

To: Members and associates of Pilgrim Uniting Church
From: Geoff Boyce, *Pilgrim Chaplain at Large*. (geoff@geoffboyce.com)
Date: January 3, 2022

The COVID Years and into 2022.

1. Although Sandy and I are moving to Melbourne in early 2022, particularly to give support to our family there, I am retaining my membership at Pilgrim.
2. In the foreseeable future I intend to return to Adelaide every 4 to 6 weeks to maintain face-to-face contact with my network, in and outside Pilgrim.
3. I hope I will continue to be considered as *Pilgrim Chaplain at Large*, connecting people to Pilgrim, and Pilgrim to people, even though my 2022 horizon will become even wider.

The nature of a Christian chaplain is to notice and do what needs to be done - with the vision and values of Jesus motivating and directing.

The COVID Years - Personal Summary.

'The Church Where We Are'

From the beginning of the COVID period in March 2019 I took on, with others, the continuance of 9.30 worship 'at a distance' during lockdown, editing videos and contributing media content. We caught a glimpse of a growing Pilgrim Church on-line. At the same time, Chris Bridge, with others, brought the 11am service on-line and expanded the number of 11am viewers. We realised the importance of ministry to an invisible Pilgrim church 'out there'.

The World Service

A need to reach out to others in the context of a COVID-induced mental health crisis became evident. My response was the on-line **World Service** - *inspiration and encouragement from the world to the world*. Continuing to connect with some of my Flinders network led to a collaboration with Dr Steve Parker (ex Associate Dean (Teaching & Learning) in the School of Nursing & Midwifery). This collaboration led to a new community-building website, rootandbranches.org.

The Beckman Cafe

Steve and I were embraced by owners and staff of a local cafe in Glandore, opened just at the start of COVID in February 2019. We meet fortnightly to share and review our vocations and capture Steve's passion for films as a 'Film Chat' segment in the World Service. We mix freely with the clientele. Steve has conducted a 'Big Morning Tea' there, supporting cancer research and recently, I conducted an hour of singing and poetry for about 15 regulars. This uncovered all kind of talent and sparked interest in further community gatherings at the Cafe. To my knowledge, at least one cafe regular has been contributing to 'Sunday Night Tea' at Pilgrim.

Pilgrim Publishing

As we settled into using new technology for streaming and recording services in 2021, I was able to step back a little and take on re-establishing Pilgrim Publishing as a means of sharing our stories with each other. This also created a mechanism to showcase the spiritual life of Pilgrim as a dynamic, welcoming church to a sympathetic, spiritually hungry society. In this case, it also supported Pilgrim's commitment to 'Covenanting'.

Happynings

Happynings is a diverse group of six autonomous people who initiate change for well-being, outside of institutional control. Their vocations include corporate consultancy, community development and relational support for migrants and refugees. Our supportive 'home' is a Moroccan restaurant near the city mosque, where we meet monthly for mutual support, eat amazing food and meet surprising people.

Music

Over the years I have written songs for Pilgrim, usually in support of themes Sandy would be exploring Sunday by Sunday. In 2020 I wrote the song 'We are the Church where we are', in response to the dispersed 9.30am community during COVID lockdown. It became a much used 'theme' for us at that time. 'May it be so' is another example, a blessing as the 9.30am community concluded the service. Researching music for The World Service recharged my love of music. In late 2020, a re-union of the 'Wayfarers', a singing trio I was part of in the 60's, coincided with renewing an equally long friendship with Rod Boucher, returning from 20 years in London. Rod and I began to write a piece for communion at Pilgrim, featuring Jeff Telfer on the clarinet. This evolved into a much bigger project, including an accompanying film, 'An Earth Communion', which was offered during the 9.30am service on 21 November 2021.

Organisation

I have continued to explore aspects of 'new wave' organisation that I intuitively used to set up Oasis as a new kind of Student Centre at Flinders University, based on universal, spiritually-rich principles of hospitality. My interest in organisation continues, as I notice the huge move away from traditional institutional understandings. The more recent emergence of 'Co- design' into the public arena has been a strong influence on the inclusive, collaborative approach I have taken with my *Chaplain at Large* projects.

'Strathewen: The Chook Project', included in World Service #13, Christmas 2020 (<http://youtu.be/IX8RR8kD4b0>) illustrates how such organisation emerges, in this case, in the wake of the devastating bushfires of 2019.

Into 2022

The World Service

In November 2021, Steve and I reviewed the World Service and decided that the December 2021 edition would be the last in that format.

We will continue the gardening motif of the 'Roots and Branches' website and its purposes of providing *radical musings for nurturing humanity in the garden of life*.

We hope this can be achieved by posting in-the-moment inspirations and encouragements.

In similar vein as *Film Chat* about current movies, we will add interviews with people about what they are doing and thinking at the moment.

Music from *Playing for Change* and others will continue to be shared as new music is created.

I hope to develop some topical themes throughout the year: the recent passing of Desmond Tutu has suggested the theme of 'Radical Heroes'.

We will continue to re-post-material circulating in the online world as we come across interesting and helpful insights.

To continue to get the World Service, and link to the *Pilgrim Chaplain at Large*, please 'subscribe' now to the rootandbranches.org website.

This website will be the main means by which we may keep in touch with each other.

You will be notified by email or on Facebook of each of my postings.

Why not check out the first posting for 2022 by going to rootandbranches.org in your web browser? Click the 'subscribe' button if you like what you see.

And why not think about becoming a 'gardener' by joining in with others who send me material they find inspirational and encouraging?