen

Matthew 14 invites us to give our attention to the role that fear plays in our lives. In this time of the pandemic, what we fear and the expectations we create can so easily be transformed into reality, paralysing us or limiting our ability to take the kind of risk that being disciples of Jesus demands of us. As we are in the boat together, let us hear Jesus say, **"Take heart. It is I. Do not be afraid!"**

SYNOD : NEW ADDRESS

This is a note to advise you that the UCA VicTAS Synod has now moved. Our new physical address and mailing address is:

Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Level 2, Wesley Place
130 Lonsdale Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Helpful phone numbers:

Reception – 9116 1400

Mark Lawrence/Kathryn D'Alessandro – 9116 1423

Isabel Thomas Dobson - 9116 1475

Emma Gordon – 9116 1421

Moderator/Deb Penaluna – 9116 1422

All email addresses remain the same. Everyone with WWCC could you pls register this change.

What if COVID lasted another year?

Your church Council has thought about 'what if church should go back next week?'

Now they should consider 'What if Church does not go back until next year?'

How will this change your thinking and planning as a church?

Mental Health Matters

Rev Fiona Bottcher [Deacon]

Our reaction to the first lockdown was almost frenetic as we grasped the novelty of isolation and how we would best use our time. We would come out of it new, transformed. This time it's different. This time there's no real sense of an end or of a better future. My advice is this:

Weep.

The grief of this lockdown has crept in like a thick, invisible fog, swirling around our feet and knees. Our bodies feel heavy as we push against it. Processing grief goes beyond listing our losses, we need to stand in the wind-torn holes in our hearts and feel it.

Weeping is a kind of emptying. It allows us to give form to our loss, to cradle it in our arms and to name it.

And what then? Well, then we dance! Because there is "a time to mourn, and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:4) and where there was death there is new life - we know this, as Christians it's etched into our hearts. Henri Nouwen reminds us that: "often our grief allows us to choreograph our dance while our dance creates the space for our grief." So let us weep and let us dance my friends!



Prayer:

Accepting

May we accept the people we are

May we become who you call us to be

May we follow together in the way you lead

*May we bear each other's burdens with
patience and grace*

May we extend to all human kindness

May we love, for that is your way

Just as you showed us as the Christ

Amen.

Jon.

Photograph by Marc Xu courtesy of Unsplash



Photographers across the Presbytery we are building a new PPW website and would love you to donate photos of your area. Eg. Local church street front, op-shops, congregational life, mission activities. Contact Linley on 0408 169 882 .

Safe Church

Church Training Session

Aug 24, 2020 from 7pm – 9pm on zoom.

All welcome

Register with

<https://www.trybooking.com/BKWGU>

PPW Focus Worship Service

COVID has meant ministers had postponed leave. Now some ministers may be worn out and need leave at short notice... to help you can connect to the **Focus Worship Service through the Presbytery** Facebook Page in a number of ways by clicking on this link <https://www.facebook.com/groups/UCAPPW>. By going directly to the Focus church's website each week:

August 16th - Melton

August 23rd - Drysdale—Altona Meadows Laverton

August 30th - Corio-Norlane—Peter Jewell Farewell

The video will be posted to the Presbytery Vimeo page <https://vimeo.com/user111726530> - The video will be there a little later & other resources.

9 minutes @ 9

PPW Presbytery Ministers pledging to pray with you twice a day...

- ◆ Pray for our political leaders as they seek to navigate a way out of this declared disaster, at the same time as being buffeted by the backlash of blame.
- ◆ Pray for our Synod staff as they endeavour to guide us through this difficult time, at the same time as having to move office.
- ◆ Pray for our local church leaders as they push through exhaustion to continue to support the worship, witness and service in our communities.
- ◆ Pray for our families as we settle in to the ongoing psychology of lock-down and what that means for our relationships.
- ◆ Pray for all of our front-line workers who are now experiencing their own outbreak of Covid-19 as a result of their care for our communities.
- ◆ Loving God, surround each of these our prayers with your gentle guidance and abundant Grace.
- ◆ In the name of Christ we pray. **Amen.**

Jeanne Beale

Lay Preacher's/ Worship Leaders Chat

August 19th 4:30 - 6 pm

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89868660025>

Meeting ID: 898 6866 0025

Make it Messy



Saturday August 25th

2- 5pm on-line

*Messy church, young families and
Intergenerational ministry.*

Psychologist's list on how to cope with the anxiety and fear caused by COVID-19 goes viral

Published by Eileen M Feliciano, Psy.D. on March 27, 2020 [Extracts—Dot points] Full article on Regenerating the Church FaceBook

1. *Stick to a routine.*
2. *Dress for the social life you want, not the social life you have.*
3. *Get out at least once a day, for at least thirty minutes. ... open the windows and blast the fan.*
4. *Find some time to move each day, again daily for at least thirty minutes.*
5. *Reach out to others, you guessed it, at least once daily for thirty minutes.*
6. *Stay hydrated and eat well.*
7. *Develop a self-care toolkit.*
8. *Spend extra time playing with children.*
9. *Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and a wide berth. Everyone is doing the best they can...*
10. *Everyone find their own retreat space.*
11. *Expect behavioural issues in children, and respond gently.*
12. *Focus on Safety and attachment... physical touch, play, verbal reassurances.*
13. *Lower expectations and practice radical self-acceptance .*
14. *Limit social media and COVID conversations, especially around children.*
15. *Notice the good in the world, the helpers....*
16. *Help others. Find ways, big and small, to give back to others.*
17. *Find something you can control and control the heck out of it eg. Declutter...*
18. *Find a long term project and dive into eg. huge jigsaws, series of novels, knit a blanket*
19. *Repetitive movement can be soothing eg. Knitting, rocking, running...*
20. *Find an expressive art and go for it...*
21. *Find lightness and humour in each day...*
22. *Reach out for help your team in there for you.*
23. *'Chunk" your quarantine, take it moment by moment.*
24. *Remind yourself daily this is only temporary.*
25. *Find the lesson. (Making sense of Covid).*

Mentally and emotionally challenging times...

By Mel Perkins (eLM Lay Leadership Development Co-ordinator)

Hi folks, as we continue to find ourselves in challenging and changing times, I have thought deeply about what to send to you as resources - and when. Some folk are doing well in themselves, others are struggling, and others still feel like they are on an emotional and mental roller coaster. The following resources may provide some pastoral (not counselling) support to folk during this difficult time - for themselves, or as they recognise the signs in others.

Firstly, we know that many are finding these times mentally and emotionally challenging. The following are some of the great resources available online and through apps:

- ⇒ Beyond Blue - <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/> - with extra support during COVID-19
- ⇒ Smiling Mind (including "Thrive Inside") - <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>; <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside> - "Thrive Inside" offers specific support as we spend extended times at home
- ⇒ Calm - <https://www.calm.com/>
- ⇒ Headspace - <https://www.headspace.com/blog/>
- ⇒ Emerging Minds - <https://emergingminds.com.au/> - this has a toolkit for supporting children's mental health during a pandemic (with skills applicable for all!)

Secondly, taking some time to be still, quiet and slow down and just listen to nature can work wonders. The following are some ideas that can be practiced at home, in front-yards, in back-yards, in other places (given lifting of restrictions). Some benefit can apparently be gained even by watching nature videos with these practices in mind if you can't go out.

- ⇒ *Dadirri* - an Aboriginal practice of deep listening. The following explanations come from the Northern Territory - <https://www.miriamrosefoundation.org.au/about-dadirri>; <https://www.creativespirits.info/aboriginalculture/education/deep-listening-dadirri>. Where you have connections with local Aboriginal people and you are able to connect with them in these times, take the opportunity to ask them about their practice of deep listening.
- ⇒ *Forest bathing* or *forest therapy* - a spiritual practice that originated in Japan. See how it looks in Melbourne/Victoria - <https://www.abc.net.au/triplej/programs/hack/forest-bathing-melbourne/11173878>; <https://www.visitmelbourne.com/Features/Forest-bathing>
- ⇒ Home gardeners world-wide are finding their garden helps keep them more balanced generally, but especially during COVID-19 (I know being in mine helps me a lot!)

Thirdly, ambiguous loss and COVID-19. Many are feeling loss that is unclear, full of uncertainty, not knowing what is coming next - at home, work, church, society, etc. For some, this is linked to anxiety because they don't know exactly why they are feeling loss, or whether it is ok to feel that way. Back in the 1970's, Dr Pauline Boss developed the term, "ambiguous loss" in her work with people who had family members away at war. She then developed this work further with those who had a family member experiencing dementia. Dr Boss' work on ambiguous loss has application to trauma and the time we now face due to COVID-19. Some useful resources around this are:

- ⇒ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QQRbFJ0arM> - Dr Boss speaks about COVID-19 and ambiguous loss (a great listen with some PPT slides)
- ⇒ <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/in-sickness-and-in-health/202005/covid-19-and-ambiguous-loss> - some explanation about ambiguous loss
- ⇒ <https://www.apa.org/monitor/2020/06/covid-grieving-life> - Grieving life and loss - from the American Psychological Association. There are some important points in this too.

We have decisions to make now, and into the future, about church - our communities and our structures. When our nervous systems are anxious and struggling, good decisions can be hard to make. I hope these resources are helpful for your work. Peace & Blessings.

(These resources are also found at: [https://victas.uca.org.au/lay_leadership_mental_and_emotional_wellbeing/.](https://victas.uca.org.au/lay_leadership_mental_and_emotional_wellbeing/))