

WITNESS



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

The Journal of the Lay Preachers' Association, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Vol 38 No 1

Lent 2017

WITNESS



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

The Journal of the Lay Preachers' Association, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Vol 38 No 1

February 2017

Salutations and greetings to you all! Our Lenten journey is underway, and we are once again called to walk these next 40 days reflecting on the challenges and hardships that Christ and his disciples faced as they made their way to Jerusalem, and how this relates to our own faith journey.

Through Matthew's Gospel, we are given a uniquely balanced view, of the duality of our Lord. His awesome and awe-inspiring divinity and his frail yet complete humanity. And this journey begins in Matthew 17 with the Transfiguration.

It is no coincidence that this significant event occurred upon a mountain. Even for us today, journeying up a mountain gives us the opportunity to change our perspective. To consider our circumstances, our life situation, or our place in the world from a different viewpoint. Perhaps Jesus also felt the need to 'take a moment, and breathe some fresh air' before his final decent to Calvary. Taking only his closest friends, to share this unique experience.

While we are familiar with the description "His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white,"(17:2) and we can perhaps alter our own viewpoint, by considering the idea, that it was not Christ who changed before them. But rather, that in a divine moment of revelation, a veil was lifted from their eyes, and they became witness to the "True Christ" as He had always been. A new perspective on the man they were following into an uncertain future. Our Lenten journey invites us to

find a new perspective to our Lord. May each of us be open to this revelation.

THE PRESIDENT WRITES

The *Basis of Union, paragraph 3*, reminds us. *'The Church lives between the time of Christ's death and resurrection and the final consummation of all things which Christ will bring; the Church is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal; here the Church does not have a continuing city but seeks one to come.'*

There are many pilgrimages that we hear about today. In my North East Victoria Presbytery we have the Celtic Pilgrimage that has been going on for many years. Some of you may have been part of this over the years or alternatively, walked part, or all, of the several European pilgrimages that are so well known. My experience with 'pilgrimage' is that I knew where the destination was, but not so sure about just what delights and challenges I would find along the way. Being a pilgrim church we are confident in our destination, but not at all sure about just what we will experience along the way. It is tempting to forget that we are always moving on, and settle for the comfort of the present, or fond memories of the past, thus not acknowledging that the Church continues to move forward in new ways. We, Lay Preachers of the Uniting Church, are among those who are assisting and feeding those who are with us on this pilgrimage. Therefore we have a responsibility to maintain our own journeys of learning and growing in our faith as we continue in our ministries.

In the coming few months the Lay Preachers' Association has two major events coming up, both of which will provide excellent opportunities to assist us in our growth and enhance our skills and share with other Lay Preachers and worship leaders across the Synod. I hope that all of you put these events in your diary right now.

1. Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting - held at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, Parkville on Friday evening, March 24, and Saturday, March 25. Planning is well underway, with a focus being on 'Moving along with change in the UCA'. See the attached flyer for more details.

2. National Conference for Lay Preachers - this year is held in our Synod; at the Centre for Theology and Ministry, Parkville, from July 7 - 10. Plans are in place for an exciting conference, which will provide plenty of opportunities to share experiences and ideas with those from Lay Preachers and others across the Assembly. We have an excellent group of presenters lined up that will get us thinking on how we grow in our ability to share our faith through meaningful and authentic worship in our changing communities. There will be many tasks to be done as we get closer to the time, so I do hope that many will come forward when a call to help goes out.

Lay Preachers are needed now more than ever as the availability of ordained ministry is decreasing across the Synod, but particularly in the rural areas. The Church is also meeting many challenges in new and creative ways. Lay Preachers are very much part of this journey. Your ministry, be it in small, out of the way communities or in the bustle of the city, is highly valued by the Church and by the people being served in those communities. My prayer is that the Lay Preachers' Association provides you with the care and support that assists you in this most important gift to our Church.

I look forward to seeing you at the Conference on March 24/25, which is not all that far away. God's blessings to you all.

LouAnne

PRESBYTERY REPORTS

Gippsland

Peter Morris

With the changing needs of the church, many worship services in Gippsland are led by members of the congregation.. It is an important strength of the Uniting Church that lay and ordained people work together to do what needs to be done. Some of our congregation members are very able worship leaders and lead worship when needed; but don't see this as their main calling. After experiencing leading worship, others feel called to train for ministry of Lay Preacher. There are some people ready to start their Lay Preacher training and we are looking at the best options to help them through their application and training process. We continue with the large task of updating our records and looking for opportunities for fellowship and encouragement of Lay Preachers. Most of the Lay Preachers I talk with, say that while they would like to do more, they are doing about as much as they can at the moment...

In November 2016, there was a wonderful continuing education opportunity with Rev Dr Sunny Chen on exploring Year A of the Lectionary. There were a good number of Ministers, Lay Preachers and people interested in leading worship. Mrs Elizabeth Dyllal went to be with the LORD in June 2016. She was a Retired Lay Preacher and Minister's wife. They had been missionaries in the New Hebrides and were still involved in the pastoral care of seasonal workers from Vanuatu.

We have much to be thankful for...

North East Victoria

Joan McRae

Our Lay Preachers continue to lead numerous services across the Presbytery each month. Peter Jackman, of Cobram, will be recognised as a Lay Preacher in a service at Cobram on February 26. We are delighted that he has joined those recognised by the church as Lay Preachers.

Joan Hall, of Seymour, was commissioned in January as a Lay Pastor at Dunolly where she has a half-time placement. We offer Joan our prayers as she takes up this new phase of her ministry.

Wendie Wilkie, our Presbytery Minister Mission and Education, retires from that ministry at the end of February. We are delighted that she will continue her ministry as a Lay Preacher, and that she will remain in Wangaratta!

Port Phillip East

Di Paterson

January is often a busy time for Lay Preachers and this January has been no exception. Many of our Ministers take a well-earned break and are grateful for the assistance of our Lay Preachers.

I have almost sorted the list of current Lay Preachers and am hoping to meet with PRC to sort through the next step for a Lay Preacher Group/Committee for PPEP. Many of the Lay Preachers were happy to speak with me and were delighted that lists etc. were being brought up to date.

A number of our Lay Preachers regularly conduct Worship to support many of the congregations who are small in number and have not been able to call a minister. The services of the Lay Preachers in our Presbytery are a huge support to the Churches and the Presbytery and we are grateful for their ongoing commitment and willingness to serve.

Port Philip West

Rob Coulson

Following a survey conducted in late 2016 two training days are being arranged (March and November). Topics include Preaching from the New Testament; Preaching from the Hebrew Scriptures; and the Psalms.

The number of accredited Lay Preachers in PPW is declining due to transfer to another Presbytery, retirement and transfer to another denomination.

Tasmania

Heather Cowled

VALE: It is with sadness that I write to inform you that George Hingston, a Recognised Lay Preacher since 1959, passed away after a long illness on the 13th of January. A very active Lay Preacher gone to be with his Lord.

Coming Events: The Tasmanian Presbytery Minister has been busy organising a lot of activities for Lay Worship Leaders which includes Lay Preachers.

April 1st at Longford. Our Presbytery Minister describes the day as “the 1st April is an Open Space Technology day to work with what the future might be for Lay Preachers into the near future in the Presbytery. It is a way of attending to the business that needs to be attended so that decisions can be made in relation to the funds set aside. There may well be a decision not to reform the Association, but to network another way so that some of the wider church responsibilities can be attended to. It may be that things stay as they currently are. “ To have a say or volunteer to be on a committee I hope that all Lay Preachers and those in training will be there. This is a very important decision day. **April 29th** A day with Bill Loader: “This is open to anybody in the Presbytery who is keen to engage the topic and approach that Bill Loader brings. It will enhance the dialogue that the wider church is engaged in around sexuality, and in particular same sex relationships/marriages etc. Bill’s approach is to give good foundational background in terms of theological, biblical, contextual thinking, that informs the position we may take and from which we can enter conversations with those who hold an alternative view, without becoming divisive over it. His research lends itself to assisting the church to engage in that conversation healthily.” This event will be at Scotch Oakburn in Launceston.

To all the Lay Preachers, who are active in the state, we are thankful for their service to the Presbytery of Tasmania.

Yarra Yarra

Hailey Rose

A seminar day was held on 19 February at which members of the YY LP Committee ran sessions on preparing liturgy in the year of Matthew. Several Worship Leaders contributed to this very successful afternoon. The Committee met on Sunday 29 January. Survey to LPs and Councils was approved to discover the accuracy of our roll and to check continuing education and WWCC. Investigations are continuing with the proposal to amalgamate the Committee and the Association..

Education Opportunities

The new [*Standards for Formation and Education for the Specified Ministry of Lay Preacher*](#) are expected to be implemented during 2017. These *Standards* for Lay Preacher Candidates comprise the Core Competencies for the specified Ministry of Pastor plus the General Competencies in relation to worship and preaching.

Education options for Lay Preacher Candidates The primary education options available to Lay Preacher Candidates in 2017 are based around:

- a. **Pilgrim Theological College** options including in-class and online courses that describes learning pathways for lay leadership, and
- b. a **'community of learning'** over four intensive weekends, hosted at the CTM Parkville but potentially available to regional and remote areas by online videoconferencing (similar to Skype).

Pilgrim Pathways

Pilgrim Pathways is an initiative to create a new cohort of students in the Graduate Certificate in Theology and Graduate Diploma in Theology. These awards are for people who hold a degree in another field, but do not assume any previous study of theology. **As a pathway through the**

award, we are offering a sequence of subjects to make up the award on Tuesday evenings through the next six semesters.

Pilgrim Theological College Anniversary Scholarships

To launch the Pilgrim Pathways initiative and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UCA, Pilgrim is offering up to 40 scholarships to support new students in the Graduate Certificate of Theology or the Graduate Diploma of Theology. The Anniversary Scholarships would cover 75% of the University of Divinity fees. (Additional support from congregations or presbyteries could cover the remaining 25% which is the UD 'capitation' fee, plus a 1% margin. In 2017 this amount is \$571.50). Enrolment information and details of how to apply for the Anniversary Scholarships can be found at <http://pilgrim.edu.au/anniversary-scholarship/>

During this transitional time involving both the Lay Preacher Competencies and the VicTas Synod restructure, a 'community of learning' including Lay Preacher Candidates, prospective and current leaders under the Ministry of Pastor, and other lay leaders will meet together for four weekends across 2017 with a specific focus on the two Core Competencies and the General Competencies related to Worship and Preaching.

LAY PREACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

President	Ms LouAnne Stabb 3 Chifley Street, Wodonga 3690 02.6059 2244 stabb@iinet.net.au
Secretary	Mr Alastair Davison 0412 653 218 ajdavison@netspace.net.au
Treasurer	Mr Rob Coulson 178 Main Road, Riddell's Creek 5428 6242 /3431 rssnpc@bigpond.com
Witness Editor	Mrs Mandy Stark 5 Nioka Crt Park orchards 3114 amandajanestark@gmail.com

