

COVID-19: care-full gatherings & communion

Many of us are sick of COVID-19, but not in the medical sense: the virus has so altered our everyday lives that it is easy to wish everything could just go back to the way things were, 'back to normal'. But as we hear in many places, the 'new normal' will not be the same: the world is now different, and we are now more aware than ever that how we live has life-long impacts on others.

Careful attention to COVID-19 has saved thousands or millions of lives. Yet the global 'Black Lives Matter' campaign and continuing climate change show us there is much still to be done as stewards of God's good creation.

God's Spirit is still with us, calling us to *follow Christ, walk together as First and Second Peoples, and seek community, compassion and justice for all creation*. God invites us to share eternal life and love, to show care for all, and to bring abundant life to those on the margins as Jesus did.

This month we give thanks for the long faithful service of Sue Walker (p 8), explore many opportunities for ongoing learning (p.4), and celebrate the 43rd birthday of the Uniting Church (p. 5).

As the leaders of local congregations and faith communities plan and prepare for church services and gatherings, careful attention must be paid to COVID-19 Safety Plans, using checklists provided by WorkSafe Tasmania, Government health authorities and the Uniting Church's FAQs for Tas.

Church guidelines for care-full celebrations of Holy Communion are now available; it is still too early to safely share morning tea or meals together as we care for the most vulnerable amongst us.

More information is available from the UCATas website <https://ucatas.org.au/> or from the Tasmanian office - phone 6331 9784, or at open meeting every Thursday from 7:00pm (contact the office for Zoom or phone-in details).



Opportunities

Code of Ethics/Safe Church



✚ Saturday 15 August – Hadsphen Uniting Church

✚ Tuesday 25 August – Glenorchy Uniting Church

Code of Ethics 9.30am-12.30pm

Safe Church 1.00pm – 4.00pm

✚ **ZOOM Safe Church: Tuesday 18 August 7 - 9pm** – contact the UCA Tas Office for a link.

Safe Church Training is for anyone who has not yet attended a Safe Church session or attended over 3 years ago. All those in designated leadership positions are **required to attend** and others with Working with Vulnerable People Cards are **encouraged to attend**.



Next Presbytery Gathering

9.45am Saturday 12 September 2020

face-to-face — venue to be advised

Put this date in your diary. This extra gathering will be an opportunity to gather again due to the shortened June Gathering and cancellation of several Presbytery events in the 2020 year.

Cemetery Details Transcribing Help Needed

As the Presbytery works with congregations to ensure processes and records comply with the 2019 Burial and Cremations legislation, there are a number of cemetery records that need transcribing into Interment Registers. I wonder if you or someone you know in your church/community may be able to help us. Please contact the UCA Tasmanian Office for more information. P: 6331 9784 or E: tas.office@victas.uca.org.au

UCA Tasmanian Office

The UCA Tasmanian Office at 36 Paterson Street Launceston will re-open with office staff on Monday 6 July, open Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm.

Reflection

Like ants we scurry

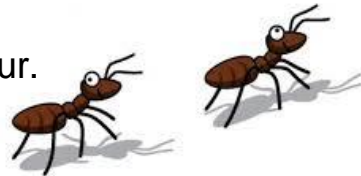
Like ants we scurry, ahead of a gathering storm,
Scrambling for stores to hold the chaos at bay.
But chaos will break over us in waves, while we shelter
As best we can, huddled against fear, together at least.

Mind not those few who don't make it back
To the shelter we built together, workers alike;
For some shall be lost in any storm or battle –
So we tell ourselves, as balm to salve the burning.

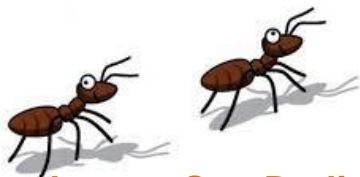


"To balance the lament of Sabbath
With the bombardment of noise"
Is the hardest in this time, a friend wrote,
After caring for her first "c19 end of lifer".

War-time feelings these, with daily battles
In supermarkets on both sides of the globe,
Seeking scant toilet paper to hoard, or
Restricted to one can of soup for a family of four.



An abundance of fear surrounds us, chatter
Of ants against the chaos, but still and silent
Abundant grace and compassion seep too,
Eternally present to renew, sustain, transform.



Rohan Pryor, 23 March 2020

A reply to Joanne Cox-Darling, a UK Methodist minister friend of Rohan:

*"To balance the lament of Sabbath with the bombardment of noise" is so poignant [Joanne](#), true for these times. Last night I made potato and garlic soup, using some 'dodgy' garlic from our garden and cutting off the dodgy bits before it went off. We are fortunate to still have plenty of food in our supermarkets, despite the *Aus toilet paper wars*. Feels a bit like stories of war-time (Foyle's War preferably), and so quickly with such a small enemy amongst us. As you continue to find the grace to hold the space for others, labyrinth car parks included, may abundant grace and liberating hope continue to replenish you from God's eternal supply.*



Continuing Education opportunities

In the midst of these tumultuous times, Continuing Education might seem a million miles away. On the other hand, the flexibility and creativity you're all exercising in conducting worship and preaching in new ways, as well as attending to regular ministry and meeting commitments remotely, shows a whole lot of learning going on. And that will continue as we work out how we can begin to regather in coming weeks/months.

I want to share with you just a couple of upcoming Continuing Education opportunities, as well as some resources that may prove helpful now and in due course. Click through the blue links for more information.

1. [Sex and the Bible: A Pilgrim Intensive](#) taught by Jione Havea: **31 July, 1, 7, 8, 9 August 2020**. A great opportunity to delve into the nuance and complexity about what the bible says (and doesn't say) about sex. Pilgrim is planning for face to face learning in semester 2, with the option of engaging remotely if that is your preference.
2. *Pilgrim Theological College* is providing a fabulous opportunity for **ministers in placement to enrol in a Graduate Certificate in Divinity (that's 3 units at postgrad level) for just the capstone fee**. So, if you've been thinking about delving back into some formal theological/ministry practice study, now's the time! [Course guide here](#)
3. [Mentor Training Day: Saturday August 15](#), 10am-3.30pm, via zoom hubs. Mel Perkins (Lay Ed), Dev Anandarajan (Intercultural Leadership) and I running this training day for lay and ordained alike, presbytery leaders and anyone keen to find out more about mentoring. We'll look specifically at mentoring for Period of Discernment; Lay Preachers; Reception of Ministers. We'll use the Zoom platform, and while individuals are welcome, of course, we do encourage joining a hub in your area to take advantage of peer learning and discussion.
4. A call out to anyone who enrolled in the online [Festival of Homiletics](#) in May? I'd like to organise some **discussion opportunities** for those interested. If you are keen, but didn't purchase online access prior to the Festival, it is still possible (for [\\$150 US](#) – still much cheaper than going to the US!) You'll receive the videos of sermons, lectures, interviews in your inbox for a year's use. **Please reply to this email if you would like to join with others** to share the experience, and I'll get us all together – not for the whole event, but for 4 or 5 key sermons/lectures.

For those not on social media, here is a selection of articles shared recently on the [Continuing Education Facebook Group](#):

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President's Church Anniversary message



Dr Deidre Palmer has encouraged Uniting Church members to apply the difficult learnings of 2020 to shape the way the Church pursues God's mission in the world. In her annual message to coincide with the foundation of the UCA on 22 June 1977, Dr Palmer said the Uniting Church

was responding with creativity and compassion to COVID-19 and other crises, embracing new opportunities to be the Body of Christ.

"While we've been moving along this unfamiliar pathway we continue to be bearers of Christ's light and hope wherever we are," said Dr Palmer.

"Your creative responses have been a gift and blessing of the Spirit who guides and sustains us along the way.

"I've been delighted to hear Uniting Church members saying that the sharing online across the country has given them a deeper understanding of the breadth and diversity of the Uniting Church.

"Gathering as a Christian community among our neighbours will remain central to who we are but these last few months have brought home to us that we are not defined by church buildings.

"Rather we are defined and marked by the love and compassion that shapes us and marks our relationships with people in our communities in our neighbourhoods and the wider Australian society."

As restrictions on gathering and movement are gradually lifted and things return to normal Dr Palmer urged church members to find creative ways to rebuild in a way that would be "just for everyone".

Dr Palmer recommended members read the Assembly's new advocacy document, [Build Back Better. A Just Recovery post COVID-19](#), and issued a warm invitation to UCA members to attend [her President's conference in October](#).

"On this anniversary, we give thanks to God for who we are and from where we've come. But we also look forward to where we are going." said Dr Palmer.

"Towards an intergenerational and multicultural Christian community, centred in Christ. led by the innovative, creative Holy Spirit of God."



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY

*With thanks to the Uniting Church in Australia
Assembly website news*



Leadership Formation

Why does God matter?

How might you answer this question I wonder . .

We are in the midst of a critical shift in the life of who we are as church - as God's faithful people. We are moving from being at the centre of community life to its edges. We are moving from being a thing to do to something that doesn't matter for the majority of people. We aren't a vital part of the world's fabric.

Or are we

How might answer the question "Does God matter?"

Part of the place of faith is to enable people to be connected with who is greater than what has been created. Part of the place of faith is be a space where meaning making happens - how do we make sense of life's challenges and pushes and pulls. Part of the place of faith is as the hope we carry within that is about who is greater than what has been created.

Understanding, owning and articulating our faith matters in a world where there is curiosity for God as other than what has been created. It does matter in the turmoil and chaos currently faced. For those who bear loneliness, disadvantage, discrimination (for whatever reason), it matters that there are those who can speak hope and love into their spaces. Who bring companionship, work for systems of justice and call out the harmful activity that continues to deprive others.

The work of our place as God's faithful in the world begins with this core question. Does God matter

Have a go at answering it for yourself. What do you discover as you do? What does it bring to light about how you understand the nature and activity of God at work in your life, in the world? What importance does it bring to the surface for you own life?

You might like to draw a picture, capture an image and write a song or poem, or prayer that responds to the question. You might like to share with that someone else, or with us.

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Why does God matter?

I wonder

The Presbytery Ministry Team are available to assist and work alongside communities and leaders as you grow in your faith and share in God's activity in the world. Contact the office or one of the Presbytery Ministers to begin.



Presbytery of Tasmania: Assisting congregations and faith communities to thrive and use their resources well for mission.

Denise Savage, Presbytery Minister for Leadership Formation

If you would like Denise to listen and share around leadership formation, contact Denise 0 427 647 395 or denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au.



Synod Meeting 2021



26 – 28 February 2021 - a change of date

The Synod Standing Committee has resolved to postpone the November 2020 Synod meeting in anticipation that a face-to-face meeting can be held at a later date. The proposed dates for the next Synod meeting at this time **are Friday 26 February – Sunday 28 February 2021 inclusive.**

At its August 2020 meeting the Synod Standing Committee will consider Synod Meeting dates as well as the format (face-to-face or by Zoom), location and a reduced membership.

Depending on the details confirmed by the Synod Standing Committee, our Presbytery Standing Committee will need to decide whether the 'preferential ballot' process, following the Synod Meeting ballot held at the recent Presbytery Gathering, provides clarity of the Presbytery's discernment for a reduced number of members appointed by this Presbytery, or whether a new ballot process will be required.

Abundant thanks for Sue Walker!

After nearly twenty years working in the Tasmanian office of the Uniting Church, Sue Walker plans to retire in July this year. The February Presbytery gathering in Hobart recognised the long and significant contribution of Sue with a minute of appreciation and warm affirmation.

In June 2000 the then Synod of Tasmania advertised for a part-time office secretary, whose tasks were to include reception, audio typing, work processing (some desktop publishing), and general office secretarial tasks. The qualifications listed included Microsoft Office computer programs, accurate typing, prepared to be flexible, and understanding of Uniting Church ethos. The advertisement in *The Examiner* read, "An adaptable person who can relate well to working in a Church position is encouraged to apply."

In August 2000 the then Moderator, Rev Rob Brown, wrote to confirm a telephone conversation in which Rob had offered Sue the part-time secretarial position, commencing on Tuesday 8 August 2000 at the Synod office in Margaret Street.

On 12 December 2002, following the merger of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synods of the Uniting Church, Sue was offered an equivalent position under the new UCA structure by the then General Secretary of the Synod, Rev Dr Robert Johnson, commencing 1 January 2003. The position was accountable to the Associate General Secretary, Rev J Allan Thompson, and in a performance review from this time Sue noted one of her objectives as "recognising that each person who phones is important and has a right to be heard and respected and listened to with understanding."

Sue has been closely involved with Kids Camp-Out, in organising the events and preparing materials, as well as acting as a storyteller. Many of you will remember Kids Camp-Out as a big event held at Ulverstone, with each Parish sending along lots of kids, cooks etc. In more recent years Sue has been involved with initial planning and background preparations, as well as associated administration tasks.

On top of her office secretary duties, Sue also served as Secretary of Presbytery around 2010 to 2012, which included helping set meeting agendas, writing minutes and handling correspondence. The Presbytery of Tasmania (including the then Chairperson Rev Brian Cole) at the time, greatly appreciated Sue's capable handling of this extra role; her calm, cheerful attitude; and her willingness to serve the Uniting Church by attending weekend meetings in her own time.



Through 2010 and 2011 Sue undertook a Certificate III in Printing and Graphic Arts through the Tasmanian Polytechnic. Sue also undertook First Aid training including performing CPR and providing basic emergency life support. Sue has been the primary point of contact for many of the requirements introduced in recent years to keep everyone safe: OHS logbooks, Keeping Children Safe policies and Working with Vulnerable People registration, and care for the cemeteries which the Church manages.

This information from the Church's records only skims the surface of Sue's interactions with people from across Tasmania and across the Synod over the past twenty years. An online calculator estimates Sue will have been employed for just over 7200 days by the time she concludes. Of course, Sue has valued working only half time so that she can do all sorts of other interesting and enjoyable things in life, and that is a key part of why Sue has decided the time has come to conclude her employment with the Uniting Church.

The February Presbytery meeting in Hobart used the orange consensus cards to indicate the large number of people who Sue has personally interacted with, and the deep warmth with which she is held. The Presbytery of Tasmania, and by extension the Synod of Tasmania and Victoria, recorded its sincere thanks for the long and faithful service of Sue Walker. Sue's husband Allan and one of their sons, Scott, were present to hear the Church saying nice things about her. We wish Sue a long and enjoyable time of retirement with her family and friends – a full measure of the 'abundant life' that Jesus talks about in John 10:10. Sue will conclude her time in the office on 24 July 2020.

Rohan Pryor, Synod Liaison Minister (Tas.)

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**** [How Long O Lord? Essays and Resources addressing Racism](#)**: this is from the United Methodists' in the US, but contains a wealth of material whose theological and pastoral insights are valid beyond the US borders. Really worth a look.

**** [It's not just the coronavirus – bad theology is killing us](#)** : the theological work here is punchy, confronting and applicable globally – racism and the church.

Finally, a reminder of our local lectionary podcast, [By the Well](#) to assist with weekly preaching.



*Grace and Peace,
Fran Barber - equipping Leadership For Mission*

This 'n That

■ **The Mercury 19 June 1875** “Mr. Thomason, bush missionary, gave an account of his work at the Huon subsequent to the period embraced in the report. On the 10th January last he entered upon his work, and from that time to the 7th of this month—a period of a little over four months—he had preached 102 times in Franklin, Port Cygnet, Irish Town, Castle Forbes Bay, Wattle Grove, Gardiner’s Bay, Surge’s Bay, Port Esperance, Hastings, Recherche, Southport, and other places. Although the distances had been long, he had every reason to be thankful with the success of his labours. He had met with the greatest kindness and hospitality; and he had had the happiness of seeing no less than 34 souls converted to the truth. (Hear, hear.) Some present perhaps asked what conversion meant and he might answer, what made men praying men. All the 34 persons he alluded to had, since their conversion, engaged in public prayer, and some of the young men had conducted prayer meetings and Sunday-schools.”

- **Not just a recovery, a just recovery** The Assembly Resourcing Unit has updated the UCA Vision for a Just Australia document for the post-COVID-19 world. The Uniting Church in Australia has outlined a set of principles and key actions that will guide the way to a better future as Australia recovers from the coronavirus pandemic. Read more [here](#).
- **Three More Asks - UCA against racism / deaths in custody** Thank you to all those who responded to the call of national leaders of the UCA and UAICC in the last week. There's still time to send your messages of support to UAICC, change your Facebook frame or sign the Change the Record petition. The national leaders of the UCA and UAICC are encouraging members to stay active in support of racial justice, as the movement against racism continues around the world. Read more [here](#).
- Dr Deidre Palmer has announced that her **2020 President’s Conference** will go **ahead in Adelaide from October 2-5**, as originally scheduled. “We are looking at online options, and a variety of ways of connecting with live-streaming, pre-recorded interviews, and Adelaide based panels, that people can connect to around the country,” said Dr Palmer. See more [here](#).
- **COVID-19 Recovery Action Plan Checklist** The Uniting Church has a range of COVID-19 safety planning resources and posters: visit <https://victas.uca.org.au/> where COVID-19 is on the front page.

Praying for the Everyone

- For those people in local, state and federal governments as they allocate resources and make decisions to keep us safe and healthy
 - For those in the back rooms of our bureaucracies who are producing information and signs, flyers and communications to tell and show us how to keep safe in our workplaces, communities and homes
 - For the vulnerable in our communities: the elderly, indigenous, isolated, immigrant population, those who are unwell, people who have lost their jobs and many others
 - For all those who have continued to provide essential services to us during the pandemic: health industry workers, emergency services, food service people
-

Congregational Checklist for July

- ☐ Annual reports, including reports from ministers, chairpersons, various church activities, financial statements to be sent to UCA Tasmanian Office (if you have had the opportunity to hold your AGM yet)
- ☐ Review of Safe Church Policies (following AGM)
- ☐ Notify UCA Tasmanian Office of any changes to Presbytery Directory – office bearers, worship times etc. (following AGM) We have sent a copy of your entry to the Church Council secretary.
- ☐ Check items in Annual Maintenance Statements Log Book for June and send to UCA Tasmanian Office
- ☐ Annual Manse Inspection Report to UCA Tasmanian Office

what's On

July

Tues 7	10.00am	Pastoral Relations Committee
Mon 13	10.00am	Resource & Development Committee
Thur 23	10.00am	Presbytery Standing Committee
Mon 27	10.00am	Resource & Development Committee

August

Tues 4	10.00am	Pastoral Relations Committee
Mon 10	10.00am	Resource & Development Committee
Sat 15	10.00am	Code of Ethics, Hadsphen UC
Sat 15	1.00pm	Safe Church, Hadsphen UC
Tues 18	7.00pm	Zoom Safe Church
Tues 25	10.00am	Code of Ethics, Glenorchy UC
Tues 25	1.00pm	Safe Church, Glenorchy UC
Thur 27	10.00am	Presbytery Standing Committee
Mon 24	10.00am	Resource & Development Committee



Uniting

This year's Share Sunday, Sunday 30 August 2020 theme is "a place to call home", focussing on Youth Homelessness.

Uniting has just released the 2020 resources for a full worship service.

- A sample service outline, including a liturgy, reflection and suggested hymns
- PowerPoint presentation
- Stories of people supported by the Church's faithful generosity.

The resources are available to view and download from the Uniting Vic.Tas. website at: [2020 Share Sunday Worship Resources.](#)

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Presbytery of Tasmania website: <https://ucatas.org.au>

The map of Tasmania including King and Flinders Islands has been adapted from a Creative Commons file
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Australia_Tasmania_location_map_blank.svg