

Partnership in Print



Uniting Church in Australia - Macedon Ranges Partnership

Barfold - Gisborne - Kyneton - Lancefield - Metcalfe - Mia Mia - Mount Macedon - Riddells Creek - Romsey - Sutton Grange - Tylden - Woodend

Issue No 17 - December 2016/January 2017

Seasons - Advent 1 - Epiphany 4



WHERE THERE
IS HOPE,
THERE IS

faith.

WHERE THERE
IS FAITH,

miracles
HAPPEN.



As 2016 draws to a close, it feels good to say 'farewell' to it. For people of my generation, there have been too many deaths of significant cultural icons, people who had been regarded as voices of truth and courage. There seems to have been a rise in a sense of 'us versus them' in political and community life, a nastiness and polarisation that has become entrenched in the way we speak to and about each other. We've tried to hold out hope, and hold onto it for ourselves, but sometimes a sense of despair has been almost overwhelming. Even winter seemed to be longer and colder and wetter than it had been for a long time.

We haven't been completely without hope. For the Partnership, our ministry team is in place and we're thoroughly working together. There are many signs of life, some just tiny green shoots, among the congregations of the partnership, and it's good to watch them start to grow and flourish. In the responses to our survey, many people expressed their hope for the Partnership, and were looking forward to what might be in store.

And seasons pass. We've had our first days over 30°, and the puddles and muddy patches have dried out. The cricket is back on... but maybe we should leave out any thoughts about that if we're trying to be hopeful. The Church seasons, too, roll around, and we try to meander gently through Advent, with its themes of holy waiting and expectation, while we are being pushed into thinking about and celebrating Christmas already.

As the liturgical year turns, we come back to the Gospel of Matthew, one of the two Gospels that contain stories of Jesus' birth. It's good to reread this story with fresh eyes and see what is (and isn't) there: the women - with the whiff of scandal around each of them - in the list of Jesus' forebears; the sense of fear and violence that permeates this story; the ones from a different faith who go to such lengths to seek out Jesus to worship him. The poet Steve Turner writes "Christmas is really for the children..." in an ironic dig at the saccharine version of the Christmas story we so often hear and see represented. I don't think he had Matthew's nativity in mind.

This God-with-us is in the midst of all the real messiness of life, standing beside us in our own messiness, and calling us to be bearers of hope in what might seem like hopeless situations. In the midst of our Christmas celebrations, can we find places to welcome outsiders and stand with people living in fear and despair? Can we begin to build bridges and start conversations across the imaginary boundaries that divide us? Can we help give voice to the ones in our communities who go unheard?

And can we continue to do it beyond the time when we've taken down the tinsel and packed away the decorations, on into the next season and whatever the new year brings?

Annette Buckley

Around the Partnership

Worship Leaders for December

	Service time	4th December	11th December	18th December	24th Dec Christmas Eve	25th Dec Christmas Day
Sutton Grange				7pm Carol Service		
Mia Mia	11 am			Christmas Service D'Arcy Wood		
Barfold	11 am	Peter Cannon HC				
Metcalfe	11 am		Annette Buckley			
Kyneton	9:30 am	TBA	Peter Cannon	Wendy Elson HC		9:30am Peter Cannon
RM Begg	3:30 pm	Monday 5th Wendy Elson				
Lancefield	10:45 am	Lay	Worship Team HC	Peter Cannon	7:30pm at Lancefield Worship Team	9am at Romsey Annette Buckley
Romsey	9 am	Worship Team	Worship Team HC	Peter Cannon		
	6 pm			Annette Buckley		
Tylden	9 am	Annette Buckley HC	Shirley Bowen	Alison Killoh	7:30pm Congregation	9am at Woodend Wendy Elson
Woodend						
Mt Macedon	10:30 am	D'Arcy Wood	Wendy Elson - HC	Cliff Talbot	9pm Annette Buckley	9am Meg Evans
Riddells Creek	9 am	Wednesdays				
Gisborne	9:30 am	Wendy Elson	Bev Gilbertson	Annette Buckley	7:30pm Paul Gilbertson	Jenny Trehwalla

Worship in January

During January there will be 3 services offered each Sunday across the Partnership. Each will be at a different time of the day, in a different location around the partnership and be conducted in a different style. The idea of this is to give lay worship leaders a break, and to give everyone an opportunity to experience different styles of worship. You are free to choose where, when and how you worship. Be brave and try something new.

Note - Most services during January will include Holy Communion.

Sun 1st January	10 am at ROMSEY Meg Evans (traditional)	10 am at GISBORNE Annette Buckley (contemplative)	11 am at BARFOLD Peter Cannon (discussive)
Sun 8th January	10 am at KYNETON Peter Cannon (contemplative)	10 am at MT MACEDON Wendy Elson (Baptism - family all age)	12 noon at LANCEFIELD Annette Buckley (family all age over lunch)
Sun 15th January	10 am at TYLDEN D'Arcy Wood (traditional)	12 noon at GISBORNE Peter Cannon (family all age over lunch)	6 pm at ROMSEY Wendy Elson (family all age over a meal)
Sun 22nd January	10 am at KYNETON Wendy Elson (traditional)	2 pm at RIDDELLS CREEK Annette Buckley (Baptism - family friendly)	5:30 pm at WOODEND Peter Cannon (contemplative over dinner)
Sun 29th January	Joint Partnership Service @ Kyneton Botanical Gardens @ 10:30am		

Congregational Severe Weather Policies

With summer nearly upon us and a potentially severe bushfire season, now is the time to confirm the policy for your congregation. Will you be meeting for worship or other event if Extreme or Code Red weather is forecast? Some are listed below.

Congregation	Code Red	Extreme
Tylden	No services or meetings	
Romsey	No formal Sunday worship but the church will be open for fellowship, prayer and meditation.	
Mt Macedon	No services or activities (including Thistle Club and Men's Group)	Depends on what is happening and will be at the discretion of the chairperson
Woodend Op Shop	No trading	
Northern	Automatically cancelled	Up to the congregation's discretion
Kyneton	Depends on local situation - suggest a phone call to check	

Coming Events

Bible Study & Worship Preparation Dates

Tuesday 7:30pm session venue & date		Wednesday 10am session venue & date		Week preparing for	
Gisborne	29th Nov	Lancefield	30th Nov	Advent 3	11th Dec
Tylden	6th Dec	Mt Macedon	7th Dec	Advent 4	18th Dec
Riddells Creek	13th Dec	Northern TBA	14th Dec	Christmas Day	25th Dec

Note: Bible Study and Worship Preparation session details may at times change. Please regularly check the web site for these and other details.

General

CoCo

The next meeting of CoCo is **Saturday 10th December** at 9:30am at the Kyneton Uniting Church. Members of CoCo will then go for lunch

together at the Albion Hotel in Kyneton.

Next year Coco will meet on the first Saturday of the month. The first meeting for 2017 will be Saturday 4th February.

Gisborne

Prayer Group

The Gisborne Prayer Group meets each **Tuesday** at 2pm and **Friday** at 10am through December and January just skipping Tuesday 27th and Friday 30th December.

Advent Studies

The 4th week of the Advent Studies is on **Friday 2nd December** at 11am. (Only this day)

Friends Group

The Friends gather at 6:30pm on **Fridays 2nd December** and **6th January**.

Fellowship and Community

Groceries are still being collected until **Monday 12th December** at Foodworks in Gisborne for Lentara and Asylum Seekers.

Muffin 'n More

The Muffin 'n More meet on **Tuesday 13th December** from 10am until 12noon.

Paint pine cones, make stars, or simply reminisce about Christmases past. Meantime, pick up stray pine cones, cut up last year's cards for the Prison Project, check your cupboards for gift paper which we can recycle.

We will also meet on **10th January**. Same place. same time.

Craft Group

The Gisborne Craft Group meets on **Tuesdays** after Muffin 'n More from 12noon until 2pm on the **13th December** and **10th January**.

Church Council

Gisborne Church Council meets on **Wednesday 14th December** at 7:30pm

Tylden

UCAF

The Tylden UCAF is concluding the year with afternoon tea at Tylden Junction Cafe at 1:30pm **Wednesday 7th December**.

Christmas Eve Service

There will be a Christmas Eve service at Tylden led by the congregation at 7:30pm. Our service this year has both a modern and Australian theme along with readings, prayers and carols. There is an offering on the night for the Christmas Bowl. All are welcome. Supper follows the service.

Tylden & Woodend

Target Christmas Tree

The TARGET CHRISTMAS TREE is already operating at the Woodend Store. Gift tags for which you give \$1 may be purchased. One hundred percent is donated to Uniting Care/Share. Please support this project if you have the opportunity



Op Shop Woodend

The Opportunity Shop will hold its Annual Morning Tea for volunteers at the Woodend Bowling Club at 10am on **Wednesday 30th November**.

The presentation of annual donations will take place on this occasion to Woodend and Tylden CFAs, Woodend Ambulance, SES Woodend, Student Welfare at Kyneton and Gisborne Secondary Colleges.

We will be placing a box in the Opportunity shop window to collect non-perishable food items for Kyneton Community Care from **Monday 28th November**.

Mt Macedon

Christmas Wishes

All at Mt Macedon wish you a Joyous Christmas and a Healthy New Year with lots of sharing together across the Partnership.

Advent Studies

Advent Studies at the Mount Thursdays at 10am. First study **Thursday 24th November**. All Welcome.

Men's Group

Men's Group breakup Lunch @ Telegraph Hotel Gisborne 12:30pm **Tuesday 6th December**.

Thistle Club

Thistle club breakup Christmas Lunch & AGM is at 12:30pm on **Wednesday 7th December** at the Church.

Congregational meeting

There will be a Congregational meeting after church on **Sunday 11th December**

Romsey

Church Council

Romsey Church Council will meet on **Wednesday 7th December** at 6pm at the home of David and Sandra Strack for a meal and meeting. There will be no Church Council meeting in January. The next meeting will be Wednesday 1st February.

Follow the Star

There will be a planning meeting on **Monday 5th December** at 10am in the meeting room. The event will only occur on one night this year, **Wednesday 21st December**. See advert on opposite page.

Follow the Star

Wednesday 21st December

You are invited to meet outside St Paul's Anglican Church in Main Road, Romsey, to walk with Mary, Joseph and their donkey as they search for a place to stop for the night.

Where will they go? Who will they meet on the way?
What will we discover at the end of the road?

We will be looking for a stable with live animals where we can sing Christmas Carols, see a real baby, and share some refreshments together.

Parents, children . . . and everyone else please join us.



Time: 6:30pm Sausage Sizzle at Catholic Church - Main St, Romsey
7:15pm Gather in service road outside Anglican Church

Dress Up: Dress up as wise men, or angels, or shepherds or a person from Bethlehem if you wish. There will be some costumes available to borrow (adult as well as child sizes).

A free event in association with the churches of Romsey and Lancefield
Music by the Kyneton Municipal Band
All Welcome

Questions? Contact: Wendy Elson 0400 042 076, Annette Buckley 0457 608 539
or Jay Brooks 5429 6163

Hope Hour Activities

Several of our church communities acted on the suggestion to take up some form of gathering for HOPEHOUR.

Mt Macedon and Riddell residents headed to the park for afternoon tea, sharing some with the locals before rain forced them into the coffee shop.

Hoping the rain might stop!!

Well it did-inside!!



Despite the wet and blustery conditions, walking the Kyneton Labyrinth was a meaningful experience for some.

One lovely lady took it upon herself to create a very special gathering. She bought take away and took it to some friends who are limited in their ability to get out and about.....a very special offering of hope.

Metcalf CFA service was a poignant place to have a focus on hope as we face the difficulties of summer fire season.

As we head into the Advent season of HOPE, lets search for the place where we can be beacons of hope in our communities.

Gisborne UCAF

Twenty-one intrepid travellers braved the heat on Monday 21st November to visit Sky Dancers Butterflies at Harcourt. Butterflies were in short supply because of the colder weather we have had until recently, but the fellowship and afternoon tea was enjoyed by all.



Our Thanks and Praise!



Bruce Barber

The last Sunday in October saw a full Gisborne church, an occasion for all UCA congregations from across the Ranges to gather together but also for a celebration of 150 years of ordained ministry.

D'Arcy Wood, Bruce Barber and Murray John were ordained on 20 October 1966 at the annual Conference of the then Methodist Church. It was an inspiring occasion then and, says D'Arcy, continues to inspire his love and work in ministry. He sends his heartfelt thanks to all those who supported the idea of a thanksgiving service and who then worked hard to make it such a happy day. It was a true faith feast.



Murray John was presented with a holding cross



Jenny Trewhalla, from Presbytery, presenting D'Arcy with his certificate

Suggested read - **The Christmas Mystery** by Jostein Gaarder

Even grown ups enjoy a bedtime story every now and then, especially one that combines, as does this one, the sophistication of a novel with the whimsy of a fairy tale. Gaarder, a Norwegian former professor of philosophy serves up a metaphysical brainteaser that unfolds into a warm--but not preachy--meditation on God and the Christian doctrines. Set in an unnamed town in present-day Norway, it tells the story of Joachim, a young boy who finds a faded, handmade Advent calendar in a bookstore on the eve of December first, and begs his father to let him take it home. The next morning, when he opens the calendar's first door, Joachim discovers not just the expected picture but also a tightly folded piece of paper, the first instalment of the fantastic tale of a little girl's journey through time and space to be present at the Nativity. Soon the girl's story is making unexpected intrusions into Joachim's own life, and he races to solve the mystery of the calendar before Christmas Eve. Great book to read one chapter for each day of Advent. (2 copies in the Goldfields library system)

A few things from Wendy....

I got there a bit late so apparently I missed “Land of Hope and Glory” but managed to sit back and enjoy Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony. Lancefield’s music afternoon in the church is on fortnightly Tuesday afternoons. What a lovely relaxing afternoon of sharing together the richness and relaxation of beautiful music. It is a highlight of our Partnerships offering of activities. Next 2 dates are Tuesdays 29th November and 13th December.

An idea for Christmas... Some of us are doing a REVERSE Advent Calendar. Every day in December, instead of taking a chocolate, we are going to contribute one grocery item for those who need it. Bring them to church on Sundays and we will see that they get to Lentara or one of our community groups.

Remember our meditation groups continue to operate in areas all around the Macedon Ranges. If you are interested in finding out about this practice just ask one of us. I am part of the Woodend group and Annette is part of

the one in Romsey. This is a wonderful prayer practice of the ancient Christian mystics and it is a blessing to the church.

Along similar lines we will be walking the Labyrinth at Kyneton (situated at the Catholic church) on Tuesday 20th December at 6 pm. Bring finger food to share and we will have a picnic and a prayer walk. The busy Christmas week is an important time to slow down and focus on the meaning of Advent and the ongoing presence of Christ in our lives. The practice of walking the Labyrinth is a good way of recognising and acknowledging all that has been our experience through the year, the joys and the struggles.

If you are interested in finding more ways to share your faith through listening and everyday interactions, you are welcome at the next MR Conversations group which will meet at Woodend at 10 am Thursday December 8th. We will meet at the church hall and go and find a coffee shop from there.

Reflecting on an Advent Hymn

The Season of Advent includes the four Sundays leading up to Christmas. There are many traditions connected with Advent. The most familiar is that of lighting candles on an Advent wreath.

Another tradition involves singing the verses of the hymn “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel” on the seven days before Christmas. The verses were based on ancient prayers known as the “O Antiphons” that were first sung in Latin.

Most modern hymnals contain a version of this hymn, although the number and order of verses sometimes changes, as does the translation. Each verse of this hymn talks about Jesus coming into our world and uses a different name for Jesus.

The words to the hymn are written below. Being very old, they may seem rather strange, so a brief explanation is given for some of the terms, along with a suggestion for reflecting on each verse. Sing a different verse each day of the week for the four weeks of Advent.

**O come, O come, Emmanuel,
and ransom captive Israel
that mourns in lonely exile here,
until the Child of God appear.**

**Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
shall come to you, O Israel.**

This verse does not refer to the modern nation of Israel, but to all of God’s people (often called “Israel” in the Bible). It asks that Jesus help set

people free. Who are people in the world who need to be set free? Where are some places where the good news of God's love that Jesus brings can make a difference?

**O come, O Wisdom from on high,
and order all things far and nigh;
to us the path of knowledge show,
and help us in that way to go.**

In the Bible, Wisdom doesn't mean knowledge or the things we learn from books. Instead, it's when God's Spirit is inside us and helps us know, deep in our heart, what is right and how God wants us to live. Proverbs 8 tells us that Wisdom helped God create the world, and 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that Jesus is the Wisdom of God. Talk about something you know by heart.

**O come, O come, O Adonai,
who came to all on Sinai high,
and from its peace a single law
proclaimed in majesty and awe.**

Adonai is a Hebrew word used to refer to the name for God that Moses learned when speaking to God at the burning bush (Ex 3 :2). Sinai is the mountain where God gave the torah or law to the people. Reflect on how Jesus helps us learn how to live in God's way.

**O come, O Rod of Jesse's stem,
from every foe deliver them
that trust your mighty power to save,
and give them victory o'er the grave.**

Jesse was King David's father. King David was considered a great king who was fair and good and the people longed for a new ruler from the line of David. He was also a shepherd, and Jesus - who was descended from David - showed us that being a shepherd was a wonderful way to be a leader. Who are some people who show

servant leadership?

**O come, O Key of David, come,
and open wide our heavenly home;
make safe the way that leads on high,
and close the path to misery.**

"Key of David" was a name given to the risen Christ in Revelation 3:7 and celebrated that Jesus was God's Messiah or special, chosen one, who would reconnect us to God when we were separated from God. Think (or talk) about times when you feel cut off from God and how you have reconnected.

**O come, O Dayspring, come and cheer
our spirits by your advent here;
love stir within the womb of night,
and death's own shadows put to flight.**

Dayspring was an old-fashioned way of meaning "new dawn" which is part of the song of Zechariah in Luke 1:78. Zechariah sang this song to his infant son, John the Baptist, imagining some of the things that Jesus would do. This new dawn would bring about God's mercy, bringing new life, love, and joy upon the earth. How has the birth of Jesus brought joy into your life?

**O come, Desire of nations, bid
in one the hearts of humankind;
O bid our bitter conflict cease,
and be for us our Prince of Peace.**

The prophet Isaiah spoke of a Prince of Peace (9:6) who would come and bring justice and righteousness. Matthew understood that Jesus was this person, and while we do not know if this is who Isaiah meant or not, we do know that the things Jesus taught can help the world to live in peace. How can you help to bring peace in the world?

*Taken from Editor's Clip Sheets
used with permission*

Emmanuel is one of the names of Jesus (see Mt 1 :23). It is sometimes spelled "Immanuel." This is because the word comes from Hebrew, and was originally written in the Hebrew alphabet. It means "God with us" and can be spelled either way.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

December 2016

<p>4 Advent 2</p> <p>9am - Worship at Tylden, Romsey 9:30am - Worship at Gisborne, Kyneton 10:30am - Worship at Mt Macedon 10:45am - Worship at Lancefield (<i>cuppa at 10:15am</i>) 11am - Worship at Barfold</p>	<p>5</p> <p>10am - Follow the Star planning meeting at Romsey Service at RM Begg</p>	<p>6</p> <p>12:30pm - Mt Macedon Men's Group 2pm - Gisborne Prayer Group 7:30pm - Worship Prep at Tylden</p>
<p>11 Advent 3</p> <p>9am - Worship at Tylden, Romsey 9:30am - Worship at Gisborne, Kyneton 10:30am - Worship at Mt Macedon (followed by Congregational meeting) 10:45am - Worship at Lancefield (<i>cuppa at 10:15am</i>) 11am - Worship at Metcalfe</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p> <p>10am - Muffins 'n More at Gisborne 12noon - Gisborne Craft Group 2pm - Gisborne Prayer Group 7:30pm - Worship Prep at Riddells Creek</p>
<p>18 Advent 4</p> <p>9am - Worship at Tylden, Romsey 9:30am - Worship at Gisborne, Kyneton 10:30am - Worship at Mt Macedon 10:45am - Worship at Lancefield (<i>cuppa at 10:15am</i>) 11am - Worship at Mia Mia 6pm - Sunday@6 at Romsey 7pm - Carol Service at Sutton Grange</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p> <p>2pm - Gisborne Prayer Group 6pm - Labyrinth Walk at Kyneton</p>
<p>25 Christmas Day</p> <p>9am - Worship at Romsey & Woodend, Mt Macedon 9:30am - Worship at Gisborne & Kyneton</p>	<p>26 Boxing Day</p>	<p>27 Public Holiday</p>

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 10am - Advent Studies at the Mount	2 10am - Gisborne Prayer Group 11am - Advent Studies Gisborne 6:30pm - Friends Group	3
7 9am - Midweek Prayer at Office 10am - Worship Prep at Mt Macedon 12:30pm - Mt Macedon Thistle club AGM 1:30pm - Tylden UCAF 6pm - Romsey Church Council	8 10am - MR Conversations at Woodend 10am - Advent Studies at the Mount	9 10am - Gisborne Prayer Group	10 9:30am - CoCo at Kyneton 8pm - Romsey Community Carols at the Skate Park (Picnic from 7pm)
14 9am - Midweek Prayer at Office 10am - Worship Prep in the North 7:30pm - Gisborne Church Council	15 10am - Advent Studies at the Mount	16 10am - Gisborne Prayer Group	17
21 9am - Midweek Prayer at Office 6:30pm & 7:15pm - Follow the Star at Romsey	22	23 10am - Gisborne Prayer Group	24 Christmas Eve 7:30pm - Worship at Lancefield, Tylden, Gisborne 9pm - Worship at Mt Macedon
28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

Christianity at Sea

Ron and Wendy Hebbard from the Gisborne Congregation went on a 5 week cruise around the Pacific September-November this year.

We really enjoyed our trip around the Pacific although it's not for everyone, I guess. I made note of some quirky and interesting things we saw.

In Samoa, the buses captured our attention, with bible texts painted on the sides.



Samoans have graves and tombstones in their front yards where their dead families are buried. (in Apia) When a family builds a new house (hut) they do not remove their parents' old one. It is left on the property to fall down - out of respect, I imagine.

On board the "Dawn Princess", I attended some of the Sunday church services; - two at sea travelling, and one nearing Bora Bora.

The first one, conducted by Englishman, Simon, assistant entertainment officer, left me feeling

rather disappointed. It was just a dry formulaic Anglican style Order of Service. I didn't fancy singing hymns like 'For those in Peril on the Sea'.

The next week, I volunteered to read the Bible and was told to choose my own. I got a Gideon's bible from the Purser & believe the congregation heard me clearly and the message for Corinthians was comprehensible.

This service was led by Tui & Maele. Tui was a fine singer and preacher. His wife was the Hula dance teacher on the ship. Their service was more lively with use of guitar and banjo. Tahiti was their home.

One passenger, a pastor, was selected to conduct another service and this one I really enjoyed.

We also had on board a couple of missionaries who hailed from Canada. They presented Gideon's bibles to crew and passengers. Their luggage must have been quite heavy.

The husband, Sulieman (Solomon) showed lovely Christian kindness to us one day on a shore excursion. He also led daily bible studies.

Now home Gisborne and back to reality, we have good memories of our trip to the Paradise islands.



Apia, Samoa

Ron and Wendy Hebbard

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Coco Report for meeting held Saturday November 12th 2016 at Romsey UC

Chairperson Colin welcomed us. This was a scheduled open meeting but no one took up the offer. Rose Broadstock from Presbytery, who was coming to elaborate on the Survey Results, was delayed, so we proceeded with routine Agenda items for awhile.

Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed to. It was reported that the Website is all up to date, it contains many resources so keep checking it. Safe Church – still need a Training Day and a person to tie it all together.

We have correspondence from: David Liebich indicating where Riddells Creek members will now attend. Letters from Riddells Creek and CoCo need to go to Presbytery to finalise property arrangements.

A letter of Introduction from Rev Dr John Evans. He is doing supply in Robert Renton's position, following Robert's retirement. A comment was made that we need to restructure Finance Group to include another Presbytery Representative.

Presbytery sent a Manse Maintenance Manual with a covering letter.

Names were taken for registration to attend a Presbytery Cultural Audit meeting to be held at Gisborne UC on Wednesday 23rd November at 2.30pm.

Reported that the Internet is operational at the CoCo office.

Ian Kennedy has agreed to Chair the Property Committee – to cover existing Manses and Riddells Creek facility when this is handed over. Committee to bring back feedback on the role they see for themselves. The Woodend Manse still has guttering problems. The Romsey Manse good. The wiring was sorted out after a 'rat attack'.

Rose Broadstock arrived and we welcomed her.

She led us in a devotion with reference to a Luke reading mentioning Lot's wife and the consequences of looking back. The need to look to the future emphasised.

Rose distributed her Report on the Macedon Ranges Partnership Review. (This Report is re-printed in this edition of PIP [see next page], on the website, and also available at the Partnership Churches). Also the Survey results will shortly be available to read on the Website.

There was extensive discussion on each response to the various questions. Overall, Rose was pleased with the numbers who responded. Some feelings expressed in the discussions were:

- More stories of mission and outreach to be shared.
- Look at ways to contact people in various age groups.
- Empower older generations – better use of wisdom and experience.
- Many positive feelings – most people hopeful and encouraged.
- Explore concerns of negative responders.
- Look at ways to celebrate achievements – through publicity. Eg. Local Papers, Crosslight etc.
- Reassure people that change can be a positive and enriching thing in their lives.
- Social Media may be a way of reaching younger groups.
- Good that people felt that overall communications had been effective throughout the Partnership. 'PIP' particularly useful in this – big thank you to Jay.

Many thanks to Rose for bringing the Survey results into focus so we can act on them. Also to Colin for his leadership skills in facilitating our

CoCo meetings and tying everything together. Stemming from this Survey we hope to work out objectives and priorities so that we can move forward in the New Year.

Treasurer Paul then submitted the Financial Report. It was Annette's turn for a Report on her Ministry. She submitted a very positive and comprehensive report on her doings in her first three months of Ministry with us. This Report is available at the various congregations and on the Website. We thanked her for her enthusiasm and willingness to participate, it is a delight to have her with us. She made recommendations regarding:

- Worship component of CoCo
- Chairing of CoCo meetings
- Litany for Advent to be the same across the Partnership
- January worship services.

In principle agreement on these recommendations.

- Wendy will do two services per month from Feb/March – this is in accordance with her Re-generation Ministry contract.
- Maybe another Conversation gathering to be scheduled – depends on interest shown.
- The Ministry Team needs to be informed of Church Council Meetings so they can attend if possible.
- Peter is having some leave at the end of February.
- Change of CoCo Meeting schedule – probably first Saturday of the month.

Decided not to have individual congregation reports due to late finish. Woodend did say their roof problem is on-going. Complaint being pursued.

After our next meeting we will have a Christmas Break-up at the Albion Hotel in Kyneton. Woo Hoo.

Macedon Ranges Partnership Review Report

• Purpose of the review

As agreed at the formation of the Partnership and recorded in the Memorandum of Understanding, there was to be a shared Presbytery-Macedon Ranges Partnership review of the Partnership after 12 months. The purpose of this was to provide a way to respond to concerns that may have arisen, and to begin to plan for the future.

• Process

A review planning meeting was held at a CoCo meeting in September 2016.

Congregations were informed that a review was to take place.

Opportunities were provided for conversation after worship on a particular Sunday.

There was an opportunity to attend CoCo as an open forum.

An online survey was distributed to every congregational member which was also available in hard copy.

• Participation

Whilst it isn't possible to quantify participation in congregational conversation, the survey was completed by 102 people across all congregations, which is considered a high level of participation. Whilst the Macedon Ranges congregations generally categorize themselves as an older group, there was participation in the survey by some 36-50s, and also a good-sized group of 51-65s.

• What did people see at the partnership's greatest achievements?

The key achievement identified was in finding a skilled ministry team (71%) (and having worked together to survive a long vacancy). Other highly rated achievements were the connections formed between congregations, worship shared, the formation of CoCo, and a shared vision.

Most people are positive about the partnership (hopeful 47%, encouraged 22%, positive 15%

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= 84% overall).

A number of new initiatives were listed in the comments section.

- **Concerns**

Greatest concern: people being open to change (63%). Other concerns were around finances, the way the ministry team will work (and pressures on it), and that the partnership may not achieve its goals.

- **Communications**

Communications were considered effective. However, people were almost equally divided about how much they were hearing about what was happening in mission and development across the partnership.

- **Partnership vision**

The vision to explore new ways of being Church and new mission (MOU) was generally understood (83%) though 13% were unsure.

- **Change needed**

By far the strongest need identified was openness to being church in a new way that connects with the community. Secondary to that was the need for new mission in the community.

- **Impacts of the partnership**

Attitudes

Generally, people indicated that the partnership has encouraged them to trust God (although it is likely that some people found it difficult to determine just how much the partnership influenced this), and that love and respect has marked the way the Partnership has worked. Most people (85%) have been challenged to move from self-centeredness to mutual support. In terms of belonging in a partnership, 78% felt they had been helped by this.

Energy

The strongest energizer of the partnership is hope that the future will be life-giving and thriving (57%), alongside a range of other energizers.

- **What has most held back the partnership?**

By far the biggest barrier was seen as lack of vision. A range of other issues included size, openness to change, lack of energy, lack of proposals, length of time to get going, physical distances.

- **Hopes for the future**

A large number of individual hopes (76) were listed. Common ones were for growth, and growth of youth, families, 30's – 50's, mission in the local community, and for openness to change. Others included hopes for the stability of the ministry team, consolidation of some congregations, and the identification of a shared identity and purpose.

- **Next steps**

The outcomes of this review was discussed at CoCo on 12 November 2016 and key issues were identified. The partnership will now enter a planning phase, which will include devising ways to respond to issues raised in the review.

- **Summary: signs of encouragement and warning**

It is most encouraging that there is a strong sense of hope across the Partnership, a high level of activity and of engagement, as indicated by the high level of participation in this review. There is a keenness to clarify purpose and direction both as a Partnership and locally, to envisage ways to connect with the community, and to develop new mission initiatives.

There is a sense that a lot has been achieved in terms of formation – the establishment of a skilled ministry team, formation of the CoCo, and new or stronger relationships between congregations. However, there is a perceived lack of clear vision for 'what's next'. In other words, people are very ready for the Partnership to move from formation to visioning and planning. So, this is an exciting place for the Partnership to be in!

There is a connection between people's

greatest hopes and greatest concerns. There are great hopes for growth, new mission initiatives, new ways of being Church, but significant concern about people being open to change. The point cannot be made too strongly that the success of the Partnership and the achievement of the many hopes of the people will be dependent on openness to change. We often hope that wonderful things will happen without anything needing to change for me and my congregation, and we won't have to let anything go for the new thing to come! Woo hoo! Wouldn't it be fantastic if it could work this way!! But it does not, and so the realization of hopes for the future will rest and depend on the open hearts and hands of every member of this partnership.

Hopes for the future will also rest on relationships - the degree to which each congregation considers the needs of other congregations, the intentional support of the ministry team, the unity of the ministry team, and the unity between the CoCo and the ministers. Within these relationships is the capacity to create a great future, or to become focused on ourselves or 'them and us' which could contribute to a very sad end.

The full details of the survey will be on the partnership's website soon
– <http://www.macedonrangesunitingchurch.org.au/>

That 12 congregations have come together to share their life is an almost unheard-of miracle. At this point it is very appropriate to acknowledge the amazing commitment, positivity and life-giving ministry of Rev Deacon Wendy Elson who held a large region together in the very long and highly demanding period of two vacancies. Thanks should be given to Colin Chapman for his insightful and active leadership, to Bronwyn for her generous commitment and organisational skills and to Pr Annette Buckley and Rev Peter Cannon for responding to the call to share in this great work. Most of all praise should also be given to all whose good will and love for God first conceived this vision, and who enabled so much to be achieved during this demanding formational time.

There is much to be celebrated in what has been achieved so far out of the love and hopes of local people. May God give you the grace for the next phase of this wonderful journey together.

*Rev Rose Broadstock,
Mission Development Strategist,
Port Phillip West Presbytery
12 November 2016.*

Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes



Jeni, Carol, Heather, Joan, Leonie and Laurie packing the last 20 boxes

The Romsey Congregation work all year with the Romsey Walking Group to collect items to pack shoeboxes. This year we packed 120 boxes which when combined with others packed individually, we blessed 152 shoeboxes at morning worship on the 13th November before they were delivered to the warehouse in Mitcham.





Romsey Community Christmas Trees

Annette, Jenny, Belinda, Patrick, Jay and Meg with partially decorated Community Christmas Tree at Romsey's Sunday@6 evening activity. Along with a 4 metre high central tree, twenty-one metal trees of different sizes, decorated by community groups, will be featured in the centre of town throughout December.

Macedon Ranges Partnership Prayer Cycle

Day	Congregation/s	Topic	Day	Congregation/s	Topic
Sun	Northern Congregations	Friends	Thu	Riddells Creek, Office & Staff	MR Partnership
Mon	Kyneton	Family	Fri	Mt Macedon	Homeless
Tue	Lancefield & Romsey	Concerns	Sat	Gisborne	Current Affairs
Wed	Tylden & Woodend	World Events			

Port Phillip West Prayer Cycle

Suggested prayer – We pray for Uniting Church Agencies, Congregations and Schools together with the Ministry Agents who serve God in their various placements. We remember today XXX. Lord, guide and bless your work in our Presbytery that it may flourish for the good of the people and for your glory.

Dec	Location/Position	People
Sun 4th	Chaplains in hospitals and prisons	Sheree Anderson (St Vincents) Ms Karen Wall (Royal Melbourne Hospital) Rev Tevita Holani (Prisons) Rev Robert van Zetten (BNarwon Health)
Sun 11th	Assembly, Synod and Centre for Theology & Ministry placements	Pastor Stuart McMillan (Assembly President) Rev Sharon Hollis (Moderator, Synod of VicTas) Rev Dr Geoff Thompson (CTM) and staff of the CTM generally
Sun 18th	Winchelsea	Mr John Bumford and Congregation
Sun 25th	Candidates for the Ministry	Mr Bruce Crowie, Ms Kathryn Stoel-Cousineau, Ms Carlynn Nunn, Mr Paul Dau (Certified Candidate)
January	No list available yet	

Lectionary Readings Year A

Advent

A season of preparation, beginning on the fourth Sunday before Christmas, in which the church recalls its hope and expectation in the coming of Christ past, present and future.

Date	Day/Season	Co- lour	1st Reading	Psalm	2nd Reading	Gospel
Sun 4th Dec	Advent 2	P	Isaiah 11:1-10	72:1-7, 18-19	Romans 15:4-13	Matthew 3:1-12
Sun 11th Dec	Advent 3	P	Isaiah 35:1-10	146:5-10 or Luke 1:47-55	James 5:7-10	Matthew 11:2-11
Sun 18th Dec	Advent 4	P	Isaiah 7:10-16	80:1-7, 17-19	Romans 1:1-7	Matthew 1:18-25

Christmas

The Christmas - Epiphany season includes Christmas Eve/Day and the twelve days of Christmas. It recalls the stories of the birth and infancy of Christ. The church in this time celebrates the wonder of the incarnation, the season concludes with Epiphany.

Sat 24th Dec	Christmas Eve	W	Isaiah 9: 2-7	96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)
Sun 25th Dec	Christmas Day	W	Isaiah 62:6-12 Isaiah 52:7-10	97 98	Titus 3:4-7 Hebrews 1:1-4,(5-12)	Luke 2:1-7 (8-20) John 1:1-14
Sun 1st Jan	Christmas 1	W	Isaiah 63:7-9	148	Hebrews 2:10-18	Matthew 2:13-23
Fri 6th Jan	Epiphany of the Lord	W	Isaiah 60:1-6	72:1-7,10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12

After Epiphany

A period in which the church reflects on the manifestation of Christ to all people. The Baptism of the Lord is the first Sunday of this period. The Transfiguration of the Lord is the Sunday. The length varies depending on the date of Easter.

Sun 8th Jan	Baptism of Jesus	W	Isaiah 42:1-9	29	Acts 10:34-43	Matthew 3:13-17
Sun 15th Jan	Epiphany 2	G	Isaiah 49:1-7	40:1-11	1 Corinthians 1:1-9	John 1:29-42
Sun 22nd Jan	Epiphany 3	G	Isaiah 9:1-4	27:1, 4-9	1 Corinthians 1:10-18	Matthew 4:12-23
Sun 29th Jan	Epiphany 4	G	Micah 6:1-8	15	1 Corinthians 1:18-31	Matthew 5:1-12

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In God's Hands: The Ecumenical Prayer Cycle

See website for weekly prayers.

https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/prayer-cycle/ecumenical-prayer-cycle/#*

Week 48	27 Nov - 3 Dec	Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger
Week 49	4 - 10 Dec	Liberia, Sierra Leone
Week 50	11 - 17 Dec	Cape Verde, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal
Week 51	18 - 24 Dec	Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Togo
Week 52	25 - 31 Dec	Ghana, Nigeria
Week 1	1 - 7 Jan	Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories
Week 2	8 - 14 Jan	Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Oman, Yemen, Iran, Iraq
Week 3	15 - 21 Jan	Cyprus, Greece, Turkey
Week 4	22 - 28 Jan	Algeria, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia
Week 5	29 Jan - 4 Feb	Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden

Directory removed for privacy

Contacts Other Groups

<p><u>SUTTON GRANGE</u> <u>MIA MIA</u> <u>BARFOLD</u> <u>METCALFE</u></p>	<p><u>Elders - North</u> Dot Smith Marge Townrow</p>	<p><u>Elders- Kyneton</u> Pip Elston Helen Aldridge Jenny Elston Peter Stone Doug McIver Andrea Strack</p>
<p><u>KYNETON</u></p>	<p><u>Congregation Chairperson</u> Roy Gibbs</p>	<p><u>Congregation Secretary</u> Jenny Elston</p>
<p><u>LANCEFIELD</u></p>	<p><u>Elders</u> Peter Fraser, Ian Kennedy Judy Stammers, Rita Vandervalk</p>	<p><u>Classical Music Group</u> Ian Kennedy <u>Organist</u> - Rita Vandervalk</p>
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Address Label

Partnership in Print is a monthly magazine produced by the Uniting Church in Australia - Macedon Ranges Partnership and is available on the last Sunday of each month, except December.



Printing donated by
 Copy for the next Edition is due by
 Sunday evening 29th January 2017

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