



Shepparton
Uniting Church

First Edition
December 2014

on the *Vine*

Seeking to be faithful to Christ in worship, community life and serving the wider community.

Prayer Points...

Writing a prayer

Jools To Visit Shepparton

1st - 5 May, 2015

Fun For The Kids

Have some fun!

Faith in Action

Love makes a way

Reflecting on...

The kingdom of heaven



Rev.
Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt
(03) 58212077

A word from our Reverend

“

We are here as part of God's church not because we are good enough, or because we are better than others, but because we recognise the need for God in our lives and seek to learn together what it is to walk the way of Christ in love and service of others.

We come from a variety of backgrounds and are at different points in our faith journey. This all adds to the richness of our lives together. Whether you are here as a visitor or looking for a place to be your spiritual home, I trust that you will find a welcome and something that nourishes your inner being.

”

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Prayer points...

Writing a prayer

When writing a prayer to be used for the prayers for others, I focus on several points:

- It is a conversation with God and the start of my prayer will always acknowledge my God.
- The language I use needs to be relevant and one which will encourage and invite the congregation to be connected and a part of the prayer.
- Choose a theme and tie this in with
 1. The world we live in.
 2. Government and leaders of our community.
 3. Those who are unwell and suffering.
 4. Our church community (noting specific persons if requested)



5. Our families and loved ones.
6. Ourselves. I always aim to finish with a word of encouragement and mission.

Choosing a theme is as simple as picking an event in everyday life, eg. Going shopping, riding a bike or going for a walk. Talk about the things you observe and tie them in with the points above.

Eg. Walking into the supermarket and acknowledging the work that goes into running it reminds us of the work and commitment required by world and

community leaders, and of the responsibility to carefully utilise earth's resources to provide food etc.

The aisle with medications reminds us of those who are unwell and the baby section of new families and their needs, etc.

Taking the shopping trolley back to the main entrance so the young kids have less to push around in the heat reminds us that it is good to go that extra mile to help others. We can make a difference and our prayer should be for just that.

Kim

On the Vine

It's with pleasure that I write to you as the Convenor of the publicity committee in this the first Shepparton Uniting Church Magazine.

The publicity committee hope that the articles within help to inspire your journey of faith and encourage you to show God's love in the community and world around us particular at this time of waiting and celebration.

Like many in our world today, even in a time meant for joy and excitement of a new baby, Jesus and his family had heart ache, fleeing their country for safe

haven. Although not all around us (although there are many) have the sorrow of fleeing all they know, many have heart ache for other reasons.

Loss of a loved one, fear of what tomorrow will bring or even feeling alone in a crowded room can be just a few of the reasons why this season can be a time of suffering for many. I encourage you to read, contemplate all within these pages and step out as disciple of Christ acting "justly, love mercy and walking humble with your God". (Micah 6:8)

If you have a journey of faith or experience that you wish to share with the community or feel you

could help with a particular article on a once of or regular basis then please contact the Publicity Committee through one of its members or via our email publicity@sheppartonuc.org.au

Until next time we hope that the light of the star over that special stable shines into your soul this Christmas and radiates out for all to see.

Blessings

Melissa Graham

Publicity Committee Members:
Melissa Graham (Convenor),
Jen Davies, Thelma Payne and
Corey Jinnette(magazine only).

In General

Shepparton Uniting Church Building Project Update

After what has been a year of delays things are once again moving forward with the Shepparton Uniting Church redevelopment project.

We had a productive teleconference meeting with the members of property service Paul Walec (Director - Property Services), Lucia Fitzgerald (Manager - Development Projects) and Andrew Stewart (Optimize Consulting - Synod appointed consultant) on the 27th of May.

This meeting set the ground work to begin work towards cost estimates with local builders for our project.

Although there has been many more obstacles in our path

since that date our most recent meeting with Rev. Mark Lawrence (General Secretary Synod of Victoria and Tasmania) and Pauline McGillivray (Executive Director Administration and Finance) was extremely productive. Below is a report in regards to this meeting from Joan McRae, Congregation Chairperson.

We now have a clear path forward with the overwhelming support of the Synod, with a letter received from Pauline outlining our next steps in moving forward.

Brian Pethybridge (Peps Plans) is currently working with the city council and the council's heritage advisor to finalise aspects of our plan to fulfil all

Meeting with General Secretary



Warmest thanks to all who attended the meeting with the General Secretary and the Executive Director Administration and Finance on October 23.

Mark Lawrence and Pauline McGillivray listened, reflected, responded and encouraged us all. The General Secretary apologised to Shepparton for the hurt and problems Shepparton has been caused by new procedures in Property Services. He assured us that the Chair of the Property Board is keen to see the Shepparton redevelopment completed. Pauline suggested practical ways

heritage concerns. Hopefully by the time this is printed these will be finalised and Brian will have begun the process of drawing the final documents of design ready for us to begin the process of putting the project out to tender.

The Property Planning Task Group continues to ask for your prayers as we continue to work, with hope and faith, towards a new Worship complex for all.

to enable the redevelopment to go forward.

We were heartened and encouraged by the support offered by Pauline and Mark.

I emailed my thanks to Pauline and Mark early the following morning and received Mark's response at 7.20am, from work!

Pauline and I really appreciated meeting with the Shepparton folk. We hope that the evening was helpful for everyone and that we can work together constructively in the future. Thank you too for your chairing of the meeting, and the small group's hospitality over dinner.

Joan McRae - Chairperson



Julian Hamilton to visit Shepparton (Jools)

**1st to 5th May,
2015**

This exciting event is open to everyone – Julian is a most inspiring speaker and relates well across all age groups.

Julian Hamilton is currently the Methodist Chaplain serving Trinity College in Dublin. He is well known and loved amongst our Uniting Church young folk and is one of only two key speakers who have ever been asked to attend and speak at more than one NCYC!

He was one of the Bible Study speakers at NCYC in Sydney in January this year, and most of our NEVictoria contingent attended his Bible Studies each day.

Jools is visiting Australia for about a month in April and May 2015 and he has accepted an invitation from the Presbytery to spend from the 1st to the 5th of May in the Presbytery - based here in Shepparton.

At present the basic plans are to run a major youth event in Shepparton over the weekend

(1st-3rd) and some opportunities for ministers, leaders, those involved in children's and family ministry to participate in workshops on the Monday and Tuesday (4th-5th). Julian will then move to Frankston to engage with metropolitan congregations.

A very rough plan is:

Friday evening – A "youth rally" type event, involving young folk from other Youth Groups in the Shepparton area and from the Loddon, Mallee and Riverina Presbyteries.

Saturday

A full day of activities, including a Bible Study with Julian and a variety of workshop/elective type activities. The day will end with evening worship, featuring Julian as preacher.

Sunday

9.30am Worship – Julian as Guest Preacher, followed by morning tea

6pm Evening Service at Wesley (organized by Ministers' Association). Julian as Guest Preacher.

Monday and Tuesday

Workshops with Julian for ministers, leaders etc. possibly one in Wangaratta area and one in Mooropna/Tatura area.



Group Profile

MaDaS Senior Youth Group

I've been a leader of the Shepparton UCA Senior Youth Group (MaDaS) for a little over a year now, alongside Cameron Shields and Lorraine Threlfall. Through that time I have seen some wonderful sights and learned so much from our upcoming youth and leaders of the church.

Our program this year has seen us discuss Joan Fisher's upcoming journey to Palestine, challenge ourselves with quiz nights, explore movies and discuss social issues, practice prayer with Rev John Hill, trampoline at Go Jump, plan two services

shared at both the Mooroopna and Shepparton churches and grow in our understanding and discipleship, discuss the issues which affect us as young people, meet with staff from Uniting Care to talk about the issues facing asylum seekers and new arrivals, and have a formal dinner at Maccas when we brought table cloths, crockery and cutlery! Wow! All the while, the youth have grown in their friendships and found a safe place to hang



out and explore God, the church and their place in the world.

If you or someone you know might be interested in joining our senior youth group (Gr 9-12), or junior youth group (Gr 6-8), please phone Jen on 0438210839, or Rosalie on 0358212077.

Jen Davies.

Vic Tas Synod 2014

Synod Snippets

The Victorian and Tasmanian Synod meeting was held over 1 week at Latrobe University Bundoora in September. I had never been to a Synod meeting before and the idea I had in my mind was that it would be held in a lecture theatre. It was a nice surprise to find that we were organised into table groups of 8 people. I soon found that each day was packed with morning worship, reports, small group time, table discussions, bible studies and proposals.

For the bigger proposals we would talk about it in small groups and table groups which aided consensus voting.

Some of the bigger issues to be discussed were whether the Uniting Church would continue its support of ACCESS ministries, support needed for Rural Ministry, an update of where we are at with the Major Strategic Review and lamenting the pain of the Synods financial predicament.

A couple of my personal highlights was having dinner with current moderator Dan Wootton and the Synod youth, being able to vote for the moderator elect who was announced to be Sharon Hollis, daughter of Joy Sims of the Dookie congregation and having the opportunity to stand at the microphone, address the floor of the Synod and have my point of view heard.

Cameron Shields.

Advent Prayer

Lord, we often miss Advent's power because these December weeks are full of secular Christmas parties and preparations for Christmas. Each year, the business of this season serves to distract us from having an Advent season that truly prepares us for the celebration of Christmas, with all its meaning.

God, every year I believe that this will be the year that I will take the time to think, wait and prepare myself for the coming of

Christmas day. To be reflecting on that first Christmas and what this season truly means for me here today. All around me are the signs rushing me to Christmas. Some kind of celebration stops me during this time of waiting to realise the true splendour of your gift of love.

Lord, I need your help. I want to slow my world down. The days are longer at this time and I seem only to fill them with more things. This year, more than ever, I need Advent. I need this

time of reflective preparation and longing for hope in the darkness that surrounds me.

God, be with me. Guide me in these weeks to what you want me to see this Advent. Help me to be vulnerable enough to allow you to lead me to the place of my limitations, the place where I will find you deeply rooted in my heart and soul, loving me with no limitations.

Amen

Getting To Know...

Gwen Wallace

Born: Nov 27th in Prahran, 87 years ago

Place with the fondest memories: Oakleigh, in those days it was "in the bush-on the very outskirts of Melbourne."

A typical childhood Sunday: riding her bike to church and on most Sundays she and her family attended morning, afternoon and evening services.

1ST Job: Working in the general store/post office at Springvale. Although it was not a very big store everything you wanted was available.

Marriage and Children: At 21 Gwen married Bill who owned a market garden that is now the Moorabbin Airport. They had 2 children Geoff and Di. Sadly

Geoff passed away at the age of 29. Gwen has three grandchildren and 4 great grand children.

Faith: Faith has always been a major part of Gwen's life. She told me she would not manage without it.

Over the years Gwen has worshipped with the Baptist Church, the Salvation Army and the Interdenominational and Presbyterian/Uniting Church.

Gwen has been very happily living for the past 17 years at Tarcoola. She is a busy, sprightly and very independent lady and has a weekly schedule that



would see many having difficulty keeping up her pace. Some of her activities include: Friday Hospice Op Shop, Monthly on a Monday Scots Op shop, daily visiting at Acacia and Hakea (Tarcoola), Monthly UCAF

For The Kids

Have Fun!



Cloud Dough Recipe

In a bowl add 8 cups of flour and 1 cup of baby oil. Work together until combined.

Play!

Nativity Word Scramble

All these words come from the Christmas Story. Can you unscramble them?

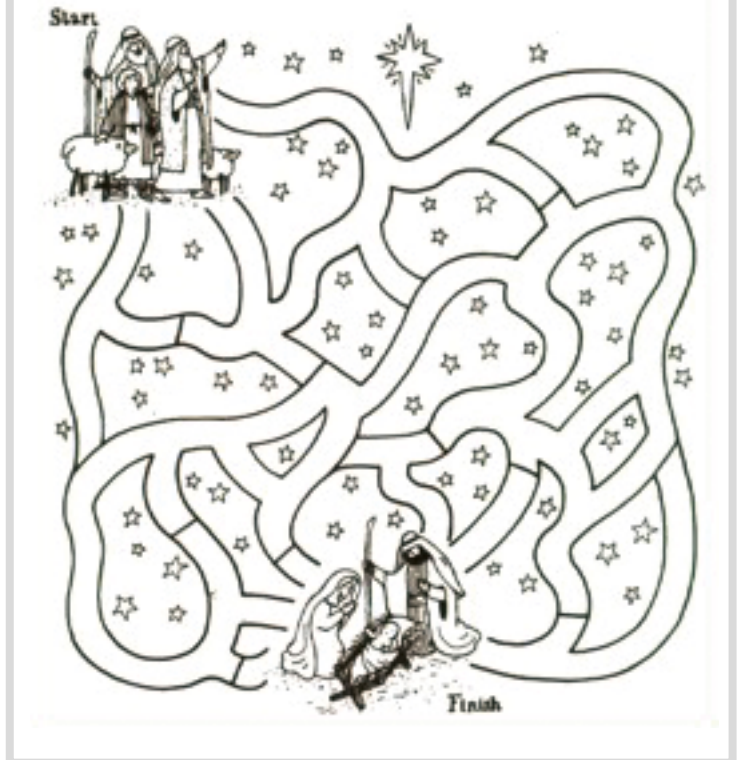
1. STRA -----
2. MAGREN -----
3. MYAR -----
4. SEPHE -----
5. DOEYKN -----
6. AEGLN -----
7. JPHOES -----
8. JSSEU -----
9. KIGSN -----
10. STBALE -----



How do angels greet each other?

They say "Halo there!"

Help the shepherds find the way to Jesus



Hey, Kids!

Let's Countdown To Christmas!!!

Three jam-packed mornings of Christmas craft, music, stories, games, puppets and refreshments

WHEN: Mon 22nd, Tues 23rd, Wed 24th December

TIME: 9:30 - 11:30am each day

COST: \$12 (to cover craft costs for the whole program)

AGE: For 4-11 year olds

(We'll be working in small age based groups)

WHERE: Shepparton Uniting Church, 150 Maude St.

PLEASE REGISTER ASAP - LIMITED NUMBERS

We have a limit of 50 places. Pick up a registration form at Church or phone

Lyn 5821 1242 or Rosalie 5821 2077

From the Minister's desk

Advent

So? It's Advent! And nearly Christmas! What does all this Advent business mean? What's in it for me? I'm too busy preparing for Christmas, what with presents, planning Christmas Dinner, catering for unexpected visitors, etc., to worry about Advent. Perhaps you've heard people speaking about Advent like this. And yet, in the history of the Christian Church, it has been, and I believe still should be, a very significant time of preparation and reflection, both for Christmas and the Christian life in general. Historically, Advent has been a time for fasting, much like Lent, and Christians only broke their fast on Christmas Eve. How can we

use Advent today? We can take time to reconsider Jesus' birth, life, death and resurrection and what relevance these events have for me and my family, my community, my country and for the whole wide world. We are soon to celebrate Jesus' birth once again. Through Jesus, God becomes one with his people to bring them back to himself; in other words, to reconcile humanity back to God and to each other. We, and all people have the unfortunate trait of doing what we want to do, rather than doing and being what God wants us to do and be. God loves us, and Jesus shows us this. "For God so loved the world that he gave

his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." Let us take time this Advent to reconsider these things and their relevance to us now.

This will probably be my first and last piece whilst in the official role of Minister-in-Association, which will conclude on 31st December 2014.

Norma and Darryl would like to wish all the people of the Shepparton Uniting Church, a holy and happy Christmas, and all the best for the New Year.

Rev. Darryl Porritt - Minister-in-Association

Media Release - 25 June 2014

Kildonan / Cutting Edge merger

Two UnitingCare community welfare agencies, Kildonan UnitingCare (KUC) and UnitingCare Cutting Edge (UCCE) have confirmed their organisations will merge as of July 2014.

The merger of the sister agencies will create a stronger community welfare organisation able to deliver better services to more clients, with a geographical reach extending from metropolitan Melbourne through to Northern Regional Victoria.

The Boards of the two like-

minded agencies made the decision to merge to ensure the new body will be best placed to respond to the needs of its communities, as the welfare sector faces significant policy shift and reform.

The new organisation will adopt the Kildonan UnitingCare name, and will be led by Stella Avramopoulos, who has been at the helm of Kildonan for the past six years.

'The visions of Kildonan and Cutting Edge are strongly aligned, and our coming together

provides significant synergies for both agencies - but more importantly, for the communities our agencies serve,' said Kildonan CEO Stella Avramopoulos.

'Both agencies have a reputation for delivering innovative, proactive and relevant services that have been helping communities get ahead of their problems for years.

'Together, we will be able to deliver better services, more effectively, to more clients,' Ms Avramopoulos said.

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Presbytery News

Since our last meeting we have seen several ministers conclude placements in our Presbytery, although it is pleasing to see that several of them have decided to enjoy the next stage of their journey in our Presbytery. In February, Rev Geraldine Leonard concluded her placement at Yarrowonga and Rev Martin Wright concluded his placement at Rochester/ Northern Rivers Parish. In late April I attended the services where Rev Joan Fisher concluded her placement at Emmanuel Anglican Uniting, Kergunyah and Trinity North Albury Uniting

Churches and Rev Graeme Wells concluded his placement in the Rutherglen linked Congregations. In early April Presbytery inducted Rev Deacon Kel Hodge as a Minister of the Word in the Benalla Congregation.

I have attended a couple of briefings in Melbourne. The first meeting was concerned with the Major Strategic Review. An opportunity was provided to meet with some of the team members as well as sharing with members of other Presbyteries. The second was an update on the Uniting Our Future

Programme, where we were given information concerning the process of selling properties and progress with this. Again an opportunity was provided to share with other Presbyteries - especially those who have been more affected by this programme - to understand their fears, pain, frustrations and in some cases the hope in a new future as congregations and agencies have reviewed their mission and programmes.

Helen Collins - Chairperson of the North East Victoria Presbytery.

UCCE Acting CEO Ronni Druitt added, 'This is a natural step in the evolution of agencies within the church. We have carefully selected our partner to merge with ensuring our good work in the communities in which we operate can continue.'

Kildonan UnitingCare is one of Australia's oldest community organisations dating back to 1881. Over the past five years it has more than doubled in size and been gaining a solid reputation for delivering some of the most proactive, responsive and relevant community services in Victoria.

Based in Melbourne's north and north-eastern suburbs its programs target the issues that lead to financial hardship and personal or family breakdown - tackling issues upfront, before problems take hold or worsen.

UnitingCare Cutting Edge (formerly Cutting Edge Youth Services) was established in 1996 to address the underserved needs of youths in Victoria's Goulbourn Valley. Over the last 18 years, UCCE has continued to strengthen its reputation in the region as a capable provider of services that empower individuals,



support families and strengthen communities. Ronni Druitt will remain at the Shepparton office in her role as Business Manager while overseeing the operations until the new organisational structure is in place.

The UnitingCare network is one of the largest providers of community services in Australia, employing 39 000 staff, supported by 27 000 volunteers and operating across 1600 sites.

For more information contact Jane Calvert, 0403 603 125.

Faith In Action

Love makes a way

"I woke on May 20th to my kids smiling saying 'We are proud of you' and 'You got in trouble', 'you were arrested', 'How many prayers did you say?' and 'Will it help the kids?'"
Adrian Greenwood Young Adult Discipleship Educator.

On Monday the 19th Adrian was part of a group that held simultaneous sit-in prayer vigils at the Sydney office of Prime Minister Tony Abbott and the Melbourne office of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten.

The following is the latest update that he posted on the morepraxis.org.au website that he runs as part of his roles as the Young Adult Discipleship Educator within the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania.

#LoveMakesAWay a growing movement of Christian Activism

Over a hundred faith leaders have now risked arrest though civil disobedience as #LoveMakesAWay. Including Catholics, Pentecostals, Uniting Church, Salvation Army, Anglicans, Baptists, Independents, Church of Christ and a Jewish Rabbi.

#Love Makes A Way is a movement of Christians seeking an end to Australia's inhumane asylum seeker policies through prayer and non-violent love in action. To asylum seekers the Australian Government says "NO WAY!" but a growing movement of Christians that says #LoveMakesAWay.

Australia's asylum seeker policies, especially the policy of indefinite offshore detention and living conditions inside Manus Island and Nauru detention centres have been condemned not only by church

advocacy groups but basically everyone including the UNHCR, Human Rights Commission, Amnesty International, Australian Medical Association, Australian Psychological Society and a wide range of refugee and international law experts in Australia. Prof. Pat McGorry describes detention centres as "factories for producing mental illness."

These actions demonstrate to the government how serious we are in our commitment to see all children and their families released from Australia's immigration detention centres.

For many years church leaders have been calling for change on asylum seeker policy to both Coalition and Labor governments. Churches have volunteered to house asylum seeker children and families at their own expense.





Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue



What do they do?

They conduct prayerful sit-ins in offices of federal MPs. So far, these have included:

- Scott Morrison
- Julie Bishop
- Tony Abbott + Bill Shorten (simultaneously)
- Jamie Briggs
- Joe Hockey
- Josh Frydenberg
- Christopher Pyne
- Peter Dutton
- Andrew Nikolic
- Richard Marles
- Bridget McKenzie

What do these actions involve?

Group members enter the office of the politician and explain they are there to get a commitment to a timeline for the release of all children and families from immigration detention, or in

the case of backbenchers and senators, for them to become public champions within their party for the release of all children and families.

The participants then stay there, singing and praying and reading the Bible, until they receive that commitment or are arrested.

So far 107 people have through participation risked arrest in these vigils, including 90 actual arrests. With over 200 involved in these actions and hundreds more attending information and training.

Most have eventually been arrested and charged at the end of the day, but no convictions have so far been recorded.

Why risk arrest?

The government and the Opposition seem impervious to the lobbying and discussion that many organisations have engaged in

over the past decade. In fact, the brutality of the detention system seems to have increased.

Nonviolent direct action forces the government and community to confront the issue and return to the negotiating table.

“You may well ask: “Why direct action? Why sit ins, marches and so forth? Isn’t negotiation a better path?” You are quite right in calling for negotiation. Indeed, this is the very purpose of direct action. Nonviolent direct action seeks to create such a crisis and foster such a tension that a community which has constantly refused to negotiate is forced to confront the issue. It seeks so to dramatize the issue that it can no longer be ignored....”

Rev Martin Luther King Jr

Explaining civil disobedience in his ‘letter from the Birmingham jail’

Assembly action

Just a thought



Rev. Terence Corkin
General Secretary
Uniting Church Assembly

Over the last few weeks I have been receiving a steady stream of "Readiness for Ministry" certificates through the office for me to sign. These certificates are the formal declaration by the Assembly that a person has completed their preparation for ordination.

As I sign them I give thanks for God's faithfulness in continuing to provide Christ's church with people to serve in the distinctive and essential ministry for which the UCA ordains people - Deacon and Minister of the Word. I cannot help but wonder where they will serve and to what ministries they will be called in their first and subsequent placements. Whatever the variety of places and focus of these ministries the Apostle Paul in Ephesians chapter 4 would offer them the encouragement that they have a very particular responsibility.

11 So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.

Equipping the saints for service so that the body of Christ may

be built up into maturity is a very high calling. Paul's words encourage those called to any ministry to recognise that it is not about them and what they like to do or get credit for; but rather it is always about strengthening the discipleship of others. This equipping is not just for service but also has a goal - that the whole people of the church may reach maturity of faithfulness to God.

When I received my "Readiness for Ministry" certificate I never expected to one day be the General Secretary of the Assembly. However the core of my call to ministry was always to "equip the saints for service" as an older translation put it. I am sure that supporting the ministry of others and encouraging faithfulness is just as important in this role as it is in a congregational context.

A discipline that I exercise for myself is to occasionally reflect on how much of my ministry is focused supporting the ministry of other parts of the body of Christ and how much is just about me doing what I like. My encouragement to the people receiving these recently signed certificates and to those of us who have had them for many years is that we reflect on our calling and the extent to which its expression is holding true to our vocation.

Preaching Plan

December 2014 / January 2015

December 2014	7 th Advent 2	14 th Advent 3	21 st Advent 4	24 th Christmas Eve	25 th Christmas Day	28 th Christmas 1
9.30am Shepparton Afternoon/ Evening	Rosalie HC	Rosalie	Rev. Joan Fisher	7.00 pm Rosalie 10 pm Joan McRae	9:30am Rosalie	Joan McRae 2.00pm Kialla Brian Hardy
Dookie 9.00am	Joan McRae	Shirley Marven	Rev. John Hill HC		Joy Sims	Joy Sims
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Joan McRae	No Service	At Katandra	Tues 23 rd 7:30 pm Christmas Joy Sims		No Service
Kialla West 11.00am	No Service	Shirley Marven	No Service			No Service
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge	Carol Service 7:30pm Joy Sims	Rev. John Hill HC			No Service
Lectionary Readings	Is 40:1-11 Ps 85 2 Pt 3: 8-15a Mk 13:24-37	Is 61:1-4, 8-11 Ps 126 1 Thes 5:16-24 Jn 1:6-8, 19-28	Sm 7:1-11, 16 Lk 1:47-55 Rom 16:25-27 Lk1: 26-38	Is 9:2-7 Ps 96 Ti 2:11-14 Lk 2:1-14	Is 62:6-12 Ps 97 Ti 3:4-7 Lk 2:8-20	Is 61:10-62:3 Ps 148 Gal 4:4-7 Lk 2:22-40

January 2015	4 th Christmas 2	11 th Epiphany 1	18 th Epiphany 2	25 th Epiphany 3
9.30am Shepp Afternoon/ Evening	Rev. Joan Fisher	Rosalie	Rosalie	Rosalie & Lorraine Threlfall 2.00pm Kialla Rosalie
Dookie 9.00am	Rev. John Hill HC	Joy Sims	Shirley Marven	Joan McRae
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Rev. John Hill HC	No Service	At Katandra	No Service
Kialla West 11.00am	No Service	Joy Sims	No Service	No Service
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge	No Service	Shirley Marven	No Service
Lectionary Readings	Jer 31:7-14 Ps 147:12-20 Eph 3:1-14 Jn 1:10-18	Gn 1:1-5 Ps 29 Acts 19:1-15 Mk:1-4	1 Sam 3:1-10 Ps 139:1-6, 13-18 1 Cor 6:12-20 Jn 1:43-51	Jon 3:1-5 Ps 62:5-12 1 Cor 7:29-31 Mk 1:14-20

Come – Into My Garden

Meet my friend

It is Spring-time, the Roses are blooming. The Pansies are a mass of flowers. The petunias are making a show. The clematis plants are climbing up the netting in front of the pergola. Iris's have been making a show. As we have South West winds from time to time the North of the house is sheltered and it is pleasurable when the weather is milder or in the cool of the evening to sit quietly and let the aura soak into one's person. A garden doesn't just make a show for spring - Many different flowers come into being as each season comes. Each May as our wedding remembrance comes around and the tree dahlias are in full flower: surely this then is a time where heaven comes to be present.

Of the resurrection stories Mary meeting Jesus in the garden has to be an all time favourite. Read

John Ch 20 Mary Magdalene stood weeping. Jesus said to her, woman why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away". Jesus said to her, "Mary!" she turned and said to him in Hebrew, "Rabbouni!" (which means teacher). To read all this passage not only speaks of resurrection, but brings to mind that Jesus was thought to be the gardener. To be sitting in the garden, quietly in the cool of the evening, this presence can be experienced over and over again.

When I was a small boy we sang of heaven above the bright blue sky, but now all of us have come down to earth and found that Heaven is here among us. Jesus in his earthly

ministry clearly said that Heaven is close at hand. To quote Paul from Acts 17:28 "For in him we live and move and have our being." Thus we can say the spirit of the living God is ever near us: not exclusive to anyone of us, but equally available to all. The story of Jesus with the woman at the well in the Gospel of John, Ch 4 verses 24 & 25 is enlightening. "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

We began with a talk of the beauty of the garden and my parting thought is of what peace it is to both work and sit back and enjoy God's creation. Here we can know that there is a vibrancy beyond the rush and bustle of the working day.

I have some family and some visitors who come; they talk, and then like a whirl wind they are gone. The garden which to me is Heaven is not seen by them. Blindness to a garden, that is sad. Heaven is so near at hand. Pitifully, busyness hinders sight.

Author – Alan English
27th October



Ecumenical and Interfaith activities in Shepparton

The Ministers' Association

Originally the Ministers' Fraternal, this is the longest-running ecumenical group, which provides opportunities

for fellowship and sharing for clergy in Shepparton. It runs the ecumenical service on the first Sunday evening each month.

Shepparton InterChurch Council

The InterChurch Council was formed in 1984 to provide opportunities for interchurch learning and sharing between both clergy and lay people. The Uniting Church was a foundation member. The SICC meets on the second Thursday of every second

month. The annual Ecumenical Service at Pentecost is run by the SICC using the service held round the world. This year ecumenical studies were held in October to celebrate our 30 years. The SICC is affiliated with the Victorian Council of Churches. The SICC

has been involved for many years in interfaith prayer services and was involved for over 20 years in working for the Sanctuary at GV Health. Rosalie was the 2013 President; Joan is the secretary. Members are welcome to the meetings.

Shepparton Interfaith Network

Interfaith work has taken place between members of the SICC and Muslim communities for 25 years, but was formalised into the Interfaith Network in 2010, with membership now including the Sikh community.

The Network has been successful in obtaining grants for interfaith work which allow it to present public programmes on a range of topics such as Indigenous Spirituality with Dr Vicki Clark and Pilgrimages, both during

2014. An extensive website gives details of the members, their places of worship (including the Uniting Church) and other helpful information. Rosalie is a member and Joan is on the Executive.

Faith In Action

Soup Kitchen

Every now and again, one person's idea is adopted by a community. Every year the youth group leaders ask the youth "what do you want to do this year?" A seemingly simple question which can produce some really exciting experiences. Once or twice the idea of volunteering for a soup kitchen had come up, following an experience in Melbourne a year or two before. Lorraine set about trying to find who did

a local 'soup kitchen', finding People Helping People and their community BBQs. Through this, the youth spent one Tuesday night helping at a variety of locations across Shepparton and Mooroopna. From the conversations which came out of that night, it was decided that the Shepparton and Mooroopna congregations would take on the responsibility of hosting one of these community BBQs each week for this year. It's very

exciting that even though this is something the youth initiated, it has become a great way for the wider church community to get involved and meet some of our younger members.

For those of you who have volunteered so far with our youth, we thank you. For those of you who would be interested in doing so, please get in touch with Lorraine or Cam and we can add you to our roster.

Reflecting On...

The Kingdom Of Heaven

Recently we have been exploring answers to the question "to what shall I compare the Kingdom of Heaven?" The Young Adult group led a thought provoking worship focusing on the answers to this question as expressed through these passages from Matthew's gospel, Chapter 13, verses 31-32; 33; 44; and 45-47.

Messy Church participants continued to explore this question and engaged in various activities prompted by the Bible verses.

A mustard seed was examined and tasted and sunflower seeds were planted to observe the change from the seed to the plant and to its flower.

Yeast was also touched, tasted and mixed with 3 measures of flour, kneaded, proved and formed into rolls for baking at home.

Treasure was hunted and found. Pearls of great value were examined.

Throughout all the activities the conversation focused on the Kingdom of Heaven and the challenging question of our role as Christians in bringing it into



being today.

Bob Graham has written a children's book entitled "A Bus Called Heaven" and it describes the change in a local community when a derelict old bus is abandoned in the street. Through the actions and enthusiasm of one little girl, (and as is often the case in Jesus' parables, the most unlikely or unexpected person to be the leader!) remarkable things

happen and the old bus seems to earn its name.

This would be a great book to have on your shelf, to share with your children or grandchildren or even just to read yourself and to ponder on what the Kingdom of Heaven might look like in our time and place. What do YOU think it might be like...?

Lorraine Threlfall



Upcoming Events

December 2014 - February 2015

December 2014

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	3	4 10am Multicultural Play Group 4pm Together in Voice	5 MaDaS Christmas Dinner	6 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	7 9:30am Worship 7pm Evensong
8	9 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	10 12pm Leisure Lunch 6:30 Church Council	11 10am Multicultural Play Group 10:45am worship at Banksia lodge 1:30 pm worship at Hakea lodge 2pm Fellowship Group 2pm English Conversation Group 4pm Together in Voice	12	13 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	14 9:30am Worship 4:30-6:30pm Messy Church
15	16 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	17 1:30pm UCAF 1:30pm worship at Ava Maria	18 10am Multicultural Play Group 2pm English Conversation Group 4pm Together in Voice	19	20 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	21 9:30am Worship
22 9:30 - 11am Countdown to Christmas	23 9:30-11am Countdown to Christmas 12:15pm worship at Acacia House	24 9:30-11am Count-down to Christmas 7pm Family Service 10pm Christmas Eve Service	25 9:30am Christmas Day Worship	26	27	28 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
29	30	31				

January 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1	2	3	4 9:30am Worship
5	6	7	8	9	10	11 9:30am Worship 7pm Evensong
12	13	14 12pm Leisure Lunch	15	16	17	18 9:30am Worship 4:30-6:30pm Messy Church
19	20 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	21 1:30pm UCAF	22 10am Multicultural Play Group 2pm English Conversation Group 4pm Together in Voice	23	24 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	25 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
26	27 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 12:15pm Worship at Acacia House	28 1:30pm Worship at Ava Maria 7:30pm Women's Evening Group	29 10am Multicultural Play Group 2pm English Conversation Group 4pm Together in Voice	30	31 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	

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23	24 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	28 1:30pm Worship at Ava Maria 7:30pm Women's Evening Group	26 10am Multicultural Play Group 2pm English Conversation Group 4pm Together in Voice	27	28 8am Men's Breakfast 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	



**Shepparton
Uniting Church**

Shepparton Uniting Church
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