The Westerly

PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP WEST

PPW & PWV Newsletter No.60 – July 2024

Presbytery of Western Victoria

NAIDOC Week National Aborigines & Islander Day Observance Committee

Rev. Karen Eller (Bellarine Linked Congregations

The UCA celebrates the thirtieth anniversary of its Covenant Relationship with UAICC (Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress). Since 1994 we have been walking together, First and Second peoples. But what does it mean in our own contexts?

For the past few years, for each NAIDOC week, I have taken up the challenge of reading indigenous authors. 2022 Stella Prize winner, Evelyn Araluen, wrote a collection of poetry, *Dropbear*. One of these, named after a biblical monster of the deep, 'Leviathan', echoes the depth of meaning behind the cautionary wisdom tale of Tiddalik the frog whose greed ended up in ecological disaster. Araluen ends with a dire warning for us all.

you do wrong you get wrong

you get

gobbled up

On Wadawurrung Country today (June 26th), the Wadawurrung educator, Ash, shared with the mob of us who went walking on country, the cautionary story of Naarm, now known as Port Phillip Bay. Wadawurrung storytellers have passed down the story of displacement and upheaval for many generations. Bunjil had warned the people not to be greedy, but they would not listen. The sea came in and flooded the riverine basin to teach them the lesson. Ash, the educator, pondered the parallels with today. His hope is for our governments, councils and land managers to work with indigenous groups to adopt best practices for caring for country.

In the lead up to last year's referendum, at the encouragement of Alison Overeem, Palawa woman, Director of UCA Leprena in Lutruwita (Tasmania), I met with Aunty Mary Shuttleworth from the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners and with board member, Wendy Brabham (Wemba Wemba woman) of the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-operative. These relationships have been valuable in teaching me and the Bellarine Linked Congregations how to better walk with First Nations people in our area.

What I have learned has been profound, and I am committed to learning from and nurturing relationships with indigenous peoples. I know I will make mistakes, and so will you, but please do not be afraid to reach out to your First Nations peoples in your patch.

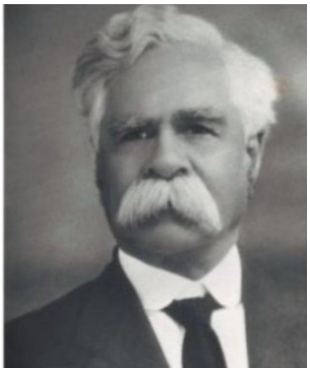
What does NAIDOC week mean for you and your ministry context? How will this year be different to other years? How is your faith community growing in its relationship with the traditional custodians of land, waters, sky, lants, creatures, rocks and peoples? How will you acknowledge the thirtieth anniversary of the Covenant?

CONTENT WARNING: This edition has images and names of deceased Indigenous persons. Stories of surviving Sexual Abuse.

NAIDOC Week—7th—14th July

NAIDOC Week: Christian Week of Prayer & Founder

NAIDOC HISTORY from naidoc.org.au



NAIDOC Week goes for 8 days from Sunday to Sunday, because this week is a Christian time of remembrance. NAIDOC Week has its roots in 1938 'Aborigines Sunday' suggested by **William Cooper** devout Christian, political activist who asked the churches to start praying for Aboriginal people.

In 1935, William Cooper, founder of the Australian Aborigines League (AAL), drafted a petition to send to King George V, asking for special Aboriginal electorates in Federal Parliament. The Australian Government believed that the petition fell outside its constitutional responsibilities.

On Australia Day, 1938, protestors marched through the streets of Sydney, followed by a congress attended by over a thousand people. One of the first major civil rights gatherings in the world, it was known as the Day of Mourning. Following the congress, a deputation led by William Cooper presented Prime Minister Joseph Lyons with a proposed national policy for Aboriginal people. This was again rejected because the Government did not hold constitutional powers in relation to Aboriginal people.

Major Aboriginal organisations, state and federal governments, all supported the formation of, the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee (NADOC). At the same time, the second Sunday in July became a day of remembrance for Aboriginal people and their heritage. In 1974, the NADOC committee was composed entirely of Aboriginal members for the first time. The following year, it was decided that the event should cover a week, from the first to second Sunday in July.

With a growing awareness of the distinct cultural histories of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, NADOC was expanded to recognise Torres Strait Islander people and culture. The committee then became known as the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC). This new name has become the title for the whole week, not just the day.

This year the theme for NAIDOC week is ... **'Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud & Proud'** is the theme honours the enduring strength and vitality of First Nations culture – with fire a symbol of connection to Country, to each other, and to the rich tapestry of traditions that define Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

From the Editor: If you missed an edition of The Westerly see Newsletters – Presbytery of Port Phillip West (ucappw.org.au). Rev Linley Liersch Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au. Next edition submissions 30th July 2024 . Please click links or pictures for hyperlinks.

Mental Health Matters

REV. KAYE RONALDS (UC RELIGIOUS ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ADF)

UC DEFENCE FORCE CHAPLAINCY REPORT TO ASSEMBLY

Moral Injury and Pastoral Narrative Disclosure

"Moral injury is a complex trauma related syndrome involving a correlation of biological, psychological, social, and spiritual symptoms that can have substantial impact upon health and well-being." The groundbreaking work of Reverend Lindsay Carey and Reverend Timothy Hodgson uses a holistic bio psycho-social-spiritual approach to moral injury, by including chaplaincy in the screening and treatment of moral injury among actively serving military members and retired veterans." Some people not only present with PTSD but also with Moral Injury and this research has demonstrated the value of bringing chaplains alongside other professionals in responding to personnel who present with complex conditions. The training of chaplains across the ADF has equipped chaplains with a tool for screening for Moral Injury and a new technique for treatment called, Pastoral Narrative Disclosure.

The work of these two Uniting Church Chaplains has gained momentum and other Uniting Church chaplains are amongst those who are leading the training of chaplains in Navy, Army and Air Force.

In October 2023 a team of Uniting Church Chaplains presented sessions on Moral Injury and Pastoral Narrative Disclosure at the Australian Military Medical Association Conference in Perth. There is already interest from the Defence Forces of our allies to have the MI and PND training delivered in their organizations. In February 2024 ADF Chaplains road tested the training with chaplains from Uniting Care Queensland. Raising awareness of Moral Injury amongst chaplains, especially in aged care and hospital sectors, means that veterans have a better chance of receiving the spiritual care that they need.

Congratulations Rev. Dr Lindsay Carey CSM (1987)

Congratulations to Chaplain Dr Lindsay Brian Carey (Airey's Inlet UCA) who was recognised in the Australia Day 2024 Honours List. Dr Carey received the Conspicuous Service Medal in the Military Division for devotion to duty in moral injury research and the development of resources and training to support Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel.

"I became really concerned about the number of veterans who were potentially being diagnosed with PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) and yet their deep-set problem may not just be PTSD but actually a moral issue. People forget that moral injury, and also PTSD, have a social spiritual impact on people."

The ADF defines moral injury as a trauma-related syndrome caused by the physical, psychological, social and spiritual impact of grievous moral transgressions, or violations of an individual's deeply held moral beliefs and/or ethical standards.

Dr Carey helped to design the moral injury skills training that has been used to train Defence's 250 chaplains in a new strategy known as pastoral narrative disclosure. Dr Carey is the co-author of more than 200 publications and the 2019 co-recipient of the 'Weary Dunlop Award' from the Australasian Military Medicine Association.

"The CSM award gives greater recognition to the current veteran research and chaplaincy training that has been undertaken here in Australia with respect to moral injury. Predominantly most of the research has been undertaken overseas but Australia is now one of the leaders in the field."

Rev. Dr Carey notes *"Attending Queen's and the University of Melbourne was a significant turning point for me, it helped me to clarify what I wanted to achieve, the changes I needed to implement, and where I wanted to progress. I was also greatly inspired by other Wyverns who I had met during my time at Queen's, learning about their achievements, particularly in the areas of research, applied science and practical theology."*

Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry - Leader

AUGUST 6, 13, 20th

BOOK NOW

About the course

Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry - Leader is a 3-day program designed to give participants an introduction to the key concepts and practices of ministering with congregations and agencies in times of transition.

While it is a stand-alone program, it is also the first phase of training that leads to being qualified as an Intentional Interim Minister. Thus, it is useful in itself for anyone in lay or ordained ministry, and also for those exploring whether they are called to Intentional Interim Ministry.

Who is this course for?

- People in Presbytery leadership roles
- People in the latter half of Third Phase of Ministry
- Ministers intending to do significant amounts of supply
- Ministers moving from chaplaincy/agency roles into congregational ministry
- Ministers in placements going through significant transitions, such as looking for new mission directions, contemplating combining/closing, moving to resource ministry.

ACTION STATIONS ON ACT2 REPORT

By Bethany Broadstock

Share the warmth this winter.

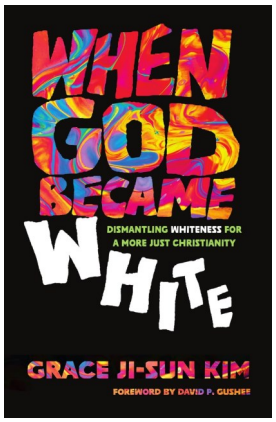
This winter, more and more people are entering the doors of our services, often for the first time, and in a state of panic, desperation and fear for the future. With your support we can give people the practical help they need to rebuild a hopeful future.

Donate now →

BOOK REVIEWS & EVENT

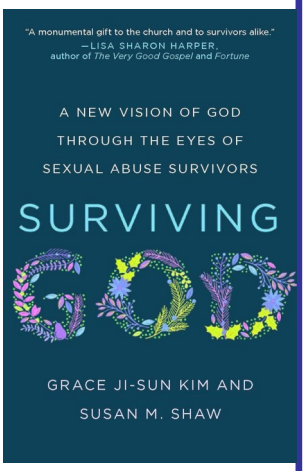
Co-author by Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim event 26th July 10am & 28th July 3.30pm
@ Wesley Church 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne.

When Western Christians think about God, the default image that comes to mind is usually white and male. How did that happen?



Christianity is rooted in the ancient Near East among people of darker skin. But over time, European Christians cast Jesus in their own image, with art that imagined a fair-skinned Savior in the style of imperial rulers. Grace Ji-Sun Kim explores the historical origins and theological implications of how Jesus became white and God became a white male. The myth of the white male God has had a devastating effect as it enabled Christianity to have a profoundly colonialist posture across the globe. Kim examines the roots of the distortion, its harmful impact on the world, and shows what it looks like to recover the biblical reality of a nonwhite, nongendered God. Rediscovering God as Spirit leads us to a more just faith and a better church and world.

Who is God when we see God through the eyes of survivors?



Many books have dealt with sexual abuse scandals in the church and the role of pastoral care for survivors. Others have provided liberatory readings of biblical texts to support survivors of sexual violence. *Surviving God takes a new approach, centering the voices of sexual abuse survivors while rethinking key Christian beliefs. Starting from experiences of oppression, beliefs that contribute to oppression are challenged, and new, hopeful, and healing beliefs take their place.*

Groundbreaking theologians Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Susan M. Shaw, each a survivor herself, demonstrate how traditional ways of thinking about God are highly problematic, contribute to the problems of sexual abuse, and are not reflective of the God of love and justice at the heart of the gospel. These long-held theologies often perpetuate the problem of sexual abuse and fail to promote healing for survivors. Drawing from their own experiences and the experiences of other survivors, and centering the ways gender intersects with race, sexuality, class, and religion, Kim and Shaw lead us to deep healing and a transformed church that no longer contributes to the devastation of sexual abuse. In these inspiring pages, you will discover new ways of thinking about God that are surprising, challenging, and empowering.

Aitken College (Greenvale, Victoria) – Striving for Sustainability

PPW Climate Action Group

Aitken College is an open entry, co-educational, independent school in Greenvale, Victoria in association with the Uniting Church. At Aitken College, education is about providing opportunities and experiences for young people. The College motto 'In Mind and Spirit' reflects the nurturing of educational and spiritual growth. The unique site on which the College is located is welcoming and provides opportunities for students to learn about sustainability and care for their environment. Principal, Josie Crisara says that 'hands-on learning to demonstrate it is possible to make a difference, needs to be experienced by young people in order to give hope.'

Energy auditing

The College prides itself in providing students with a set of values to become responsible members of our global world. College Chaplain Rev Deacon Gavin Blakemore believes that the school's philosophy and values which flow out of the association with the Uniting Church, are central to the focus on caring for creation. Gavin adds that "the school's location on land that was open farmland only twenty-five years ago provides a wonderful opportunity for discovering natural world and learning to live in harmony with the environment."

Dwayne Ganci is the Sustainability and Agriculture Coordinator for the College. He mentioned that the College has had a sustainability vision for many years and students are taught to care for the environment. Dwayne adds "the kids really act positively to this aspect of school curriculum. We have Sustainability Leaders in each of the classrooms who are supported by elected primary and secondary Sustainability Captains."

Propagating native seedlings

Several projects have arisen including a recent biodiversity project with Major Roads Victoria to ensure that vegetation from the local area is restored following the current extensive roadworks adjacent to the school.

The College is also working with Melbourne Water to regenerate the biodiversity of the local waterway called Brodies Creek and help establish it as a wildlife corridor. This has now become a regular service program for all Year 9 students.

Another project which is part of their Precious Plastics initiative, involves collecting plastic bottle tops and using this material to make ballpoint pens, combs and pots.

Students explore the concept of recycling plastic waste, learn the environmental impact of plastic pollution, and investigate the process of plastic recycling. The collection of bottle tops is sourced from the school community.

Plastic recycling and re-use

Aitken College is also a recipient of the "5-Star ResourceSmart Schools certification" and is one of only three schools in Victoria to receive this certification. This program is managed by Sustainability Victoria, a Statutory Authority establish by the Victorian Government, and organisations must renew their certification on a regular basis. The program evaluates biodiversity, waste, water usage and energy usage. Aitken College has been a ResourceSmart School since 2007 and recently was a finalist in two categories of the 2024 RESOURCE SMART SCHOOL AWARDS. **GO AITKEN COLLEGE!**

‘Narana Creations’ Closes so that Another Door Opens

Rev Will Pickett and Rev Greg Crowe [Uniting Aboriginal And Islander Christian Congress]

After 30 years, Narana Creations will return to the genesis of its first imagining and be transferred to the Wathaurong Co-Op.

As reported to the Synod of 2023, the UAICC Victoria Oversight Committee has been in conversation with both the Wadawurrung Traditional Owners Corporation and the Wathaurong Aboriginal Co-Operative about the future of Narana Creations.

At the beginning of 2024 the Wathaurong Co-Op indicated its interest in acquiring Narana Creations as an ongoing cultural centre in the Geelong district and beyond. This acquisition is in the final stages of agreement. As part of the transition, Narana will be closed for business as of this week to enable the appropriate preparation for handover.

Narana Creations has held a special place within the Synod of Victoria and the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania since 1996. It has been the location of the State Office for UAICC Victoria for 30 years and became a space in which many of us within the Uniting Church were ‘baptised’ into a deep listening to the story of the First Nations Peoples. We have been significantly influenced and blessed by Uncle Vince Ross over the Narana years, and for those of us who have been able to visit Narana once or many times, it is a special place.

Prior to his appointment as UAICC Victoria State Director in 1993, Uncle Vince was one of a few visionary Indigenous leaders involved in what was then known as the Geelong and District Aboriginal Co-operative. This Co-op became later known as Wathaurong Co-op, and continues to be a provider of support and health services, employment and justice services to and for the First Nations people of the greater Geelong area.

Vince along with some other key leaders had a vision for a cultural education centre and social enterprise for the Geelong area. The Co-operative had some property next to the wildlife sanctuary at the base of the You Yang Ranges. It was their vision to create a centre linked to the sanctuary, but for a variety of reasons, the vision never came into fruition.

Vince never lost his passion and vision for a cultural centre, and when he was appointed to the UAICC Victoria in 1993 he worked to establish this new enterprise as the primary activity of the Congress in Victoria. Through the support of the (then) UCA Synod of Victoria, and its commitment to the Covenant, Uncle Vince realised his original vision for a cultural centre.

Since Uncle Vince’s retirement, Narana has continued to be an important place. It has become clear, however that the energy, focus and resources needed for its flourishing mean that other expressions of UAICC Victoria Mission and Ministry have been limited.

So after 30 years Narana Creations is returning to the community of its first imagining. This is both sad and wonderful. While the UCA is letting go of a space and place that has been so important to our own identity as Second Peoples in relationship with the First Peoples of this land, it is a sign of the Church’s commitment to the covenant and reconciling relationship with First Peoples that this centre and the land be returned to the First Peoples’ community of the land on which Narana sits.

A ceremony of thanks and gratitude and celebration of transfer with the Wathaurong community will be held at a date to be decided.

Events

July 7th—14th	**NAIDOC Week**
July 11th—16th	**17th National Assembly theme 'Threads of Love', Sydney**
July 11th—22nd	**Refugee Week** Resources
July 18th 7:30—9pm	**Northerly** Lecture by Amy Plantinga Pauw @ Brunswick Uniting Church Church in an Ordinary Time: A Wisdom Ecclesiology
July 26th 10 am	Surviving God**: A New Vision of God through the Eyes of Sexual Abuse Survivors** Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim @ Wesley Church 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
July 28th 3.30 pm	When God Became White **: Dismantling Whiteness for a More Just Christianity** Rev. Dr. Grace Ji-Sun Kim @ Wesley Church 130 Lonsdale St, Melbourne
9th & 10th	Victorian Council of Churches: Acknowledging 75 years **@ CTM 29 College Cres, Parkville, Melbourne**

To support, care for and encourage ordained colleagues in best ministry practice. This vocational accompaniment recognises the complex challenges ministers face.
To actively lead for a new culture – reflective of the Gospel – that we want to be a part of.

Worship Leaders and Bible Readers.
If you are leading worship you should think about Lay Preacher studies. "Exploring the New Testament" is a good way to start to build your knowledge and skill at interpreting scripture.

Accredited Lay Preachers could do the subject as a refresher.

Starting July 15th 7—9 pm

on zoom. Rev. Linley Liersch & Mel Perkins Leadership Development: Lay Leadership will be your lecturers.