

The Gippsland Gardener

Ministry and Mission across the Presbytery of Gippsland – August 2021



It's already been a year since our last edition,
and what a year it's been!
There is much to share and while we remain
in the grip of a pandemic twelve months on,
that has not been the defining nature
of ministry in Gippsland under the Fig Tree Project.
So like before, grab a cuppa,
find a comfy chair somewhere warm and put your feet up;
We've got lots to tell you!



Resourcing Ministers: Pastoral & Strategic - Arnie Wierenga & Jennie Gordon

A key feature of eucalypts is that they require fire to regenerate. We've seen much regeneration across east Gippsland in the last twelve months and what once seemed barren now has dense regrowth. The scars of fire remain, but the cycle of life also brings hope and promise. The Fig Tree Project draws us towards Jesus as we hear his telling of the parable in Luke 11. As we see patterns of growth in the natural world, it's not hard to apply the parable to our ministry and mission and wonder about what nutrients our diverse trees might need.



The Fig Tree Project brings all ministry agents into one of six Ministry Teams across Gippsland. The Presbytery's commitment is to provide high level training with the goal of growing effective teams. Through our teams, in our ministry together, our ministry agents can more fully and joyfully tend and encourage the fruitfulness of our congregations and communities. All our ministers working with congregations will undertake team training with Rev. Dr. Jenny Byrnes as facilitator and coach. We're holding a two-day camp in August at UC Camping's Grantville Lodge to continue to support each other and to resource and grow our team ministry capacity in Gippsland.

Our Shearwater Team worked creatively and diligently from March to the end of December 2020 to develop, write, edit and send out the Shearwater Weekly Worship Resource. This was a massive undertaking and something of a pressure-cooker way to bring the team together! The resource was deeply valued and used throughout the Presbytery and Synod, so much so that the decision was made to continue to produce a weekly resource, and to share the work across willing ministry agents in the Presbytery. The Fig Tree Worship Resource continues to be produced, a Sunday ahead, and shared each week and is still being adapted for use on the Synod website, with plenty of downloads. You can subscribe and get it delivered in a weekly email; the details are on our Presbytery webpage.

Missional Support Resource Minister - Deb Bye

I am so blessed to be able to work from home – so all the lockdowns have not affected me too much. It's been wonderful to be able to communicate with so many in our Presbytery via email, phone, TeamViewer, zoom, FaceBook and yes even in person!! I can't believe I'm 8 months into my third year in this role. I have learned MUCH and seen many changes – good changes with good people!

It's been wonderful to share the great things that are happening in our congregations and in an effort to encourage each other, I want to see if we can increase that type of communication as we move forward. Your annual reports are a great source of fabulous stories to be shared – these can encourage others in our Presbytery to "have a go". Even the smallest congregation can be encouraged by these stories and maybe adjust some ideas to suit their circumstances. Keep your eye out for some of these reports over coming months. If you have the capability to use Facebook – check us out <https://www.facebook.com/ucagipps> - you'll find events there as they happen, and you can join in conversations too.

We have also been taking advantage of the online options to join in training and workshops or talks from other Presbyteries. We do some great things in Gippsland – it's time to TELL PEOPLE! I am also privileged to be able to work with your Fig Tree Team Leaders. I try to help in any way I can to support their work and I'm just at the end of the phone or email if you need help with anything. If I can't help – I'll find someone who can!

We (the Resource Team) have lots of plans for things like basic Governance training to help with your church council meetings (if you need it) and we are also working on how to assist church councils in more constructive ways to manage their lack of treasurers and secretaries – you are not alone!! Yes, Covid has slowed us down BUT we are finding new and exciting ways to do things. I've been so impressed by those who have put aside their fear of turning on the computer (my mum has been one of them!) and embracing technology. It's frustrating because it doesn't always work properly the first few times, but like anything – practice makes it easier (we don't need perfection) I'm a cat person – but couldn't resist sharing this - Keep in touch!



Resourcing Minister: Mission , Education and PeLM - Peter Batten

Look at all these learning opportunities you can get involved in! ...

Intergeneration Road Trip 27-29 August . Warrigal, Traralgon and Bairnsdale Gippsland Presbytery is excited to host Chris Barnett, (Synod Intergeneration and their families resource person) and Robin Yang, (eLM young adults). Bring your questions, thoughts and ideas. This event is taking place in three locations across the presbytery.



Fri 27 Aug., Warragul Uniting Church 2120 Sutton Street Warragul. 7-9pm
 Sat 28 Aug. Traralgon Uniting Church 19-29 Park Lane Traralgon 7-9pm
 Sun 29 Aug. Bairnsdale Uniting Church 710 Lanes Rd, Bairnsdale. 2-4pm
 To register, email Deb sec.ucagipps@gmail.com
 For more info contact Rev Deacon Peter Batten mission.ucagipps@gmail.com



Ministry in Disasters. pt 1


Ministering in disaster-affected communities - good advice for congregations and faith communities

Who for: Congregations and faith communities
When: Thursday, 9 September, 2021, 7-9pm
Where: Zoom
Cost: Your time and ongoing care


Presenter: Rev Dr Stephen Robinson,
National Disaster Recovery Officer, UCA Assembly

Register:
<https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/ministering-in-disaster-affected-communities-tickets-165059686967>

Enquiries: Mel Perkins
 Lay Leadership Development Coordinator
mel.perkins@victas.uca.org.au



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Ministry in Disasters. pt 2

Peer Support Training. In conjunction with eLM and the UCA Assembly I am exploring the possibility of establishing a peer support network across the presbytery that can support, respond, and follow up in times of disaster. Disaster recovery is a long term process as we are experiencing from the Black Summer and many disaster recovery agencies are involved in the short term. The aim of this peers' support person/s is to be present for the long term within the community. Training in peer support will be offered in October to nominated people from congregations and teams across the presbytery. As presbytery representatives in your congregations, I would be keen to know if there are people who would be interested in this ministry and willing to do some online training, then contact me. More information will be published shortly. Peter mission.ucagipps@gmail.com

Preaching the lectionary 2021-2022.

Rev Dr Sunny Chen will guide the participants of this day through the Revised Common Lectionary for year C (2021-22) Sunny is an engaging and enthusiastic lecturer and has been a regular presenter to the presbytery. Sunny currently teaches New Testament Greek at Pilgrim Theological College.

Put this event in your diary :

Traralgon Uniting church Saturday 9 October with Rev. Dr Sunny Chen, Time - TBA



Currawong Ministry Team

Rev. Deacon Peter Batten, Mr. Rob Barnes, Rev. Barb Strickland, Rev. Sandra Houghton (supply)



JNC Currawong team. Following a mission study earlier this year the Sale congregation are currently in the process of compiling their profile. This has been an encouraging and engaging process, as the congregation, church council and JNC have discussed the benefits of the team and what style of ministry would be suitable to work within the team with the focus on Sale UCA.

Maffra/Heyfield rejoiced in the commissioning of Rob Barnes as a pastor in placement (see pic). Rob and the church council are focusing on what it means to be curators of worship. And how this can reshape the role of the worship leader.

The ministry agents of the Currawong team were hosted for a meal and discussion at the home of Jenny and Peter Batten. The conversation focused on team building across the Currawong church councils and congregations and future combined ministry possibilities. .

Stratford congregation recently held their AGM with a change of office bearers. Rev Barb Strickland continues her ministry to Fulham Correction Centre. This ministry has been challenging, in Covid times, with restrictions on personal contact.

Kookaburra Ministry Team

Rev. Arnie Wierenga, Rev Paul Bauer (until 31 May 2021), Rev Colin Oakley (Anglican).

Loch-Poowong and Korumburra are currently enjoying short-term supply ministry with the Rev. Dr. Des Parker. Des offered ministry to Poowong some years back and has enjoyed re-engaging with folk there. The Mya Mya café continues to operate weekly on Wednesdays when possible and is well attended, offering an important place of community connection in Poowong. It generally hasn't been possible to hold worship in Kernot and Strzelecki or Arawata through this period. Kongwak has organised occasional services.

Leongatha farewellled Rev. Paul Bauer at the end of May with his ministry move to Bendigo South. Worship is being led there by members of the congregation including Rev. Jim Murray. A mission study day was held in June and work continues toward shaping future ministry

A Life and Witness consultation was held in 2019 at Koo Wee Rup, Lang Lang and Corinella (Anglican). Arnie and Anglican Archdeacon Graham Knott are working with Colin and the Westernport Parish on recommendations from the report.

Lyrebird Ministry Team

Rev. Deacon Peter Batten, Mrs. Cathie Halliwell, Rev Kerry Pierce, Rev. Judy McLeod (Supply), Rev Robyn Schaefer, Frank Lees (Federation University Chaplaincy)

Cooperating churches in Churchill, Boolarra, Yinnar held a one day Lego program. Of the twelve children who attended, ten normally do not attend church. Included in the number of participants were two young adults who bought their younger siblings. This energised the team as these young adults had attended Christmas and Easter events in the past. The story of the day was a Lego retelling of the Great Banquet (Cathie Halliwell)



JNC Lyrebird team (Churchill Cooperating Parish focus) is continuing its work on the profile.

Traralgon UCA continues to be led through the Intentional Interim Ministry process by Rev. Dr. Kerry Pearce. Half way through this ministry there have been some exciting developments in leadership and some challenges along the way. Such is the nature of IIM ministry. *Uniting* Gippsland is currently hiring one of their spaces as a temporary office for staff for a new Drug and Alcohol rehabilitation centre being built in Traralgon.

Mirboo Nth. has continued to use Zoom for their services over this lockdown period and have discovered the challenges of technology in the rural sector. The joy in recent times was a visitor joining the service from Melbourne and a young flute player leading the music via Zoom as a means to practice for an eisteddfod.

Robyn Schaefer provides worship and pastoral care to the congregation at Morwell UCA. In February this year the congregation celebrated the refurbishment of part of the interior of the church following the arson attack last year.

Federation University Chaplaincy: Chaplaincy has been a little bit less busy over the last months, understandably. However, there are still positive things happening. Students continue to seek support in various ways; we have had extra help with the

food table provisions and the second semester is set to see more students around so it will be busier. Including supplying breakfast on the days I am there. (Rev. Frank Lees)

Yarram congregation recently farewelled Clive and Bev Wort. Who for over thirty years have contributed much locally and to the presbytery. They have moved, to be closer to family. (Betty Grouse)

Pelican Ministry Team

Rev. Arnie Wierenga, Rev. Nathaniel Atem (until 31st July 2021), Rev. Jude Benton (Anglican), Rev. Rowena Harris (on extended sick leave), Ms. Marian Bissett (long-term supply in the High Country), Rev. Joedy Meers, Rev. Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt (Rev. Deacon Peter Harvey to start 1st September).



There have been many changes within the Pelican Ministry Team since our last edition of the Gippsland Gardener. For the last twelve months Rev. Rowena Harris has been on sick leave and the Synod is working with her through the decisions and challenges ahead. She appreciates your prayers. Arnie and Jennie have been making the trip up the Great Alpine Rd each month to provide worship and pastoral support. Marian Bissett has been offering long-term supply to the High Country patrol since May and this has been a blessing.

Rev. Joedy Meers began at Lakes Entrance last September, and Rev. Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt began in Bairnsdale at the same time. The town of Lakes Entrance has felt the dual challenges of bushfire and then pandemic and its impact on tourism. A couple of key people in the congregation have passed away in recent months. Please pray for Joedy and the congregation through the challenges they are facing. Bairnsdale has been supporting Paynesville with the provision of worship and the Op Shop and in matters such as COVID compliance for most of this year. Rosalie and lay preachers are leading worship monthly at Paynesville. There's a cooperative mission project with Johnsonville UCA, Bairnsdale UCA and Sale CWA to assemble Birthing Kits - volunteers needed on Sept 9th and Oct 7th, please contact Wendy Flahive; wendyflahive@gmail.com or phone 0438516322 for more information.

Rev. Nathaniel Atem has completed his five year term at Orbost and has accepted a call to Ararat and Lake Bolac. A mission study was held at Orbost in June and work continues to discern the best way of supporting ongoing ministry in Orbost. One possible direction is through our relationship with Frontier Services. Prior to 2015 Orbost was part of the Snowy River patrol.

Rev. Jude Benton has been a key member of MADRA, a community organisation in Mallacoota helping the region to recover from the bushfires. Through lockdowns last year she led worship on the local community radio station. Arnie and Jennie enjoyed a few weeks in August, and another week in January, covering for Jude and hitting the airwaves with radio church.



Rev. Deacon Peter Harvey will commence a three year Bushfire Recovery role from 1st September. The Presbytery has been able to secure this role through relationships and funding support from a variety of sources including the Presbytery of Western Victoria, our care agency Uniting, donations received, and Frontier

Services. It has taken time to find Peter (we advertised nationally) but we are excited about the gifts and experience he brings to the role. While bushfires happened 18 months ago, the impact on isolated people remains real, and COVID, drought and floods add to the needs of people in the places impacted by fire. Peter comes to us from western NSW, and if COVID restrictions allow, his induction will be at the Buchan reserve on Sunday September 26th, followed by a community barbecue. All are welcome.

Shearwater Ministry Team

Rev. Jennie Gordon, Rev. Deacon Wendy Elson, Rev. Ian Turnnidge

Ian and the team at Cowes have continued to provide an online worship service to the wide network of people who joined them last year, alongside meeting in person when restrictions were eased. It's been a year full of challenges for everyone and for Ian it's been about juggling the varied needs of church, school and community. Their well-attended weekly community meal has been on again and off again as restrictions dictate. Ian found time and energy to participate in a rich and evocative arts project for the Bass Coast, bringing music together with words and images, infused with spirit, to celebrate this glorious landscape where we live.





Wendy is juggling complexities as well, having let go of her chaplaincy position at the local school to focus on study. She's recently spent time in Tasmania with family and we uphold them on the death of her father in June. A monthly Yarning Circle has sprung into life in Wonthaggi, thanks to Wendy's encouragement and care, with a local Bunurong elder, other First peoples and a number of Second peoples. It's a treasured space of deep and gentle listening to each other. Recently the local Community House has offered to support a community meal in partnership with the church, due to commence when restrictions allow.

Jennie is currently serving as supply minister 0.25FTE at Corner Inlet, providing monthly worship services in Toora and Foster and also at Fish Creek Union Church where she shares a chaplaincy arrangement with Korumburra's



Anglican Priest, Rev. Dr. Fran Grimes. Supply ministry also includes one day per week pastoral care, and a weekly contribution of a reflection for the local paper, The Foster Mirror. They were pleased to host the Moderator, the Rev. Denise Liersch, recently at Foster for worship and lunch. There is much to do in these little villages and we're working to provide a more settled ministry arrangement for the church and the wider community.

Wattlebird Ministry Team

Rev. Jennie Gordon, Rev. Ian Brown, Rev. Moira Dodsworth. *(Rev. Gospel Ralte - from Jan 1st, 2022)*

It's been a delight to welcome Ian to Gippsland from Camberwell in November 2020 and Moira from Queensland in January 2021. Both inductions were impacted by COVID-19 regulations which meant that many more people could join us on Zoom. There are blessings hidden in the most difficult spaces! We've been learning about how best to support each other as a team and currently have monthly Zoom meetings that are working well.

Despite the constant pivot of lockdowns and restrictions, Ian finally had a long-awaited face-to-face farewell from Camberwell, and has settled in well with Warragul. They recently rolled out their new pastoral program to reach out to and care for their 180 members. Please get in touch with them if you'd like to know more about that. Ian also leads worship in other preaching places in the team once every month and often offers a visual reflection on the weekly Psalm on our website.

Moira's arrival was not without drama given border closures, pets to transport and collect, a delivery truck that arrived before she did and a large welcome party to greet her in Thorpdale with food and willing hands to unpack boxes. It's been a challenge to develop a preaching plan, with many congregations who have not shared ministry before, but with patience and grace most things have gently settled. Moira's been conducting weekly study groups in three places, with a different focus chosen locally, and they're well attended. She's getting used to the cold and has purchased a house in Moe, so those packing skills will come in handy!



It's a cause for great celebration that the Rev. Gospel Ralte has accepted a call and will commence in January with the Neerim South UCA Anglican Cooperating congregation, including Buln Buln and Noojee, and also with the Bunyip District Congregation. Gospel is currently in ministry in Tasmania and, together with his family, is looking forward to joining us next year. Negotiations and discussion prior to calling Gospel were a profound time of working together ecumenically, as well as with Bunyip, Garfield and Longwarry. The Rev. Dr. Jim Connolly has been providing supply ministry with Neerim South, and continues to lead worship in the vacancy. Rev. Paul Bauer, at Leongatha, had also been in ministry with Bunyip District and was farewelled and thanked for his ministry before he moved in May.

Questions and comments – always welcome.

Blessings in Christ, from your Resourcing Team:

Deb Bye 0408 499 046,
 Rev. Deacon Peter Batten 0419 255 585,
 Rev Jennie Gordon 0416 152 051
 Rev. Arnie Wierenga 0419 533 434,