



**Victorian**  
Council of Churches



# Council News

February 2021

Victorian Council of Churches

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## *Reflections*

A new year has begun! For some this is a huge relief after the events of last year, for others it's a time of reflecting on how to ensure the gifts of last year aren't lost as we return to some form of normal, whilst for others thinking about a new year might be like opening a Pandora's box with all the uncertainties of what might...

As Christians we are about to enter into Lent.. A time of preparation and a invitation to journey with our Lord, those last months of his life as he sets his face steadfastly towards Jerusalem..

This journey in many ways is similar to entering into a new year.. Much is familiar and yet there's uncertainty, or even confusion as what's coming, or why .. The Cross ..

May we journey through Lent with the sense of the presence of our Loving God.

*- Ian*

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I am beginning to accept invitations to come and share stories of the Council activities with your Church or group – I'm also 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

Over the Christmas New year period Council was active in a number of areas...

- i. working with the leaders of the Christian Church and other Faith communities to facilitate a discussion on a response to the legislation before State Parliament.
- ii. Working with the Health department as all of Victoria eased out of restrictions, Now helping disseminate information on the partial reintroduction of restrictions
- iii. Following up from AGM in October Council has been working on establishing priorities for 2021 around the three themes of—communication
  - engagement
  - witness
- iv. With in the constraints of Covid restrictions Council is moving to open the Offices for people to drop in . If you would like to drop in please ring 0408 313 610 so we can manage appropriate numbers.

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## VCC—Contact details

- phone: (03) 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

# WCC, Christian Conference of Asia urge prayers, return of peace in Myanmar

*In a pastoral letter to churches and communities in Myanmar, the World Council of Churches (WCC) and Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) expressed both alarm and great sadness for recent developments in Myanmar.*



It is with profound concern that we follow the current developments in your country, especially the abrupt resumption of military rule, overturning the outcome of elections on 8 November 2020, as well as the detention of key political and pro-democracy representatives "and the escalation of the national situation to the state of emergency," the letter reads.

"We urge a swift and peaceful return to the path of democracy, and appeal for the human rights and freedoms – including the freedom of religion or belief – of all Myanmar's people to be fully respected and protected."

The WCC and the Christian Conference of Asia are holding churches and communities of Myanmar in prayer and solidarity. "We pray that you will be strengthened and supported in your ministry and witness for peace, justice and human dignity," reads the letter. "In a spirit of solidarity we offer you the assurance of our continued prayers and support."

[Read the full WCC and CCA pastoral letter on the situation in Myanmar](#)



## Climate Action Update

### **Australia and the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference in Glasgow 2021**

A discussion with Mr Jamie Isbister, Australia's Ambassador for the Environment.

**When:** Thursday 18 February 2021, 7pm-9.30pm

**Where:** Chapel at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture 15 Blackall St. Barton, ACT **and online**

[Read More >>](#)



## President's Reflection

### World Interfaith Harmony Week

February 1-7 2021

World Interfaith Harmony Week invites us to imagine our one human family living in peace, guided into vibrant and creative harmony by people of faith who are completely honouring the deepest truths of their faith tradition.

[Read More >>](#)



## Safe Church Program

### Training, Awareness and Leadership sessions

- NSW DCJ - Domestic and Family Violence Training through TAFE NSW - EOI open until 16 February 2021, or until spots are filled.
- QCT - Domestic and Family Violence Awareness - 25 February, 4 March and 11 March 2021
- ACSL - Safeguarding Leadership Introductory Session for National Church Leaders - 17 & 18 March 2021

[Read More >>](#)



## Act for Peace

### Send a Girl to School

Australian students are busy settling in for a new year at school. Many children in Afghanistan and Pakistan won't get that chance. Girls in particular have already been fighting for equal access to education, and COVID-19 has only made this situation worse.

[Read More >>](#)



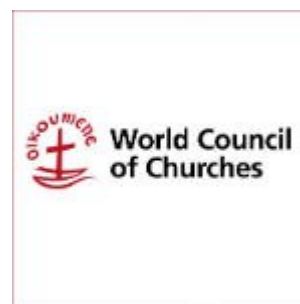
## Ecumenical News

### World Council of Churches

#### New resources available:

- Pilgrim Prayer: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle
- Moral Discernment: two new volumes

[Read More >>](#)



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### Joint Ecumenical Pastoral Letter

o churches and the Council of Churches in Myanmar

"In the spirit of solidarity we offer you the assurance of our continued prayers and support."  
Rev Prof Dr Ioan Sauca, WCC and Dr Mathews George Chunakara, CCA.

[Read More >>](#)



## Global Faith-Based Day of Climate Action

### Sacred People Sacred Earth

**When:** 11 March 2021

Join faith communities around the world on March 11 for the biggest-ever multi-faith Day of Action on the climate crisis.

[Read More >>](#)



*From the Centre for Theology & Psychology*

# Thriving Christian Leader Program 2021



The Thriving Christian Leader Program (TCLP) offers active participation in five half-day workshops, which can be taken all together as a year-long program, or as stand-alone sessions.

**Identity and Calling** -February

**Resilience and Self-Care** - April

**Skills & Support** - June

**Context, Culture & Integration** - August

**Communication & Community** - October

The workshops provide opportunities to interact in ways that may be less likely to occur within a vocational setting, with year-long program participants also benefiting from facilitated "Thrive Groups".

Please head on over to <https://ctp.mst.edu.au/the-thriving-christian-leaders-program/> for more information.

## **CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY – FEBRUARY**

### **Upskilling Opportunities**

[Feb 10 The Grandparenting Effect - Webinar \(Intergenerate AUS\)](#)

[Feb 18 Developing Intergenerational Ministry – On-line Workshop \(Intergen\)](#)

[Mar 6 Amplify – On-line Conference](#) (nb. Victorian Hub info [via here](#))\*

May 22 Stories of Childhood - Playgroup/Pre-school Ministry Conference

[May 25-27 Children’s Spirituality Summit/InterGenerate – On-line Conference](#)

### **Lent Ideas**

[Weekly Lenten Intergenerational Resources](#) (scroll down to Special Resources)

[Lent & Easter resources](#) (UCA – under Special Days and Seasons)

[Lent Event – Action Ideas & Bible Studies](#)

[Lent & Holy Week \(Going for Growth\)](#)

[Lent At Home \(GenOn\)](#)

### **Holy Week Ideas**

[Holy Week in a Box \(Building Faith\)](#)

[Holy Week at Home \(UK Methodist\)](#)

[Holy Week Ideas \(Messy Church USA\)](#)

[Celebrating Holy Week at Home \(CRCNA\)](#)

[Celebrating Holy Week with Children \(GodSpace\)](#)

### **Easter Ideas**

[Easter Intergenerational Services \(UCA\)](#)

[Easter Games & Activities \(Bible Games\)](#)

[Easter Animations plus \(Bible Society\)](#)

[Easter Stories \(Lost Sheep\)](#)

[Easter Ideas Hub \(BRF\)](#)

Nb. More Lent & Easter ideas can be found in [Previous Updates](#)

### **Messy Church National Conference**

[Feb 20 Messy Church National Conference](#) (On-line – **3.30pm AEDT**)

[Feb 25 Messy Masterclass](#) (On-line – **6.30am AEDT**)

[Australian Messy Church at Home – Something New](#)

[Messy Church Easter & Lent Resources](#)

[Messy Church at Home - Lent](#)

**via Fuller**

[Five top tips for innovating \(Fuller\)](#)

[Learning the unforced rhythms of grace \(Fuller\)](#)

[Relational capacity and ministry burnout \(Fuller\)](#)

[From emotional reactor to intentional decision-maker \(Fuller\)](#)

[Three questions every youth leader should ask themselves \(Fuller\)](#)

**via Ministry Matters**

[Re-vitalising during a pandemic \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[How to create a culture shift \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Create new entry points \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

[Leadership begins with listening \(DePree\)](#)

[Caring for caregivers \(Ministry Matters\)](#)

**via World Council of Churches (WCC)**

[Cooler Earth, Higher Benefits – Children, Climate & Finance \(WCC\)](#)

[Churches commitment to children \(WCC\)](#)

[WCC's Engagement for Children \(WCC\)](#)

[WCC's Commitment to Children \(WCC\)](#)

[A Climate Justice Toolkit \(WCC\)](#)

**Highlighted 2021 Events (for your diary, watch out for more)**

Feb 10 [The Grandparenting Effect](#) (Webinar – **10am AEDT**)

Feb 18 [Developing Intergenerational Ministry](#) (On-line – **1pm AEDT**)

Feb 20 [Messy Church National Conference](#) (On-line – **3.30pm AEDT**)

Feb 25 [Messy Church Masterclass](#) (On-line – **6.30am AEDT**)

Mar 6 [Amplify](#) (On-line + Hub model)\*

Apr 22 [Messy Discipleship Book Launch](#) (On-line – **1.30pm AEST**)



## Safer Internet Day is 9 February 2021

As we farewell this extraordinary year, we are looking ahead to Safer Internet Day and the chance to celebrate all the ways the internet brings us together to work, learn and share.

We hope you can join us on 9 February 2021 and join the millions of people around the world who come together for a better internet.

Read on for ways you can get involved and **start the chat** this summer.

### Register as a Safer Internet Day 2021 supporter

Register to keep in touch and be the first to know when new resources become available. Go to [eSafety.gov.au/SID](https://esafety.gov.au/SID) to register and learn more.

### Inspire others to get involved using the Promotion Kit

Promote Safer Internet Day to the people you know. Download our [Promotion Kit](#) with tips, digital tiles, newsletter copy and more. You will also find materials for all ages at [esafety.gov.au/SID](https://esafety.gov.au/SID).

### Support #SID2021 on social

Help spread the word! **Start the chat** on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) using our tiles and suggested messages, or create your own Safer Internet Day video posts. Don't forget to add [#SID2021](#), [#StartTheChat](#) and tag [@eSafetyOffice](#) so we can share your posts too!

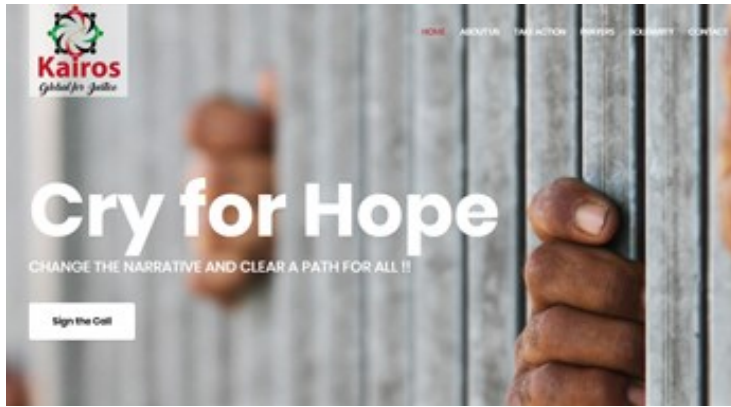
**Get involved!**

#SID2021 #StartTheChat



**Safer  
Internet  
Day 2021**

**Tuesday  
9 February**



## *Cry for Hope: A Call to Decisive Action*

PIEN is part of the Global Kairos for Justice movement, who, along with Kairos Palestine have issued '*Cry for Hope*'.

Please join the Global Coalition of Christians and Partners as we call for Palestinian Justice... Join Palestinian #Cry4Hope

"A critical point has been reached in the struggle to end Israel's oppression of the Palestinian people. As the State of Israel threatens to annex even more Palestinian land, it will effectively accomplish its goal to colonize and control all of Palestine.

Kairos Palestine and Global Kairos for Justice have issued "*Cry for Hope: a Call to Decisive Action*". Please add your name to this call to decisive action. *Cry for Hope* is available in multiple languages at [www.cryforhope.org](http://www.cryforhope.org).

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# 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)



*Image credit: Ben Littlejohn/Act for Peace*

I am writing to you as we are currently looking for someone who might be interested in taking up a 12 month contract to manage the Christmas Bowl for churches. It's a 3 day a week position and the person will have a real hand in shaping the Christmas Bowl for next year.

While our office is located in Sydney, but we are open to having someone working remotely. We all are doing this at the moment and it seems to be working.

If you can please share this opportunity with anyone you know who might be interested and through your networks, I'd really appreciate it.

You can find out more about the position at <https://www.actforpeace.org.au/Take-action/Work-at-Act-for-Peace> and by clicking the **Marketing Coordinator - Church Giving** link. Alternatively, you can also give me a call.

# 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.

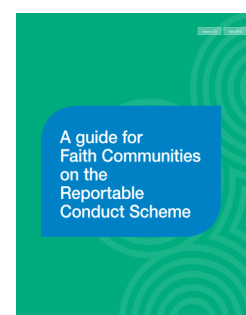
To make a report you do not need to be sure or have any proof. You just need to be genuinely worried the child might be at risk. It is up to Child Protection to decide what to do. Your identity will be confidential, and the law protects you from any liability if the report is made in good faith.

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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We're on the web!  
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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 a time.