
WITNESS



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SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

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Salutations and greetings to you all! I can hardly believe that we are once again celebrating Pentecost! Where does the year go?

Pentecost, is often considered to be the "True Birthday of the Church" a time to acknowledge and celebrate the gift of the Spirit as it descended upon the heads of the disciples, allowing them to hear the words of salvation, in their native tongue, regardless of who was speaking.

I must admit, that this would at times be very handy, in our multi-cultural, multi-lingual society of today. I greatly admire those who are linguistically gifted- those who are speak one or even sometimes many more languages. It is a skill that I wish I had acquired.

It seems that there is more and more assistive technology, such as "Google translate" that can help to bring better understanding between people. However, there are still times when the true meaning of our words become "Lost in translation."

You only need to look at the number of biblical translations, from the King James Version to the NRSV, to see exactly how much our chosen translation, changes the reading, and all too often the intended meaning of these precious words.

Often in my prayers, I pray for clarity. I pray for spirit to show me what is required, in a form or manner that I can understand. There are times when I can be distracted from the message, when I cannot see clearly, or in my humanness, feel that the answer is "not what I was looking for."

As we move through Pentecost, may we seek clarity, listen intently and respond swiftly and appropriately. Mandy

THE PRESIDENT WRITES

If you did not attend the Annual Conference last March you may be wondering why I am still writing the President's report. You are correct, in that my two year term did expire at the AGM. However our succession planning was not terribly effective and we came to the AGM without a President-elect nomination. As a last resort I offered to have my term extended and the task of appointing a President-elect was referred to the Committee of Management. The Committee has done just that and I am pleased to announce that Bruce Hill, who has looked after our Travelling Lay Preachers very well for a few years, has been appointed to the position. He has taken up the role as of our May meeting and will be installed as President at the 2019 AGM. It is only fair that he has at least part of a year to get used to the idea and therefore I will continue as President until the next AGM. So, you'll have to put up with a few more reports from me.

There is more good news to convey. Western Victoria Presbytery is now represented on the Committee of Management. We were thrilled to welcome a Past President, Daryl Pedler, as the new representative from Western Victoria. His appointment came through just before our meeting which was perfect timing. We give thanks for both Bruce and Daryl and look forward to working with them. May they both be blessed in their service with the Lay Preachers' Association. Bruce is a relatively new Lay Preacher and Daryl very experienced. What an excellent balance to have both experience and youthful enthusiasm from our two new Committee members. Currently the Committee has only one vacancy, Tasmania.

Right now we are planning the Lay Education Day, which will be held on at CTM in Parkville on the 4th of August. More details will be available soon. Extending our skills and understanding is so important, and getting together with other Lay Preachers, candidates and lay worship leaders is always incredibly valuable. AND, participation in the day is an activity that you can include on your 'Continuing Education' application. A revised, and hopefully simpler, form will be launched at the Lay Education Day.

May all of you be blessed in your faithful service across the Synod.

Lou Anne Stabb

PRESBYTERY REPORTS

Gippsland

Peter Morris

It is encouraging to hear of our lay preacher candidates continuing their studies and enjoying the journey. Lay preachers, candidates and worship leaders have been travelling to congregations where they haven't preached before and their ministry has been greatly appreciated. We are glad to do what we can.

We look to provide appropriate training days, including a day on the Basis of Union with Rev Dr Geoff Thompson, in Traralgon on 23rd June.

We plan for 2018 to be a time when we acknowledge the service of lay preacher, and finding better ways for fellowship and encouraging each other.

We have much to be thankful for.

North East Victoria

Joan McRae

Lay Preachers have been working along busily in this presbytery.

One of our Candidates recently completed her services for assessment and the Lay Preachers' Committee has recommended to the Pastoral Relations Committee that they recommend that Presbytery recommend that she be recognised as a Lay Preacher at the May meeting of Presbytery.

We are looking forward to being joined in this presbytery by Robert Lees when Michele is inducted as minister of Echuca-Moama in July.

Port Phillip East

Di Paterson

We have many of our Lay Preachers regularly involved in leading worship at a number of Churches in the Presbytery. It was good to have one of our candidates at Lay Preacher's conference and training day. The VicTas conference/training went well and it was very informative.

We have finally sorted out the last bit of paper work for one of our candidates and they should be commissioned soon. I have a candidate who is starting a time of mentoring with a Minister from the Presbytery, and this will be helpful for the Candidate. That gives us 3 Candidates at various stages of their journey into being accredited as Lay Preachers

Port Philip West

Rob Coulson

Four LPs from PPW attended the LPA Training day/AGM.

A copy of the latest version of the "Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Lay Preachers in the Uniting Church in Australia" sent to all LPs

A copy of the "Continuing Education of Lay Preacher" certificate application form forwarded to all LPs (as a way of encouragement to participate in training) A former LP has returned to the UCA after leaving for a period of time. We welcome his return.

Tasmania - vacant

Western Victoria - Vacant

Loddon Mallee- Robert Lees

Survey forms have recently been returned from more than half of our members showing details of their service leadership during 2017. Results confirm that Lay Preachers fill a vital role in small congregations where ordained ministry is

unavailable. Several of our members conduct services on average more than twice a month. The hours contributed providing worship leadership is most significant, and is usually in addition to holding other roles within their Church. Like motherhood, Lay Preaching is a sacrificial role which brings rich spiritual rewards, unseen by those occupying the pews.

Loddon Mallee can confirm that all Lay Preachers hold current Working with Children Registration.

Yarra Yarra

Haley Rose

Rev Dr Barry Brown spoke at our February education day on the season of lent and provided us with some useful tips and resources.

Our lay preacher checklist returns are now around 70%, all checklist returns have supplied WWCC. Around 7 respondents indicated that they had not undertaken any study. We have recently sent out another letter to congregations as only about 27% replied last year. This letter is to double check our records. By doing this we found two lay preachers who were not on our roll and two on the roll that were not lay preachers. Each lay preacher in Yarra Yarra is conducting an average of one service a month, with a range of 1 to 30+ services per year.

In 2017 we issued 11 long service certificates and six to retiring lay preachers. We were also saddened to hear that Peter Scott-Young had died in 2017. We currently have seven lay preacher candidates with another two expressing interest. We remain very busy supporting the presbytery with its preaching needs.

Lay Preachers Education Day- 16th and 17th of March, 2018. "Being a Lay Preacher in today's World."

Our conference began with a simple and thought-provoking worship service, and then a presentation by Rev Deacon Jeanne Beale on Inclusive Communication styles within worship. She identified that

"Boundaries are multidimensional", and are created by the individual from their lived experience. However, they can also be created by the observer, as we enter into someone else's space. We recognise that as trusted leaders within the church, our role is to nurture and support those whom we serve, but to always be aware and respectful of each person's boundaries, and the expectations of the Church regarding these matters. More details can be found at <http://ucavictas.org.au/> keeping children safe. We recognise that within our role, we frequently meet people who are vulnerable, so being aware of maintaining our pastoral and personal boundaries is extremely important.

On the Saturday morning we commenced with a very informative session conducted by the Rev Dr Sean Winter, who is the newly appointed director of the ELM (Equipping for Leadership and Mission), and directly overseeing the EFL (Education and Formation for Leadership) While these acronyms are new to us, this is part of a major restructure within the Pilgrim College around how education and ministry preparation, both lay and ordained, will occur in the future., Sean took this opportunity to provide us with some basic groundwork about what the education and learning space of the church might look like going forward. There will be a new role created, specifically for lay education, and that role has been subsequently appointed. Mel Perkins will commence this new role in early June. Sean asked us some very significant questions about our ministry as Lay Preachers, and how we envision this evolving in the coming 5-10 years. There was robust discussion about the diversity and importance of our role, within the overall life of the church.

In the following session, Rev. Ray McClusky provided a practical and detailed presentation on "Powerpoint Basics." He stressed the importance of appropriate and timely "preparation", and on the importance of knowing the congregation, the outlay of the building, the equipment

you are using, the technical operators of any IT systems, and finally rehearsing and having an active knowledge of your slide presentation. He also suggested that using a "Blank Slide" can bring the congregations attention back to the preacher. He emphasised that Powerpoint should be used to enhance worship, not distract from it.

After lunch, we gathered for a timely reminder about our Code of Ethics and the inherent requirements of our role as a Lay Preacher. While this information is important for our Lay Preacher Candidates, it is essential knowledge for all of us. The conference was informative, enjoyable, thought provoking, and a wonderful opportunity for us to gather as a wider community. It would be great to see you all at the next one!

Continuing Education

Completing book reviews- Heather Cowled

Book Review Example for one point for Continuing Education.

A single point review might be something that you submit to your church newsletter or to a meeting of local Lay Preachers. You will note that there isn't a book review dot point in the one point section [D] on the Continuing Education Form. Each of the four sections A to D are only suggestions of what the continuing education may be, so whatever you are doing for continuing education, can be put into the point section that you think it is worth i.e. the more complicated or time consuming the more points.

Here is an example of a one point review:

I was reading 'Amish Country Crossroads by Beverly Lewis', which is an interesting novel about gangsters and an Amish Community. What got me thinking was the reference to the conversion of one of the gangsters simply by reading 'Mere Christianity by C. S. Lewis' which was first printed in 1952. My curiosity at the power

of this book, to convert a gangster, led me to search my bookshelf and re read my old copy from the perspective of 'How could this convert someone?' I did find it very refreshing and still relevant to Christians today. Not an easy read, because it doesn't have inclusive language, which I found irritating, but a good reminder '... of Christian apologetics, ethics and theology...' It was a good case for not throwing out old books just because they are dated, as there might be still some relevance for today, but if I was a gangster I don't think it would convert me.

To be a 4 point book review there needs to be a clear link that "Shows how the insight gained will be used in ministry..."

It really is easy to get 5 continuing education points for a year e.g. Safe Church Workshop organised by the Presbytery = 2 points. Code of Ethics, in Tasmania we have two per year, so 2 points. Any relevant Conference or Presbytery Education Day = 2 points. Writing a book review 1, 2 or 4 points. Reading a relevant book without a book review 1 point. That gives a total of a possible 11 points for one year! Just keep track of what you are doing and you will soon see how easy it is to get a Continuing Education Certificate.

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