



Issue No. 201

February 2022

Uniting Church Micah 6:8 Award

Charlotte Ball (below, front left) is the 2021 recipient of the **Uniting Church Micah 6:8 Award** for Scotch Oakburn College, the only college in Tasmania associated with the Uniting Church.



“This amazing group of Year 9 students are on campus today raising money as a part of a Round Square Fundraiser for *Relay for Life*. Student Charlotte Ball organised the volunteer group who are cleaning spaces and lockers on the Penquite Campus.”

Relay for Life is the fundraiser for the Cancer Council in Tasmania.

(.....continued on page 12)

Photo Source: <https://www.facebook.com/ScotchOakburnCollege/photos/a.387149501347933/4955239704538867/>

Social Justice

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Refresh 2022

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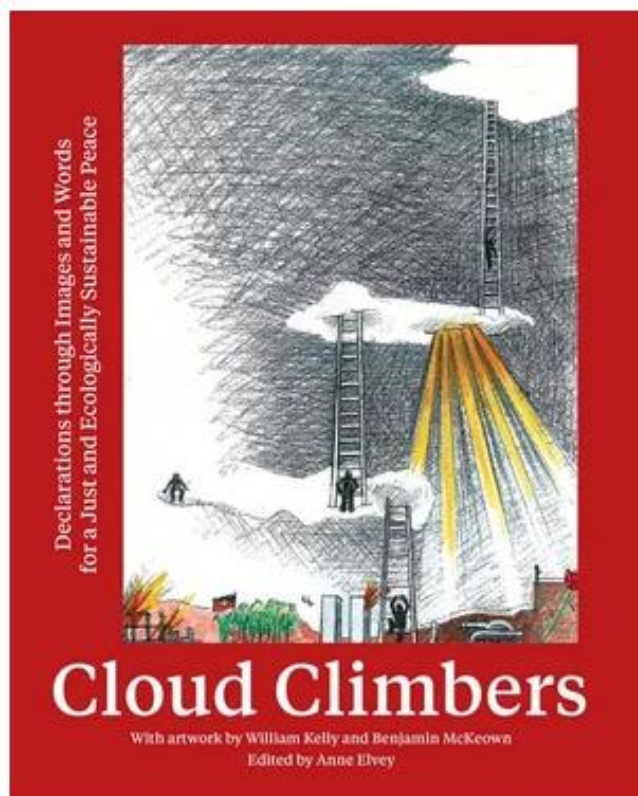
Annual Reminders

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Ian Farquhar

Invariably those special seasons in the Church calendar, Advent, Lent & Season of Creation stimulate one's thinking, oft-times one subject will come to mind and be slow to step aside. I guess this is an aspect of the experience of divine revelation. As we entered the portal of Advent this year, through the celebration of Christ the King, my mind was drawn to exploring the concept of King-ship. What is it? What does it mean for us? What does it tell us about Jesus? In the time of Samuel the Israelites sought to emulate their neighbours and be governed by a king. "If you have a king he will tax your income and produce, he will have grandiose building ambitions and conscript all the tradies, he will quarrel with other kings and conscript your sons and fathers into his armed forces.....Kings are not a good idea!" They still wanted a king! The subsequent history of Israeli kings confirmed those warnings and then some.

Where else could I seek to learn about kings? Aristotle (384-323 BC) also thought about kings, in his text "The Politics" he defined five types of kingship which rather grew beyond that as various subsets emerged within each type. Thus a great thinker, from a time when much of the Old Testament had yet to be written, gives us more to reflect of in relation to kings.



Then came a wonderful gift, a new word: **kinship**. By the omission of one letter Dianne Rayson completely changed the enquiry about what the kingship of Jesus may mean! Read on!

I share the following with approval of the publishers of 'The Cloud Climbers' and Dr. Dianne Rayson, an ecotheologian and Bonhoeffer scholar, who lives and works in Biripi & Awabakal lands. She lectures at the University of Newcastle and the United Theological College and preaches in various denominations. Her book, 'Bonhoeffer and Climate Change: Theology and Ethics for the Anthropocene' (Fortress Academic) was published in 2021. www.dirayson.com. Thank you, Di.

The Burning Summer by Dr Dianne Rayson

Originally appeared in *Cloud Climbers: Declarations through Images and Words for a Just and Ecologically Sustainable Peace*. Edited by Anne Elvey, artwork by William Kelly and Benjamin McKeown (Palaver, 2021).

"In the winter of 2019, while we were deep in drought, the hills began to burn. (cont.)

A dry lightning strike started the fire in the state forest, up in the hills behind our property. Years of drought had dehydrated the soil, the trees, and the waterways. Now, most of the creeks were bone-dry; smooth stones marked a path of desire where once the cool water bubbled and bounced its way. Deep in the gully, some birds still sang or called at least, and the kangaroos came close. Our soil was grey dust, rising at every kiss from the wind, smearing the boundary between land and sky. I would think of the spores and bacteria that give the soil life and wonder about their reincarnation, or if they were leaving forever.

The fire smouldered away, all winter and into spring. A little map on my phone showed the boundaries, the changing geometry in two dimensions of a fire that was cleaning out the foreigners – the lantana especially – leaving greasy black smoke to smear the sky but grace the sunsets with colour. Down the crevasses it crept, fingers of fire-front that would stop at the creek, we thought. Each afternoon I'd look up to the hills, brow crinkled, waiting for it to be done. The fire trucks couldn't get access to it, so I hoped the creatures at least could get out, away from the flames. It was winter, it was slow. I hoped the fire was cool and the forest would be safe.

For decades we've known that climate change is a threat multiplier. It makes what once might have been isolated incidents like drought or bushfires more likely, and when they do come, worse. Longer, hotter summers and less rainfall mean there is no longer a safe window for small, cool-fire burning off for hazard reduction in the tradition of ancestors. Less commitment to public services like state forest management, weed control, threatened species protection, fire-trails and rural fire services, despite the *increasing* need, means that these factors become linked together, piling on each other, creating perfect storms. It's what makes climate change a 'wicked problem': if there is a solution at all, it requires many different types of strategies at different levels all pulling together.

Morally wicked too, I think. This is the work of our own hands, the choices humans have made. The tools we have made to help us exert power over each other, capitalism, colonialism, corporations, are turned against the very Earth, our home. And now she burns. The Australian fires of 2019–20 blazed for 9 months, creating firestorms and megafires never before witnessed. Unbelievable images of whole villages huddled at the ocean's edge, prepared to escape into the water should the fire chase them there. Massive pyrocumulonimbus clouds formed above the intense heat, crazy with lightning and sucking the flames ever upward into an inverted hell. And the dark. The greasy orange grey of days turned red then black like Pharoah's plagued sun and the apocalypse at once. Bonhoeffer used the phrase, 'the ambiguous twilight of creation', and it never seemed so real as those days of dark sky. The mixing of the two lights, the *Zwielicht*, the inseparability of blessing and curse, *tob* and *ra*, when our paradise homes are burning with hellfire.

On New Year's Eve 2019, a blanket of smoke rolled into Canberra and smothered the city, leaving it with the world's worst air quality for many days. The smoke would circle the Earth, smudging glaciers and snowfields before returning to smother us again.

By the time the rains came in late January and February to cool the soil and douse the flames, a new darkness was on its way. New viruses that cross species were another consequence that the climate scientists had warned would be more likely.

Gasping for breath became the theme of 2020: first the fires, then the pandemic, another Black man with a knee on his neck, and in a wicked reprise, the West Coast fires of the US. These sins are linked. Our attempted mastery through technology and colonialism and estrangement from our Mother Earth: all of these are connected to our original sin of wanting to dominate the other.

While we held our breath and stayed in our homes, we wondered if humanity would take this last chance to stop polluting the sky with carbon. For a moment, we took stock of the impact of humans on Earth and we listened to the voices of schoolchildren and we thought this just might be the sign, the wake-up call, to decarbonise the economy. We stopped flying, and driving to work and, for a while, the air was clearer and the nights were hushed. And in this quiet, while parliaments were in recess and elders on ventilators, more coal mines were approved.

What would it mean for those of us who are Christian to bring the gospel to all of creation? For humans to bring good news to the forests and the air? To let the oceans flourish and for the creatures to live their best lives? To recognise that the God who came to us in the Garden and on the cross remains with us through creation? The God who presses us to bring reconciliation to the world! What would it mean to speak words of love and restoration and through our actions show hospitality – a sharing of ourselves with our fellows? How can Christians pray for God's 'kingdom to come' (in the language of the prayer of Jesus) and for Earth to be as Heaven to us and yet not understand that the Earth is burning and suffocating at our hands?

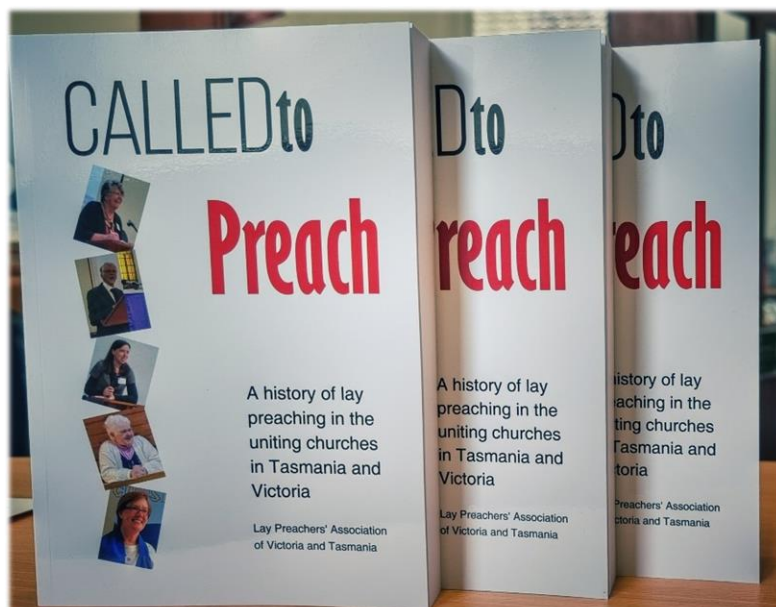
The horror of the future bears down on the present. Predictions are made real, prophecies fulfilled. Climate change is being visited upon us here and now, not to a distant poor country with sea levels rising and refugees fleeing on boats, but to all of us. People of faith have within our traditions the resources to name climate change as a manifestation of sin. We have the experience to know that 'domination' of Earth and Earth's creatures dressed up as biblical 'dominion' is hubris and a perversion of the Garden story. And yet we have theologies of relationality, of deep ecology, to reframe our relationships in the world. The Christian God of Trinity, of relationships of love and generosity, is the image in which creation is formed.

Christian hope of resurrection comes to us and restores our souls when we breathe fresh air again and watch the forests regenerate. Our deep, deep sadness over the loss of 3 billion creatures in the Burning Summer can only be countered by the hope that comes from communities defying the odds and pushing back against the trajectory. When we pray for God's kin-dom to come, we enlist to be part of a movement that won't let our home burn and our fellow creatures become extinct, or allow islands to submerge. “



A project to commemorate 150 years of the Local/Lay Preachers' Association

Published by the Synod Lay Preachers' Association of Victoria and Tasmania
in association with the Uniting Church Historical Society ISBN 978-0-9807168-7-0



Called to Preach

A history of lay preaching in the uniting churches in Tasmania and Victoria

This is the readable story of the origins and development of lay preaching from the early settlement of Van Diemen's Land to modern Victoria and Tasmania, describing events and people who helped shape lay preaching; with an historical review of the Lay Preachers' Association from 1869.

Authors:

Barry Brown, Alastair Davison, Cheryl Griffin, Glen O'Brien, Daryl Pedler, Robert Renton, and D'Arcy Wood, with a Foreword by the Moderator, Rev Denise Liersch



In this book... We hear of adaptation to changing circumstances, of being responsive to the call of God and the needs of the community as they were perceived at the time. And along the way, we hear something of what we might learn, not just of other people and their stories from the past, but of where we've come from and what has formed us: of who we are and how we might move into the future.

Chapters: [including a conversation with Arthur Tonkin]

Lay preaching in historical perspective; Methodist Lay Preaching in Tasmania and Victoria, 1820–1902; Methodist lay preaching in the Victoria-Tasmania Conference 1902–1977; Congregational and Presbyterian Lay Preaching; The Basis of Union and Lay Preaching; Lay Preaching in the Uniting Church, 1977 to the present; After the call to preach, what then?; An association of local preachers; Information from the Lay Preacher questionnaire; Observations, comments, challenges.

Price \$25 [add \$9 if posted] 300 pages including Foreword, Preface, Glossary, Index of names.

Available now through the Uniting Church Presbytery of Tasmania Office on 03 6331 9784 or email tas.office@victas.uca.org.au

Refresh 2022

Online via Zoom

Sundays 1 - 2pm

20 Feb
6 Mar
20 Mar
3 April
24 April
8 May

NB: First and last sessions approx 2 hours

Contact Denise Savage to register and receive link
denise.savage@victas.uca.org.au



Learn Local - with Steve Taylor

<https://vimeo.com/618447364>

About Refresh

A learning opportunity for all people across the life of the Tasmanian Presbytery with the UCA. Whether you have a desire to learn more, grow in how you can live out your faith, strengthen your capacity as a leader or more deeply understand how you can contribute to God's activity in the world, this is an opportunity for you.

About Learn Local

A missional learning experience where you can explore walking in community, bring your questions and curiosity, experience for ourselves being open in a practice of walking locally, discover and tweak opportunities from our learning together for deeper intentional local missional engagement, listen to and be sparked by stories of others who've walked and learnt local. Learn Local will take place over a number of online sessions during the first part of 2022.

About Steve Taylor

Steve best describes himself as a missiologist, researcher, and educator. He lives and works in New Zealand building up communities of faith from his wealth of experience, practice, research and engagement. He has for a long time worked across denominational spaces including theological education in the UCA in South Australia. Steve looks forward to engaging with us here in Tasmania.



Reducing modern slavery in our supply chains



What is modern slavery?

'Modern slavery' describes situations where offenders use coercion, threats or deception to exploit victims and undermine their freedom. Practices that constitute modern slavery can include: human trafficking, slavery, servitude, forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, and the worst forms of child labour.

At any given time in 2016, an estimated 40.3 million people were in modern slavery, including 24.9 million in forced labour and 15.4 million in forced marriage. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by forced labour, being 99% of victims in the commercial sex industry, and 58% in other sectors.

Why does it matter in Australia?

We might think slavery is something that just happens in developing countries, and while it is more prevalent in these places, it is something that is known to exist even here in Australia.

Further, when we purchase products in Australia that have been produced in other countries, or where the components of those products are mined or produced in other countries, we may be indirectly supporting modern slavery that occurs in those supply chains. It is therefore important that we ask questions about where products are produced, by who, and under what conditions.

Modern Slavery and the Uniting Church in Australia

The Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) has long lobbied for enhanced supply chain transparency and decent conditions for all workers across the globe.

In the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, our Justice and International Mission Cluster (JIM Cluster) has been a key proponent in advocating for modern slavery reporting requirements to be introduced in Australia. The JIM Cluster even provided input in drafting the legislation that is now in place, the Modern Slavery Act 2018. Under this legislation, the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has prepared and submitted a joint Modern Slavery Statement with its related entities.

The poster overleaf, provides some information and practical tips on steps that everyone can take as part of their purchasing decisions to reduce the risk of modern slavery.



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Practical tips for reducing modern slavery risks

The below information and practical tips have been provided to help you make informed purchasing decisions and reduce the risk of modern slavery in your supply chains.

What is modern slavery?

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From small things, big things grow

Even small decisions and actions can result in a large cumulative effect. If we all take steps to reduce our own impact, then collectively we can create significant change.



If it seems too good to be true...

If a product seems unrealistically cheap, then it likely is. To provide cheap products, costs must be saved somewhere in the supply chain, and too often labour is where cost cutting is applied.



Buy local

Purchasing/consuming products and services that are manufactured locally helps because the supply chains are shorter, and it is easier to establish exactly how a product was actually made.



Assist in assessing modern slavery risks

To reduce modern slavery in our supply chains, it is important to understand the products and services purchased where modern slavery risks might exist. As such, questions on your congregations purchasing and spend on 'higher risk' products will be included in the annual financial survey. Your reporting will allow the Synod to assess the risks of modern slavery in our supply chains and take action to address them.



Where possible, look for accredited products

There are some third party bodies that provide ethical accreditation for products. Accreditations to look for include Fair Trade, Rainforest Alliance and Ethical Clothing.

You can also consult the online 'Shop ethics-ethical buying guide' which provides ethical based ratings for a wide range of suppliers of common products. <https://www.ethical.org.au/theguide/>

If you'd like assistance or advice on purchasing decisions to reduce modern slavery risks, particularly around those products identified as being 'higher risk', please contact **Mark Zirnsak**, Senior Social Justice Officer mark.zirnsak@vic.uniting.org.au



Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Pilgrimage to Celtic Britain & Ireland

7 to 27 September 2022

with optional Oberammergau extension to 2 October 2022

Celtic Britain is a rich source of spirituality, theology and ways of being church. This world of stunning art, standing stones and a focus on the natural world produced a distinctive form of Christianity, with small-scale scattered missionary monasteries, illuminated manuscripts, sacred gold treasures, and unique spirituality

Travel with Rob & Andrea McFarlane on a pilgrimage to Celtic Britain & Ireland 7 to 27 September, 2022. Highlights include mini-retreats on both Iona and Lindisfarne (Holy Island); the Book of Kells in Dublin and the Lindisfarne Gospels in London; Glendalough Monastery in Ireland; the St Patrick Centre in Downpatrick (Northern Ireland); key sites for the Scottish Reformation in Edinburgh; major Gothic cathedrals in Durham, York, Canterbury and Salisbury; and the pre-Christian sites of Newgrange (Ireland), Stonehenge and Glastonbury. The main tour is followed by an optional extension to the once-in-a-decade Passion Play at Oberammergau.

Rev Dr Rob and Andrea McFarlane are experienced tour leaders. Rob is a Biblical scholar and educator. He currently serves as Presbytery Ministry Leader in the Uniting Church Parramatta Nepean Presbytery. Andrea is an academic and researcher in early childhood educational leadership at Macquarie University.

Brochure and more information at:

<https://ume.nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/celtic-britain-ireland-pilgrimage/>

Contact Rob with any questions: rjmcfarlane@hotmail.com or 0400 825 739

Deposits due 25 February 2022



Did you know the UCA Assembly has a strategic plan?

Download from [Assembly Strategic Plan 2020 - 2023 - Uniting Church Australia](#)

The national Assembly's plan has the following five elements:

ASSEMBLY STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2023

FIVE STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

RESPOND TO
THE CHURCH

IDENTITY

INNOVATION

INTER-
GENERATIONAL

INTER-CULTURAL

IDENTITY

Communicate a clear and concise message — who are we as the UCA and what is our distinct role in working toward the coming of the kingdom of God in Australia

Find New Ways of Telling the UCA Story

Continue Work on Practical Implications of the Covenant

Address National Issues in Public Spaces for the Gospel

With Synods, Implement the Safe Church Framework

Rev Dr John Squires sets out ten distinctive features of the Uniting Church, see

<https://uniting.church/dna-of-the-uca/>

1. We are an ecumenical church.
2. We stand in covenant relationship with the First Peoples.
3. We continue to develop as a church in deepening relationships with many cultures and faiths.
4. We are a church which values the ministry of all the people of God.
5. We are committed to mutuality and gender equality in every part of the church.
6. We are a church which deliberately seeks to discern the movement of the Spirit in our midst.
7. We are a church which values integrity and clarity about our ethical standards.
8. We seek to be a church that engages in the difficult discussions with honesty, transparency, and hopefulness.
9. We are a church which is strongly committed to justice for all.
10. We are a church that lives, acts, and advocates for a sustainable environmental future.

**This
'n
That**

■ Have you read a **good book** lately that has extended your understanding of God, spirituality, theology, the Bible? Send us a review.

■ Reminder: Contractor and Consultant Safety Management – these must be pre-qualified and have completed the Linksafe online safety management induction before starting work at any UCA property

Praying for Everyone

- For Denise Savage and Steve Taylor as they prepare for and facilitate an online leadership space in Refresh 22
- For guidance in working out the distinctive features of the Uniting Church in your context
- For those who look after the Covid plan at your place.
- For Charlotte Ball and all of us as we grow into the values of the Kin-dom
- For the end of modern slavery and the courage to make decisions that bring about that end
- For 150 years of lay preaching heritage and for the lay preachers who take us forward

Annual reminders for Congregations:

(this section is back by popular demand)

March:

- AGM by end of March
- Check items in Annual Maintenance Statements Log Book
- Notify UCA Tasmanian Office of any changes for the Presbytery Directory – office bearers, worship times etc
- Working with Vulnerable People up to dates

What's On

February

Tue 1	10:00am	Pastoral Relations Committee
Tue 8	11:00am	Resource and Development Committee
Wed 23	11:00am	Resource and Development Committee

March

Sat 5	10:00am	Presbytery Meeting: Clarence Uniting Church, Bellerive
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Uniting Church Micah 6:8 Award

(From page 1)

The Micah 6:8 Award recognises a student in Year 9 or 10 who has a focus on what is 'just and fair', neighbourly compassion, loyalty and love. Their efforts may be local or global in scale, done in conjunction with an expression of the Uniting Church such as a congregation, agency or other UCA entity such as the College, and reflects a Christian understanding of God as expressed in the College Values. Additionally, the student is one who questions and tests common practice.

Charlotte is caring, compassionate, organised and diligent with a great sense of social justice and she lives out the College values in all respects and has contributed to school life in a selfless manner.

Charlotte and her friends have already got together to consider and brainstorm their fundraising efforts for 2022! Led by Charlotte, a group of Year 9 students have been on campus in their holidays to raise money as a part of a Round Square Fundraiser for *Relay for Life*, the fundraiser for the Cancer Council in Tasmania.

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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