



Charman Uniting Church

News Letter

14th June 2026 Vol 7 No 20 Pentecost 3



“We Make the Way by Walking”

by Lukas Harry

There were tears, laughter, long-held memories and hopeful anticipation as the congregation of St Andrew's by the Sea Black Rock Uniting Church gathered on 17 May for their final service in the building that has shaped generations of faith and community life.

The service marked not an ending, but a transition, as the congregation prepares to continue its journey as part of Charman Uniting Church in Cheltenham.

The story behind this move stretches back several years. In 2023, the Black Rock and Cheltenham-Mentone congregations officially joined together to form Charman Uniting Church after worshipping alongside one another during refurbishment works at the Cheltenham site. What began as a practical arrangement gradually became something deeper

As church members beautifully described, the amalgamation was “a bit like a marriage,” two congregations spending time together, discovering shared values and ministry, and eventually deciding to continue the journey as one community.

That spirit of unity and shared faith was deeply present throughout the final Black Rock service. Stories and memories flowed freely during worship, with members young and old reflecting on the role the church building had played throughout their lives. People remembered weddings, baptisms, playing baby Jesus in Christmas pageants, Sunday School sausage rolls with Marge, funerals of loved ones and the simple moments of fellowship that had shaped the community over decades.

The theme throughout the service was that “the Church is the people.” Minister Rev Greg Fry reflected on the reality that while places, communities and circumstances change, God continues to lead people into new ways of living faithfully.

“We need to find new ways to experience things when things change,” he said. “People move, needs and opportunities change. We let go and move on and look for new opportunities.”

Rev Fry reminded the congregation that the Black Rock church community itself began not in a grand sanctuary but in a living room off Balcombe Road in the 1890s - a reminder that the Church has always been about people gathering together in faith, wherever that may be.

He also acknowledged the changing nature of church life in modern times. "There was a time when all you needed to do was open the church doors and people would come flooding in" he reflected. "Things have changed. The Church now needs to adapt and find new ways to connect."

That sense of movement and adaptation became one of the strongest themes of the day. The congregation expressed that they were "not closing, but moving," with one phrase emerging for the community moving forward:

"We make the way by walking."

There were visible reminders throughout the service that while the congregation is entering a new season, much of its story will continue. Several treasured elements from the Black Rock building, including stained glass windows, crosses and memorial plaques, have now been incorporated into the refurbished Charman Uniting Church building, allowing the light and history of the congregation to continue shining in a new space. As Rev Greg Fry said, "I've been in to see the new building and the light now shines through the beautiful stained glass windows in a new way."

For many, the building carried generations of personal history. I connected with congregation member Frank Mindum after the service who reminisced on the deep connections held within the space. "Melanie's parents married in that building. We were married in it, our children were baptised in it, and we said farewell to family and friends there too." He described it as "a space of comfort, peace, fellowship, warmth and walking a deep faith journey within."

But in this new space at this time of such uncertainty, I hope that we can offer simple peace, calm, ears that will listen and not judge, offer service as needed, simply do what Jesus did to whomever is in need. That's what excites me and what I hope happens as we move forward."

As the final service had come to a close, one message shared from Pastor Di Paterson captured the spirit of the day perfectly:

"Referring to the strong sense that the congregation's story was never really about bricks and mortar alone, he said "The building itself isn't the Church. It's definitely the people that make it a church."

Frank said that familiar pieces from the Black Rock church help bridge the grief of leaving with the hope of beginning again. "There's an incredible sense of familiarity in the new space" he said. "These items perpetuate the long history of those who gave their hearts and souls to this faith community."

While there was much sadness in saying goodbye to a beloved building, there was also excitement about what this new chapter may hold. Frank spoke warmly about the opportunities ahead, not simply to continue existing ministries, but to expand community connection and reimagine what church life can look like.

"Strong fellowship will continue and people will continue to support each other, but I think the exciting part isn't what continues, as that is pretty much our baseline. It's the new elements that will start to be introduced. How we can branch out and do more, reach further out, bring community in, and share this new chapter beyond the doors of the church. Build our visibility, remove preconceptions of what people 'think' we're about. Yes, we'll talk about and focus on faith but there is so much more that we can offer, including on a secular level with the simple purpose of showing that we're the same - we watch footy, we play music, we drink coffee, we look after people, enjoy a laugh, get angry, we make mistakes and get it wrong.

And so, after more than a century of worship in Black Rock, the congregation now steps forward together, carrying its memories, faith and story into a new season at Charman Uniting Church. With Greg Fry as the full time minister and DI Paterson as part time Pastor.

"You as a church will go on stronger as a community."

Read the full article at ->

NEWSBEAT

NEWSLETTER FOR THE PORT
PHILLIP EAST PRESBYTERY





Below: From the Presbytery of Port Phillip East Weekly News Update - thanks Nan McArthur for bringing to our attention

God of the calling,

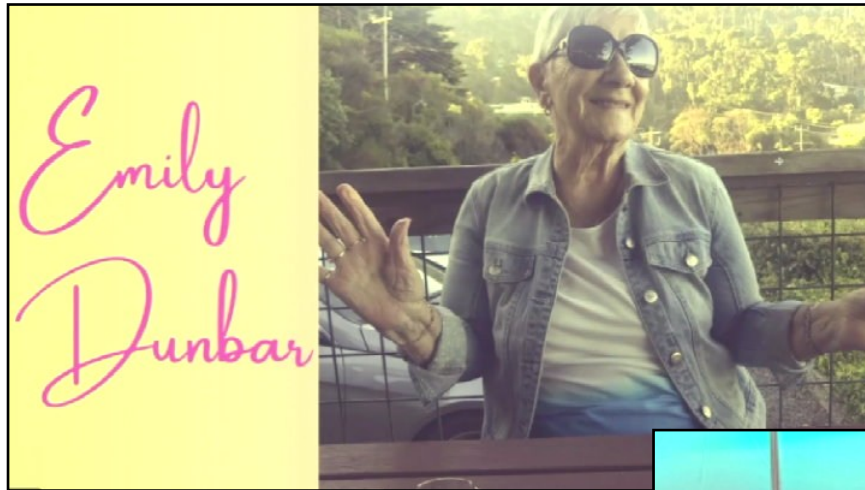
You move through every generation, sparking gifts and stirring hearts in unexpected places.

Give us eyes to see the potential hidden in our pews, and the courage to call out the beauty and leadership we witness in others. Help us to move past the panic of filling empty seats, and instead commit to the joyful, slow work of walking alongside new disciples.

May your gentle Spirit breathe confidence into those who are hesitant, and grant us the patience to mentor, the humility to share our lives, and the love to nurture the leaders of tomorrow.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen.

A sad but joyful goodbye to Emily Dunbar ...



Some 120 people filled our church on Thursday of last week to say goodbye to our dear friend Emily Dunbar

Numerous family members paid glowing tributes to Emily





It was a good test of the first large gathering in our new facilities - and it coped very well!

It was good to see Ray & Lorraine Kent who had travelled from Creswick (*near Ballarat*) for the occasion



Ray Kent (*above*) catching up with Emily's close friend Grace Buchanan whilst Lorraine (*left*) is deep in conversation with Helen Cole



The smaller of our new kitchens coped extremely well under the guidance of Margaret Bode and Frances McKay





Bible Readings June 2026 *(the readings used in our service may differ slightly)*

June 7th	Pentecost 2	Genesis 12:1-9, Hosea 5:15-6:6	Psalm 33:1-12 Psalm 50:7-15	Romans 4:13-25	Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26
June 14th	Pentecost 3	Genesis 18:1-15, (21:1-7) Exodus 19:2-8a	Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19 Psalm 100	Romans 5:1-8	Matthew 9:35-10:8, (9-23)
June 21st	Pentecost 4	Genesis 21:8-21, Jerimiah 20: 7-13	Psalm 86: 1-10,16-17 Psalm 69:7-10, (11-15), 16-18	Romans 6:1b-11	Mathew 10:24-39
June 28th	Pentecost 5	Genesis 22:1-14 Jerimiah 28:5-9	Psalm 13 Psalm 89:1-4,15-18	Romans 6:12-23	Matthew 10:40-42

We pray for all in need especially -

Prayers of the People



Emily's family & friends
Katherine's cousin David & Family
Pastor Di
Joc
Joan Wright
Tina, friend of Joan Wood
Phillip (Barbara's nephew)
Barry
Adrian
Anne-Maree, Andrew and their daughter, Rachel

Maria
Helen Cole
Gloria, Samson & Family
Jenny and Janine Bartholomeusz
Anita and Kingsley
Joyce Curnow
Stuart - addiction struggles
Helen & Earle Hosking
Grace & Van Rensberg
Joan's friends Robyn & Jemma
Kath Tondorf
Susan Hoskin

Karen
Mark
Mary
Margaret Walker
Joyce Carpenter
Andrew
Bronwyn
Teresa
Sybil Bond
June and Grace Fairbank

We give thanks for those whose prayers have been answered..

Thanks for your BayCISS Collection Contributions

From Joan & Chris Wood . Many thanks to those who continue to support BayCISS with donations. Goods especially non perishable food may be left at 66 Bernard St. Cheltenham, or call them on 9555 0462 for details

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

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

Although we are now the Charman Uniting Church, we expect banking arrangements to remain the same as before, for the rest of the year.

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 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.**



OUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL:



Click on the YouTube logo to view a selection of **over 200** sermons and service preludes

*This week's video –
"Stepping into the unknown"
Grant Collins 7th June 2026*

Click on image or [HERE](#) to view



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/82004410836?pwd=cU9RWlhVMm8wOUw0TStLV1EvNFdYdz09>

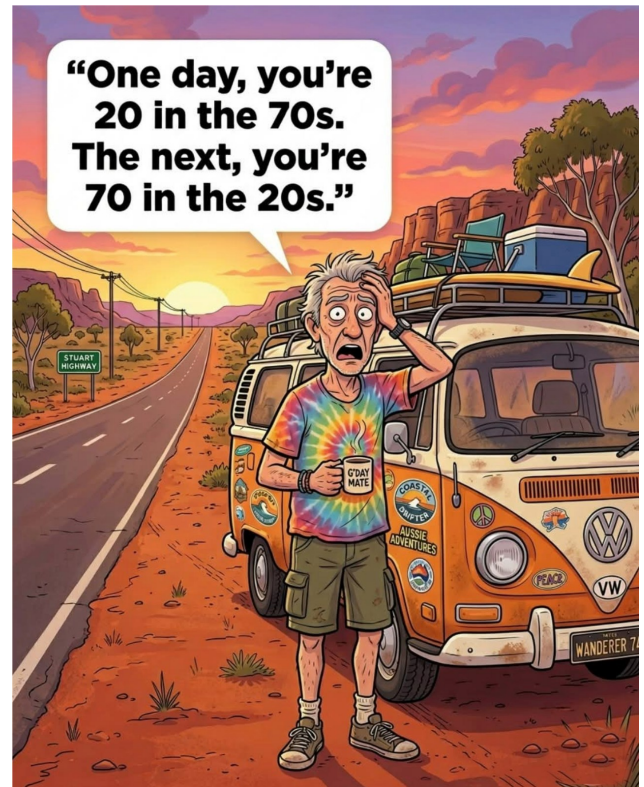
Meeting ID: 820 0441 0836 Passcode: 665 784

You can also join us on your phone by dialling **03 7018 2005** and entering the above meeting details.

**Sunday Church
on Zoom**



In your dreams ...



David's colourful dream of a new organ for our church. Felix is not so impressed!