

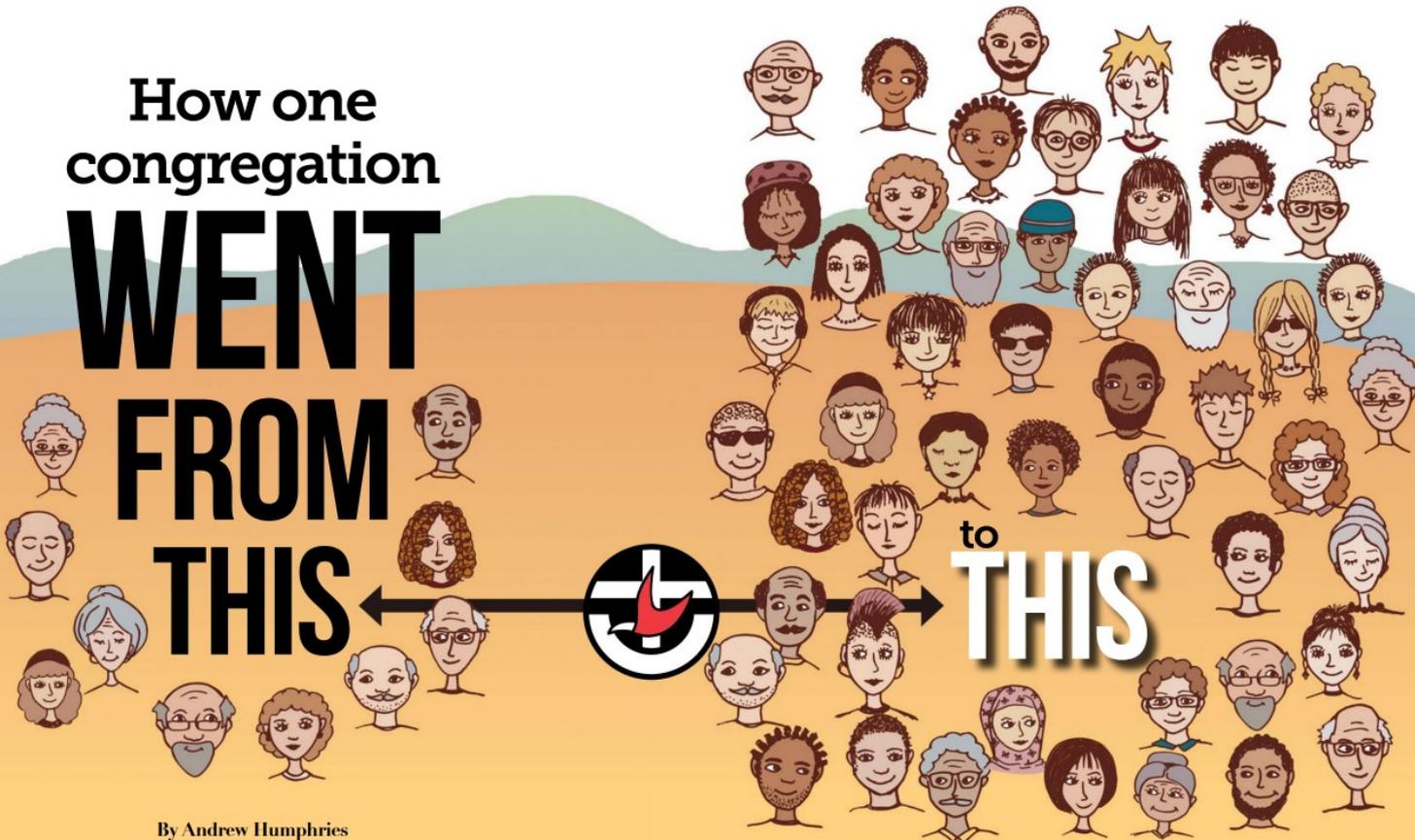


News Letter

18th September 2022 No 33



How one congregation WENT FROM THIS



By Andrew Humphries

When Rev Matt Cutler reflects on his role as Minister at Tecoma UC, he does so with a deep sense of gratitude.

In finding Tecoma, he believes, he has been blessed.

Social justice is pivotal in Matt's life and faith and, at Tecoma, he has found a congregation and community that puts that concept at the heart of everything it does.

From its commitment to our First Nations people, to providing free food to some of those doing it tough in the

community, Tecoma congregation members don't just talk the talk, they walk the walk when it comes to promoting social justice.

A quick look at its website shows how heavily the church is involved in the community, from the free food program, to an op shop, to martial arts and dancing.

Matt refers to it all as the "church as community" and he is immensely proud of its place in the Yarra Ranges, east of Melbourne.

And while the future looks bright for such a forward-thinking Minister and congregation, that hasn't always been the case.

In fact, at one stage, Tecoma residents were forced to ponder the possibility of closure, as congregation numbers dwindled to unviable levels.

As a resident of Belgrave, just a kilometre up the road, Matt was already aware of Tecoma UC when he became its Minister in June 2018.

While the church held a special place

in the community's affections, that didn't mean it was immune from the same pressures affecting places of worship in regional and rural areas around the country.

"Living in Belgrave meant I had an awareness of a church that promoted various programs and had a community garden out the front, so I had a vibe of a church that was very community-minded, albeit small with an ageing congregation which, of course, is a common story," Matt says.

It's all about the numbers, though, and the reality was that in 2018 they weren't looking so good in Tecoma.

"When I arrived as Minister, we were down to about a dozen members attending a service and, of course, this was pre-COVID," Matt says.

"Ours was the classic case of the Uniting Church congregation with an ageing population and not many young families involved.

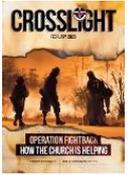
"It's the same story with a lot of the other churches in the Dandenong Ranges

and Tecoma was certainly heading the same way.

"Thankfully, we had a facility here that was still being used and had a good reputation within the community but, yes, if it had continued to trend the way it was going a conversation within the church hierarchy about its future wouldn't have been far away.

"I think the hierarchy still had a belief that any conversation about closing didn't need to be entertained at that stage, although the tracking was

Continued



CROSSLIGHT is available on the internet - click on the following link or the CROSSLIGHT image to view online. www.crosslight.org.au

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

Prayers of the



We pray for all in need especially -

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

MUTS: Our next MUTS meeting will be on Monday 19th September, 2022 - "God authorized and commanded me to ... go out" Study and Zoom details in separate email. You are also welcome to come to 1/10 Harpley St, Cheltenham if you want to be face to face. Contact Jenny or Grant Collins on 9583 6156 or jacngrant@gmail.com

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

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 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 to view a selection of **over 50** sermons and service preludes



"The King of the Kilometres" by "Joey"

The plans they were made, the itinerary drawn
They finally left on that cold August morn
Two cousins with interest in the family of old
Left on a trip where they hoped to find "gold"

At Hillside for one night, they decided to stay
Then first thing next morning, they were soon on their way
To Naracoorte, Tanunda, through the valley of Clare,
Paid a visit to "Maggie" the food lady with flair

Through picturesque country and next stop was Burra
At "Aberdeen Cottage" where the welcome was thorough
Food was aplenty and a place most pristine
Next morning they left, family history to glean.

They went to the cemetery and found graves of note,
Remains of Bertram houses, in this place so remote.
They then headed on to the "Hill that is Broken"
Ancestry shows family words there were spoken.

The Royal Exchange was our place there to sleep
Accommodation was good – great to put up our feet.
They dined at "The Palace" – a place quite esteemed
From where "Priscilla", Queen of the Desert" sure beamed.

After locating interesting graves on the plan
A cemetery visit just showed them one can
Follow things through, and there they did find
The graves of past people who had been on their minds

The Historic Centre right near the rail
Tried hard to help find who they wanted to "nail".
The mine is almost in the centre of town
It dominates vision when looking around

We found two distinct areas divide Broken Hill
And they drove around looking, at their free will.
Then on to Mildura, a monotonous drive
Where wild goats on thistles seem to survive

Earlier on, they had seen a solitary horse
One day, some cruel person will sure have remorse
So sad, with it standing, alone in the wild
With no other company in the hot, wet or mild.

We stayed at "The Grand" in the centre of town
Dined "Spanish Grill" where good food was found.
They left right on time, and to Horsham did head
To meet cousin Cynthia – about "One" they had said

They had a great catch up, it was so good to see
Her looking so well with her manner so free.
Then they drove back to Hillside for dinner and sleep
All well, so far, and their times they did keep.

Next morning up early, for another big day
At nine they did leave, now for Ballarat way.
They first saw the two "H's" – Helen and Hayd
Then to Campbell & Jane's for lunch, well displayed.

Back into the car, Ian was quite keen
To be on the way as time was quite lean.
They wanted to get back to Brighton by four
And with Ian's good planning, they made it, for sure.

And now, on reflection, the trip was so good ...
They did all that they hoped, didn't think that they could.

But as to explain reason for the name of this ode

With laughter, Ian nearly made Sally explode.
*"Now it's 300 k's, that means 2 and a bit hours
We'll get there by 4 if nothing goes sour
Well, we've knocked off a 100, that's going well
Think we might just have time for a very quick spell
But we'd better be quick, 'cause you just never know
If something should happen, so we must quickly go"*

No rest for the wicked, but all with good aim
A medal in gold he'd be quite fit to claim
For excellent planning and time to the second.
He did really well, it seems Sally reckoned.

But in fairness to Sally, she kept up with the pace
And was ready by deadlines, with make-up on face.
They both were so grateful that nothing went wrong
With car, road diversions, or "meeting" a "Roo"

That would have been major, for it and them too.
So now back in Melbourne, they're feeling so glad
To reflect on the fabulous trip that they had!

"Joey"
26th August, 2022

