



Uniting Tasmania

Issue No. 236 | October 2025

What would Jesus do?

As Christians and church-goers in an increasingly complex and conflicted world, it is often difficult to know what to do. We are faced with homelessness, violence and war, advertising and addiction – to gambling, drugs, pornography, incessant fighting – and abuses of power.

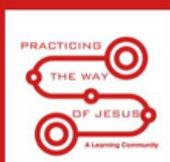
Artificial Intelligence rises just as emotional intelligence in politics seems to disappear. Nobody seems willing to tackle the biggest challenges to humanity and the planet, at least not to work it out together.

As Christians and church-goers we turn to the Bible for answers, but there we also find homelessness, violence and war, and abuses of power. Sometimes we find a Bible passage that supports our views, and sometimes that challenges our views. How do we know which to follow?

(cont. p2)

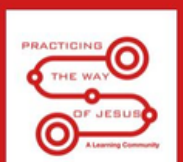
COMPASSION:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality that the universe operates on grace rather than retribution. They let go of judgment and contempt, forgiving those who hurt them, and practicing compassion towards self and others.



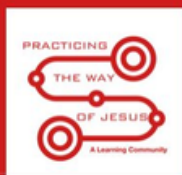
HUMILITY:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality of inherent dignity and worth, recognizing that we are each made in the Divine image. They don't compare or compete, treat everyone with equal respect, serve others, and humbly ask for the help they need.



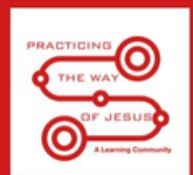
JUSTICE:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace their power to shape the world. They choose agency over apathy, taking practical steps to make the world whole, treating other people the way they want to be treated, and caring for those who are hungry, thirsty, naked, sick, and lonely.



LAMENT:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality of Divine presence, empathy, and comfort amid the brokenness in the world. They face pain rather than avoiding it, grieving mistakes and failures, mourning with those who mourn, and complaining to God about unjust systems and structures.



(From p.1)

Jesus – of course – is the answer. In the Bible we can see what Jesus did, and said, and from that learn what Jesus would do – since the Spirit of Christ continues to guide us. Jesus preached about the kingdom of God being present amongst us as a new community “in Christ” and with the Spirit, despite the kings and empires of the world that crushed and eventually killed him and any who dare challenge their power.

Jesus preached about care for the widows and orphans – “the least of these” – and love of our enemies and our neighbours – exemplified by a distrusted Samaritan ‘foreigner’ – rather than dogmatic and divisive religious wars that exclude and excommunicate.

Following Jesus is less like following a king, or learning all the rules of an empire, and much more like learning how to grapple with the complex challenges using love and the other gifts of the Holy Spirit – and doing this not alone, but with others who are our ‘kin’ in the kin-dom of the new community in Christ.

Mark Scandrette is a Christian leader and spiritual director with a focus on living in Christian community and practicing the way of Jesus every day. Mark’s books include “Practising the Way of Jesus”, with a focus on the Beatitudes in the Gospel of Matthew which are Jesus’ teaching about the character qualities of an ideal follower of Christ:

- | | | |
|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| • Compassion | • Humility | • Justice |
| • Lament | • Peacemaking | • Radical love |
| • Right motive | • Surrender | • Trust |

The cards scattered through this edition summarise each quality of Jesus’ disciples, and help remind us to ask “What would Jesus do?” and to act as if Jesus were right here with us, in the Spirit, now. For more from Mark , see <https://www.facebook.com/scandrette/>

Rohan Pryor



Synod 2025 reflections

Bronwyn Morton (Rev. Deacon) Kingston Uniting Church

I had the privilege of representing the Presbytery of Tasmania at the meeting of the Synod of Vic/Tas in Melbourne for 2025. What a diverse and rich experience it was!

If I close my eyes and reflect on that four day experience what do I see and hear?

Opening Worship

I see people gathered for worship. I hear powerful prayers and beautiful singing. I hear a newly installed Moderator, Rev Salesi Faupula, with words of wisdom and encouragement. At one stage, he is guided by the Spirit to sing in his native tongue because he is nervous.

I witness the farewell to the outgoing Moderator, Rev David Fotheringham, who has served the Synod with dedication and wisdom for the past three years.

The theme of Pilgrims of the Spirit draws us together as the Spirit blows where it will, moving people to speak and pray. An image of a small boat draped with many colours, representing our diversity, comes to mind. We are a multicultural people always on the move. God leads us on across both calm and troubled waters, in safe harbours and on rocky shores, in the boat with us, through good times and times of challenge.

I hear the reading of Luke 14: 1, 7-14 and the Moderator's message to us calling us be a church of unity, inclusivity and diversity, with a willingness to trust God for whatever lies ahead. Unity is not in sameness or status, but in reshaping community so that those left outside are brought to the centre, while those at the centre may actually be on the outside. We need to keep asking who is missing from the table, who is unheard, and what must we do to ensure God's feast is shared by all. Renewal comes when we listen to one another, especially those who reveal our blind spots, and are open to being reshaped by Christ. Let's go forward together, not in uniformity, but in the unity of humility, justice and love, walking not in fear, but in faith.

These words particularly ring true in light of the anti-immigration march in Melbourne on Sunday, the second day of Synod.

I hear many voices raised in prayer as, at one time within worship, we practised the Korean way of praying where everyone prayed spontaneously in their native tongue. How powerful! Unity in diversity.

(Cont. p.4)



(From p.3)

At the conclusion of the Opening Worship we were sung out by a massed Tongan choir of people from Canterbury church. Strong, powerful, uplifting praise to God.

Devotions and Bible Study

At the beginning of each day we had a devotion and a Bible study. The devotion that will stay with me is a visualisation in which we were asked to hold out our hands, and in one palm visualise grace and in the other resistance. This was a powerful reminder to me of the gifts we have from God and how they might be resisted.

The three Bible studies led by Rev Prof John Flett challenged us to rethink concepts of unity and diversity and about who is on the outside. Over three days we reflected on

1. Jesus the Same. Hebrews 13:7-14
2. Give us Friends. Ephesians 4 1-6, 11-16
3. In the image of the Creator Colossians 2:8-15 and 2:15-3:8

Notes below were taken from the power point presentation

Ø difference is the basic condition of Christian community

Ø quoting Lamin Sanneh “with respect to cultural chauvinism, pluralism can be a rock of stumbling, but in respect of God pluralism is the cornerstone of the universal human family”

Ø unity lies in negotiation and acceptance of difference.

Ø pluralism is the nature of truth

Ø what does it mean for us to be “renewed in knowledge in the image of the Creator?”

Each time we finished with a prayer from the World Council of Churches accompanied by two slides of a paddy field, one where it was newly planted and one where the rice was fully grown. Once it was grown there were no lines of demarcation seen between the fields.

Prayer

Lord make us realise that our Christianity is like a rice field:

when it is newly planted the paddies are prominent, but as the plants root and grow taller, these divided paddies gradually vanish, and soon there appears only one vast, continuous field.

So, give us roots that love grows, and help us grow in Christian fellowship and service, that your will be done in our lives, through our Saviour, your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Theological Reflection

At the end of each day we were led in a theological reflection on the day by Rev Tara Tautari from Aotearoa, New Zealand. Rev Tautari brought to her reflections a peaceful and Spirit filled presence. She led us gently through the occurrences of the day, those that had been smooth sailing and those that had needed some wrestling with. Her quiet unfolding of God’s presence in all that had occurred was a fitting end to each day of business, and gave us cause to reflect as we headed home.

(Cont. p.5)



(From p.4)

We had a couple of sessions of Diving Deep into the workings of groups, agencies or committees within the Synod. Highlights also included:

- the Saturday evening session where Dr Mark Zirnsak introduced Palestinian and Israeli speakers, Riman Barakat and Peta Jones Pellach, who talked about their ongoing work advocating for peace on the ground in their own countries, as part of peace groups FeelBeit and Women Wage Peace. While acknowledging the great difficulties of finding a peace filled solution to the conflict, the stories of these women were hope filled, telling of listening and collaboration.
- First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria's Aunty Esme Bamblett spoke to the Synod, talking of a Treaty, soon to go before the Victorian Parliament, which would help address past injustices suffered by First Peoples. This reinforced the Synod's consensus on the Yoorrook Report's recommendations (See below)
- Report of UAICC Tasmania, especially the challenge to the Synod by Ayla Williams, following on from the input of the Moderator, and Bible study leader about who is in and who is out, and who is welcome at the table.

Reports were taken as read and we all became more familiar with the workings of the church over the past three years.

There were also 26 proposals that were put forward for discussion, debate and adoption, either by consensus or agreement, with two withdrawals. Of these proposals, those that stand out are:

- The Faithful Futures Project

The Synod meeting resolved to adopt the vision of Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples, seeking community, compassion and justice for all peoples, this to be implemented through:

- A. Coordinated Ministries - renewing discipleship and being attentive to the life and needs of the local context by 2030.
- B. Respecting Country – Honouring the Church's Covenant with the UAICC, all communities of faith will listen to, and be able to tell about some of the histories of the Country on which they are located by the end of 2028, and be invited to develop local and appropriate ways to respond.
- C. Intercultural leadership – By 2028: to be providing appropriate intercultural leadership formation and equipping for all ministry agents and congregations; and develop intercultural networks for worship, witness and service.
- D. All-Age Growth – to have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative in 80% of Coordinated Ministries by 2030.
- E. New Communities – establish at least five new Christian communities by 2030.

It was resolved to establish a Faithful Futures Steering Committee to provide oversight, develop a strategy, resource and review this project and report to Standing Committee and subsequently, to the next Synod.

(Cont. p.6)



(From p.5)

- Response to the Yoorrook Justice Commission Final Reports and Truth Telling

In response to the Yoorrook Commissions investigations into the allocation of land to the church, Kerrupmara/Gunditjmara man and Traditional Owner, Commissioner Travis Lovett, deputy chair of the Yoorrook Justice Commission states “Truth-telling lays the foundation for change. It enables us to recommend the reforms needed to laws, institutions and systems, so these can be addressed through Treaty negotiations. It’s how we begin to rebuild trust and to establish a new relationship between First Peoples, the state and all Australians.

This moment is not just about Aboriginal people. It is about the kind of nation we want to be. A nation mature enough to face its past. A nation proud enough to face its past. A nation proud enough to embrace the oldest continuing culture on Earth. A nation strong enough to take responsibility and act.”

The Synod resolved to welcome the Commission’s Final Reports and commend them to the councils and institutions of the church within the Synod, requesting the Standing Committee to establish a Working Group to respond to the recommendations of the Commission

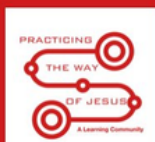
- Care of rural communities through discussion, and recognition of the impact in Victoria of the fire levy on farmers, and acknowledging that many of our rural communities are struggling and we need to listen them more carefully and care for them.
- Frequency of Synod meetings. It was resolved that Synod meet every 2 years, rather than 18 months as currently, and the Moderator’s term therefore extends to 4 years commencing at the current Synod meeting.

This report, while long, picks up on only some personal reflection on the depth and nuances of this time of being God’s people from the Uniting Church together. There were many rich conversations and deep reflection across the four days. More information can be found on the Vic/Tas website.

Bronwyn Morton (Rev. Deacon) Kingston Uniting Church

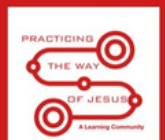
PEACEMAKING:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality that we all belong to one another as siblings in God’s big family. They move past the binary of “Us” versus “Them” to seek peace and reconciliation and find connections across differences in race, class, gender, personality, politics, and culture.



RADICAL LOVE:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality that they are vitally connected to the source of all life and that nothing can separate us from what is most essential to our well-being. They face their fears, turn towards courageous love, die to the old/false self, and live from the new/true self characterized by love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, humility, and self-control.





First timer reflection about going to Synod 2025 meeting

Meg Fiddymment, Kingston Uniting Church

This is my first Synod meeting for the Uniting Church. I went with curiosity to see how the Organisation worked and how I could keep it focused on the people within each community who are seeking a place of safety and acceptance.

I was wonderfully amazed at the passion and care that I heard and met and listened to from those that love Jesus. I heard about their desire on how they could live out their faith and values within their own community and context.

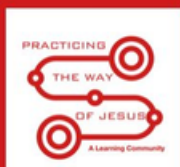
I was so drawn to thinking about who is in our community and those that are 'outside our gate' that John Flett referred to in his inspiring and thought-provoking theological input each day.

It was so good to hear the respectful discussions around the 'Faithful Futures' project and the possibility it raises for us to reflect and celebrate the good work that is happening within our communities and be prompted to look at different ways of expressing our faith through the five goals.

There is so much I could say. I am finding space to listen to the Spirit as I re-read and discuss with others how this can be a part of our church and presbytery. I am also doing that for myself as I listen to the Spirit, living my values based on Jesus and how I can be more authentic and truer as a pilgrim of the Spirit.

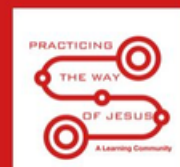
RIGHT MOTIVE:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality that God's tender gaze sees everything. Nothing is hidden, and the truth eventually comes out. They stop hiding and pretending, regularly take inventory, are honest with themselves and others, and act with integrity from an undivided heart.



SURRENDER:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the inevitability of suffering, struggle, and conflict. They choose non-violent resistance over retaliation, turning the other cheek, going the extra mile, loving and blessing those who curse them, knowing that, in the end, love will finally win.





Highlights of Synod 2025

Bron Howard

The opening Worship service was lovely, it was great to be with so many people, witness the Installation of our new Moderator Rev Salesi Faupula and give thanks to David Fotheringham for his faithful service as Moderator for the last three years. Then when people were leaving the service the choir sang, it was uplifting.

Mark Zirnzak (JIM) introduced two amazing women:- Peta Pellach (Israeli) who grew up as an activist in Melbourne and Rimam Barakat who lives in Palestine. Peta married an Israeli man and moved to Israel where she became involved in the Women Wage Peace in Israel.

Rimam Barakat – is a Palestinian Muslim woman from East Jerusalem, a peace builder and co director of Feelbeit, an Israeli-Palestinian cultural centre on the border between East and West Jerusalem, that uses the arts to envision and prototype a better future for a bleeding land.

The Women Wage Peace in Israel and the Women of the Sun group in Palestine organizations were born separately, but both had the urgent desire to end the cycle of violence and conflict, and shared their belief in the powerful role women have to play in leading our region to peace, brought us together. They were already working together for a brighter future when everything changed. On Oct. 4, 2023, members of Women Wage Peace and Women of the Sun marched together for peace. On October 7 2023 members from both the groups were killed and injured when war broke out. Yet, in their grief, they found strength in one another.

The 'Women Wage Peace in Israel' connected with the 'Women of the Sun group in Palestine' and decided to continue with their planned peace gatherings. Religion needs to be a tool for peace building not a destructive force in society, brought together in Israel: Israeli Christians, Muslims, Jews and Druze, 25 women in total, they held 5 meetings together, meeting in Bethshala so all could attend during the war. They spent time talking and learning about their religions, forming bonds, gaining understanding for each other.

Many Palestinians and Israelis working towards peace, wanting better futures for their children, families and generations to come.

Transformation

at Evandale Uniting Church

What do you do with the backyard of a church, a messy, overgrown rubbish heap of a backyard space? What do you do if the backyard slopes down to a railway line and beyond the railway line to a river and beyond the river to a panoramic view over the Midlands to the Western Tiers? What do you do if most of the sloping churchyard is a cemetery of old graves, with the rubbish heap at the bottom?

Evandale Uniting Church has the enviable reputation of being the most photographed building in a town which is renowned for its many historic buildings. The church is one of two, directly opposite each other on the main road as you enter the town. One church is Uniting. The other is Anglican. Both are called St Andrews.


Visitors come to Evandale Uniting Church, often in search of ancestral graves. The panoramic view is of interest to the town, as the only point of public access to it, other properties with a similar view being privately owned. The overgrown rubbish heap is obviously in need of transformation. That is the story of a group of enthusiastic volunteers (collectively known as Marginata), pictured below. The rubbish has been removed. Shrubs are being planted. Albeit a work in progress, the messy area at the bottom of the cemetery is being turned into a garden space suitable for meditation.



PreachFest

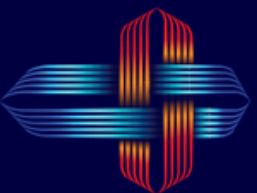
Ancient Futures

24/25 OCT 2025

 St Stephen's Uniting Church

PreachFest is for anyone who shares in this gift of proclamation. The conference is grounded in worship, aiming to uplift and inspire all participants.

This year's PreachFest theme is *Ancient Futures*. We honour the voices and faithful witnesses of those who came before us, connecting them to our participation in service in the future hope of reconciliation and the renewal of all things in Christ.



nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/preachfest-2025/



Keynote Speaker

Monica Jyotsna Melanchthon

Associate Professor, Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Studies and now Research Coordinator at the Pilgrim Theological College, University of Divinity

About Monica

Monica's vocation has been a unique blend of the joy that comes with ministry and the resourcing of the wider church, a passion for working with communities of women, and love of academic research, teaching, and mentoring.

Find out more



Uniting Church
SYNOD OF NSW & ACT

Uniting

**Create a safe and
happy home for
children in need.**

Become a foster carer and provide a stable and supportive
environment for children and young people.



As part of wanting to connect more with congregations, and promote the great work of Foster Care, Uniting Vic.Tas have put together some worship resources for congregations.

<https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/congregations/mission-team-and-work/#resources>

The resources include an order of service, with a powerpoint and some sermon prompts, as well as a video of one of our foster carers sharing about the connection between her faith and foster care.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WUD_uQmbWUA&feature=youtu.be

We're inviting congregations to use the resources for worship and share the video in their service on a Sunday that suits them. We would love it if you could share these resources with congregations in your presbytery.

The work of foster care is incredible work, and worth celebrating.

These worship resources remind us that we bring ourselves before a God who calls us beloved children, and who seeks to restore all people to loving relationships of healing and hope.

Also just a shoutout, keep an eye on the Gippsland times, there's a story coming out about congregations and Uniting Vic.Tas working together to gather toys for foster kids. A great story of what's possible when we work together!

Matt Julius | Church Engagement Worker, Mission, Ethos and Engagement Team

RESOURCES



Promoting peace

As part of its commitment to justice and peace, and as the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel continues, the Assembly has produced a range of resources promoting a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

<https://uniting.church/palestine-and-israel/>

From Synod Connect



SU Garden Day

Where: "Cluny", 130 Elphin Rd, Newstead
When: Saturday 8th November, 10am - 2pm
Cost: \$10 entry fee includes tea/coffee and cake

Come along for a pleasant outing and support Scripture Union in Tasmania including school chaplaincy, school holiday camps and programs, and outreach ministry.

Enjoy a walk through the garden and browse the plant, produce and knick-knack stalls.

Contact:

Sue Tomlinson - 0449 928 405
suzann.tomlinson@su.org.au



SU Chaplaincy National Snapshot 2025

SU has been providing social, emotional and pastoral support in Australian schools through chaplaincy for over 30 years. Throughout 2024 we collected information on their activities and impact. We are pleased to share our findings with you.

School Chaplains do great work promoting holistic wellbeing in schools. We know this because every year, we hear story after story about the amazing contribution they make to the lives of students, families and staff – the people who know chaplains, work alongside them and directly benefit from their work. In this report, we are pleased to tell this recurring story in a different way – through data, graphs and infographics.

Throughout 2024, SU collected information on the demographics, activities and impact of our School Chaplains. Not all the information collected was included in this report. This report is a 'snapshot' of the information that, from our experience is the information people are most interested in when it comes to finding out more about school chaplaincy.

Thanks to the School Chaplains and field workers who gave their time to record data, to McCrindle who helped us put together our 'Chaplaincy Activity Surveys' and to SU Chaplaincy staff who crunched numbers, interpreted data and designed infographics that have helped us understand the story of school chaplaincy better than we did before.



To view the full report, please visit <https://suchaplaincy.org.au/chaplaincy-snapshot/>

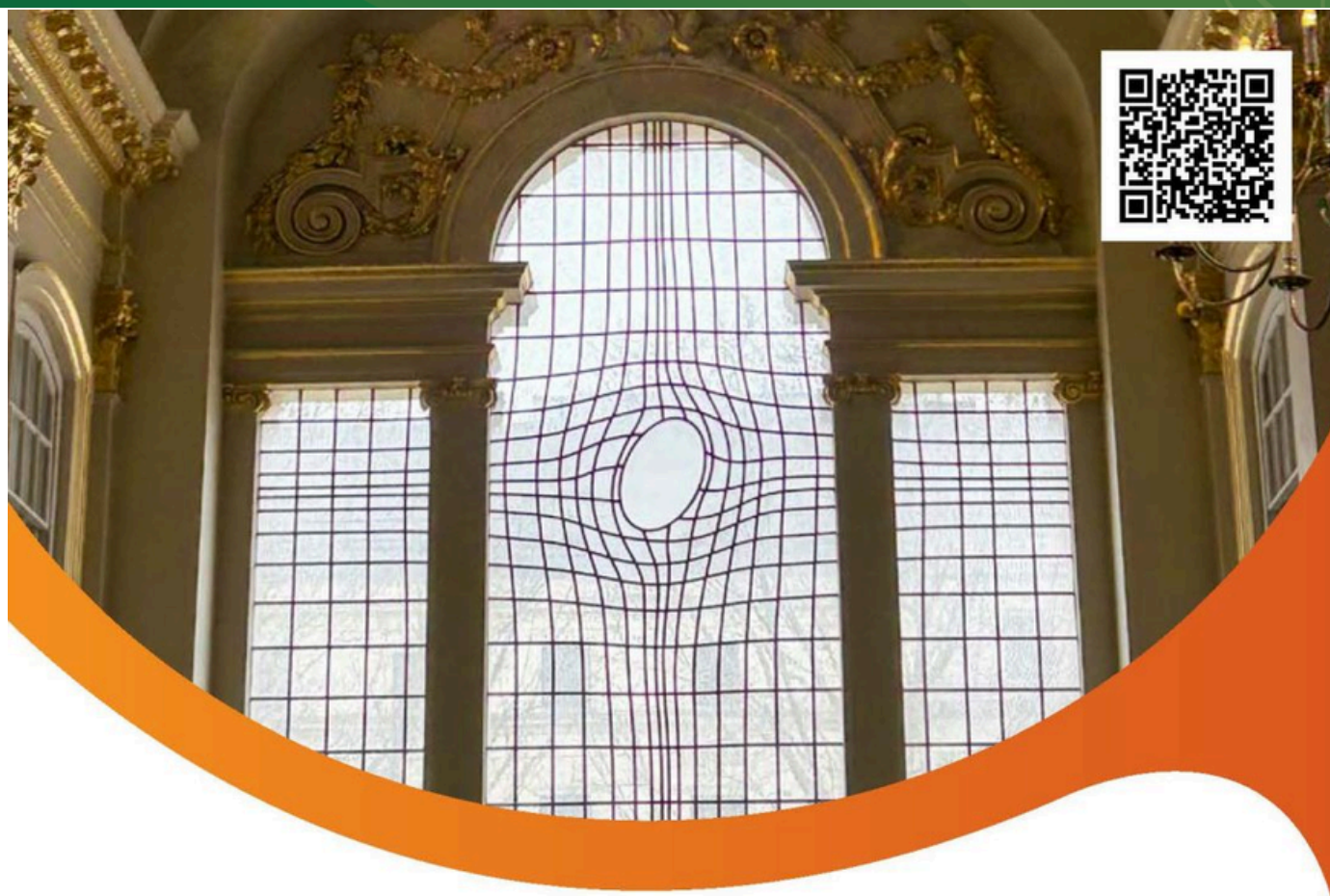
Preaching course

'Exploring Preaching' is an online course beginning on October 13 designed for anyone wishing to grow in their understanding of preaching within the Uniting Church.

<https://events.humanitix.com/exploring-preaching>



From Synod Connect



Discernment Day

About

Come and see... An opportunity to learn about discernment, discipleship and ministries in the Uniting Church, and pathways into lay and ordained ministries.

- Meet UCA Ministry agents and learn about their different roles and contexts
- Discover educational pathways for discipleship and ministries
- Learn about the Period of Discernment and ministry pathways
- Consider how to discern your gifts and your sense of call

Register online at <https://events.humanitix.com/discernment-day>



Where:

Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Cres, Parkville VIC 3052



When

9:00 am – 4:00 pm,
Saturday 25 October



Cost

\$40 per person (in-person)
Free (online via Zoom)



WHAT'S ON!

OCT - NOV 2025

OCT 07 | **Pastoral Relations Committee**
10.30am - 4.00pm

NOV 03 | **Recreation Day North Tas.**
Presbytery Office Closed

OCT 09 | **Launceston Show Day**
Presbytery Office Closed

NOV 04 | **Pastoral Relations Committee**
10.30am - 4.00pm

OCT 11 | **Refresh North, LNUC**
9.30am – 12.30pm, 128-132 George Town Rd, Newnham

NOV 08 | **Presbytery Meeting, Longford UC**
3 High St, Longford

OCT 12 | **Refresh South, Clarence UC**
1.30pm – 4.30pm, 2 York St, Bellerive

NOV 21 | **Resource and Development Committee** 10.30am - 2.30pm

OCT 21 | **Resource and Development Committee** 10.30am - 2.30pm

NOV 27 | **Presbytery Standing Committee**
10.00am - 4.00pm

MONTHLY CHECKLIST



Check monthly and three monthly items in Annual Maintenance Statements Logbooks

TRUST:

An apprentice to Jesus learns to embrace the reality of divine care and abundance. They overcome worry, anxiety, and striving, practice gratitude, contentment, and generosity, and cultivate an interactive relationship with God where they can express their needs and desires.



The next issue will be distributed in the week before the end of November. Contributions to be received seven days before publication. Contact Graham Booth, editor, by [email](#), phone 6331 9784 or post: 36 Paterson St, Launceston, 7250.