



### Whither or Wither? ...that is the question

We've been told that *"life was not meant to be easy"* and that applies as much to church life as our every day life. Indeed, life has never been easy for 'church'. From the very first days church has faced persecution and the threat of extinction. Prison and martyrdom were everyday occurrences. Thank God that in this country we are still have freedom to practice our religion.

But you don't have to be a Rhodes Scholar to know that our numbers are diminishing, congregations are closing and properties are being sold. The latest census statistics are far from encouraging.



The Australian Bureau of Statistics has released the first wave of data from the 2021 census.

Looking at the statistics relating to the eleven local government areas in the Port Phillip East Presbytery, we note that population has increased from just over 1.6 million in 2016 to 1.76 million.

The number of people identifying as Uniting Church in affiliation has dropped from 38,456 to 32,076, meaning that we've moved from an average of 2.39 percent to 1.83 percent of the population. What may be of more interest is the growing cultural diversity in our communities.

You can check out information on your local region on the ABS website:

<https://www.abs.gov.au/census/find-census-data/search-by-area>

Duncan Macleod  
Presbytery Minister: Team Leader

And so the eternal question - 'what can we do?' Is it **Whither** we go or **Wither** and die? Reading the Book of Acts one thing stands out - those early Christians were very tough and brave people. They ventured out and took risks akin to an episode of Indiana Jones. Their job was not easy as they set sail into uncharted territory and took risks. I don't imagine for one moment that we of Cheltenham and Black Rock can set sail on the seven seas and do what those early followers did. **BUT** we can learn from them.

One of the most valuable clues came from Jesus himself when he said *"a new commandment ... love one another as I have loved you ... by this will all people know...."*. Right now as your Council is putting the final touches to the proposed Cheltenham redevelopment the burning question is why? What purpose? What next?

**Change begins with us.** I believe the "what next" was answered in Pastor Di's recent sermon *"Open to the Work of God"* in which she spoke of how Jesus sent his followers out. In other words we have to be **open to the work of God** and **open ourselves** before we can expect others to be **open to us**. This is where each one of us can begin.

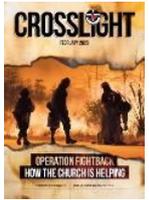
May I urge you to watch this sermon again. It's on our YouTube Channel, click on

Di's photo or follow this link

<https://youtu.be/tWPreTwklwQ>

*Pastor Di eyeing the new development and I'm sure she's thinking "hmm .. some possibilities there"*





CROSSLIGHT is available on the internet - click on the following link or the CROSSLIGHT image to view online. [www.crosslight.org.au](http://www.crosslight.org.au)

Print copies of CROSSLIGHT are available at the entrance of the Black Rock Uniting Church.

# Prayers of the People



We pray for all in need especially -

Helen Cole	Stuart as he struggles with addiction	Susan Bartell
Joyce Curnow	Jenny, Janine and June	Bronwyn
Hala	Bartholomeusz	Gloria, Samson & Family
Elna (Joan's sister)	Audrey Fewster's family and friends	Barb Loosemore
Lyn (Elizabeth's friend)	Margaret's neighbour Joan	Isobel Churchward
Virginia (Nan's friend)	Anita and Kingsley	Gemma and Teresa
Betty Kneen	Rosemary & Bob	Sybil Bond
Pete, Christine, Ben, Bruce & Valda (Jo-ann & David's friends)		Grace Fairbank

**WEEKLY OFFERINGS:** Thanks to everyone who have continued to make their weekly offering.

**Envelopes:** If you wish your offering to be specifically for Cheltenham, please place it in an envelope marked "Cheltenham" and place it in the offering bowl at church.

**Direct Debit:** Cheltenham / Mentone members note that direct payments can now be made to our new Westpac account at Southland, **BSB number is 033 358, Account Number is 664 881**

Payee "Uniting Church in Australia Cheltenham Mentone Parish Council"

The former Commonwealth Bank - BSB 06 3119, Account Number 1014 1206 - is still active for the time being.

**Cheltenham-Mentone Members:** Please bear in mind that although we are worshipping at Black Rock, the expenses of electricity, water, insurance, maintenance and Minister's stipend are still ongoing at Cheltenham.

## Social Collection Department

**BayCISS** - collection of goods by Graeme & Joan Wood has recommenced. Leave goods with them at 66 Bernard St. Cheltenham, or call them (Graeme & Joan Wood) on 9555 0462

From Graeme & Joan Wood - *Thanks to those who have given monetary donations to purchase goods on their behalf for BayCISS and many thanks to those who continue to drop food parcels at our home each week. BayCISS have again asked us to pass on their grateful thanks to the congregation.*

**Emerge** - Financial help is the best way to help - Cheques to - GPO Box 420 Melbourne VIC 3001 or donate via the website [www.emergesupport.org.au](http://www.emergesupport.org.au) Emerge welcomes vouchers for supermarkets or art materials which children could use at home - materials, pencils, colouring books etc. Margaret Bode is happy to collect items if you leave them at her home, 16 Monaco Street Parkdale. **Donations in an envelope marked EMERGE may be left in the collection plate.**

## Church on the Internet - Sunday 10am (virtual doors open 9:45 am)



If you don't have Zoom on your computer/laptop/iPad/Smartphone, click on <https://zoom.us/support/download> Then click on this link below or the "Sunday Church" image to join our Service - <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85247373230?pwd=WIM2UHJEemFWS3RScnNqM3puaGdZdz09>

Otherwise open Zoom and enter the following - **Meeting ID: 852 4737 3230 Passcode: 836844**  
You can also join us on your phone by dialling **03 7018 2005** and entering the above meeting details.



## Videos on the Internet



YouTube Channel; Follow this link or click on the YouTube logo [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH-y4pZ\\_f\\_lezegzNZi6nnQ](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCH-y4pZ_f_lezegzNZi6nnQ) to view a selection of **over 50** sermons and service preludes



Can you guess the names of these songs? ...

(thanks to Nan McArthur for these brain teasers - answers cunningly disguised at bottom of page)



Sweet Caroline

See you later alligator

Hey Jude

New York, New York