

PRESBYTERY PORT PHILLIP WEST

DECEMBER 17TH 2020
NEWSLETTER NO.22



A Thrill of Hope, the weary world rejoices! Rev. Linley Liersch

*In a year when **good news stories** are needed more than ever before, the story of the Christ-child being born as one of us reminds us again that we are important to God. In our weariness, God comes to us inviting us to rejoice in the midst of the chaos, lift our heads to the sun when we are brought low, and seek the way of love instead of despair. How might we dare to live out “a thrill of hope” this advent season?*

Queensland Communication Team have provided these “A thrill of hope...” resources as posters, postcards, newsletter banners etc. to advertise your Christmas services. Notably Darebin North West UCA we ahead of them getting banners printed on the same theme.

Ever since I head this theme it as been echoing around in my head. “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.” I could hear the tune in my head. The words from ‘O holy Night’. It felt so true. A weary world wants to celebrate, celebrate things with deep meaning, with people that are important to them. We have all learnt this year how much we depend on our gathered church community as a place of hope in the world.

Our souls cry out “Fill us with hope..”

After the lockdown cleared we all went to see family for the first time. For me it was if my soul had been filled. Slowly as we gather again as church, we join with our weary world and rejoice in the birth of our Saviour. God with us. God with us in the midst of bushfires, COVID pandemics, floods...God through it all. God with us as we gather this Christmas.

We wish you a Holy Christmas.

PPW Staff and Ministry Team.



Darebin North West UCA Banners



O Holy Night

O holy night
The stars are brightly shining
It is the night of our dear Saviour's birth

Long lay the world
In sin and error pining
'Til He appeared
And the soul felt its worth
A thrill of hope
The weary world rejoices
For yonder breaks
A new and glorious morn

Fall on your knees
O hear the angel voices
O night divine
O night when Christ was born
O night divine
O night, O night divine

Chains shall He break
For the slave is our brother
And in His name
All oppression shall cease
Sweet hymns of joy
In grateful chorus raise we
Let all within us
Praise His holy name

Christ is the Lord
Let ever, ever praise Thee
Noel, Noel
Oh night, oh night divine (x2)

Songwriters: Adolphe Charles Adam, Ivan Black

Am I prepared for the Saviour's birth?
Are the sermons prepared, the carol chosen?
How do I prepare myself?
Is my house ready for hosting Christmas?

Where is the thrill of hope?
I am weary...
The world is weary...
There is a need to rejoice!

What are the chains that God needs to break in our world?
How have all the chains in our world been broken open by Christ coming into it?

Singing hymns has never been so controversial...
Never more desired?
I need to sing...
We need to sing together!

'O Holy Night' had its origins in the mid-1800s in France. When asked to pen a poem for his parish's Mass that Christmas, composer Placide Capeau thought about the birth of Jesus, as cataloged in the Gospel of Luke, as he wrote the lyrics. He enlisted the help of his Jewish friend Adolphe Charles Adams to aid in the composition of the music. The song was initially titled, "Cantique de Noel." Although the church in France initially accepted the carol, Capeau was later swayed by socialist propaganda and walked away from his faith. The church in France condemned the work due to this. Nevertheless, the lyrics and music made its way to America through abolitionist John Sullivan Dwight. He changed some of the lyrics slightly. Dwight particularly identified with the third verse which spoke about breaking the chains of slavery and seeing every man as our brother. Thanks to Dwight the song's notoriety spread worldwide.



Our theme this time ... Birth of Christ

Week 5 – Advent 4 - Luke 2:1-20

Week 5 entries are due 5pm on Thurs 17th of Dec
Just post your entries on this Regenerating the Church Facebook page for all to see. **Jeanne**

Advent around the Presbytery...

Chris Barnett (Intergenerational: Children and their families)

Chris Barnett has hosted 2 Advent Huddles in our presbytery over 4 months. He invited ministers to gather and to think about how to make Advent special...

Grovedale UC sent Advent packs to their mainly music families as a way of keeping in contact this Advent season. Full of goodies these packs were delivered by the elders in the congregation.

Grovedale Messy Church gathered in the carpark. No BBQ was allowed, so wrapper Ice-creams were handed out. **Rev. Peter Jewel**

Hoppers Crossing UCA ideas that have flowed out of Advent Huddle gatherings. Firstly a the 'Follow the Star' Advent Labyrinth which is located in the cafe courtyard. A huge thankyou and mahalo (thankyou!) to Christina Rowntree for all of the logistical support she graciously gave. She also spent a whole day this week (Tuesday) at Hoppers with measuring, laying out and painting the labyrinth. Christina's support, expertise and resourcing is very much appreciated.

Paintings of Advent candles which are painted by a couple of parishioners for each week of Advent. Note the third candle of Joy was painted yesterday in anticipation for this Sunday.

On Sunday 20th December we will hold a 'Carols n' Picnic in the church car-park - a BYO everything, chairs, rugs and of course food and drink.

Other activities have been Advent packs, the Christmas Bowl videos and activities for each Sunday along with a 4 week Advent study.

Thanks to the Advent Huddle initiative for ideas, resourcing and gentle accountability to ensure these initiatives were able to be carried through.

A huge thankyou to you all for the support and resourcing. I look forward to journeying next year with you all. **Grace and peace, Rev. Faama Leota**



With God's help we made it through 2020.

Mat Harry (eLM New and Renewing)

G'day Practitioners

It's been a tough year no doubt and I just want to encourage all of you in the New & Renewing Community space – you've done a wonderful job learning new things, adapting to the context of not being able to meet together and greatly transforming your digital presence in 2020. There is a message of encouragement for you and your fellow congregants at:- (Click Picture for Link)

Well done to all of you faithful followers of Jesus who maintained essential services – you are an inspiration! Well done good and faithful servants. Let's continue the lessons into the future... Many blessings to you as you continue to encourage and inspire others in the pursuit of "God's will be done".



COVID (Merry) Checklist—are you checking it twice?

Ministry Team

Many Congregations are still not clear what is required of them to be able to open.

1. **Each Congregation MUST Submit the NEW COVID Safe Plans to Synod.** Many congregations submitted these plans mid-year. The forms have now been up-dated and need to be submitted again.
2. **Each Congregation MUST submit a completed reopening checklist to Synod**
3. **Each congregation MUST receive a written response from Synod.**
4. **QR Codes registration for 1 person per 2 sqm density quotient.** The new regulations for places of worship are great news as we approach Christmas and hope to have larger gatherings together in our church buildings. Information from DHHS that hasn't been widely broadcast is that the **new regulation for 1 person per 2 sqm only applies to places that have an electronic recording system.**

Places that have only **pen and paper systems can still only have 1 person per 4 sqm.** Free registration <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/qrcode> with State government. Information is confidential and will be destroyed after 28 days.



How are some churches doing QR Codes? Church ushers can hold their phones and type in the names of the people who are attending. You need one person per household to be registered. For others with smart phones: Just print out your QR Code on a sheet and they can scan the code to be registered. Example photographed above. Or put the QR code in your news sheet to be scanned by people once seated in the pews.

SYNOD COVID links

Recovery Action Plan Check List
FAQ's Vic Regional & Metro Melbourne
Church Facilities reopening Check List

Visitor Contact Logs

Cleaning Info Sheets

<https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/>
Check Regularly!

No FOOD HANDLING Allowed in Churches yet.

“Holy Communion is possible with careful planning which maintains all distancing, hygiene and no food sharing requirements.”

(See Congregation Group Permitted Activity Guide.)

Pls consider 'Open Hand Liturgy'.

Pilgrim Learning Hubs

Linley Liersch (Mission Development Strategist and Education - eLM)

Have you ever thought about theological study?

Are you a person who learns through group participation?

Is studying in the city preventing you from participating in theological studies?

Then Pilgrim Learning Hubs may be for you. You register for on-line studies with lectures delivered by Pilgrim professors. Alongside this learning Hub meets weekly to look at the tutorial work and workshop any questions. Contact Pilgrim registrar Erlinda Loveseed 9340 8892 erlinda.loveseed@pilgrim.edu.au

In 2021 first semester “**Early Christianity: Stories, Texts, Beliefs**” a survey of the New Testament subject taught by Robyn French.

Second semester “**Life, History and the people of God in the Hebrew Scriptures**” a survey of the Old Testament taught by Monika Melanchthon.