



"Malo e lelei" ... Thank God you're alive

Hello Christian co-journers.

Hello in Tongan is "Malo e lelei" which literary means "thank God, you are alive" Most Tongan people used to be seafarers. One source described that they went out day and night fishing and when they returned onshore they exchanged greetings with their family and friends, "malo e lelei" Thank God you're still alive. Nowadays we take to say hello or hi for granted however it's important for us to pause and say thanks be to God.

I would like to say hello or malo e lelei to everyone who may read this as we greet each other at the beginning of this New Year, 2020. This is my first contribution to the River of Life, and I want to say malo e lelei. Of course, we have many different cultures in our presbytery who have their own meanings for hello, and I would like to encourage you to share them with other cultures.

The end of last year and the beginning of this year has been hard for those who were impacted by fires, droughts, floods and difficult circumstances, yet we're reminded to give thanks to God that we're still here. We've made it for another opportunity to live our lives and to tend to what we're called to do, until next time.

What is the real meaning of Hello?

"According to one source "But as prevalent as the word is, "hello" is relatively new. Hello, came into existence in the mid-1800s. It is an alteration of hallo, which was an alteration of holla or hollo. These words were used to attract immediate attention and demand that the listener come to a stop or cease what he or she was doing."



What did people say before Hello?

"Instead of hello, he preferred the word "ahoy." While ahoy may sound funny to us today, the word actually had been used as a greeting for a long time among sailors."

What is hello in English? "According to Merriam-Webster, a greeting is a salutation upon meeting someone, or an expression of good wishes. More simply, to greet someone is to say "hello" or to extend a polite word of welcome."

I would like to remind all of us about Jesus' greeting (peace be upon him) which often extended the greeting: "Peace be upon you." As you may know Muslims often greet each other with the same phrase in Arabic; "As-Salāmu `Alaykum"... Jews also use this same greeting but they say it in Hebrew; "Sholom

Aleichem". Notice the similarities in both Arabic and Hebrew. Also, the common respected response to this greeting in both faiths is: "and on you be peace": In the New Testament we hear Jesus' greeting for his disciples and for us also. ³⁶While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." (Luke 24:36). ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house!' (Luke 10:5). ⁹When it was evening on that day, the first day of the week, and the doors of the house where the disciples had met were locked for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." (John 20:19)

May 2020 be a year where we take hello seriously as we greet each other by thanking God that we're still here.

Siotame Paletu'a
Presbytery minister, Northern Region



Find us on
Facebook



This is a great place to catch up on Presbytery news, between editions of "The River of Life". Invite your friends to join—this is a closed group.

Search for "Loddon Mallee Presbytery" or use the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2302440563408439/>

What is a Minister's Stipend?

Have you ever wondered why we pay our ministers a stipend? The word 'stipend' comes

from Middle English: from Old French or Latin, from *stips* 'wages' and *pendere* 'to pay.' The church has traditionally spoken of it as a 'living allowance' paid to ministers to cover their needs as they exercise their ministry rather than a salary. There is a mutual relationship between the church and the minister, a covenantal relationship, in which the church provides for ministers so they may fulfil their calling acknowledged by the church.

In the church a stipend is a form of payment provided to ministers to permit them to devote themselves to ministry. The stipend is given to enable the person to be free of avoidable anxiety about having to obtain food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. The stipend is a 'monetary allowance' rather than a salary or fee for services rendered. There is an important difference between the terms 'stipend' and 'salary'. A salary is remuneration for work carried out, usually on the basis of an assessment of the value of the kind of work in question. It is not paid for particular duties or hours of work. A stipend is exactly the same for all ministers across the Synod.

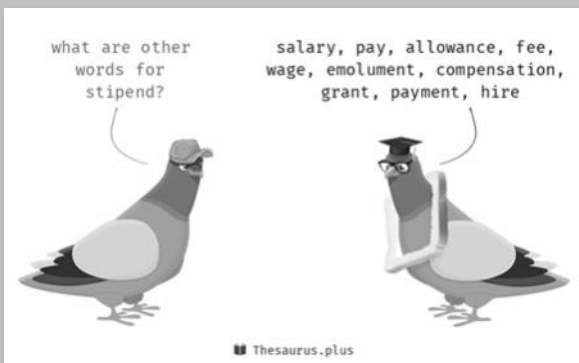


the acceptance of part time ministries and the professionalisation of ministry. Ministry does require high levels of competence and conduct, high personal and 'professional' standards. However the idea that this should mean a highly remunerated ministry stands in tension with the basic understanding of ministry as grounded in God's call to serve through the church.

Thereafter the church undertakes to provide such ministers with a stipend so that they are able to exercise the ministry to which God has called them and to which the church has set them apart without being preoccupied with having to provide their own financial support for that ministry. Throughout the centuries the provision of support for those in ministry has varied greatly. Generally it has been modest and has been related to the community standards in which the minister served. The provision of a minimum stipend was taken into the Uniting Church at the time of Union and has subsequently continued in all synods.

Historically ministers have been provided with housing (a manse) or an allowance in lieu of a manse. Many ministers, especially those getting closer to retirement age, are living in their own homes. The needs of ministers at different stages of family responsibility, varies greatly which impacts on the provision of suitable housing.

In the Uniting Church ordination service, the person to be ordained as a Minister of the Word is given a charge which includes the following. "Taking Christ the Good Shepherd as your example, you are called to lead God's people in worship, witness and service; to equip them for their ministry and mission; and to work with them in building up the body of Christ. You are called to strive for peace and unity among all Christian people, especially among those with whom you serve." The words for a person becoming ordained as a Deacon are similar but speak of 'Christ the Servant' and being 'a faithful pastor of God's people'. The questions are introduced with the following. "In this ordination the Uniting Church in Australia acts and speaks within the one holy catholic and apostolic Church. God in Christ acts and speaks through all that the Church does and in obedience to God's will. God gives you grace and authority for this ministry." The questions include, "Do you believe you are truly called by God and the Church to the office and work of a Minister of the Word/Deacon?" Ordination then is not just a local matter but links the ordained person with the church universal. There is an authority given for ministry that is to be accepted with both appropriate humility and appreciation for its significance. Providing a stipend has to do with the church recognising ordained ministry as having a particular role and authority and enabling it to be carried out.



The relationship between an employer and a salary earner is contractual. There are contractual obligations on the part of each which are enforceable in law. The relationship between a congregation, or other responsible body for a placement, and a minister is covenantal. A congregation, or other body, covenants to pay a stipend to a minister but that minister is, strictly speaking, not accountable to that congregation, or body, but to the Presbytery or other council of oversight. This, of course, is not to suggest that there is no sense in which a minister is accountable to the congregation or body in which he or she exercises ministry. The covenant between the responsible body and minister, means that the stipend will always be the first charge on any church budget.

There are some pressures on the notion of stipend, such as



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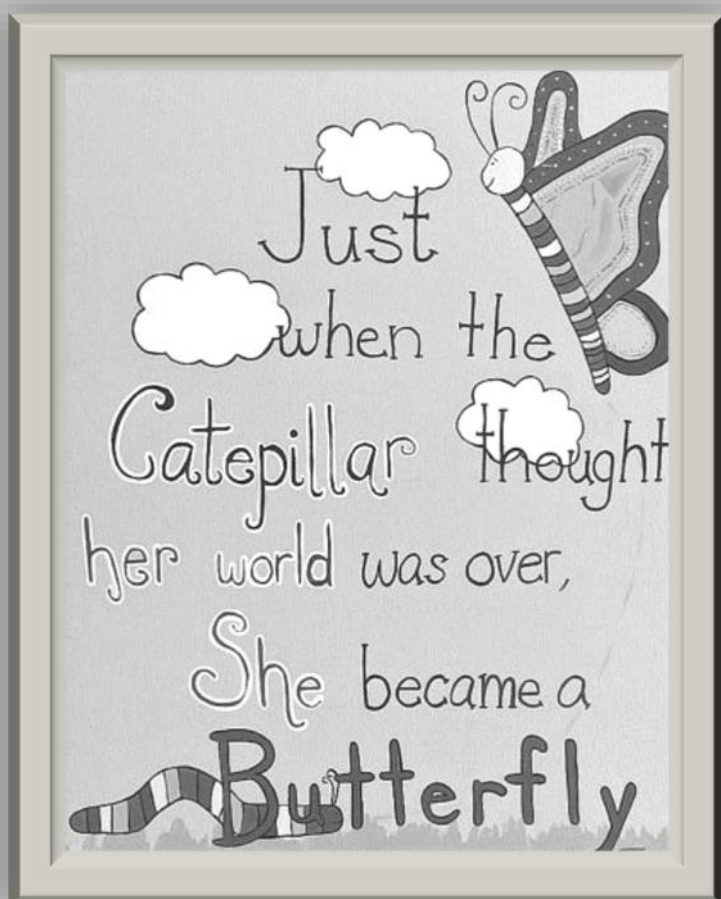
The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania makes use of the following principle: "The traditions from which we come expect a great deal of ministers. They are to become and remain Biblical scholars, articulate interpreters of current events, pastors with competence in the professional skills of psychology and human relations, as well as developing a quality of spirituality which 'both by life and doctrine sets forth God's true and living word.' It is unreasonable to expect this order of contribution to the life of the church if ministers are preoccupied and anxious about money, or are spending their time in an effort to save or earn money."

The Uniting Church, like other denominations, uses the word 'stipend' to describe the remuneration provided to ordained ministers. The notion of stipend arises out of a theology of ministry in which the idea of a covenantal relationship between ministers and those among whom they minister is central. Ministers are given a 'living allowance' in order to carry out their call to serve God through the church. This distinguishes it from views about remuneration which are appropriate in a contractual relationship. Salary and wage earners are paid for what they do and the amount reflects some independent assessment of the value of their work.

Grace and Peace,

Rob Dalgleish,

Presbytery Minister-Administration



ANNUAL DINNER



BUILDING HARMONY A Community Approach

Guest Speaker: Jeremy Jones AM
Director of International and Community Affairs
for the Australia/Israel and Jewish Affairs Council

Jeremy is an international authority on interfaith dialogue, racism and human rights. He has dedicated his life to promoting freedom from racial and religious discrimination, persecution and harassment. In 2007 he won the Australian Human Rights Medal for his work against racism and has become a leading figure in interfaith relationships and human rights advocacy. He believes that different expressions of creativity can enhance interfaith relationships and build bridges on a regional, national and global level in our multicultural society.

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Welcome

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**Join us for an evening of music,
food and fun this Harmony Day!**

When: Thursday 19 March 2020

Where: The Conservatory, All Seasons
171 - 183 McIvor Rd, Strathdale

Time: 6.00pm (for 6.30pm start) - 9.30pm

Tickets: \$55 each - Table of 8 \$440

Booking: Book online at www.trybooking.com/BHMKW.
Bookings close Monday 16 March.

Meals: All meals Halal. Vegetarian and culturally appropriate meals available on request.
For all enquires or to RSVP call 0472 917 391.



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Header Photo—Front Page:

The photo was taken by Rev. Gordon Wild, in September last year, near Seymour, during a rural ministry retreat.

The setting sun was shining through a late afternoon rainstorm. The sunset was lovely, but the trick was to remember to turn around! Rainbows are often behind you.

The photo is also the Presbytery Group Cover Photo on Facebook.

“A Ministry Journey for Rev. Brian Morgan” Part 2

Wynyard's Minister had very recently died suddenly, after only a few months in Placement, so this put a Minister in grief with a Parish in grief... and it worked. At the end of four or five months, I said “Goodbye” to some new and very special friends and accepted the call to Rainbow, Victoria, alone, with God, whose love for me I doubted. How could God want me, a divorced person, in the team? In that first year I functioned but only just and it took many visits from the Presbytery Minister, Rev Allan Collins, Desri's faithful encouragement and the love of the Rainbow folk, to begin to re-teach me the meaning of God's Grace.

A particularly exciting Ministry part of the Rainbow years was the bringing together of the Rainbow Yaapeet Uniting Church Parish and the Mallee Parklands Baptist Churches to form the Southern Mallee Cooperative Parish. The Baptist Pastor, Rev Garry Lock and I passed each other on Sunday mornings as he came south, and I went north to conduct worship in each other's residential towns in our own denominational buildings. One

day we casually commented to each other, “What if we had combined congregations and Lock was the God man in Hopetoun and north, and Morgan was the God man in Rainbow?” What a joke! He'd never go for that! It took a few months but that is exactly what happened. They went for it, and 30+ years later it is still going and the people reckon it is the best thing they ever did.

The Lord had brought into my life the woman who was to become my wife, Desri Badcock, from the Yolla congregation, where I had found great nurture during my supply in Tasmania.

We corresponded and I grew in self-worth. My daughter, Bron, joined me in Rainbow and when Desri and I married in January 1983, my son Rob, also joined us. Grace and healing abounded and my faith in God strengthened. It still amazes me that Desri and I went on to focus on marriage and relationship education through leadership in the Tasmanian “Growing Together in Marriage” programme and through the “Prepare-Enrich” organization, in which I became a Trainer, in turn in Tasmania, the Northern Territory and Victoria. We're convinced that God often uses our worst experiences to shape our best ministries.

After the children left home and headed to Adelaide for further education, the call of home for Desri, led us back to Tasmania. So, after 8 years in Rainbow, we accepted the call to Westbury Parish, Tasmania, in the heart of Badcock family territory. A wonderful place to be!

After an all too short five years there, the Synod of Tasmania issued a Priority Call to move to South Launceston, Tasmania to minister in a two-person team, in a Parish shattered by the departure of one of their Pastors with half of a major

congregation. Another Parish in deep grief! Those that were left were strong and faithful people, wanting to recover their ministry to the city. A strange place for a country loving farmer's daughter and a bloke with a strong sense of call to rural congregations, but again God knew best and we ministered there for the busiest six years of our ministry journey. An average of forty-eight funerals a year for several successive years, four services a Sunday, Chaplaincy in a UCA Aged Care Facility and some other mid-week Aged Care Facility services as well. Grief and relationship breakdown recovery programs became a major focus here.

At six years, we felt called to conclude and after some testing of the way forward, accepted the call of the Palmerston, Northern Territory, congregation. One congregation, one Minister and a growing, vigorous, relatively young bunch of theologically diverse, eclectic-origin Christians. Just seven weeks in, with boxes still not unpacked, I was struck down with an acute attack of pancreatitis and finished up in

the Royal Adelaide Hospital for five weeks, narrowly avoiding needing the funeral which Desri began to prepare. Although I was able to come home to Palmerston, the attacks continued for the next five years and I made many visits to the Royal Darwin Hospital. We offered to resign the placement, but the gracious congregation would not hear of it.

When the “Sexuality and Leadership” debate struck the Territory, the Palmerston congregation was deeply divided. I was convinced the Assembly had made the right decision and after attempting to hold them all together, we reluctantly accepted the testimony of several people both inside and outside the congregation, that the time had come to seek a new call. For the first time in my ministry we did not share this decision-making with the congregation before informing them that we were moving to Allansford. I've regretted this ever since, because it caused unnecessary hurt and was a poor example of Christian Body Life.

Three and a half years in Allansford, South West Victoria, blessed us immensely. It was a place of healing and rest, as had been foretold by one of my Pentecostal friends in Darwin.

At sixty-six I retired to our house in Launceston because I was beginning to become crabby with the congregation and they didn't deserve it. We set up our first “own home” and, following our sense of call to care for Desri's aging parents until their deaths, placed our membership in the Westbury, Tasmania congregation and offered occasional ministry there. This ministry eventually grew quite large over seven years, and I was appointed the associated minister.

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Interfaith Gathering at Newstead ...

It was a "full house" at Newstead Uniting church last Sunday as people joined in an interfaith gathering of songs and prayers for peace and care of the earth.

Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, Baha'i, Jewish and Christian representatives joined musicians and singers around the theme of the relationship of faith to the environment. Participants described the time as "a gentle patchwork of peace", "a wonderful opportunity to have an interfaith experience" and "a time to reflect on how we can care for a planet and an environment that has given so much to us"

One young person said "I don't understand why people who damage the environment don't care about us kids and people who need to live here in 100 years. I hope things get better and they can fix the damage and solve the problems they have made." This interfaith gathering has been linked to "Newstead Live" for a number of years.

Fay White writes: . . . How wonderful was this morning's service with its tribute to Mother Earth and her creatures - the heart-intimate words of the songs, the tidal flow between speakers and music, and most of all the held-breath attention of the congregation. Thank you for asking me to take part. All the best, Fay.



David Kram of the Progressive Jewish Congregation of Bendigo and the Central Goldfields



Some of the participants in the service.

BABIES!

We are excited by the news of the recent births of two "manse babies".

Elijah Christopher was born to the Rev Susan Malthouse-Law and Daniel Law on January 25 - just a day after his mother's birthday.

Susanna Beatrice was born to the Rev Sarah Tomilson and Alex Connally on February 7.

No doubt the congregations of Weeroona and Castlemaine District will provide many honorary cousins, aunts, uncles and grandparents to these very welcome little ones.

We wish both families much joy and many blessings.



... From page 4

After a six-week supply in the North West Regional Parish, Tasmania, we expressed interest in a new venture of Mobile Ministry in Loddon Mallee Presbytery, relieving, loving and encouraging small, rural congregations. I re-entered active ministry, received a call, which we accepted, and continue in that until today. We have enjoyed three of the most interesting years of my 50-year ministry. But that is another story still! We will conclude this placement on Easter Sunday 2020 and wait for the Lord to reveal our next steps. God is indeed faithful! How blessed we are!

Brian Morgan,
October 2019.

Photo on page 4:

In February, 2017, Brian and Desri gave a novel report to Presbytery of their time at the Cohuna Parish with the Mobile Ministry. Their fun presentation was very much appreciated.

Tribute to Margaret Cousens

Margaret's years with the Cohuna UCA

Margaret arrived, I think in 1964, to take up her teaching post here in Cohuna and boarded with Mrs Frantz Snr.

Margaret was a faithful worshipper, and soon joined the choir, and the stirrings of helping the young people to find their goals in life through her faith in Jesus encouraged her own thoughts as she started a Youth Group, with the help of Mavis Hester, and a bit later Kids Club. Kids Club had a few different names over the years, but with a great understanding of young people and the will to instil into them the values of life, much preparation went into the planning of the programs.

There were many visits from the Kyabram Youth Group and overnight camping in the hall, and plenty of activity kept these young people grounded and wanting to learn, and with the training through her primary teaching Margaret knew how to get the best from each child who came along.

Margaret also was a member of the Methodist Badminton Team and also played Squash. She wielded a mean racquet.

Margaret was also part of the Bible Study Groups. She was encouraging and a great source of knowledge to all who came along and was continually learning all *she could*.

She also worked diligently for the annual Agricultural Show as a Steward, and also exhibited her vegies, flowers, and floral arrangements. In these last few years she also joined the U3A singing group and also led the local Probus Club.

Margaret loved music and particularly appreciated the words of favourite hymns and songs which held great meaning for her. Memories of the school recorder group come to mind too and Marg always encouraged the most timid of children to have a go.

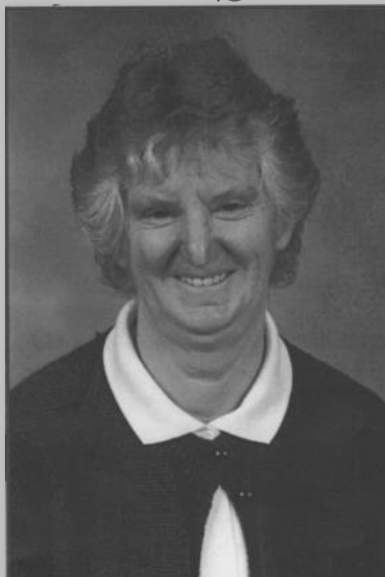
She joined our ladies mission group - Initially called 'The Heather Club', then Uniting Missionary Fellowship. Actually, she had a true mission heart.

Margaret also took extra responsibility by becoming a member of some committees in our Loddon Mallee Uniting Church Presbytery and took her role seriously.

Travelling extensively, she travelled far and wide, and marvelled at God's creation wherever she went. Talking of a trip to the Holy Land, and as she told me of the wonders of that, I could see how moved and blessed she was as she recalled that *she had walked where Jesus walked*.

Studying to further the depth of her knowledge in Biblical studies, she was hopeful that one day there would be a calling for her.

As you hear from the Barham Church, it is easy to recall the night of her induction. It was her joy to be given the task of pastoring to these faithful people who came to love and



respect her and she them. What a blessing. We of the Cohuna Church rejoiced with her. She had found her place.

*Hazel Radley,
Cohuna Uniting Church.*

Barham, Moulamein and Wakool

Margaret Cousens was appointed pastor to Barham, Moulamein and Wakool congregations. She came at a time of change for the parish as we could no longer support a full ministry. Margaret gave us a new leadership when we especially needed it. Margaret's faith and dedication to the three congregations constantly reflected her commitment to the Lord. The Lord's work was her life and she lived her life accordingly.

Always the teacher, Margaret used her expertise to deliver challenging and instructive services. Children were a priority for her and she loved to use music and craft to present engaging messages. Messy Church, Kid's Club and Scripture at school were also part of Margaret's program. Margaret never forgot a child's birthday, each receiving a card and gift.

Margaret was concerned for the whole Church and broader community, visiting the aged and subsequently spending many hours in the local aged care facilities. If anyone was ill in hospital you could be certain that Margaret would be there as well. She cared deeply for those around her. Some of her other commitments included KYB Bible Study, Welcome Centre, Time Out and she was the Chairperson for UCAF. Margaret initially co-ordinated Women's World Day of Prayer for the Barham district. She also co-ordinated the Christmas Child Shoebox Appeal. Margaret was involved and instigated so many initiatives about the Church, I would say that this article only scratches the surface of what she brought to our Parish.

Margaret was generous with her time and resources, giving far above the requirements of her part-time position. She said she was pleased just to be doing her Lord's work.

Margaret cared for each and every one of us. She kept in touch with us especially those who were battling illness, facing grief or just plain lonely. She was there for us even when, as we now know, her own health was suffering. Through her every day actions she showed God's love in a real and practical way.

Margaret Cousens touched the hearts of many people and will be sadly missed, especially by all those within the Parish and its surrounds.

*Lynne McKindlay,
Secretary of the Barham Uniting Church.*



The Quambatook congregation gathered on January 19th to farewell the Rev Youn Sang Kim and his dear wife Sue. Youn retired at the end of January. Another farewell service was held on Sunday 26th of January at the Swan Hill Uniting Church.

The 2020 Loddon Mallee UCAF Fellowship Day.

To be held on **Monday May 11th**,
at Chum Street Uniting Church,
Golden Square.

Love One another

G Q R J N I L D R Z G F U R G
C O M M A N D D I M Y T E Z I
G F S Y J F W J O K H N Y O J
Q W F L F R U I T W S C P M I
C H M E R B W Q J F N R U P O
T L D R I K O B U S I N E S S
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Y M N P E H H A R R P O I V Q
F F G P B R E E G Z H L H R I
R E M A I N S R V C E C D S A

Photo Album



The Blenders, a long established acapella women's group, took part in the Interfaith Service held at Newstead UC.



Rev. Youn Sang Kim and his wife Sue, enjoy the retirement celebrations at Swan Hill UC in January.



Several churches gathered at the Castlemaine UC for a combined Christmas Day service. Music was provided by a ten piece brass ensemble of musicians from the Churches of Christ, Salvation Army, Uniting Church and the Thompson Foundry Band. Pic shows Rev Sarah Tomilson deeply involved with the children.



At the October Presbytery Meeting, we celebrated 50 years of Ordination for Rev. Brian Morgan. Brian has been our Mobile Minister for the past 3 years. Brian and Desri provided a celebration cake for us all to share.

NEXT EDITION—April 2020

Please send us your contributions (lmucapresbytery@gmail.com). This is a chance for you to share your news and happenings to unite our mission and connection. *Thank you to those who have taken up this offer.*