The Westerly

PWV & PPW Newsletter No.73 October 2025

Limitations help us Innovate

Rev. Dr. Prince R. Rivers (Duke Divinity School)

Who doesn't wish they had more resources to do more ministry? We want more people in worship. We want a bigger building to hold the people who already participate in worship. We want more parking. We want a larger budget so we can act on new ideas for ministry and mission. So we hope for more. We strategize to have more. We do capital campaigns to raise more funds. One way or another, we are determined to get past the limitations that hold us back.

In the book "A Beautiful Constraint: How to Transform Your Limitations into Advantages, and Why It's Everyone's Business," Adam Morgan and Mark Barden challenge us to reframe the way we think about limitations. Constraints, the authors say, are often the key to innovation, not a barrier to it.

Scripture bears witness to this idea in several places, including the story of Jesus feeding the 5,000. The disciples wanted Jesus to send the crowd away because it was late in the day. Jesus knew the people were hungry, so he told the disciples to feed them. Given the size of the crowd and their meagre supplies, the disciples told Jesus they could not do that.

While the disciples' response sounds reasonable, Jesus instructs them to borrow a kid's lunch, and he uses those limited rations to miraculously feed the crowd. Like the disciples, we can get stuck in what constrains us as leaders. "A Beautiful Constraint" asks us to overcome these limitations with "propelling questions." A propelling question is a bold ambition that acknowledges a significant constraint. For example, how do we build a transformational youth and children's ministry — without a paid youth minister?

Without a doubt, constraints are real, and we need to acknowledge them. But what might happen if we asked different questions and looked for potential innovation? Like the disciples, we might witness God do something that is beyond what we can imagine.

A handful of disciples turn the world upside down. What if we talked about the limitations we face as invitations? When the litany of constraints comes up in the next meeting, what if we embraced them and saw them as opportunities for God to do something extraordinary? Your small congregation isn't too small — it's intimately sized for deep community. Your limited budget isn't restrictive — it's an opportunity for creative faithfulness and radical dependence on God's provision. Ministry flourishes not when we have everything, but when we offer everything we have to the God of multiplication.

What are your congregations' limitations?
How can you change the questions?

Limitations help us Innovate

Pastoral Care in PPW

Lisa Carey (Chairperson of Presbytery of PPW)

With only a couple of weeks to go, I thought it still important to let those in PPW know that David Withers and Fi Bottcher have been providing supply while Narelle Collas is on long service leave. Following is a bit about them and their contact details if you need to get in touch with them.

"While Narelle Collas is on a well-deserved LSL break for the next 8 weeks (8 Sept – 31 Oct), Fiona Bottcher and I are doing our best to fill Narelle's absence as we share in Supply Ministry for the Presbytery. It is fair to say that Narelle's current list of ongoing ministry tasks, that she shared with us in late August, is somewhat overwhelming. Nonetheless, we will do our best.

It is now nearly 2 years since I sadly farewelled my final placement at Bacchus Marsh and Pentland Hills, and I continue to navigate the life changes that retirement presents. Home is Werribee – possibly the midpoint of the Presbytery! I am learning how new and special it is to minister in supply from time to time across the Presbytery in a rich diversity of new ways. And life is certainly more flexible and varied, as I try to keep pace with 3 adult children and 6 grandkids.

One of my key tasks is to meet up with Ministry Agents from across the Presbytery with a focused conversation on completed 'Annual Reporting on Ministry' responses. These conversations have already begun, and I realise how privileged I am to hear the treasured stories of faithful ministry – both the joys and the challenges - that is being exercised by diverse communities from across the Presbytery. I will also be giving attention to some particular allocated contexts in pastoral ministry and share with Fiona in other needs that may arise over the course of time in supply.

May abiding moments of grace and the gentle presence of the Spirit's peace be yours."

Rev David Withers (rev.david.withers@outlook.com, 0478 640 828)

"Hi Presbytery, remember me? You may have come across my musings in the Westerly from my previous role as the Mental Health Chaplain. You can look back at past editions if you'd like to get an idea of the work I did then. Well, I'm still here!

I'm so grateful to have this opportunity to support the work of the Presbytery as a supply minister while Narelle is on Long Service Leave, and to work alongside Rev David Withers and the rest of the team.

My role reflects my interest in how we pastorally and spiritually care for each other as we discern God's call in our lives; as individuals, congregations, ministry agents and in all the relationships we build along the way. I'm inspired by the depth and breadth of the work that congregations and agencies across the Presbytery are engaged in and I'm aware of the diverse and very real pastoral needs that come with it.

If you're wondering whether a pastoral conversation may be helpful for you, or if you're concerned or worried about something that's happening and aren't sure who to talk to, I invite you to get in touch."

My contact details are: feigh.b@gmail.com 0421 027 467

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge all First Peoples of the beautiful lands on which we live and celebrate their enduring knowledge and connections to Country. We honour the wisdom of and pay respect to Elders past and present.

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.

Please click links or pictures for hyperlinks. **Next edition submissions 28th October 2024**

Discernment Day

Lisa Carey (PPW Chairperson)

Discernment is about discovering the will of God, sensing the movements of the Holy Spirit in our lives, and identifying a sense of call to participate in God's mission to the world in and through Jesus Christ. To God in Christ all people are called to respond in faith. Each of us must be in touch with the Spirit of God at work in us. Although the Bible and the Church together carry much wisdom and gives us the general outlines for our individual and communal life in Christ, each person has their own unique personal vocation to live.

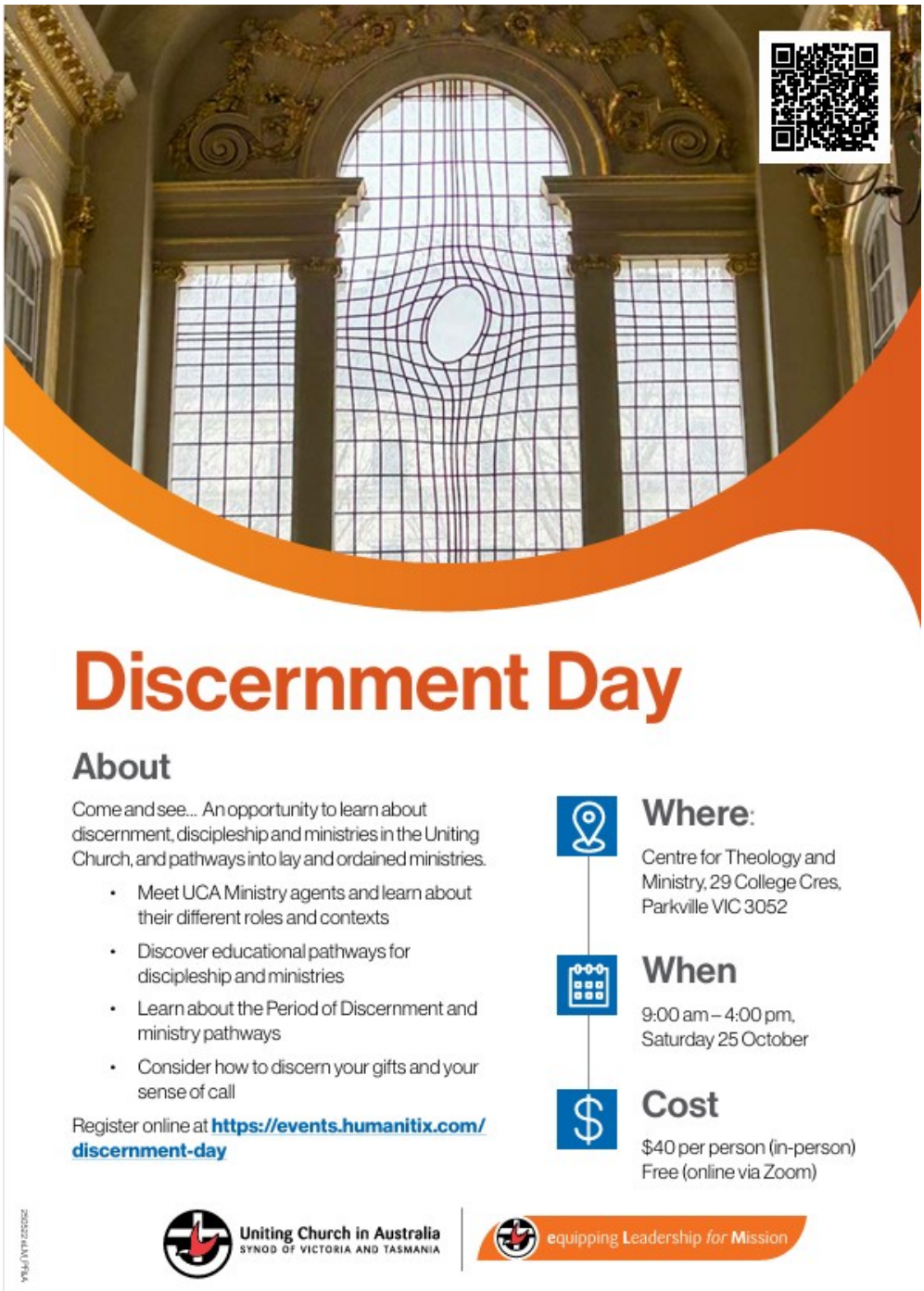
Within the wider community of the Uniting Church and in the particular language of the Basis of Union, The Uniting Church affirms that every member of the Church is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified and to be his faithful servant. It acknowledges with thanksgiving that the one Spirit has endowed the members of Christ's Church with a diversity of gifts, and that there is no gift without its corresponding service: all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ.

At the heart of the discernment process is the understanding that discipleship and ministry is a calling on all people who have been baptised. This ministry may be expressed: ***within the local congregation, in your workplace or the community, or within one of the specified ministries of the Uniting Church.***

The church believes that each ministry is as important as any other. The Period of Discernment (POD) is a process approved by the National Assembly in 1997 to enable the church and individuals together, to discern God's call on their life for future ministry and where our individual ministry lies.

There are no pre-determined outcomes from the Period of Discernment: it provides an opportunity for all members of the church to clarify God's call on their lives to serve in any number of different areas.

For further information about the period of discernment, please attend the discernment day on
25 October 2025
Information kit at the Synod Website here - [Period of Discernment (overview) - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania]



DONATE to Reduce Carbon Emissions in the Church ...

Climate Action Group

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP THE UCA REDUCE CARBON EMISSIONS?

There has been a SYNOD EMISSIONS REDUCTION FUND allocation for that purpose, but it needs some help. This fund of $100 000 comes as a dollar-matching process if presbyteries (PPW has pledged $30,000 over two years), churches or individuals contribute to the fund, over the next 2 years.

So all parts of the church can contribute

You may like to consider paying what you can afford to this fund, to help churches in our Synod reduce their **carbon** emissions. Any payment you make will be doubled through the Synod allocation.

Thanks for considering this.

Payments can be made through:

1. Direct bank transfer to:

Westpac Bank
Account Name: The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria & Tas
BSB: 033 157
Account Number: 344 136

Uniting in Ordination

CTM Parkville on Wednesday 29th October from 9:30 am.
For Phase Four Ministers

We will be joined by Fiona Ross – who will soak us in a Sound Bath and hear from Fiona and others who are exploring new ways of being Christian Community.

Program for the day…

9:30 Arrival

9:45 Worship (Alister)

10:00 Check-In (Joan)

10:20 **Sound Bath (Fiona Ross)** [in the chapel]

11:20 Morning Tea

11:45 Fiona Ross & Tom share stories of the new ministries emerging and what excites them

12:30 Lunch (BYO or buy from Café)

1:15 Discussion about the opportunity that is *Faithful Futures*

2:25 Closing Prayer

Please register straight away and join us **Register here:** https://events.humanitix.com/uniting-in-ordination-en9zbbcz

Teachers Exploring Chaplaincy or Spiritual Care?

Many schools report difficulty filling chaplaincy and spiritual-care roles. At the same time, some teachers may be wondering about that work—perhaps in a hybrid role that keeps some teaching alongside a formal role in caring presence.

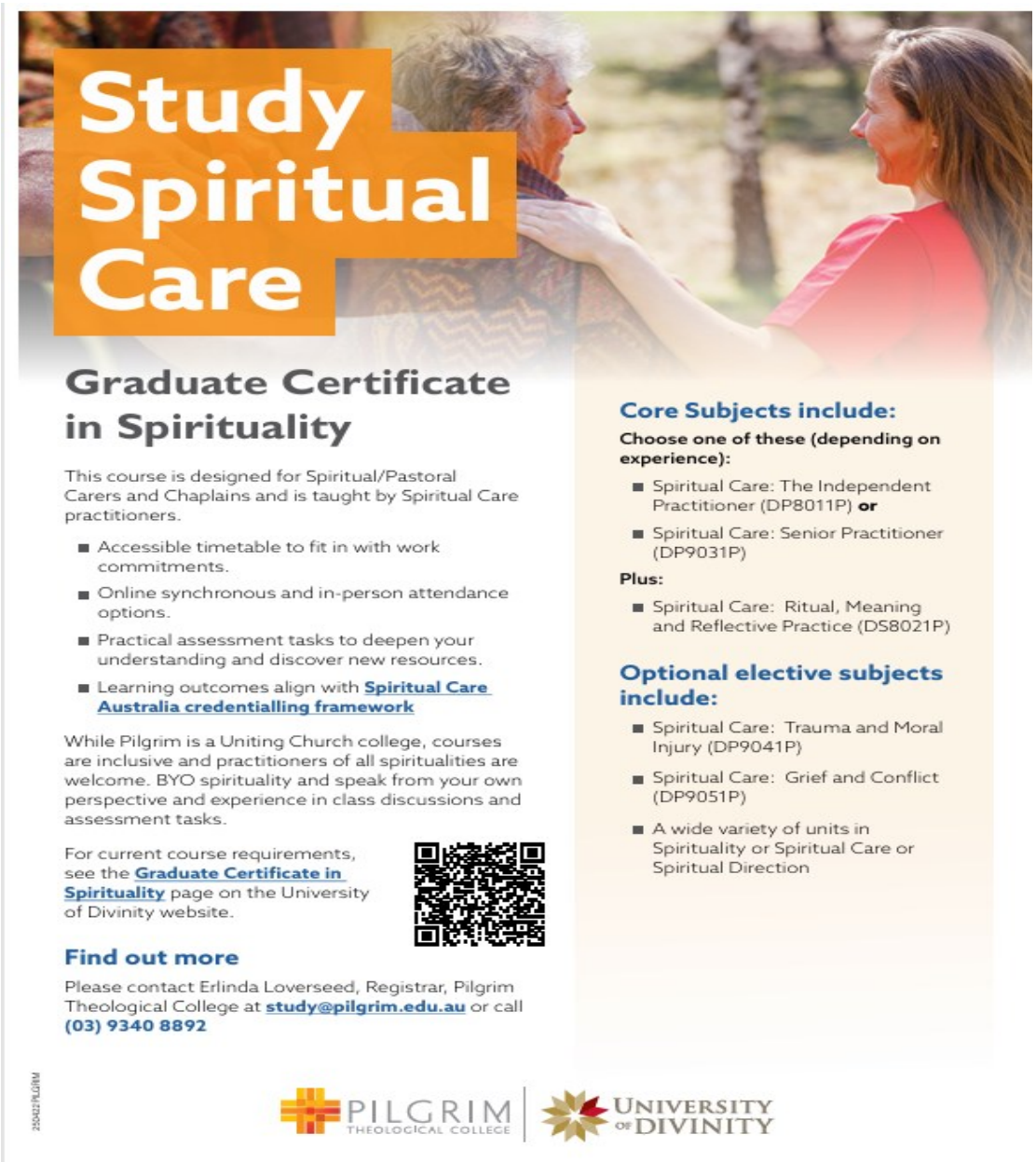
eLM's Chaplaincy and Connections Team is running a small, six-month inquiry to see what interest exists and what supports would help (formation, mentoring, time release). This is exploratory and listening-led - not a push to move teachers out of classrooms.

Do you know a teacher or educator who might be willing to share some thoughts? Thy can participate in to ways:

Short primer (comment welcome): [Google Doc link]

Brief anonymous survey (4-6 mins): [Survey Link]

Questions? Contact Adrian Pyle: adrian.pyle@victas.uca.org.au



PreachFest! is just two weeks away! There is still time to register to join us for an inspiring time of learning, connection, and renewal for preachers and leaders across the Uniting Church and beyond.

DATE AND LOCATION

- 24-25 October 2025
- St Stephen's Uniting Church, Sydney
- Online via Zoom (Keynote sessions only)

COST

Register today for multiple ticket options:

- **All Access**: $199
- **Day Pass:** $109

Pastoral & Spiritual Care With Transgender People Workshop

A professional development workshop for ***pastors, chaplains, counsellors and professionals*** seeking to support trans and gender diverse people

Thursday 20 November, 12-2pm, $49– (On-Line)

Working alongside trans and gender diverse people in ministry, chaplaincy, counselling, or social work can be deeply meaningful - and at times complex, especially when navigating faith, tradition, and community expectations.

This 2-hour online workshop offers a safe and supportive space for Christian professionals to:

- Hear stories of hope from a transgender person of faith (Steff).
- Explore how scripture and theology affirm gender diversity as a core quality of God.
- Better understand the language being used by trans and gender diverse people.
- Learn practical tools for providing safe, inclusive, and trauma-informed care.
- Connect with other faith leaders and carers committed to walking this path.

Whether you're seeking greater confidence in your pastoral care, clarity in responding to trans people, or encouragement to advocate for safer communities, this workshop will equip you to walk with love in your professional practice. https://events.humanitix.com/pastoral-and-spiritual-care-with-transgender-people

Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies

TO LISTEN AND RESPOND

DIALOGUE AS FEMINIST METHOD

Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies **2025 Conference**

7–8 NOVEMBER 2025

at **Pilgrim Theological College**
29 College Crescent, Parkville VIC

and **online**

www.feministtheologies.net

Registrations now open.

PROGRAM

BOOK LAUNCH

Feminist Theologies: A Companion
(eds. Kerrie Handasyde, Stephen Burns and Katharine Massam)

Tending to stories in Feminist Theologies: Interdisciplinary Renderings of Faith, Hope and Love
(eds. Helena Kadmos and Katharine Massam)

to be launched by
Professor Joy Damousi AM FASSA FAHA

5.30–6.30 pm, Friday 7 November
Dalton McCaughey Library, including refreshments
and online

JANETTE GRAY RSM MEMORIAL LECTURE AND DINNER

Julia Thwaites
Janette Gray RSM Scholar

7–9 pm, Friday 7 November
Yuma Auditorium, with two-course meal
and online

PRESENTATIONS

with papers, workshops and more by members and friends of the
Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies

10.00 am–5.00 pm, Saturday 8 November
Yuma Auditorium and other spaces at Pilgrim Theological College, with lunch and refreshments
and online

ACFT Inc. AGM

including opportunities for members to be nominated and elected to ACFT Committee roles and working groups

12.00–12.30 pm, Saturday 8 November
Yuma Auditorium
and online

This program of events is proudly brought to you by the Australian Collaborators in Feminist Theologies Inc. in collaboration with the Janette Gray RSM Fund Committee, Pilgrim Theological College and the University of Divinity.

Feminist Theologies · PILGRIM THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE · UNIVERSITY OF DIVINITY

YOORROOK Justice Commission

CAN WE HANDLE THE TRUTH?

Join Us for the Churches' Response to Yoorrook

We will hear perspectives from various denominations on their responses and discover ways to foster change within your church community. To enrich our discussion, we will be joined by Aunty Prof. Anne Pattel-Gray.

Saturday 18 October 10:30am – 2:30pm
Lunch provided
Father Tuckers Meeting Room
Rear of 95 Brunswick St
Entrance via Fitzroy St

Christians for Yoorrook · Together, we are ANTaR Victoria · THE WESLEY CENTRE

 # FREE EVENT - REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

Join us for an exciting opportunity! Be sure to register at the following link or scan the QR Code:
(https://events.humanitix.com/can-we-handle-the-truth)

THE WESLEY CENTER IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE AUSTRALIAN INTERCULTURAL SOCIETY

FREE WILL OR DIVINE SCRIPT? WHO'S REALLY IN CONTROL?

CHRISTIAN AND MUSLIM REFLECTIONS ON THEOLOGY AND THE WORLD

SPEAKER
Rev. Dr Daniel Sihombing
Pilgrim Theological College,

SPEAKER
Dr Omer Ergi
Islamic Sciences & Research Academy

MODERATOR
Noor Gillani
The Conversation

This panel explores one of the most enduring theological and philosophical questions - are our lives shaped by divine will or human freedom?

The panel will address the implications of free will and predestination for moral responsibility, suffering, justice, and personal faith. Drawing on Christian and Muslim perspectives, panellists will examine how each tradition understands the relationship between God's sovereignty and human agency.

DATE: THURSDAY 30TH OF OCTOBER 2025
TIME: 6:00PM FOR 6:30PM START
VENUE: YUMA AUDITORIUM
CENTRE OF THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY
29 COLLEGE CRESCENT, PARKVILLE

FREE REGISTRATION

Organised by · AIS Australian Intercultural Society · The Wesley Centre

Supported by · ISRA · Pilgrim Theological College

October— November Events

18th October 10:30—2:30pm	**Can we handle the Truth?** (Page 7) ***The Churches Response to the Yoorrook Commission*** Aunty Prof. Anne Pattel-Gray @ Father Tuckers Meetings Room, Rear of 95 Brunswick Street
21st October	**Conclusion of Placement Rev. Janet Munroe Chaplain** @PEGS
24th-25th Oct	**'Ancient Futures' PreachFest 2025** Rego (Page 6) @ St. Stephens's UCA, Sydney
25th October 9am - 4pm	**Discernment Day** (Page 5) @ Centre of Theology 29 College Cres, Parkville
26th October 2:30pm	**Induction of Rev. Alisha Fung** @ Yarraville UCA, 75A Bayview Rd, Yarraville.
30th October 6 pm	**Free Will or Divine Script? Who is really in Control?** (Page 7) @ Centre of Theology 29 College Cres, Parkville
7—8th November	**Feminist Theologies: To Listen and respond** (Page 7) @ Centre of Theology 29 College Cres, Parkville
9th November 11 am	**Conclusion of Pastor Position** @ Keilor UCA, crn Flora St & Church St, Keilor
16th November 2.30pm	**Closure of Moriac UCA buildings** @ Moriac, Hendy Main Rd, Moriac
20th November **12 noon—2pm**	**Pastoral & Spiritual Care With Transgender People Workshp** @ on-line (Page 6)