

Ministry update for Synod 2019
Disability Inclusion

- **Synod VicTas Disability Action Plan (DAP)**

Building on the 2015-2018 Plan, a Survey Monkey elicited 63 responses from congregations and institutions of the UCA. These have been reviewed with the aim of producing a suitable Plan and range of actions/responses for the period 2019 - 2022 - presentation and formal adoption to be at Synod 2019.

- **Mental Health Kit**

In response to a Survey Monkey 114 responses were received. Material has been gathered from across the Synod and external sources: it is an educative and pastoral resource for congregations. The kit is currently in design/production phase and will be both hard-copy and on-line, for presentation at Synod in conjunction with the Disability Action Plan.

- **Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)**

Funds have been secured to conduct an initial metropolitan 2-day course in November at CTM. Plans are also underway to conduct similar workshops in 2020 in rural and regional presbytery contexts, including Tasmania, assuming funds can be secured to underwrite the courses.

- **Uniting CPE – The John Paver Centre**

Supervisors in the Centre are subject to review of their accreditation each 5 years, according to the Standards of the Association for Supervised and Pastoral Education in Victoria (ASACPEV Inc.). In 2019 Andy Calder and Dr Jan Morgan have been subject to such review. 2019 coincides with the Centre's Registration which is also subject to review and renewal each 5 years.

Plans are under consideration for CPE programs in 2020, including a possible eco-ministry program.

- **Royal Commissions**

- (i) *Inquiry into Victoria's Mental Health System.* On behalf of the Synod, the eLM Unit has coordinated suggestions and a response for the Commission's Terms of Reference. We are awaiting the opportunity to make our contribution and will gather and collate the response from amongst our networks.
- (ii) *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability.* This national inquiry is also developing its Terms of Reference and UnitingCare Australia's Disability Forum, which this Synod is a member of, is overseeing the response to this Inquiry. Collaboration with the JIM Cluster sees a parallel focus on safeguards and protections post July 1 for people with disabilities who do not receive NDIS services.

- **Assembly 2018**

The Synod of Victoria and Tasmania led the Resolution (seconded by Synods of SA and NSW/ACT) that adopted a 'Statement of Access and Welcome', encouraged Assembly to develop Access Guidelines for all its events, develop a liturgical response regarding people with disabilities and request each Synod to develop Disability Action Plans in response to the DDA.



Actions emanating include

- (i) **Liturgy of celebration and lament:** Work continues with the Assembly's Transforming Worship network in adopting a liturgy which acknowledges the historical exclusion encountered by some people with disabilities. It is designed for use during Advent/December 3 being International Day of People with Disability.
- (ii) In response to the 2018 Resolution, and as part of Synod's Disability Action Plan, Access Guidelines to be developed will be offered to Assembly for its consideration.

- **NDIA/Spirituality**

Advocacy continues in conjunction with Spiritual Health Victoria to engage with NDIA and its planning processes to include the dimension of spirituality when planners are meeting with individuals and families. This work in progress is also linked to a proposal in which eLM is a member of a consortium seeking an Australia Research Council Grant. The Centre for Disability Studies, University of Sydney is the lead Organiser.

- **Pilgrim College**

'Pastoral Care/People with Disabilities' subject being developed and to be facilitated in second semester. Andy Calder, who has recently completed his PhD investigating the spirituality of adults with intellectual disability, is designing and coordinating the subject.

- **Road Trauma**

The Synod is an active collaborator with Road Trauma Support Services Victoria, Transport Accident Commission (TAC) and the City of Greater Geelong, in a project to construct the first state-endorsed memorial for road crash victims. The site selected is at LimeBurners Point, Corio Bay, East Geelong. With a commission of \$100,000, the Expression of Interest document is now circulating amongst relevant sculpture and artist networks, with construction and launch expected by year's end. The 19th annual 'Time for Remembering' ceremony will be held in November in Parliament House.

- **Rituals/Liturgical Resource**

Work is underway to gather and develop a collection of rituals & liturgies which respond to a range of traumatic situations. This is designed to be an online pastoral resource for congregations and leaders when needing rituals for critical incidents or event, with the ability to modify them according to the circumstances.

- **Conferences**

Andy attended and presented on aspects of his PhD at L'Arche Conference (February 2019, Sydney), Summer Institute of Theology and Disability (May 2019, Michigan), Spiritual Care Australia (June 2019, Melbourne).

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