

PRESBYTERY OF NORTH EAST VICTORIA
MEETING OF THE PRESBYTERY SATURDAY 21st November 2020

On ZOOM

MINUTES

1. OPENING AND RECONCILIATION ACKNOWLEDGMENT Rev Kel Hodge

We, the Presbytery, acknowledge that we are meeting on the land of which the local indigenous people are the traditional owners and custodians. We remember their Elders and ancestors with respect and commit ourselves to working for reconciliation and justice.

2. ATTENDANCE

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|------------------|--|
| Apologies | 5 |
| Visitors | Gavin Blakemore - Uniting, Helen Young, Wodonga, Wenda Donaldson – Uniting, Arnie Weirenga – Gippsland Presbytery, Jennie Gordon – Gippsland Presbytery. |
| Welcome | 39 |

Pastoral joys and concerns

Brian and Desri Morgan are looking forward to starting ministry in the Northern Rivers after being in isolation in Tasmania after a recent death in the family.

Tony Davies shared some further information regarding Brian and Desri and welcome them to their first Presbytery meeting in the North East.

Kel Hodge led us all in prayer for these joys and concerns.

3. WORSHIP Rev Michele Lees

Led us in worship with a reading of Ezekiel 34 and with a reflection on the Reign of Christ or Christ the King Sunday.

4. CONFIRMATION OF THE AGENDA *Consensus*

5. PRESENTATIONS

5.1 *Rev Gavin Blakemore, Uniting, Mission and Ethos Partner Eastern Division*

Greetings from John Clarke, Jude Munro and CEO – name

Jennifer Sleep shared a slide show from the work of Uniting, with particular focus on the work of Uniting through the north east area.

- Response to the bushfires
- Responding to Covid.

- 2020 – you're on mute.
- Shout-out in many languages
- New horizons
- Endings – closure of some respite houses redevelopment, downsizing in Shepparton
- New beginnings – new space in Shepparton with joint partnership,
- Uniting program in Goulburn Murray
- Target Christmas Appeal – national appeal on again this year. No toys, all donation base – can be made at local targets and will go to Uniting services in the north east.

5.2 *Rev Arnie Wierenga and Rev Jennie Gordon - Gippsland Presbytery, Resourcing Ministers, Pastoral & Strategic*

Jennie shared the story of the Fig tree.

Part of their roles are about pastoral, mission and strategy.

Each congregation is like the Fig tree – fed differently, different needs, different output.

- this is where the Fig Tree project originated from.
- engaged with **parable of the fig tree** – took to the leadership team. What about if we saw each **congregation in their uniqueness** but gather ministers to work as teams that tend the garden in the way's that they are needed.
- from there – **built enthusiasm and excitement**. Decided needed to talk widely across the presbytery so they could be informed about whether to adopt this ministry strategy - spoke to all ministers in placement, all congregations, all presbytery members. In the presbytery meeting, spoke about this as potential ministry strategy – most people had good sense of the vision and why it was different to the previous struggles. Key part to how to make this the ministry strategy across the whole of the presbytery.

- great gathering of enthusiasm.

Unique opportunities. Most ministers were interested but it's challenging to work in teams.

Conversations with ministers. Congregations wanting to know their way ahead.

- The outline that was set up is what is still setup. Perhaps a bit like the old Methodist Circuit system.
- reasons this is so radical in the UC is that the structures and processes make it challenging to set things up in this way. The challenge exists in Gippsland and most likely in the NEV too. Normally we link congregations together in order to create a placement because that's how the money works.
- Instead - find ways of managing this space in order to **create flexibility in placement profiles**. 6 profiles which are 6 teams, and all minister placements are within these teams. Can be flexible within these teams. Eg – minister in a difficult situation because of arrangement of ministry, opportunity for ministry somewhere else, which could be changed quickly to benefit all.

- **6 ministry teams** – every minister is part of a ministry team. Every congregation has their own minister. Each minister is called to a Presbytery ministry team and then allocated congregations. The PM team leads each of the 6 ministry teams. When something like the bushfires happen, the PMs knew who was directly impacted and were able to support and gave a sense of order in how to manage everything.

- Shearwater resources for fire recovery and Covid is because of this network.
- previously relationships between congregations and the presbytery were not great – have now created a much better working relationship – know people on the ground, work collaboratively, to know and love each congregation and create the fruitfulness of their ministry – **relationship is the key.**
- bushfire recovery role with frontier services – will be part of one of the ministry team and supported by the presbytery.
- have seen it be **fruitful** and have seen it give Gippsland a boost – **building for a stronger future.**
- finding that increasingly there are ministers who are wanting to work collaboratively because isolation is an issue, particularly in rural ministry. Much better than historically finding ministers for placements.
- have other info with JNCs and how to call ministers into these roles that can be shared with NEV Presbytery.

What's your initial response?

What does this mean for ministers and congregations?

Do you see some similarities between Gippsland and NEV?

Where do you see the value in this?

Spent some time in Break-out rooms to discuss these concepts.

6. TELLING THE STORY

6.1 Mansfield

Helen Pettifer and Kris Zerbst shared on what Mansfield UC has been doing to share and conduct worship over the last 6 months, finding ways to connect with each other during this time.

Just recently they have started up outdoor worship with about 20 or so people making the most of this opportunity. Bonnie Doon have also had worship last week. Been great to keep in touch with people by phone and zoom. Haven't missed the meetings.

Kristine Zerbst is coordinator of the Op Shop, which is 29 years old. Some history of the shop was shared, and this has been a way to assist with the churches finances as well as money to share with other community groups in Mansfield. There are links with wider organisations and worldwide projects. There are about 20 people who volunteer.

UCAF have a small group who usually meet monthly, join with Benalla occasionally and join in with wider state gatherings also. Kris is the current UCAF state president.

6.2 Echuca

Michele Lees shared what has been happening in Echuca Moama UC during the last few months. It has been challenging with being on the border.

A video was shared that highlights Echuca Moama's ministry pre Covid.

Have been running ZOOM worships in the last few months and have recently started up small face-to-face worship.

Market Place crafts have been operating in the best way they can in current times.

Christmas Day have provided hall and kitchen for community lunch – with the Moama community hall assisting for this years Christmas lunch.

Uniting AgeWell has been continuing to meet on the premises.

6.3 St Stephen's

Helen Young shared a Powerpoint on the Wodonga St Stephen's mainly music program. A background

of the program was shared and then some information from the local program.

Began the year with 20 families, with 27 children. Celebrate the years special days. Morning teas are part of the program and also celebrate birthdays.
Wodonga mm visited Corryong mm back in March.

When Covid began adapted program to include emails, phone calls, weekly video childrens sessions. A facebook page is also linked with the program to keep connections with the families.

The mm team learnt to zoom in order to maintain communications and also prayed during this time. Built stronger connections as a team.
Celebrating Father's Day with particular activities.

PRESBYTERY BUSINESS

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF PRESBYTERY 22nd August 2020

20.11.1 That the minutes of the 22 August 2020 Presbytery meeting be accepted. Consensus

8. REPORTS

8.1 Presbytery Minister Pastoral Care and Mission

Rev Tony Davies shared some thoughts. What have we learnt from Covid? – slideshow

- talk about this in your Church Councils.

- report is designed like an article. Use it as a discussion point. (*attached*)

- delaying AGMs – only required to hold 2 general meetings per year – one of these could be an AGM. Chair and Secretary set date and time of meetings. Discuss with CC.

- How to pray – book by Pete Greig

8.2 Presbytery Minister Administration and Strategy

Rev Richard Franklin briefly shared from his report.

Mansfield are sending out 80 information sheets each week – congregation is only usually 45. Don't stop from keeping that contact going.

Can purchase bulk copies of the How to Pray book.

Equipment grant for Northern Plains ministry has been granted.

8.3 Presbytery eLM Minister gatherings

8.4 Education, Resourcing and Innovation Support Minister

Online studies for Advent – have had a great response – 37 people from 13 congregations.

Field placements – seven interested congregations – only 4 students available. Delayed by setting things up with Pilgrim. Trying to set it up by 29th December. Perhaps some face-to-face interaction.

Put some congregations together so that we can share that resource.

8.5 Standing Committee

8.6 Mission and Education Committee

8.7 Property, Finance and Administration Committee

8.8 Pastoral Relations Committee

8.9 Chairpersons Report

8.10 Ecumenical Committees

10.11.2 Reports to be Confirmed together.

Consensus

9. Nominations for Synod 2021

The ballot system was conducted through Survey Monkey. The results were collated and sent out to all nominees.

10. Nominations for Assembly 2021

The ballot system was through the polls section of ZOOM.

The three Assembly nominations had a profile put up regarding their reasons for attending Assembly.

The results were collated and sent out to nominees.

20.11.3 That the ballot be finalised at Standing Committee and nominees informed of results.

10. PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Rev John Payne led us in our prayers for our world, our community and our church.

11. 12 PM CLOSING

NEXT MEETINGS

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|
| Pastoral Relations Committee | Tuesday, January 5 |
| Mission and Education Committee | Thursday, January 21 |
| Standing Committee | Thursday, January 28 |
| Pastoral Relations Committee | Tuesday, February 2 |
| Standing Committee | Thursday, February 25 |
| Synod 2021 | 26-28 February |
| Pastoral Relations Committee | Tuesday, February 2 |
| Presbytery Meeting – Shepparton | Saturday, March 13 |
| Standing Committee | Thursday, March 25 |