

The Westerly



PWW & PWV Newsletter No.66 – February 2025



Being Church in a Liminal Time

Rev. Linley Liersch (PPW Presbytery eLM Minister)



For many eons now we have been living in a Christendom Era where the church was at the centre of society. But now the church has been pushed to the edges of society.

We are realising that we are living in a **'liminal time'** an in-between time. This period of transition, where the old structures are breaking down and the new ones have yet to fully emerge. As congregations continue to wrestle with how to respond to changes in worship attendance, declining interest in institutional religion and what it means to do ministry in a post-Christendom culture, this is a timely message.

We are in a time when we need to **reimagine traditional models of church** in response to the shifting dynamics of society. What are the traditional models we need to rethink: Sunday morning worship where the ministry agent leads worship a four-hymn sandwich of songs out of the hymn book. A church heavy with committees, taking too long to make the changes they need to adapt. Small congregations, in a building meant to host 10 times more people, a building from another era!

Rather than clinging to outdated structures or resorting to superficial methods of evangelism, rather we need to be open and willing to **embrace change, experiment with new forms of worship** and **community engagement** and **cultivate an authentic witness** that resonates with the deepest needs and aspirations of people today. We need to embrace change because we have done it the same way for nearly 50 years, expecting people would just be drawn to Christ. We need to experiment with new forms of worship that will engage a younger generation: Messy Church, café worship and all-age worship. We need to re-learn how to do community engagement, because most of the world thinks the church is irrelevant to their lives. We need to cultivate an authentic witness that tells our own story and honours the story of others in a secular world.

Act2 documents do something unique as they summarise our **identity as the UCA** in a few words, and they testify to the fact as a UCA we have a unique perspective that no other denomination in Australia offers. If the UCA were not to continue the church and the world would be the poorer for it.

As a liturgical church we are experiencing the season of **Epiphany**, an old fashioned word meaning the 'Ah, ha!' moments in our faith journey. Famous epiphanies in the bible are often mountain top experiences, mysterious appearances with words from God accompanied by bright light, earthquakes, strong winds and fire. Some epiphanies are spoken out loud for all to hear and others are whispered. This is the season of listening for the word of God that breaks into our world, that leads to a change of heart, and pour out unexpected grace into the unsuspecting world.

For anyone seeking to navigate the complexities of faith and ministry in an age of transition. Although the challenges facing the church are daunting, we have an opportunity for renewal and rediscovery of what it truly means to be the body of Christ in the world today. [\[Being Church in a Liminal Time by Jones & Fredrickson\]](#)

Full of Epiphanies

Moderators Letter to Presbyteries

Rev. David Fotheringham

I am writing regarding the shared strategic planning process between all of the presbyteries and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania known as the **Faithful Futures Project**. You will have received a copy of the correspondence outlining the Faithful Futures Project that I sent to all Church Councils and Ministers in Placement on 29 November 2024.

At the Faithful Futures Project meeting on 22 August 2024, it was resolved that:

1. A meeting to enable all of the presbyteries and the Synod to formally resolve the Faithful Future Goals would be arranged for the first quarter of 2025;
2. That presbyteries and the Synod Standing Committee (SSC) would each be invited to appoint three representatives to attend the meeting referred to in point 1; and
3. That the presbyteries and the SSC would be asked to authorise those representatives to resolve the final goals on behalf of their appointing bodies.

At the October 2024 Presbytery Synod Forum meeting, and in meetings with Presbytery Chairpersons, I have flagged Friday, 21 March 2025 as the date for the meeting ... at Wesley Place (130 Lonsdale Street, Melbourne) commencing at 10:00am, and concluding by 3:00pm.

The meeting will have three main objectives:

1. To finalise the Faithful Futures Project-related Vision, Values and Goals, which will shape the priorities and emphases through the presbyteries and Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, enabling a shared strategic approach; (See poster below)
2. To confirm related resourcing priorities; and
3. To establish frameworks for such working groups and implementation plans as will be helpful for the resourcing and implementation of the agreed goals.

(Extract only of letter sent on 3rd December 2024)

UNITING CHURCH VIC & TAS
DRAFT VISION, VALUES & GOALS

**Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples,
seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation;**
Inclusive, diverse, seeking justice, journeying with Jesus

Coordinated Ministry
Coordinated ministry and mission in each Local Government Area (or suitable equivalent), attentive to the life and needs of the local context, by 2030.

Respecting Country
Every congregation will be able to tell some of the story of the Country in which it is located by the end of 2028, and be invited to develop local and appropriate ways to respond.

Intercultural Leadership
By 2028, to:
(a) be providing leaders of different cultural groups with appropriate formation and equipping; and
(b) develop networks to support worship, witness and service among communities of diverse languages and cultures.

All-age Growth
80% of Local Government Areas (or equivalent) have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative by 2030.

The Uniting Church is called to be a pilgrim people, participating in the movement of God. Presbyteries and the Synod have been engaging in a "Faithful Futures" Project discerning ministry and mission ahead. The VISION is widely recognised.
The VALUES have been distilled through the 2023 Synod meeting Working Groups. The GOALS have been developed through Bible study, survey, prayer and consultation. This poster shows the progress of this work, which is expected to be finalised in March 2025. Shared goals will help to relieve burdens and strengthen new mission opportunities as we follow Christ together.
For further information contact FaithfulFutures@victas.uca.org.au

November 2024

A planning process between all presbyteries and the SSC has resulted in a draft Faithful Futures document. The document can be found [here](#), while a video update by the Moderator is [here](#). More information on Faithful Futures can be obtained by [email](#).

From the Editor: If you missed an edition of The Westerly see [Newsletters – Presbytery of Port Phillip West \(ucappw.org.au\)](#). Rev Linley Liersch Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au.

Please click links or pictures for hyperlinks.

Next edition submissions 28th January 2024 .

MINISTRY OF LAY PREACHER ROAD MAP



Lay Preacher Studies in 2025



Semester 1 /2 **Understanding the UCA** - 25 Feb to 30 June; 5 August to 17 Nov -

Semester 1 - **Exploring Theology in the UCA** -24 Feb to 26 May <https://victas.uca.org.au/exploring-theology-in-the-uca/>

Semester 2 - **Exploring Christology** -7 July to 22 September <https://victas.uca.org.au/exploring-christology/>

Semester 3 - **Exploring Preaching in the UCA** - 13 October to 24 November - \$30 <https://victas.uca.org.au/exploring-preaching-in-the-uca/>

Semester 1 - **Understanding the Lay Preachers Code of Ethics**—10 June to 24 June - \$20 <https://victas.uca.org.au/understanding-the-lay-preacher-code-of-ethics/>

For the first time **Pastoral Care** will be offered in the form of the Pastoral Partners Program

Leadership Development Coordinator
Mel Perkins
Mel.Perkins@victas.uca.org.au



In 2025 will be managing registrations and teaching UCA Studies

- 1 Being Called**
Doing a Period of Discernment or starting some study can be great ways to explore God's call. For more information, talk with your Minister or Presbytery.
- 2 Apply**
Apply to your Minister and Church Council to be a Lay Preacher Candidate. If they say, "yes", your application will go to your Presbytery.
- 3 Study**
Start or continue your study through our theoretical and practical lay online units or through Pilgrim Theological College. Or explore RPL/RPE if you are eligible.
- 4 Practice**
Learn and practise your craft through involvement in worship leadership and preaching in your local congregation. Assessments will give you valuable feedback.
- 5 Recognition**
Once you have successfully completed your study and met all competency requirements of the Assembly, your Presbytery will decide if they will then recognise you for the specified Ministry of Lay Preacher.



Rev Linley Liersch
UCA Minister & Teacher
Presbytery eLM Minister
Helping teach the coursework for Theology, Christology & Preaching in 2025

Spiritual Care Matters

REV. ISABEL GREENALL (BARWON HEALTH, GEELONG)

The Presbytery of PPW currently provides 2 days per week (Monday & Friday) of spiritual care to the greater Geelong community based at University Hospital & Mackellar Centre, Geelong and many of our patients comes from both PPW & PWV. Rev Isabel Greenall is in the Placement offering care and support to patients and staff primarily at the hospital but also to those at the Mackellar Centre, as needed.

Historically, the Uniting Church chaplain has been able to access a list of all Uniting Church patients and visit them. However, with recent review of procedures alongside privacy legislation, it is no longer possible to do this. The process now is that a patient will need to ask their nurse or another member of the ward staff for a visit from the Uniting Church chaplain or Spiritual Care team. They will then put in a referral requesting a visit.



For family members, congregation members and Ministers, sometimes you may know someone in hospital that might need some care during their admission. The most important thing is that you ask for their permission before letting Isabel or the Spiritual Care team know. If the patient is not able to give their own consent, it needs to then come from the next of kin.

The best way to contact Isabel is through the Spiritual Care team direct phone number 4215 0627 or email spiritual.care@barwonhealth.org.au

National Apology Anniversary



February 13 each year marks the anniversary of the National Apology to the Stolen Generations, who suffered trauma because of past government policies of forced child removal. Many of these removals occurred as the result of laws and policies aimed at assimilating the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population into the predominately white community.

Stolen Generations survivors are some of Australia's most vulnerable people and many have kept their stories and experiences secret for many years, even decades.

Through hearing the resilient stories of Stolen Generations survivors there is now a willingness for Australians to join in on the healing journey. To be part of solutions into the future. This is the spirit of the anniversary.

Watch the story of [Stolen Generations survivor Aunty Julie Black](#) [6 min], a 64-year-old Barkindji woman, who was taken from her mother shortly after birth. Aunty Julie's story is heart breaking and courageous and reminds us that behind the Stolen Generations policies there were people, and children, who are still alive and in need of support. There is even the opportunity to donate to the Stolen Generation survivors through the Healing Foundation website.

[This Is How We Heal Video](#) [5 min] shares some of the facts around the Stolen Generations, intergenerational trauma and truth telling.

"We commemorate the apology to keep the spirit of its words and their meaning alive. The commemoration is a very real part of the healing journey. One that encourages us to keep looking for new ways to work together for genuine change in the lives of our survivors and their descendants."

– former CEO, The Healing Foundation, Fiona Petersen

The Year of Luke / Yr C RESOURCES

Hearing Luke's Gospel Afresh:

Studies on the third Gospel for Individuals and Groups

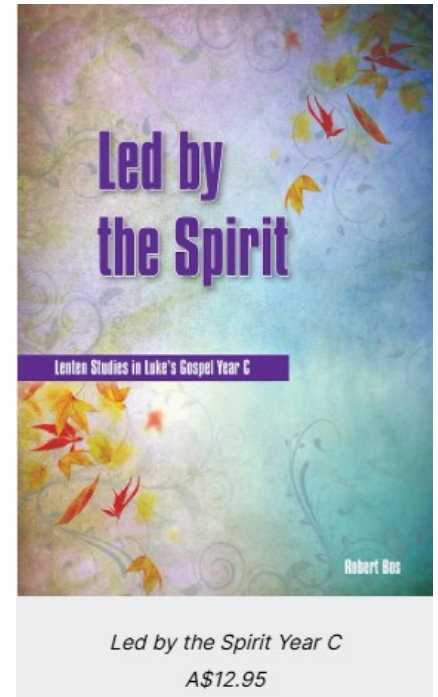
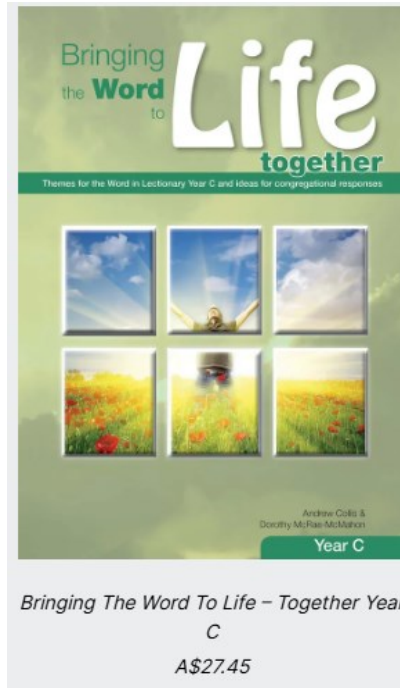
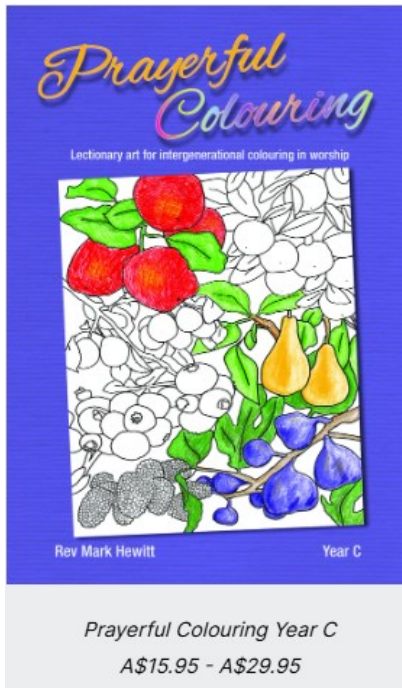
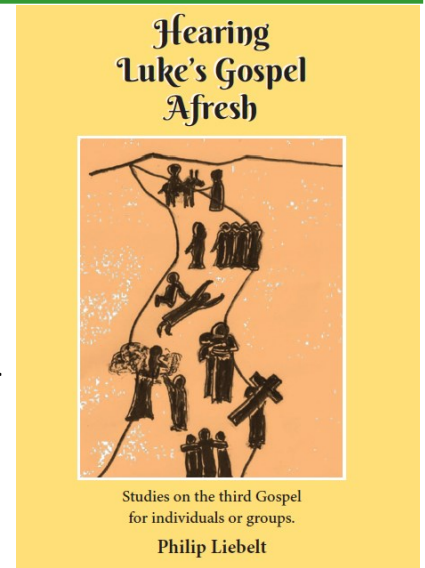


By Philip Liebelt

Phillip Liebelt is a retired UCA minister, Biblical storyteller and writer who is committed to Community Development, Social Justice and Advocacy and living in Warranabool, Vic.

Order his Bible studies: philipliebelt@gmail.com

Mobile: 0400 631 264



Calendar and Lectionary and **Year C 2024 - 2025**

UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
ASSEMBLY RESOURCING UNIT

The Uniting Church acknowledges that the Church has received the books of the Old and New Testaments as unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, in which it hears the Word of God and by which its faith and obedience are nourished and regulated ...

The Uniting Church lays upon its members the serious duty of reading the Scriptures, [and] commits its ministers to preach from these ...'
Basis of Union (1992 Edition), paragraph 5



Climate and Generations

By Danny (Retired Science Teacher) & Jenny Katzen (Retired Nurse) from eLM InterGen website

We are blessed with four beautiful grandchildren and are indeed lucky to have three of them living within 25 minutes from where we are. We use every opportunity we have to engage them in activities to help grow their interest and knowledge about the natural world such as

* Assisting them in planting native trees and shrubs on birthdays and explain why we plant native trees/shrubs. It is good to know that they already know that this reduces our carbon footprint and that we attract native birds and other animals to our suburban gardens.

* Sitting on the lawn and turning short sturdy twigs into the soil and patiently waiting for earthworms to emerge and explaining why the earthworms emerge from their burrows. Just a bit of simple physics ...”turning the twigs in the soil rubs against the soil particles and sends vibrations through the soil”... these vibrations are picked up by the earthworms and they regard this as a threat and emerge from their burrows. Using magnifying lenses is a good way to look at the external structure of the worms and then returning them to the soil to continue their important task in enriching the soil.

* Collecting a small sample of flowers from the garden and chatting about the parts of the flower and the role each part plays in attracting pollinating agents to ensure pollination and then fruit and seed formation. The conversation usually continues to include the effects of climate change on pollinators such as bees and other native insects.

* Long walks along isolated beaches admiring the views and making sure we carry an extra bag to remove some litter along the way.

* Using public transport to visit places such as the museum, Scienceworks and the botanical gardens.

All these help to stimulate young receptive minds and help them see the beauty that surrounds them, which will hopefully lead to a lasting love for our natural world.



Support Victorian Treaty

The First Peoples Assembly is inviting congregations to make a statement in support of the Treaty process in Victoria, to demonstrate to the Victorian Government that many Victorians continue to support the Treaty process. [Click to download](#)

Retired Minister's Gatherings—Pascoe Vale RSL

Venue: Pascoe Vale RSL, 40 Cumberland Rd Pascoe Vale 3044

Time: 12:00 – till 13:30 Friday 21st Feb 2025

This is for those of us who are retired or in the process of retiring to have lunch together and share a little of the journey. We gather in an informal way to catch up on how everyone's going and what we're up to. New members welcome.

So if you're interested, can you please let me know your RSVP by email before 5pm Tuesday 18th February mark@dunn.id.au This is essential for a lunch booking.

Ministry & Mission Day
at the Centre for Theology & Ministry
29 College Cres, Parkville VIC 3052
Tuesday February 18, 2025
9.30 am to 1.30 pm

Event Program:

- 9.30 am** Welcome to country with smoking ceremony
- 10:00 am** Worship Service in Yuma Auditorium

Service includes the induction of new Synod ministry staff.

Preacher: Rev Dr David Fotheringham, Moderator

- 11:00 am** Morning tea
- 11.30 am** Commencement Lecture

The commencement lecture marks the beginning of the academic year for Pilgrim Theological College.

Lecture Title:

"Discipleship in a multireligious world: faithful living in the Jesus Way and gracious loving within the embrace of the Trinity."

Presented by:

Rev Dr Sathianathan Clarke

- 12.45 pm** Lunch



Register your attendance online via the QR code



About Sathi Clarke

Lecturer in Theology and Mission, United Theological College, North Parramatta.

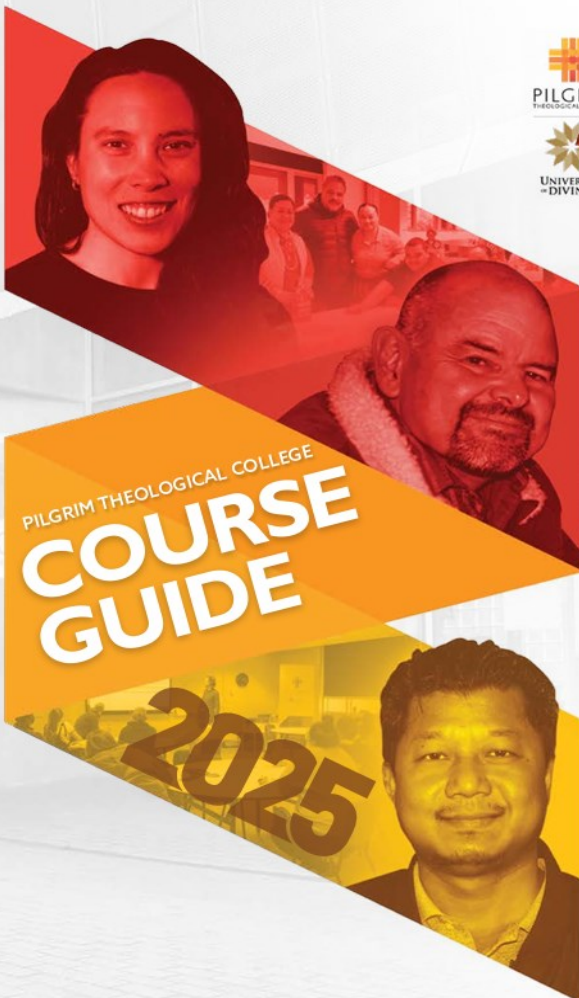
Sathianathan (Sathi) Clarke is Lecturer in Theology and Mission at United Theological College, North Parramatta.

Sathi is a Presbyterian of the Church of South India. He bridges the world between establishment and the marginalised, the global and the local, and academy and the congregation. He has taught and lectured on global Christianity, contextual theology, postcolonial mission, and interreligious dialogue in India, the U.S.A., the U.K., Germany, Sri Lanka, Korea, South Africa, and Liberia.

In his research and teaching, Sathi has cultivated specialties in contextual theology, constructive global theology, and theology of religions. From 1996-2004 he was on the faculty at United Theological College, Bangalore. He has also been visiting professor at Harvard Divinity School and, for the last twenty years, the Bishop Sundo Kim Chair in World Christianity and Professor of Theology, Culture and Mission at Wesley Theological Seminary, Washington D.C, a chair Sathi continues to hold in conjunction with his appointment at UTC.

World Interfaith Harmony Week Lecture
@ Parliament House Canberra
5th February 5:30—7:30pm Zoom [Link](#)
Prof. Dr. Rev. Anne Patel Gray UCA Minister
'Acknowledging Respect & Inclusion of Indigenous Nations Spirituality: In a Nation that Embraces Many Diverse Cultures and Faith'

'Australia is proud of its multicultural nation that boasts 270 ethnic groups. Australia is considered a secular country with a diverse migrant and refugee population with over 120 faiths. Yet Australia has traditionally been a majority Christian country that has largely ignored, oppressed and marginalised its First Nations peoples. As an Aboriginal woman, I am proudly from the Bidjara nation [in QLD] with a connection to a country that predates British invasion and colonisation. How do we forge a nation based on the truth that includes and shows respect to First Nations people, recognises our Spirituality and culture, and embraces our ancient knowledge? There is a critical need in Australia for a greater understanding of each other's cultural and religious differences. This will enable us to find common ground and build stronger relationships that allow respect for each other to grow'



PILGRIM THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE
COURSE GUIDE
2025

WWW.PILGRIM.EDU.AU



PILGRIM THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE **UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY**
SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE
Supporting education in the Uniting Church tradition

Applications OPEN NOW!

The Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania is fortunate to be the recipient of a variety of funds and bequests through its rich history of prior Theologians, Ministers and Members committed to ongoing study. Each fund aims to advance and support theological studies for lay and ordained people across the Uniting Church in Australia.

The funding amount awarded will be determined by individual criteria and in accordance with the unique stipulations of each fund. Applicants should ensure that all pertinent details are included in their application/s for consideration.

Eligibility Criteria

1. Applicants must meet the varying criteria to be considered for the selected scholarship. These may include details pertaining to ordination or lay leadership status; and/or
 2. Prior study or level of study required to meet the scholarship criteria may be a consideration and proof of prior study may or may not be required; and/or
 3. Acceptance into relevant courses may or may not be required.
- Refer the website for individual requirements.

How to apply

Interested applicants must complete an application form and provide details according to the application requirements outlined on the website. Refer the Scholarship webpage for details.

Closing Date

Applications for scholarships close prior to the beginning of semester, on 1st February and 1st July annually. Applications are reviewed by the Scholarships Committee. On receipt of your application, you will be advised of the date your application will be reviewed and the proposed result timeline.

Enquiries

All enquiries should be directed to Chair of Scholarships Committee on scholarships@pilgrim.edu.au

For more information visit our website at www.pilgrim.edu.au/cw-scholarships or scan the QR code.





Events

2—4th February

Heads, Hearts and Hands: What can dialogue do for us?

@ Trinity College Theological School (2 & 3 Feb), Temple Beth Israel, 76/82 Alma Rd, Sy Kilda (4 Feb). Cost: \$150—.

5th February

5:30—7:30pm

World Interfaith Harmony Week Event 2025

@ Parliament House, Canberra Prof Dr. Anne Patel Gray UCA Minister [Link](#)

13th February

National Apology Day to Stolen Generations Survivors [Link](#)

18th February

9:30—1:30pm

Ministry & Mission Day @ CTM 29 College Cres, Parkville

21st February

12—1:30pm

Retired Ministers Luncheon @ Pascoe Vale RSL

Bookings: mark@dunn.id.au

22nd February

Safe Church Training for 2nd Gen CALD Leaders

@ St. John's UCA, Essendon

24th February

Universal Day of Prayer for Students (UDPS)

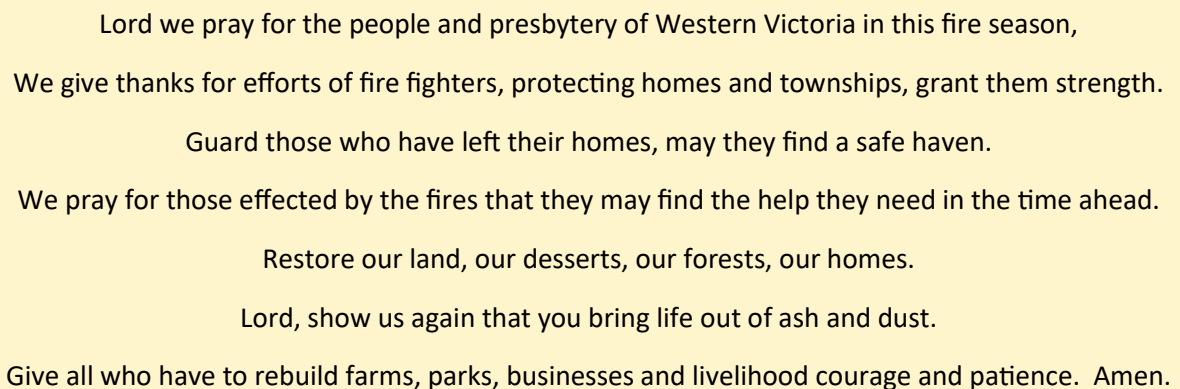
26th February

Assembly Net Zero Round Table Champions Meeting

[Register](#)

7th March

World Day of Prayer



Lord we pray for the people and presbytery of Western Victoria in this fire season,
We give thanks for efforts of fire fighters, protecting homes and townships, grant them strength.
Guard those who have left their homes, may they find a safe haven.
We pray for those effected by the fires that they may find the help they need in the time ahead.
Restore our land, our desserts, our forests, our homes.
Lord, show us again that you bring life out of ash and dust.
Give all who have to rebuild farms, parks, businesses and livelihood courage and patience. Amen.