



**Victorian**  
Council of Churches



# Council News

September 2020

Victorian Council of Churches

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Rev Fr Shenouda Boutros

Executive Officer:

Rev Ian Smith

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## *Reflection*

A new season is upon us - the air is warming, the blossom is bursting forth and new shoots are appearing on deciduous shrubs. All pointing to a promise of things to come..

I find this time of the year exciting and hope filling— having emerged from the depths of winter and despite all else that's occurring around us, this season breaks in offering all the promise of the coming months.

Whilst these past 6 months have been extremely tough, with the illness that has ravaged our world taking its toll — the change of season for me, calls for a refocusing, for it reminds me of a greater force that's at work.

As we continue to seek ways of expressing our faithfulness in these tough times may we all find strength in the promises from our God who has promised to never leave or forsake and calls us to live with assurance...

*- Ian*

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Whilst we are currently unable to gather .. Nevertheless I would welcome opportunities to share stories of the Council activities with your Church or organization – I'm happy to appear online or pre recorded you can contact me on 03 9412 8487 or email at [ian.smith@vcc.org.au](mailto:ian.smith@vcc.org.au)

## News from the Council

- In the midst of this unprecedented period of history the Victorian Council of Churches continues to seek to serve the member churches though whatever means it can.
- The VCC continues to be represented in consultations with State Government over the most appropriate ways of ensuring society's safety during this time
- The VCC has been active in facilitating a number of events over these weeks
  - Standing Together on August 30th - (link) - report page 4
  - Lighting the darkness August 31st see report page 4
  - Facilitating a Webinar on the 10th Sept on doing Ministry safely in midst of Covid 19 - see flyer on page 8
- The VCC will hold it's AGM on October 7th at 5 pm - due to restrictions it's intended for this to be held via Zoom .

The office has now temporarily closed with Rev Ian Smith working from home—  
Ian is still contactable by phone, email or What's App.

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## VCC—new Contact details

- phone: 03 9650 4511 or 9412 8487
- email [vcc@vcc.org.au](mailto:vcc@vcc.org.au)
- Web [www.vcc.org.au](http://www.vcc.org.au)
- Facebook [www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches](https://www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches)

**NOTE: The Victorian Office now has a new PO Box number.**

- postal address PO Box 6804 509 St Kilda Rd, Melbourne 3004

## The Passing of a dear Ecumenical Friend

The Victorian Council of Churches stands with all members of the Coptic Church in Victoria expressing our condolences following the death of a beloved Priest Rev Fr Macarius Wahba

The VCC has benefitted from the friendship, wisdom, generosity and graciousness that Fr Macarius brought to our deliberations.

May he find rest in his Lord, and may his family be comforted by the love of our God. - Rev Ian Smith



### Repose of The Very Reverend Fr Macarius Wahba

"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die." - John 11:25-26

It is with a heavy heart and the hope of the Resurrection that we inform you of the repose of Very Rev Fr Macarius Wahba.

Fr Macarius was ordained in March 1993 to serve at St Mary's Church Melbourne. Fr Macarius' ministry was illuminated with wisdom, service, dedication and righteousness. All who came in contact with Fr Macarius were struck with his gentleness and kindness. The Church in Melbourne and many generations are indebted to him for his ministry.



Fr Macarius was Vicar General from 2009 - 2018, prior to that Fr Macarius was Registrar of St Athanasius College and served on its Council during its formative years.

Fr Macarius is survived by his wife Christine, his mother Faiza, Brother Joseph and his family. May the Lord comfort them and us as we commit Abouna soul to the bosom of Christ and Lord and Redeemer.

His Holiness Pope Tawadros II extends his heartfelt condolences to Tasoni Christine, Fr Macarius' family and the whole congregation.

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## Victorian Council of Churches Annual General Meeting 7th October at 5pm

Due to current Covid 19 restrictions the 2020 AGM will be held by Zoom.

To register please email Rev Ian Smith

[ian.smith@vcc.org.au](mailto:ian.smith@vcc.org.au)

## Recent Events



### Standing together 30<sup>th</sup> August 2pm Sunday

**Gather with Christians from across the State as we uphold our Nation, our State and its citizens during this pandemic.**

Christian leaders from across the breadth of the Church have felt a need to stand together to uphold our State, our government, our front line health workers, our communities and one another as we work our way through this time of restrictions and uncertainty.

The gathering is virtual and will be screened on Youtube:

<https://youtu.be/BX9-JC7f3IU>



This event is a collaboration of many Churches and Christian leaders from across Victoria.  
The Victorian Council of Churches has enabled this event to happen.

On 30th August—last Sunday in Spring Christians from across Victoria gathered together to pray for our State, its leaders, frontline workers and all residents.

The event was a coming together of many different people from across the breadth of the Christian Church

Many also saw the short 6 minute version which many churches showed during the morning online gatherings.



This symbolic event occurred on Monday the 31st August and was an invitation to Stand in our drive-ways on the last evening of Winter as a sign solidarity with our communities and a sign of hope of Spring.

This was an initiative of the Ecumenical Interfaith Commission of the Catholic diocese of Melbourne but became both an ecumenical event and a multi-faith event as the idea took seed within the community.



## President's reflection

**Sunday 23 August 2020**

Our Gospel this Sunday takes us deep into the question of who we think Jesus is.

"you have shown us the foundation of our faith: give us the light of your Spirit that... we may be living stones for the building up of your holy Church." Matthew 16:13-20



[Read More >>](#)



## NCCA call for further Prayer and Fasting

**Saturday 26 and Sunday 27 September 2020**

With prayerful greetings, can we encourage that 26 - 27 SEPTEMBER be a further special time of National Prayer regarding the pandemic?

We all know the continuing impact of this pandemic, overseas and here.

[Read More >>](#)

## Lebanon Emergency

**Help Families who have lost their homes**

Act for Peace are supporting families on the ground through their local partner, the Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees (DRPR).

The Lebanon Emergency Appeal opened today (21 August) and donations are now being accepted by Act for Peace.

[Read More >>](#)



## NCCA continued

# Program Updates

### Safe Church Program

#### Keeping Churches and Faith Communities safe

The NCCA Safe Church Program would like to share the following information and resources:

- **Salvation Army** - Australian Domestic Violence Project Safe from the Start – listening to voices of children
- **Anglican Deaconess Ministries, Mercy & Justice** - Restoring Sanctuary Innovation Grant
- **NSW Office of the Children's Guardian** - Implementing the Child Safe Standards: A guide for faith based organisations

[Read More >>](#)



### NCCA Safe Church Newsletter

Do you enjoy reading this newsletter? Do you know others who might enjoy reading it?

Please pass on the newsletter and ask them to subscribe. Click [here](#) and enter your details to subscribe.

## Act for Peace

### Ration Challenge 2020

**Join the challenge Sunday 13 – Saturday 19 September 2020**

In just 3 weeks' time thousands of people across Australia will spend one week eating the same Rations as a refugee to raise money and save lives. Will you join them?

[Sign up now](#) for the Ration Challenge, Let's show we really are **#inthistogether**

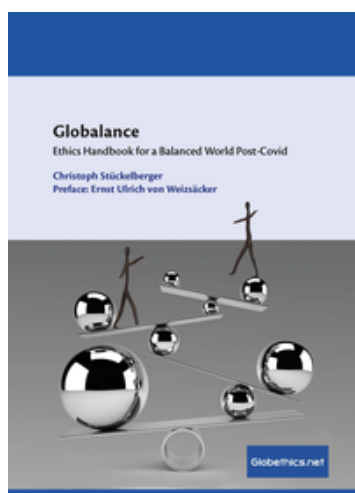






## [Season of Creation 2020 Celebration Guide, “Jubilee for the Earth,” now available](#)

A new guide for eco-theological worship resources and activities for the 2020 Season of Creation is now available, thanks to a wide array of ecumenical partners, including the World Council of Churches (WCC). A webinar, “Jubilee for the Earth: New Rhythms, New Hope,” is also planned for 8 June.



## [Globethics releases “Globalance: Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World Post-Covid”](#)

Globethics.net has launched a new book, “Globalance: Ethics Handbook for a Balanced World Post-Covid” by Prof. Christoph Stückelberger, Globethics.net president and founder.



## [10th Annual Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture will focus on climate justice](#)

The 10th Annual Desmond Tutu Peace Lecture, titled “Climate Justice Globally: Now and for the Future,” will take place on 10 October online. Featured speakers will include 23-year-old Vanessa Nakate, a climate activist from Uganda who has been leading a drive for justice related to race, media representation and climate justice; and internationally-known Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg.

## NEW DOCUMENT FROM WCC



the attached document, *"Serving a Wounded World in Interreligious Solidarity: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond"*, released on 27 August 2020.

This document is the result of collaboration between the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue and the Office for Interreligious Dialogue of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

The document and information can be found on the WCC website on the link below:

<https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/wcc-pontifical-council-for-interreligious-dialogue-release-serving-a-wounded-world-document-1>

# STAYING CONNECTED...

# DOING MINISTRY SAFELY ONLINE...

**JOIN US**  
For an 90 minute online workshop on staying  
connected and practising ministry safely online  
during Covid -19

**THIS WORKSHOP IS DESIGNED FOR:**  
For people working with Children and Young People in church  
communities

**THIS WORKSHOP WILL INCLUDE PRESENTATIONS FROM :**  
LIANA BUCHANAN-VICTORIA'S PRINCIPAL COMMISSIONER FOR CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
LINDA FRANCO, SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR, PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS UNIT  
CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF MELBOURNE  
MATHEW PENDLE - FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S WORKER IN THE UNITED  
CHURCH IN MELBOURNE  
AMANDA LINCKE - CHILD SAFE CONSULTANT FOR THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF  
MELBOURNE

Participants will have an opportunity to be part of a  
Q & A session and will receive a digital showbag

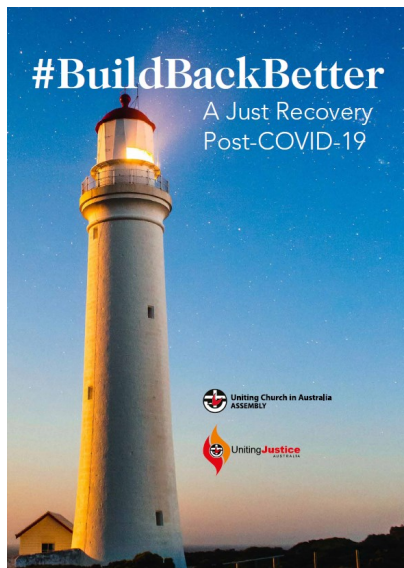


THURSDAY 10TH OF  
SEPTEMBER, 2020  
5:00PM-6:30PM  
TO REGISTER: GO TO  
TRYBOOKING



## **FROM JUSTICE and INTERNATIONAL MISSION UCA**

### **A Just Recovery Post Covid-19**



The Uniting Church in Australia has outlined a [set of principles and key actions](#) that will guide the way to a better future as Australia recovers from the corona virus pandemic. There is much we have learned through this pandemic about who we are as a nation, our vulnerabilities and our strengths. Drawing upon these learnings and the values articulated in our vision, we believe we have an opportunity to create a better future where all people and all creation can flourish.

### **Season of Creation 2020 September - Common Grace**

This year, amid crises that have shaken our world, we're awakened to the urgent need to heal our relationships with creation and each other. During this year's Season of Creation in September, we enter a time of restoration and hope, a jubilee for our Earth, where we hold tight to God's intention to see the flourishing of the whole of creation.

Stay connected throughout the season with a weekly email featuring prayers and reflections on the theme, as well as updates on activities and events you can participate in and pray for.

[Sign up here](#) to receive a Church Service resource toolkit for your church to use for any service you hold during the Season of Creation.

# Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network



During these unprecedented times PIEN invites you to view a number of significant films :

See all details at [www.pien.org.au](http://www.pien.org.au)



between war and peace  
Australia's past and future

**A conversation we need to have**

Join us on Zoom

**Monday 21 September 2020**

**7.30 pm - 9.15 pm**



**Prof Allan Patience**

is honorary Principal Fellow at the University of Melbourne  
He has been a Professor of Politics and Asian studies at universities in Australia and Asia. He has written extensively on the role of middle powers, and has called for a thorough reappraisal of the ANZUS alliance

## Speakers



**Dr Sue Wareham**

is President of the Medical Association for Prevention of War – Australia (MAPW), a board member of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, and a board member of ICAN (the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons) Australia

**Please register by sending your name and email address to:**

**[j.camilleri@latrobe.edu.au](mailto:j.camilleri@latrobe.edu.au)**

An initiative of the recently established conversation project

We're an independent, forward looking network committed to advancing the wellbeing of people and nature through conversation. We see a vibrant national conversation as vital if we are to address the critical issues of our time. Through thoughtful and informed conversation we can make full use of our diversity, reimagine the future, and set new priorities for society, economy and politics.

# Jewish Christian Muslim Association

## Donations

JCMA is a not-for-profit organisation and donations go directly towards delivery of our many events, forums and conferences and to support our workshop programs in primary and secondary schools. As a listed harm prevention charity we have DGR (Deductible Gift Receipt) status. Your donations are tax-deductible (donations over \$2 are tax-deductible). If you would like to make a donation to help support the work of JCMA please go to our website <http://jcma.org.au/donation>.

## JCMA Membership

JCMA is a membership based organisation for Jewish, Christian and Muslim people of faith. If you would like to find out about joining JCMA as a member you can go to our website at <http://jcma.org.au/jcma-membership> or call Ginette Everest on (03) 9287 5590 or email to: [memberships@jcma.org.au](mailto:memberships@jcma.org.au).

For more information and details on any events see website: [www.jcma.org.au](http://www.jcma.org.au)

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It's Ration Challenge time again ..... go to [www.actforpeace.org.au](http://www.actforpeace.org.au)

*Above is a picture of Fares Swais, executive director of DSPR Jordan.*

By participating or supporting the Ration Challenge you are helping people like Fares who is working with people in Jordan who are in desperate need of help.

More details at [www.actforpeace.org.au](http://www.actforpeace.org.au)

*Image credit: Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace*

# UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY – September Update

**During these unusual times here are some great resources ....**

## **Father's Day Idea**

[Father's Day ideas \(CPN\)](#)

[Father's Day resources \(Strandz\)](#)

[Father's Day ideas \(Ministry to Children\)](#)

[Father's Day ministry resource \(Ministry Tools\)](#)

[Father's Day suggestions \(Childrensministry.com\)](#)

## **Building Community On-line**

[Connecting families, church and Minecraft \(UCA\)](#)

[Connecting families, virtual tours \(UCA\)](#)

[Animal Crossing \(Animal Crossing\)](#)

[Minecraft \(Minecraft\)](#)

[Discord \(Discord\)](#)

## **On-line Safety & Keeping Children Safe**

[Sep 10 Webinar - Staying Connected, Doing Ministry On-line \(VCC\)](#)

[e-Safety Commission resources \(Salvation Army\)](#)

[Keeping Children Safe resources \(UCA\)](#)

[Safe Church resources \(PCV\)](#)

[More webinars \(NAPCAN\)](#)

Nb. These are in addition to last month's [Reminder re safe digital ministry \(UCA\)](#)

## **Covid Corner**

[Family Space \(SU QLD\)](#)

[A Post-Covid Vision \(UCA\)](#)

[Connecting families, nurturing faith \(UCA\)](#)

[Corona virus and disenfranchised grief \(ABC\)](#)

[Your surge capacity is depleted: it's why you feel awful \(Elemental\)](#)

## Some Australian Music Resources

[Emu Music \(Emu Music\)](#)

[I am loved \(Heather Price\)](#)

[Snack Music \(Snack Music\)](#)

[Jump for Joy & Grow \(Dan Warlow\)](#)

[God's banner over me is love \(Jill Young\)](#)

## Max 7 & Feeding the 5000

[Song: Believe it! \(Max7\)](#)

[Video: A miracle for lunch \(Max7\)](#)

[Illustration: Jesus feeds 5000 \(Max7\)](#)

[Animation: Jesus feeds the 5000 \(Max7\)](#)

[Booklet: Ten Great Stories from Mark \(Max7\)](#)

## Via GenOn

[Growing virtual community – FREE Logos sample \(GenOn\)](#)

[Growing virtual community – FREE LIFT sample \(GenOn\)](#)

[GenOn and intergenerational ministry \(GenOn\)](#)

[Moving those milestones \(GenON\)](#)

[Milestones ministry \(Milestones\)](#)

## Re:Focus Ministry (Christina Embree)

[Sep 8,15,22,29 Webinars: Connecting Generations at Church & Home\\*](#)

[Podcast: Past, present & future together \(UCA\)](#)

[Resources for parents \(ReFocus Ministry\)](#)

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# Child Protection Unit, Department of Health and Human Services

## Reporting to protect children

Mandatory reporting is about protecting children. Children can carry the trauma of abuse for years, unless they get help. They need the adults around them to report child abuse and neglect.

You might have noticed some media attention in September this year about new laws passed by the Victorian parliament to do with reporting child abuse. The media focussed on priests, but actually the law will cover people in religious ministry in the various faiths across Victoria.

If you are ordained, appointed or recognised as a religious or spiritual leader a religious organisation, this new law will apply to you. You will become a mandatory reporter to Child Protection in early 2020.

If a mandatory reporter believes a child might be at risk of physical injury or sexual abuse and their parents are not protecting them, they have to report what they believe to Child Protection as soon as they can, even if information came through religious confession.

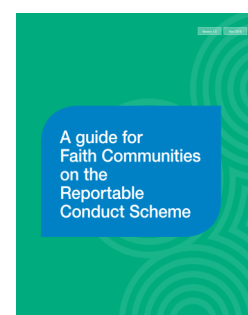
To make a report you do not need to be sure or have any proof. You just need to be genuinely worried the child might be at risk. It is up to Child Protection to decide what to do. Your identity will be confidential, and the law protects you from any liability if the report is made in good faith.

Child Protection workers are trained to assess risk to children from child abuse and neglect. They will decide what to do about what they are told. They might give you some information and advice. They might refer the family for support. They might investigate the report. They can do what is needed to protect the child. Often, Child Protection can arrange the help parents need to keep their children safe. Sometimes children might need Child Protection to step in to protect them.

Find out more on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) website <https://providers.dhhs.vic.gov.au/mandatory-reporting> - or search 'mandatory reporting victoria'

There will be free information sessions about mandatory reporting for people in religious ministry early next year. Bookings will open soon. Keep an eye on the mandatory reporting website.

*Please click on the image, right, for a downloadable pdf document of the Reportable Conduct Scheme*



***The Victorian Council of Churches through its Executive Officer, Rev Ian Smith, played a major role in the development, writing and delivery of this document. The VCC recommends all churches and church agencies familiarise themselves with their obligations under the Legislation.***

Training portal at [www.childsafestandards.org.au](http://www.childsafestandards.org.au)

Downloadable resource kit available on website



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The Victorian Council of Churches is a fellowship of churches which confess the Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour according to the Scriptures and seek to fulfil together their common calling to the glory of the one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

\*\*\* If you have an event that you want others to know about then contact at [vcc@vcc.org.au](mailto:vcc@vcc.org.au) excluding January we plan to publish a Council News each month \*\*\*

Council News is the official newsletter of the Victorian Council of Churches

Editor Rev. Ian Smith Executive Officer

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Facebook [www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/](http://www.facebook.com/viccouncilchurches/)

### The new Office

The office of the VCC is now level 6, West Tower, 608 St Kilda Rd.

Access to the building is via the right hand drive to the rear double glass doors.

If you wish to visit please ring 9412 8487 or 0408 313 610 and arrange at time.