

The Westerly



PWV & PPW Newsletter No.64 – November 2024



Mary: Prophet and God-bearer [Luke 1:39-56]

JIM Social Justice Advent Resource

The story we have chosen for this resource comes from the beginning of Luke's gospel, following on from the story of the Angel Gabriel coming to Mary to tell her that she is to have a child who is not her husband's. Mary goes to meet her older, barren relative Elizabeth, who is also miraculously with child. We hear the interaction between these two extraordinary women, which culminates in the famous hymn of the church: "The Magnificat" or Mary's Song, where she sings her response to the mercy that God has shown her.

What is it you notice when you read this story? Is it so familiar that you see in your mind's eye the art you grew up with, the songs you've sung at Christmas every year, and hear the story as you heard it in childhood? How difficult it is to read this very familiar story with fresh eyes!

It is a story we have domesticated and made nice and tidy – but it is in fact anything but.

Firstly, it is worth noting the presence of the Angel who comes to speak with Mary. Despite the attractive, gentle cherubic images we have in famous paintings, when Angels appear in the Bible they are fearsome. "Awesome." They almost always begin their interactions with humans by saying: "Do not be afraid!" This event is the inbreaking of a messenger of God into the life of the "young girl" (a better translation than "virgin") who is being told of an event which will not only change the shape of her life, but also change the course of history.

As Modern hearers of the story we often get caught up in the 'science' of the virgin birth and miss the fact that this miraculous birth story fits within the context of other miraculous births in the scriptures: think of Sarah, or Hannah, and indeed of Mary's cousin Elizabeth. Where Mary's story differs is that she is a young woman who is with child, the Son of God. **Mary is to become the "Godbearer" (Theotokos in Greek) the one who will house the child of God in her womb.**



The most important thing we often miss is the strongly prophetic response that Mary makes to the Angel. Mary responds: "Here I am." This seemingly innocuous sentence is one which is usually only uttered by the most powerful Kings and Prophets in the bible. This phrase is usually uttered by the most powerful of Biblical men. Here it is uttered by a 13-14 year old girl from a rural background pregnant with an illegitimate child. This "yes" to the action of God in her life is an extraordinary one. Right at the beginning of Luke's gospel, Mary's simple statement

Social Justice ADVENTure

Mary: Prophet and God-bearer [Luke 1:39-56]

JIM Social Justice Advent Resource

“**Here I am,**” shows us that something new and astonishing is happening. A young girl in the most precarious of positions is taking on the most important role of all of history – she is becoming the bearer of God. Her statement, “Here I am”, followed by the beautiful song “The Magnificat”, is a sign that the birth of this child is one which will turn the whole world upside down – it is a birth that will bring hope, peace, joy and love to all of humankind.

Mary’s prophetic words speak not only of God’s mercy to her, but also the way God’s mercy extends to God’s world across time:

God has shown strength with God’s arm;

God has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.

God has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly;

God has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty.

Luke 1:51-53 (Above was adapted with inclusive language).

Includes All-Age activities:

- Candle Wax painting
- Mary’s heart
- Write your own Hymn of Praise
- Haiku Magnificat
- Prayers and Blessings
- Reduce Greenhouse reductions in what we eat in in Advent & Christmas
- Vegetarian recipes
- Christian Limitarianism: The case against extreme wealth
- Taking Action against Corruption
- Letter writing campaign Ideas
- Prayer for the true meaning of Christmas
- Zero Waste Christmas



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 27th October 2024 .

Funded by the Victorian Equal Opportunity
and Human Rights Commission



Providing safety and support for LGBTQA people of faith: Improving pastoral care

Gain insights and strategies with leading advocate Jac Tomlins.
Hosted by the University of Divinity and the Victorian Equal
Opportunity and Human Rights Commission.

FRIDAYS
13 SEP or
8 NOV
9:30AM-1PM

FREE Workshop

Venue: St Paschal Campus, University of Divinity
90 Albion Road, Box Hill VIC

Scan the QR code to register or go to:
<https://vox.divinity.edu.au/event>



Contemplative Prayer Services 2024

Are you seeking to deepen your prayer life, or to experience different ways of praying? Perhaps you have heard the words "Examen", or "lectio divina" and want to know more. Brunswick and Northcote Uniting Churches are offering a series of prayer services with contemplative practices at their heart. Each service will invite us to experience a particular way of praying from the rich Christian tradition of prayer and contemplation. Come and enjoy a quiet contemplative space with us.

Saturday **14 September - 5-6pm** (experience the Examen)
Brunswick UCA, Cnr Sydney Rd & Merri St, Brunswick
Saturday **23 November - 5-6pm** (experience lectio divina)
Northcote UCA, High St, Northcote

Contact: Cath James 0438504394 or Anne Pate 0407 908729

Retired Minister's Gatherings—Pascoe Vale RSL

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

Time: 12:00 – till 13:30 Friday 6th Dec 2024

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.

So if you're interested, can you please let me know your RSVP by email before 5pm Tuesday 20th February mark@dunn.id.au This is essential for a lunch booking.



PILGRIM VALEDICTORY SERVICE

7 November | 5.30 pm | Wesley Church, Melbourne

Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTTCHER (DEACON—SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH CHAPLAIN)

There are horrible things happening in the world today, have you noticed? Of course! There's no avoiding them and we certainly shouldn't ignore them. We are all being called in important ways to "turn up" and support those who are suffering from oppression and injustice.

Finding a balance between showing up and "**retreating**" can be hard. We sometimes feel that we need to always be present to the suffering in the world.

In the New Testament there are many times we encounter Jesus retreating to be alone. And it's often to mountainsides or by bodies of water, places that are likely to inspire awe. And in those moments of awe, God is always close.

In the "Exploring Spirituality" group at Sunshine Hospital, I often ask the question "what's something that changes the way you feel?" "**Being in nature**" is by far the most common answer given. So much so that I'm exploring introducing a "deep ecology" approach to our gatherings. (Stay tuned!).

Being present to nature is being present to God. I invite you to retreat into God's presence in your own neighbourhood, whether in your garden, watching the sunset or noticing a tiny mushroom while walking your dog (see picture).

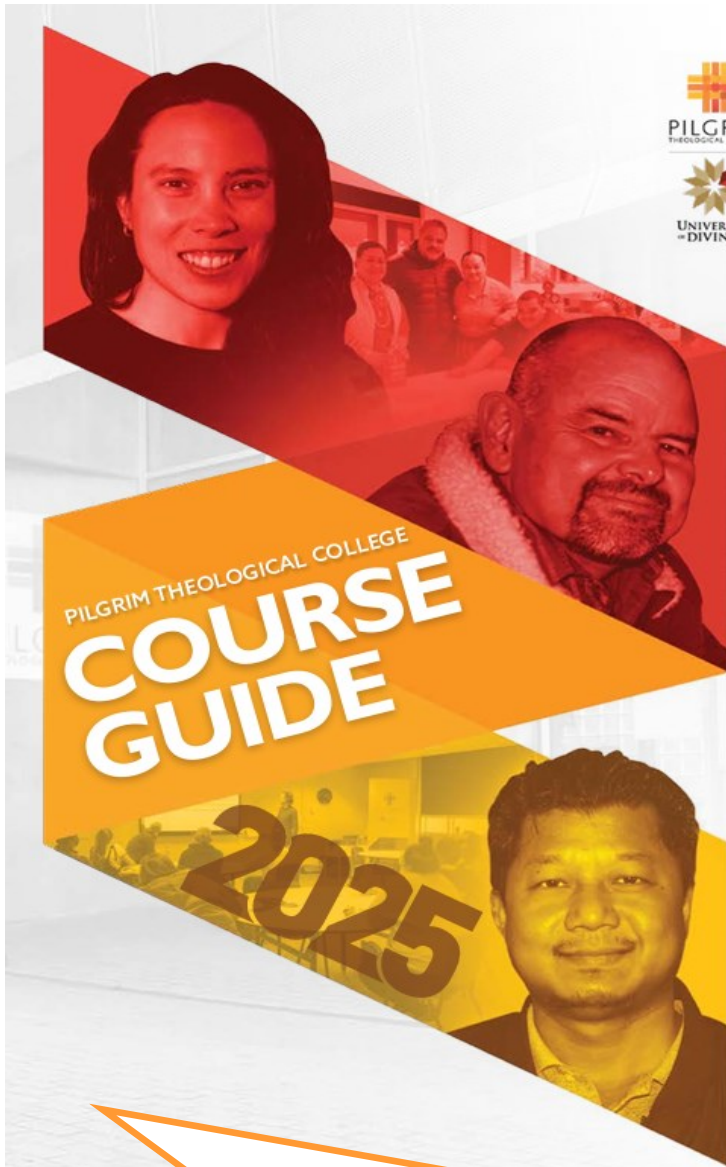


What do the terms **discipleship, evangelism and service (diakonia)** mean for the Uniting Church?

- How ought the Uniting Church in Australia best define the term 'mission' in light of our Covenant commitments?
- What is the relationship between God's all-encompassing and cosmic mission and our own call to mission?
- How does the Uniting Church understand 'discipleship' and the 'making and growing of disciples'?
- Does the term 'evangelism' still have currency and relevance to a Uniting Church audience?

These are the kinds of questions you might like to engage with in response to a new call for papers from the Act2 Project. <https://uniting.church/act2-call-for-papers/> Theological reflections from across the Uniting Church are being invited on the terms: mission, discipleship, evangelism and diaconal communities. Read more from Rev Erik Lennestål, Acting Act2 Project Lead.

A great range of reflections on the theological culture of the Uniting Church are already available from the Act2 webpage <https://act2uca.com/category/theological-culture/>



Contents

Welcome to the Pilgrim Theological College 2025 Course Guide

About our Courses

Summary of Units of Study

- Field A - Humanities
- Field B - Biblical Studies
- Field C - Christian Thought and History
- Field D - Theology: Mission and Ministry
- Capstone
- Specialisations
 - Feminist Theologies
 - Spiritual Care, Pastoral Care and Chaplaincy
- Professional Supervision
- Period of Discernment
- Lay Leadership Development
- Continuing Education
- Uniting CPE - The John Paver Centre
- Library and Public Lectures
 - The Dalton McCaughey Library
 - Northey Lectures
- Frequently Asked Questions



PILGRIM
THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

The 2025 Course Guide is more inclusive than ever with theology, feminist theology, lay Leadership development, continuing education options, CPE, Chaplaincy, Lay preaching...

UNITS OF STUDY

Summer Intensive

3 Feb – 28 Feb, 2025

CT2222P/8222P	Uniting Church Theology and History	pg 14
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Semester I

24 Feb – 30 May, 2025

AL3000P/9000P/ BN3000P/9000P	Advanced Greek Reading	pg 9
AP1000P/8000P	Philosophy for Understanding Theology	pg 9
BA1010P/2010P/8010P	Introducing the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament	pg 11
BN3130P/9130P	The Book of Revelation: Evil, Empire and Eschatology	pg 12
CH1020P/8020P	Christianity's Dangerous Memory: Early Church to Middle Ages	pg 13
CT2025P/3025P/9025P	Jesus, Discipleship and Justice	pg 15
DS1222P/8222P	Spiritual Formation in the Christian Tradition	pg 18

DO YOU WANT TO SHARE THAT YOU CARE ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT?

PPW Climate Action Group

You have an opportunity to purchase a T-shirt and join many of us who are wearing them to various events, making a statement that we are members of the Uniting Church who are working towards making a better future, by our actions.

The shirts look like this and come in sizes S to 5XL. They cost \$27 and they can be posted to you for whatever Australia Post charges. We can place an order once we have ten requests.

If you are interested, email Sue Strong on susanannestrong@hotmail.com



ZERO WASTE CHRISTMAS

How can you avoid using wrapping paper this Christmas?

- Gifts can be packed into gift bags that are reusable
- Use attractive shopping bags
- Gift Boxes can be wrapped with ribbon and reused, varying sizes can be nested and packed away for next year.
- Recycle material/clothes from the op-shop and sew bags

How can I [reuse](#) last years Christmas cards?

- Reuse last years Christmas Cards, glue paper over personal messages on the old card
- Cut last years cards into gift tags
- Gift Tags could be made into Christmas ornaments for the Christmas Tree at home or at Church
- Cut cards into a holly leaf shape and construct a Christmas Wreath

PPW Climate Action Group [Website](#)

The Climate Action Group recently ran a workshop on “**Getting off Gas and Applying for Grants**”. For a transcript of the event click on [link](#) or Video [link](#).

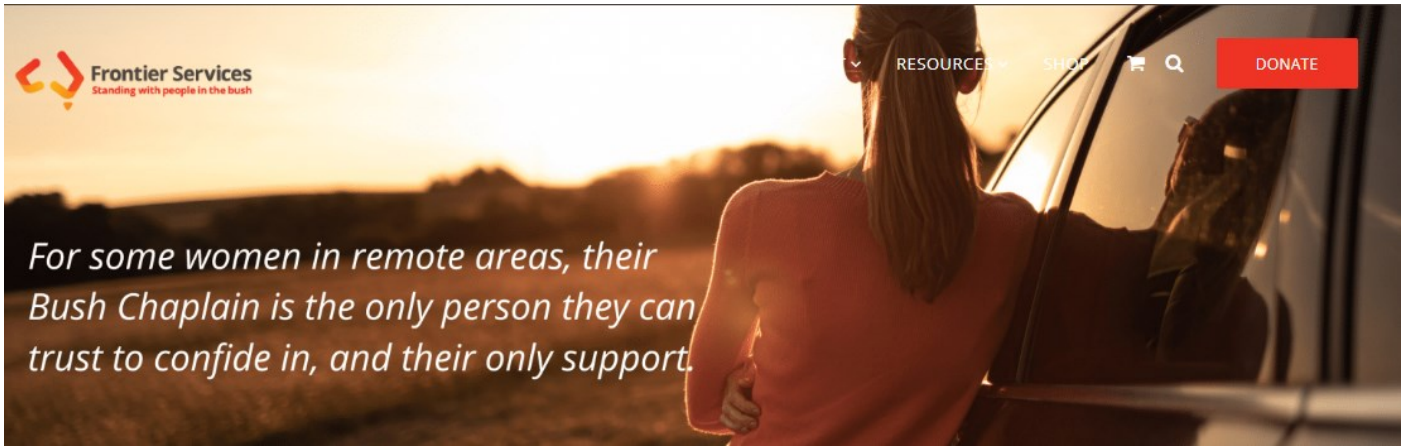


TOOLKIT

The Christmas Bowl 2024 Toolkit, with everything you need to run the Christmas Bowl in your church.



Worship Resources from Christ the King to Christmas day. Including prayers for Peace, candle lighting liturgies, Biblical reflections, Act for Peace stories from around the world and blessings. Activity Sheets. Ideas on how to make your own Christmas bowl. Posters. How to make donations. Ways to get involved!






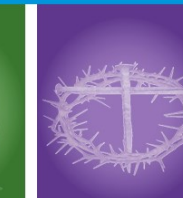

<p>Australian Birds (Mixed pack) – 10 pack</p> <p>\$12.00</p>	<p>Christmas Stockings – 10 pack</p> <p>\$12.00</p>	<p>Joy to the World – 10 pack</p> <p>\$12.00</p>

Calendar and Lectionary

Year C 2024 - 2025

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

Save the Date



Holding the Light

AN ECUMENICAL SERVICE
Remembering Victims and Survivors of Family Violence
5.00pm, Thursday 28 November 2024
Wesley Church Melbourne



MINISTRY OF LAY PREACHER ROAD MAP

Events

7th Nov 5:30pm	Pilgrim Theological College Valedictory @ Wesley Church Online
8th November 9:30—1pm	Providing safety and support for LGBTIQA+ People of faith: Improving Pastoral Care Bookings
10th Nov 11:15 am	Safe Church Training
16th November	PPW & PWV Presbytery Meetings
23rd Nov 5—6pm	Contemplative Prayer Service @ Northcote UCA
23rd Nov 3pm	Commissioning of Andrew Johnson as Assembly General Secretary Online options
24th Nov	Christ the King Sunday
25th Nov	WCC 16 Days against Sexual and Gender based Violence Resources
28th Nov 5pm	Holding the Light @Wesley Church, Melbourne. Remembering the Victims and survivors of family violence
12—1:30pm	Retired Ministers gathering @ Pascoe Vale RSL Bookings: mark@dunn.id.au
Dec 6th 11— 7pm	Mooney Ponds Uniting Op-Shop Grand Opening Puckle Street

Three exciting
Lay Pastor
roles

looking for lay
leaders with
worship
leadership
experience,
training and a
heart for the
church.

Current Vacancies

Grace Community – Melton Uniting Church

Position Title: Youth, Children and Family Ministry Pastor

Status: Non-placement Pastor (Part Time 0.8 FTE, 3 years, with possibility to extend)

Sunshine Uniting Church – Samoan Language Worship Group – 11:30am Group

Position Title: Worship Leader Pastor

Status: Non-Placement Pastor (0.5FTE - 19 hours per week)

Trinity Uniting Church Altona

Position Title: Worship Leader Pastor

Status: Non-Placement Pastor (0.5FTE)