



Victorian
Council of Churches



Council News

May 2021

Victorian Council of Churches
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Reflections

As I write this reflection, I'm acutely aware that this year particularly highlights the diversity of our Council. Whilst our Western Churches are living in the period post Easter... reflecting on the wonder and grace of the Resurrection of our Lord...

Our Orthodox brothers and sisters are just arriving at their Easter vigil having been in their Great Lent, they too about to recall those events so vividly etched on all believers.

Whilst the timing varies that etching is the same. We recall the upper room and Last Supper, the mockery and misunderstanding of the Friday, the waiting and uncertainty of Saturday and then, then the wonder of Sunday... inviting all to walk as children of the Resurrection.

As we continue to live, work and collaborate together as Christ's followers may those experiences that bind us as the Body of our Lord, also encourage and inspire us to work more closely so that the world may know that God so loves that He gave us His Son....

- Ian

I am beginning to accept invitations to come and share stories of the Council 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

News from the Council

- **The AGM of the Victorian Council of Churches will be held in July** . Given the lateness of the 2020 AGM (October last year), the Standing Committee of Council has decided to delay the AGM for 2021 with a view that the 2022 AGM will again be held in May of 2022.
- Council also is working on **finalising the next President of the Victorian Council of Churches** who will take office following the 2021 AGM. Council is hoping to be able to announce the new President shortly.
- Council continues to work on its priorities and activities going into 2022 as it seeks to be a voice amongst the Churches and an influence within society.

VCC—Contact details

- phone: 03 9650 4511 or 9412 8487
- email vcc@vcc.org.au
- Web www.vcc.org.au
- Facebook 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

Recent Events

This past month has seen two dear members of the ecumenical community of Victoria recognised following their deaths.



Archdeacon Rev Philip Newman was recognised for his invaluable contribution of over 40 years to the life and direction of the Victorian Council of Churches. Rev Philip was both a Past President (2007—2009), a Vice President and a member of the leadership of Council.

He also was a great activist in the multi-faith dialogues being an inaugural member of the Faith Communities Council of Victoria. He was a founding member of the Victorian Police's MultiFaith Advisory Council.

He was an active participant with the Victorian Council of Churches Emergencies Ministries where he gave service as a chaplain.

Many friends and colleagues gathered with family to farewell Philip from St Paul's Cathedral on April 19th 2021.

To Philip's family, the Council extends its prayers and condolences .

In the words of St Paul, 'well done good and faithful servant, you have run the race, kept the faith, now receive your reward'



The second person was Mrs Lyn Fry, who along with her husband Ian, had a significant ministry across a number of countries; Papua New Guinea and Indonesia to name a couple. Upon their return to Australia, Lyn pursued her teaching at RMIT and shared her ecumenical endeavours between Pax Christi and Church of All Nations.

Lyn was farewelled from Church of all Nations on 28th April in Carlton.

The Council is grateful for the contribution Lyn made to the life of the Church in Victoria. The Council extends its prayers and condolences to Ian and the family.



President's reflection

“ABIDE IN ME AS I ABIDE IN YOU”. (John 15:1-8)

"Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and God's love is perfected in us." 1 John 4

[Read More >>](#)



Pascha prayers for the Orthodox Churches

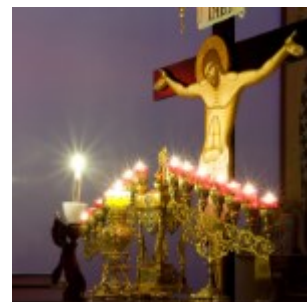
Christ is risen. Indeed, He is risen.

"I Am the Resurrection and the Life" (John 11:25)

The Orthodox churches celebrate Pascha (Easter) this coming Sunday 2 May, 2021.

The NCCA prays for the Eastern and Orthodox church communities as they celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[Read More >>](#)



Pacific Day of Prayer

"Singing the Lord's Song in Strange Lands and Times"

In the name of the Spirit of God, who hovered over the primordial waters....We worship You.



Friday 7 May 2021 is the Pacific Day of Prayer. The Secretariat of the Pacific

NCCA (con't)

Act for Peace

Ration Challenge 2021

Will you join us for the challenge? Sign up now for the Ration Challenge, from **Sunday 13 – Saturday 19 June 2021**

Let's show we really are **#inthistogether**

[Read More >>](#)



First Nations

30th Anniversary of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody



- **Common Grace** - resources
- **NITV** - Senator Pat Dodson "We've fallen down"

[Read More >>](#)

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2021

"Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit" (cf John 15:5)

Australian resources are now available for The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in Australia. This will be observed from 16 - 23 May 2021, in the week between Ascension and Pentecost.

[Read More >>](#)



A direct link to

the
re-



Call to Prayer Resource

Myanmar, Timor-Leste and Papua New Guinea.

Three Crises in our Region that need our Prayer now. Join in the special "Call to Prayer" as each of these nations face significant crises and the poor and most vulnerable are being severely affected.

[Read More >>](#)

sources can be

NCCA (con't)

Pastoral Letter

Papuan Council of Churches

These are the prayers, hopes and concerns for the situation of our Land, which we put forward to the churches and the people of the Land of Papua in order to celebrate 166 Years since the Gospel arrived in the Land of Papua. May the Lord Jesus bless us all..

[Read More >>](#)



Asia Sunday 2021



'I am the God who Heals You, and Restores Your Health'

CCA headquarters in Chiang Mai will facilitate a virtual **Asia Sunday Service on 16 May 2021** which will be led by church and ecumenical leaders from across Asia.

[Read More >>](#)

Creation care workshop

'Reframing climate and creation care communications and conversations for Christians'

The National Council of Churches in Australia and the Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) invite interested clergy, communications staff and church advocates to this workshop on alternative climate and creation care messaging.

When: Friday 23 April 2021.

[Read More >>](#)



May Calendar 2021

- 1 [World Labyrinth Day](#)
- 2 Pascha/Easter (Orthodox Christian)
- 3 [World Press Freedom Day](#)
- 9 Mother's Day
- 15 [International Day of Families](#)
- 17 [National Volunteer Week](#) begins

[Read More >>](#)



National Council of Churches in Australia

Safe Church Program

From April 2021 Newsletter



Welcome to the April Safe Church Newsletter!

While we adjust to the new 'covid-normal', it's encouraging to see faith communities able to re-gather in hybrid forms and celebrate Easter very differently to last year. Christ is indeed risen and we continue to look for new opportunities to be people of the risen Christ in this Easter season and beyond!

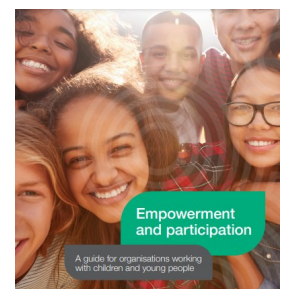
In this first half of 2021, the Safe Church Program continues to transition into its new season. We give great thanks for Laura and Deb's tireless efforts in supporting safer churches up to the end of 2020, and look forward to what's to come later in 2021 and beyond. In the interim, Emma Parr will be acting in the role of Safe Church Program Coordinator 2 days per week to assist the NCCA in this transition period. You might remember Emma from her Safe Churches work with the Uniting Church in NSW & ACT over recent years, and it's great to have someone very familiar with the Safe Church Program to support its work at this time.

Empowerment and Participation Guide from Victorian Commission for Children and Young People (Released: January 2021)

The Victorian Commission for Children and Young People has recently published a guide for organisations working with children and young people looking for assistance in developing empowerment and participation in children and young people.

The 74-page guide addresses multiple aspects of supporting empowerment and key element for genuine participation, followed by a collection of tools for implementation and age-specific guidance notes.

[Download the Empowerment and Participation Guide here.](#)



Graduate Certificate in Safeguarding Children and Young People

Are you looking for a option for Graduate academic reflection on Safeguarding Children and Young People? Australian Catholic University runs a 4-unit Graduate Certificate in Safeguarding Children and Young People to provide this space for professional in the field to complete further academic study in the area.



For further information visit the [ACU website](#).



WCC to observe World Immunization Week, encouraging vaccinations for global health

Extraordinary efforts to develop vaccines against COVID-19 and roll out mass vaccination programmes provide hope to millions of people around the globe. Throughout the pandemic, public health organizations have collaborated closely with non-government- and faith-based organizations. That has made a difference, both in getting factual information about vaccines across to the public, and in encouraging people to act in solidarity by getting vaccinated.

[Read more](#)

Celebrating Charta Oecumenica, heed Paul's words, European churches' head urges

If the historic ecumenical document, the Charta



Oecumenica, signed 20 years ago, is to hold its relevance for another two decades and beyond, Christians need to continue heeding Paul's letter to the Galatians (3:28). That is the opinion of Dr Jørgen Skov

Sørensen, general secretary of the Conference of European Churches, who was teaching in an ecumenical community in Birmingham, UK, at the now-disbanded Selly Oak Colleges, at the United College of the Ascension when the charter was signed in 2001.

[Read more](#)



Nikolaos Manginas: his camera flash may be extinguished, but his gaze lives on

The World Council of Churches (WCC) is mourning the loss of Nikolaos Manginas, who documented the actions, contributions and gatherings of the Ecumenical Patriarchate for more than 30 years. The official photographer of the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Manginas leaves behind a photo collection that is a deeply meaningful legacy not only for the Ecumenical Patriarchate but also for Orthodox churches worldwide and the entire ecumenical fellowship.

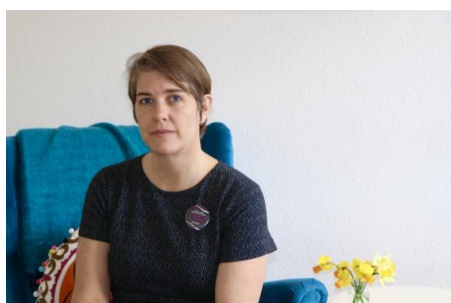
[Read more](#)



WCC commemorates life of Bishop Dr Phillip Silas Masih of Methodist Church of India

The World Council of Churches (WCC) expressed deep sadness at the 13 April passing of Bishop Dr Phillip Silas Masih, president of the Council of Bishops of the Methodist Church in India. He was the bishop of the Methodist Church in India Lucknow and Bengal regional conferences.

[Read more](#)



Casey Harden: “Name gender-based violence for what it is”

Our series of interviews with Thursdays in Black ambassadors highlights those who are playing a vital role in increasing the impact of our collective call for a world without rape and violence. Casey Harden is general secretary of the World YWCA.

[Read more](#)



Teaching Ecumenism – International Conference

Dates : 02 June 2021 - 05 June 2021 From 2-5 June 2021, the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Institute at Bossey hosts an international conference on 'Teaching Ecumenism in the Context of World Christianity'.

[Read more](#)



Rev. Canon Dr Emily Awino Onyango accepts new Anglican leadership role

Rev. Canon Dr Emily Awino Onyango, a Kenyan woman theologian, was consecrated on 27 March as the assistant bishop of the Bondo Anglican Diocese, making her the first woman to hold such a post in the church in east-central Africa.

[Read more](#)



Communication for Social Justice in a Digital Age

Dates : 13 September 2021 - 15 September 2021 This symposium will focus on the impact of digital transformation on communities and societies, and the actions needed to secure a just and inclusive digital future. Bringing together research, experiences from different regions and communities, expert input, and ethical and theological reflection, it will identify opportunities for action as a contribution to the 11th assembly of the World Council of Churches.

[Read more](#)

JIM Cluster

[>No more profiting from climate change<](#)

Australia's major banks are amongst the corporations that still make significant contributions to propping up the use of fossil fuels. Help us to encourage the banks to take stronger action to stop supporting the use of fossil fuels and instead finance the shift we need to a net-zero emission future.

[>Taking action to end family violence<](#)

In March 2021, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy and Legal Affairs presented their 425-page report following their investigation into family, domestic and sexual violence. The Committee made 88 recommendations. Help us advocate for a whole of society response to address domestic and sexual violence.

[>The Unfinished Struggle to End Slavery<](#)

Modern slavery remains a significant global problem. One example is the Australian Strategic Policy Institute report which revealed that at least 27 factories in nine Chinese provinces had used labour since 2017. Those factories claim to be part of the supply chain of more than 80 global brands. Help us advocate for measures to addressing the importation of all goods and services produced by modern slavery wherever they originate from, not just China.

[>Protecting Human Rights Online<](#)

As technology has developed, it has improved our ability to share information and be more connected. The online world has created many positive outcomes in our lives but has its negative side. Technology has provided new tools to those seeking to harm others, including those who engage in child sexual abuse. Help us make the online world a safer place and prevent human rights abuses.

[>Public Good Project for Congregations<](#)

What does public good mean to you? Become involved in a new project setting a new national agenda on the public good, while connecting across organisations who work collaboratively where people and planet come first.

[>Statement from the Heart Study Guide<](#)

A new resource from the Uniting Church in Vic/Tas exploring the *Statement from the Heart*. As a group or on your own, learn about Voice.Treaty.Truth and what a pathway towards justice chosen by First Nations people could look be.

[>Climate Justice Resources \(April 2021\)<](#)

The latest list of climate justice resource for April 2021, including: community grants, resources for advocacy and initiatives to manage your own (and community) impact.

It's been a big few months in the fight for freedom and fairness for refugees and people seeking asylum, with a big few months ahead.

In this Supporter Bulletin we'll give you an update on what's been happening and how you can take further actions to support our work as the ASRC heads into our 20th year of operation.

We're planning some exciting events and activities to help us celebrate the incredible strength and resilience of people seeking asylum and recognise the decades of support from our community of compassion and the impact of the work you have made possible.

Here's some dates to keep in the diary:

- 20 Year Anniversary - 8th June
- ASRC Telethon on World Refugee Day - 20th June (Sunday)
- New ASRC Dandenong centre opening in July

We look forward to sharing more details of our 20th year activities and how you can take part.

Feast for Freedom wrap up



The official Feast weekend has come to a close and we are excited to announce that Feast for Freedom 2021 has been a delicious success!

An incredible 6,000 compassionate people came together to participate in this year's Feast for Freedom - celebrating good food, great company and the things that unite us all.

Feasts were held all across Australia; from Magnetic Island to Margaret River, and Alice Springs to Adelaide and together Feasters raised more than \$600,000 to help support people seeking asylum.

Hosts cooked delicious meals for their guests from recipes gifted by our 2021 Cooks Aheda and Niro and shared their stories far and wide. Thank you to everyone who took part in a Feast for Freedom - every conversation and meal shared as part of Feast takes us one step closer to our shared vision of a kinder, more welcoming and compassionate Australia for everyone.

If you'd like to join us and host your own Feast next year you can [register your interest here](#).

The end of the rental moratorium



For those people seeking asylum with no income and no access to JobKeeper and JobSeeker payments, the pandemic has created a perfect storm of disadvantage putting people's safety and wellbeing at risk.

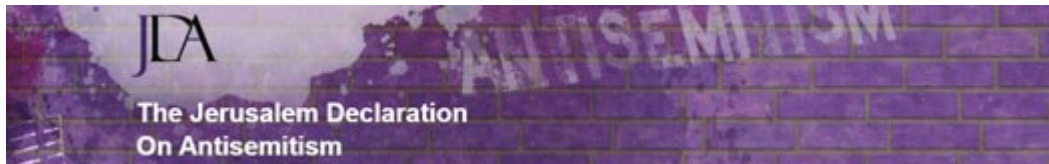
Already facing financial stress and unable to pay their accumulated rental debts, the end of the rental moratorium is now putting entire families at risk of becoming homeless.

[Find out more about how we're helping people seeking asylum during this time.](#)



PALESTINE ISRAEL
ECUMENICAL NETWORK

The Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism



This important new document has emerged that aims to present a comprehensive description and understanding of what antisemitism is and is not. The Jerusalem Declaration is largely in response to the inadequacies and misuse of the [Working Definition of anti-semitism](#) of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), which has been adopted by many countries as the standard definition.

As this new declaration points out however, *"The IHRA Definition" (including its "examples") is neither clear nor coherent. Whatever the intentions of its proponents, it blurs the difference between antisemitic speech and legitimate criticism of Israel and Zionism. This causes confusion, while delegitimizing the voices of Palestinians and others, including Jews, who hold views that are sharply critical of Israel and Zionism."*

Read [The Jerusalem Declaration](#).

*"The **Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism** is a tool to identify, confront and raise awareness about antisemitism as it manifests in countries around the world today. It includes a [preamble](#), [definition](#), and a set of [15 guidelines](#) that provide detailed guidance for those seeking to recognize antisemitism in order to craft responses. It was developed by a group of scholars in the fields of Holocaust history, Jewish studies, and Middle East studies to meet what has become a growing challenge: providing clear guidance to identify and fight antisemitism while protecting free expression".*

Jewish Christian Muslim Association



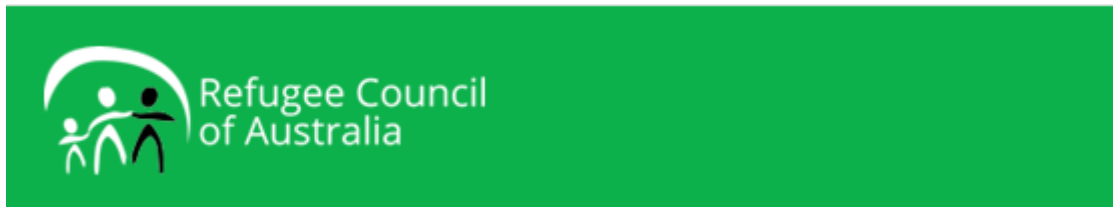
DONATIONS

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.

For more information and details on any events see website: www.jcma.org.au



Understanding when you need an immigration lawyer webinar Victorian Law Week - May 21, 12–1pm

Understanding when you need an immigration lawyer is the subject of a webinar that aims to help migrants within the community know when they need legal assistance and where to go when they need it. The Victorian Law Week event is being held by the Law Institute of Victoria on Friday May 21, 2021 from 12–1pm.

For more information: [Understanding when you need an immigration lawyer - Law Institute of Victoria \(liv.asn.au\)](http://liv.asn.au)

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY –

Welcome to the **MAY** Children & Families Update!

Plenty to explore this month – including resources for Mother's Day, Pentecost and much more. For those who get all the way down to Item 9, there are some special opportunities in relation to the recently released *Messy Discipleship* book. Speaking of books, Item 1 contains the latest information on the upcoming *Engage All Generations* book launch. It would be fantastic if you were able to participate! As always, please feel free to share these links in any way with anyone you think might appreciate the content.

CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY – MAY

Two Great On-line Events – Stories of Childhood (May 22) and Engage All Generations (June 9)

Stories of Childhood May 22 2pm-4pm AEST

[Stories of Childhood](#) is held annually for those engaged in ministry – including Playgroups - with families with children aged 0-5. The 2021 event will focus on...

Nurturing spirituality in 0-5s and their carers (Judyth Roberts)

Nurturing our leaders and ourselves (Kimberly Smith)

On-line again in 2021, participants are encouraged to register as teams or churches, gather Covid-appropriately in their own space and experience together the blessing of being part of Stories of Childhood. Registering as an individual, though, is of course possible! *Registration by Monday May 17 appreciated by [clicking here](#).*

Engage All Generations (Book Launch) June 9 11am AEST

[Engage All Generations: a strategic toolkit](#) is the latest book from Cory Seibel. This very special **FREE Zoom launch event** will include the opportunity to find out more about the book, engage with a number of the contributors and connect with others interested in intergenerational ministry.

Those contributing to the launch event will include:

📄 Cory Seibel (CAN)	Engage All Generations - an overview
📄 Chris Barnett (AUS)	Tools for Developing Intergenerational Ministry
📄 Jacolize Becker (NZ)	Intergenerational Sports and Games
📄 Tim Beilharz (AUS)	Intergenerational Church and Socio-Cultural Faith Development
📄 Tammy Tolman (AUS)	Moving All Ages Toward Life Together

[Click here for more information and to register](#)

Mother's Day Resources

[Mother's Day Resources \(Going for Growth\)](#)

[Mother's Day Multi-Age Services \(UCA SA\)](#)

[Ultimate Mothers' Day Resource List](#)

[Mother's Day resources \(BRF\)](#)

[Mother's Day Ideas \(Strandz\)](#)

Pentecost Ideas

[Pentecost Ideas \(Moreton Rivers Presbytery\)](#)

[Pentecost Ideas \(All Age Worship\)](#)

[Pentecost Resources \(Build Faith\)](#)

[Pentecost Ideas \(The Billabong\)](#)

[Pentecost Ideas \(The Well\)](#)

UCA CHILDREN & FAMILIES MINISTRY (Con't) –

A Grab Bag of Goodies

[Safe Church Principles – Posters \(UCA\)](#)
[Weekly Faith at Home Resource \(Roots\)](#)
[Bright Prayer Ideas \(Thy Kingdom Come\)](#)
[Faith Formation – Poster \(@Church+Home\)](#)
[Cheeky Pandas - resources \(Thy Kingdom Come\)](#)

Highlights from the April Intergenerational Update

[Pentecost ideas \(Strandz\)](#)
[Flickering flame light bulbs \(or \[here\]\(#\) or \[here\]\(#\)\)](#)
[The Grandparenting Effect \(Trevecca Okholm\)](#)
[The Power of Children \(Margaret Y MacDonald\)](#)
[Intergenerational Stories of Change – Part 1 \(Darren Philip\)](#)

Nb. Other great resources were included in the April Intergenerational Update. If you're not on the Intergenerational Update Distribution List, let me know and I will add you!

via CRCNA

[10 Ways to Care for Creation \(CRCNA\)](#)
[5 Ways to Re-Tell Bible Stories \(CRCNA\)](#)
[5 Ways to Celebrate with your Family \(CRCNA\)](#)
[Play-lists and faith formation at home \(CRCNA\)](#)
[5 Ways to Practice Listening with Your Family \(CRCNA\)](#)

via Grow Ministries

[Encouraging life-long faith \(Grow Ministries\)](#)
[Care in the ordinary moments \(Grow Ministries\)](#)
[Learning the language of love \(Grow Ministries\)](#)
[Simple equipping for mentoring \(Grow Ministries\)](#)
[FREE Early Word/Children's Talk Year B ideas \(Grow Ministries\)](#)

via Lifelong Faith

[How shall we live now? \(Roberto\)](#)
[Encouraging Christian practices \(Roberto\)](#)
[Practices of a Christian way of life \(Roberto\)](#)
[Developing a plan for Christian practices \(Roberto\)](#)
[FREE downloadable books from Lifelong Faith \(Lifelong Faith\)](#)

Resources from Messy Discipleship Book Launch

Resources from the recent Messy Discipleship Book Launch are currently being uploaded. If you would like the link as soon as it is available, please e-mail chris.barnett@victas.uca.org.au.

Due to the generosity of both [Koorong](#) (20% discount, use Code 20MOORE21 *before* May 9) and [BRF](#) (50% discount on book - not including postage, use Code MDAUSZN50 *before* May 31), recipients of this Update are being offered discounts on the purchase of *Messy Discipleship: Messy Church perspectives on growing faith*.

By way of follow up to the event, a series of Book Groups (3 gatherings of one hour over a period of two months is being considered to explore the contents more deeply. If you're interested, please e-mail your preferred

availability - in terms of days (excluding weekends) and times (morning, afternoon, evening) – and time zone to chris.barnett@victas.uca.org.au.

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

May 22 [Stories of Childhood Playgroup/Pre-school Ministry Conference](#) (On-line – 2pm-4pm AEST)
May 25-27 [Children's Spirituality Summit/InterGenerate](#) (On-line – dates AEST)

Jun 9 [Engage All Generations \(Book Launch\)](#) (On-line 11am AEST)

Jul 27, 28 [InterGenerate AUS](#) (Sydney, Brisbane, Christchurch + On-line)
Aug 7 [Make it Messy!](#) (Parkville, Melbourne)
Sep 10-12 [Leaders to Go](#) (On-line + Hub model)

From South Australian Council of Churches

New Resource that brings the Good News to serving members of the Defence Force.

Churches of Christ in SA, ADF Chaplain, Rev. Luke Skipper has created a new resource that seeks to bring the Good News to current serving members of the Australian Defence Force and to the Ex Services Community. Originally the now titled 'Army Christian Services' were filmed with the intention to aid Soldiers and other Defence Force Members who whilst training found it increasingly difficult to get to Church.

[Army Christian Services](#) are now available on Facebook. [Click here](#) to find out more and to view.

If you would like to help or have any questions please feel free to email Australian Army Chaplain Luke Skipper at luke.skipper@defence.gov.au

10 years of conflict in Syria

Middle East Council of Churches:

MECC Lights a Candle of Hope in the Lives of Syrians

Around 10% of the population of Syria are Christian and represent Churches from Eastern and Oriental Orthodox, Eastern Catholic and Protestant denominations. Many are [The Middle East Council of Churches](#) members.

WCC-EAPPI Easter initiative to follow the footsteps of Jesus, spotlighting current realities under occupation

While Christians around the globe prepare to celebrate Easter, military occupation continues to severely impact communities in the same places where Jesus himself is said to have walked in the Easter story. An Easter initiative by the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (WCC-EAPPI) now sets out to connect the Biblical narrative with current realities in Palestine and Israel, to spotlight the injustices of life under occupation.

[Read more here.](#)

Events and Training

Briefing on Child and Family Violence Information Sharing Schemes and MARAM

An overview of the reforms including a summary of the training, guidance and tools.

29 April 2021. [Details](#)

NDIS Online National Provider Forums

Hear latest updates and ask questions of Provider Engagement and National Delivery teams.

28 April – 25 May 2021. [Details](#)

Navigating the Ethics and Law of e-Mental Health

Explore emerging ethical and legal issues with eMHIC Special Interest Group for Ethics and Law.

11 May 2021. [Details](#)

Melbourne workshop: Framework for Mental Health in Multicultural Australia

Build cultural responsiveness, learn more about what tools and resources are available.

25 May 2021 (registrations close 17 May). [Details](#)



CEH TRAINING

COVID-19 TRAINING: what we learnt

The *Speaking COVID-19* six-month training project, which has been addressing concerns in CALD communities, has come to an end. In 50 simple & practical information sessions, we trained over 500 bicultural workers about COVID-19 safety, restrictions & support, and more recently the vaccination program. The project was kindly funded by the Victorian Government Multicultural Taskforce.

[More here.](#)

LEARN WITH US & register @ Eventbrite for our upcoming FREE Webinars:

Apr 27, Tues - 10:00 am - Hep B Made Easy

May 18, Tues., 12:00 pm - Webinars, eLearning & online training: what's the difference?

June 23 - 10:00 am - Hep B Made Easy

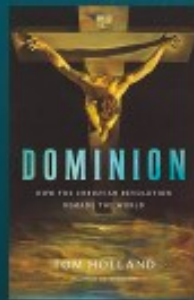
August 16 - 10:00 am - Hep B Made Easy

October 13 - 10:00 am - Hep B Made Easy

[Register here.](#)

DELVING DEEPER

Presents a discussion on



Tom Holland's *Dominion*

Christianity made the
modern world - despite
popular belief

with Dr. Chris White & Dr. Ian Barns
including Q & A and afternoon tea

Sunday 2 May, 2pm - 4pm
St Mark's Church Camberwell

Booking via trybooking.com/BQGWM

Delving Deeper, St Mark's Camberwell's discussion forum for the relationship of faith and wider issues, is relaunching on **Sunday afternoon 2nd of May at 2-4pm**.

The topic will be **Tom Holland's recent influential book, *Dominion***, which argues that it is Christianity which provides the foundational basis underpinning the modern world, not Greek or Roman philosophy, or the Enlightenment.

Chris White will introduce the book, including showing clips of Tom Holland discussing the book with Christian luminary **Tom Wright**. **Ian Barns**, an independent researcher on Christianity and various aspects of modern society, will respond.

There will be a substantial time for Q&A and for more informal discussion over afternoon tea.

Bookings are now open at trybooking.com/BQGWM. Inquiries to Chris by [email](#) or on 0407 313 447.

Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

Dear Community Leaders,

We would be grateful if you could circulate this information amongst your community members:

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program>

Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP)

About the program

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is a free service to help eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants with low English levels to improve their English language skills and settle into Australia.

Learning English will help you to participate more fully in Australian life. You will learn new skills to help you work and make friends in Australia.

When you are in an AMEP class, free childcare is available for children under school age.

Your service provider will assist you to find out about free childcare.

For migrants receiving Centrelink payments, learning English in the AMEP may meet some or all of your mutual obligation requirements.

Am I eligible?

The AMEP has been improved to increase access for eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants in Australia with no or low levels of English. If that sounds like you, the changes mean:

- you can now access unlimited hours of English classes until you reach vocational English

- you can apply to enrol, even if you've enrolled in AMEP before and have been living in Australia for many years

- you can keep studying, even if you've completed 510 hours (the previous limit), until you reach vocational English

The AMEP is available to eligible migrants and humanitarian entrants who hold a permanent visa or an eligible temporary visa and to Australian citizens who previously held a permanent visa or an eligible temporary visa. The principal visa holder and their dependants may be eligible for AMEP.

To find out if you are eligible or to find your nearest class, contact your nearest AMEP service.

Where can I learn English for free?

(AMEP Con't)

The Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is delivered at around 300 locations across Australia in major cities as well as regional and remote areas.

You can join your class online, go to COVID-safe face to face classes, or learn remotely by distance learning.

To find details of your nearest class, see the Find an English class page.

Help in other Languages

Information about the Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) is translated into many languages to help you understand the program better.

Check Information in languages to see if AMEP information is available in your preferred language.

Learning options

The AMEP provides a range of flexible learning options to help you study, including full time, part-time, evening and weekend classes.

It offers face-to-face and online classes, a volunteer tutor scheme and distance learning. If you have under school-aged children, the AMEP also provides free childcare services, while you are participating in face-to-face classes.

Where can I find out more about the AMEP?

Find out more about the AMEP by reading the Learn English for free fact sheet (327KB PDF).

You can also:

Phone: the information line on 131 881 from anywhere in Australia for the cost of a local call

Contact your nearest Adult Migrant English Program service

Help promote the AMEP

Have a look at the AMEP Promotional Flyer (2MB PDF) and share it with family and friends who may also be eligible.

<https://immi.homeaffairs.gov.au/settling-in-australia/amep/about-the-program>

Immigration and Citizenship Services Group

Department of Home Affairs

From Engage.Mail (Ethos)

Ethos Director Gordon Preece was part of a Christian delegation that met with Prime Minister Scott Morrison and Opposition Leader Anthony Albanese, to express their willingness to partner with the government to help Australia recover from the COVID-19 recession. Read more [here](#).

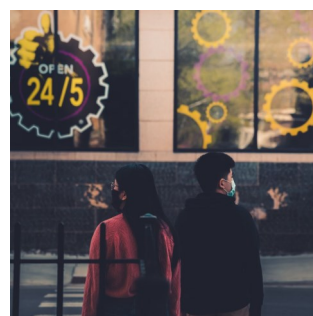


COVID TEACHES THE CHURCH SOME LESSONS ON GENDER

17 March 2021 |

Megan Powell du Toit

Men and women have contracted Covid at equal rates but with different outcomes. How do we reflect on this difference as a church? Read [here](#).



REVIEW OF *PUB THEOLOGY*

30 March 2021 | Robert Ireland

Anyone who finds the pub a place of energy, and wants to hear the lay voice, would benefit from reading *Pub Theology*. Read [here](#).



Gender and Congregational Life survey. The Center for the Study of Global Christianity at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary is conducting a Gender and Congregational Life survey, which aims to uncover what women do in congregations around the world. The survey takes less than 15 minutes and is available [here](#). For more information see [here](#).



Facing Family Violence in Faith Communities

Information sessions for community members

Everyone has the right to feel safe and free from violence in their relationships. Family violence, or domestic violence, is a pattern of behaviour where one person tries to dominate and control the other. It can include a range of direct and indirect behaviours including physical, verbal, social, sexual, financial, emotional and spiritual abuse, and stalking.

If you would like to know more about family violence and what faith communities can do to reduce and respond to family violence, then come along to one of our information sessions.

Topics include:

- What is family violence?
- How does family violence impact communities?
- Understanding respectful relationships
- How can we reduce family violence in faith communities?
- Support services available for people experiencing family violence

Ideal for

Community members of all religions and faith communities.

Relationships Australia Victoria is a leading training organisation with national and international expertise and more than 70 years' experience supporting Victorians through relationship counselling, conflict resolution, family dispute resolution, family relationships, couple therapy and parenting education.

We offer a range of professional development workshops for professionals in the community, welfare, education and legal sectors. Visit www.rav.org.au/training to view all our available workshops.

When

Two-hour information session from 10am-12pm on the following dates:

- Friday 14 May 2021
- Friday 28 May 2021
- Friday 4 June 2021

Come along and have a chat with an experienced Relationships Australia Victoria family violence practitioner.

Registration is not required.

Where

Northern Community CareWorks
81 High Street, Preston 3072

Cost

Free of charge.
Refreshments will be provided.

Enquiries

Please email any questions to events@81highstreet.org.au or call (03) 9484 4788.



The Facing Family Violence in Faith Communities initiative is supported by the Victorian Government.



Enquiries:

Please email any questions to events@81highstreet.org.au or call (03) 9484 4788



Online Event

On the Way to Sigtuna 2022: Online “Pre-Conference”

“Heeding the Spirit: New Horizons in Receptive Ecumenism”

When: 17 June 2021

Time: Thursday, 17 Jun 2021, 21:00 – Friday, 18 Jun 2021, 01:00 AEST

Register: Online at EventBrite

[“Heeding the Spirit: New Horizons in Receptive Ecumenism”](#)



The Sigtuna 2022 committee, in partnership with the Centre for Catholic Studies at Durham University (UK), will host an online “Pre-conference” in June this year. This one-day digital event is open to all and will both provide an excellent preparation for the main conference in 2022, and offer an introduction to the topic for any interested scholars, church leaders, and ecumenical practitioners.

The pre-conference will include a short introduction to Receptive Ecumenism, a series of short, highly accessible talks by leading voices in the field (including some of the invited speakers to the 2022 Sigtuna conference) and time for discussion and sharing. There will also be chance to hear about the Sigtuna conference in more details, and some exciting forthcoming publications.

Please register for the pre-conference **[“Heeding the Spirit: New Horizons in Receptive Ecumenism”](#)**

For further information: info.re5@ehs.se

A Discipleship of Equals



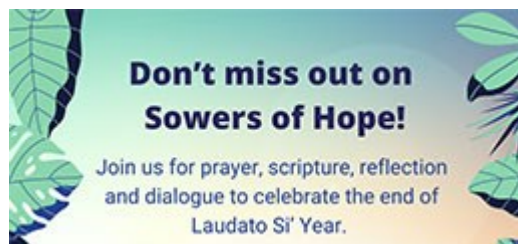
Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv has released an Easter message which calls on the Church and its leaders to follow the example of women throughout salvation history and create a future of hope despite the darkness which surrounds us. By embracing a relational model of radical love, mourning with those who have previously experienced exclusion in our Church and celebrating the gifts of both women and male followers of Christ, Bishop Vincent

believes we can build a Church which embodies the Good News of the Gospel and where all experience and encounter the Risen Lord.

[Read more...](#)

Laudato Si' - Sowers of Hope - 21 May

The Australian Catholic Bishops Conference's Office of Social Justice and Caritas Australia's Catholic Earthcare program are co-hosting this prayer and reflection event entitled *Laudato Si'* – Sowers of Hope. We will gather together as a group, receive nourishment through prayer and Scripture and grow together through dialogue and reflection. All are invited to this special online event and are most welcome to invite any others who would like to participate.



[Read more...](#)

World Fair Trade Day - 8 May



World Fair Trade Day is celebrated on May 8 and the World Fair Trade Organisation is calling on us to 'Build Back Fairer'. This is a day when we can reflect on our purchasing and procurement policies and see what are the practical ways we can support ethical and fair trade practices. Catholic organisations such as Ethica and ACRATH provide practical means for us to make trade fair.

[Read more...](#)

St Joseph the Migrant Worker

Bishop Vincent Long Van Nguyen OFM Conv, Chair of the Bishops Commission for Social Justice, Mission and Service, begins his Pastoral Message for the Feast of St Joseph the Worker by asking: "Have you ever imagined St Joseph as a migrant worker? Would he have taken with him as many tools of trade as he could carry when he fled with Mary and the child Jesus into Egypt? What would it have been like for him trying to find work in a foreign land to support his family? Would anyone help them, or would these 'outsiders' be exploited or left to fend for themselves?"



[Read more...](#)

Reconciliation Victoria

Victoria launches inquiry: into injustices experienced by Aboriginal people since colonisation

The Victorian State Government announced the launch of the [Yoo-rrook Justice Commission](#) on Tuesday 9 March.

A nation-first, the inquiry will examine injustices committed against Aboriginal Victorians across all areas of social, political, cultural and economic life since colonisation.

We welcome the inquiry and recognise it as a fundamental step in the truth-telling and justice process. The establishment of the Commission and the formal commitment to this truth-telling and justice inquiry represent generations of work and advocacy. It is a testament to the strength, perseverance, and leadership of Aboriginal Victorians.



Victoria is making history on the path towards a fairer and more just future.

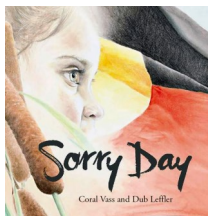
Photo: First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria

Anti-Racism Grants available with Victorian State Government

The Local Anti-Racism Initiatives Grants Program 2021 provides funding to community organisations to deliver activities and initiatives that empower local communities to tackle racism.

Grants of up to \$500,000 are available to support local anti-racism and community harmony efforts.

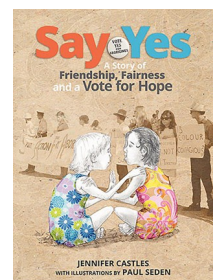
[Read more and apply here.](#)



The book **Sorry Day** by Coral Vass reflects on the Stolen Generation and what it means to Maggie and her mother. You can have this book read to you by Trevor Jamieson through the Story Box Library. There is also a short discussion at the end.

[View here.](#)

Say Yes, A Story for Friendship, Fairness and a Vote for Hope by Jennifer Castles. The book focuses on the laws and powers that governments held that resulted in segregation and broad discrimination. It highlights the role of the civil rights activists that worked towards the 1967 referendum and convinced over 90% of the Australian population to vote Yes. [View here.](#)



Victorian Council of Churches
President:
Rev Fr Shenouda Boutros
Executive Officer:
Rev Ian Smith
Ph: 03 9412 8487 / 9650 4511

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 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

Email (as well as to unsubscribe): vcc@vcc.org.au

Tel: 9412 8487 / 9650 4511

Website: <http://www.vcc.org.au/>

We're on the web!
www.vcc.org.au



Victorian
Council of Churches

Contact us: web. www.vcc.org.au

Email. vcc@vcc.org.au

Facebook 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.