



Shepparton
Uniting Church

Tenth Edition
Autumn 2017

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

YURÓRA

Breaking Down The Barriers

From the Minister's Desk

Transformed and Renewed Hearts

Assembly Action

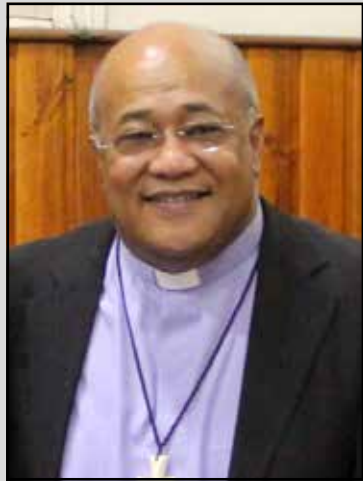
To 40 and Beyond: A Message From the President

Faith In Action

NCYC: Sharing Faith With Others

Rural Round Up

Faith, Fellowship, Fun: The Year Ahead



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“

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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Unite in Passion

In November 2016 Jen and I started looking forward to the release of this Autumn Edition of the magazine. Back then we agreed that it was vital to let our readers hear about the fantastic ways in which young people live out their faith. We have many young people participating in the life of our congregation in different ways. With many of our youth and young adults attending the National Christian Youth Convention back in January we thought it would be great for our readers to hear a few of the many stories and experience from those that attended.

By a strange coincidence, over the past few weeks we have heard concern that there are few young people in our Congregation. Often we don't see young people and families each week in our congregation and my family is no exception. I will be the first to admit at times we struggle to get to church on a Sunday morning.

By contrast our Congregation is shifting away from the norms of many other congregations in the Uniting Church with more and more young adults and families moving into the life of our wider church community.

The name of the National Christian Youth Convention is Yuròra. A Dharug word from the Burrumattagal peoples—the first people of the land in North Parramatta - meaning 'Passion'. With Societal Cultures changing that too means the culture of our young people. However the Yuròra, passion, of the young Christians in our midst is stronger than ever.

We have a lively Kuca group (age 8-12) and our Sunday School has just had a call for more leaders to help with the growing numbers and age range of Children. Our Youth Group crosses the ages 12-19 and called, last year, for the formation of a Youth focus worship service so that they can explore their faith through a multi age, interactive style service. Our Young Adults, last year formed the group Café Praxis. At this years first Café Praxis the 13 young adults aged between 18 and 36 spent the evening talking about their own faith culture growing up, which soon moved to their passion about the church moving forward as Christs disciples and mission into the future, with many brought almost to tears as they spoke about their personal journey

and passion.

The theme of NCYC was "Uniting in Culture". Forty years ago the Presbyterians, Congregationalists and the Methodists decided to unite their faith cultures to create the Uniting Church. There were many barriers prior to 1977 that needed to be broken down to create the Church we know today.

"The Uniting Church's Basis of Union tells us that we should seek to be inclusive - of men and women, young and old and of all our different gifts and skills," said Bradon French NCYC Chairperson.

I pose the question, 'What Barriers as a Congregation do we need to break down today so that we can truly unite and our passion to follow Christ and share his love can be at the forefront of our lives?' Culture barriers of race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, lifestyle etc.

This Lenten season I urge you to step outside your comfort zones and meet with all people in their space and faithfully learn what their passion and culture, as disciples of Christ, is.

Melissa Graham

Easter 2017

The following are the special worship and event times for Shepparton Uniting Church, Easter 2017:

Palm Sunday, 9th April, 9:30am

Holy Week

- Monday 10th April, 7:00pm
- Tuesday 11th April, 7:00pm at Mooropna Uniting Church
- Wednesday 12th, 7:00pm

Maundy Thursday, 13th April, 7:00pm

Good Friday - 14th April 9:30am.

Easter Sunday -16th April 6:15am on West Side of Victoria Park Lake, Shepparton, Victoria. BYO chair and mug. 9:30am at Shepparton Uniting Church.

All services will be held at Shepparton Uniting Church, 150 Maude St, Shepparton unless otherwise stated.

Special Service times for Shepparton Rural Parish are as follows:

Palm Sunday 9th April: 9:00am - Dookie Uniting Church

11:00am Kialla West Uniting Church.
5:00pm Mt Major, Dookie.
Gates open at 4:00pm. BYO Chair or rug.

Maundy Thursday - 13th April, 7:30pm at Pine Lodge Uniting Church.

Easter Sunday - 16th April 9:00am at Dookie Uniting Church.
11:00am Katandra West Uniting Church.



From the Minister's Desk

Transformed and Renewed Hearts

Dear friends in Christ,
I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and a great beginning to this New Year. At the time of writing this letter most children would be back at school and most people would be back to their daily routine of work, rest, and leisure.

Outside at the moment the rain is constant and refreshing, which reminds me that God our Creator is constantly renewing the whole of creation and that we human beings have a part to play in this continuing, refreshing,



and regenerating of the whole world. The rain seems to breathe new life into my lawn and garden which reminds me of the work of the Holy Spirit breathing new life into tired bodies and souls and commission us as the church of Jesus Christ to be agents of renewal and transformation.

Having said that, we as a church must first let our hearts be transformed and renewed by God through the Good News of the Gospel. With transformed and renewed hearts we are able to extend the same transformation to others. Both our individual and communal transformation is part of restoring wholeness. It is really being salt and light, and the whole church becomes a visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God.

Although the church is a visible manifestation of the Kingdom of God, it is not God's entire Kingdom. We have the ability to influence public policies and legislation, and in the Gospels as well as the Book of Acts, we see Christians ministering to the poor and marginalized, even

challenging unjust societal structures (Matt 9: 35-38, Acts 3-4, 5: 15-16).

In post-Christian setting, many sceptics view the church as corrosive, divisive, and a source of injustice. But the kind of church the Bible advocates is rooted in justice that flows from the heart of God. It seeks to bring all things into the wholeness of God. We, the church, are to live now in light of Jesus' restoration of all things and be the light for all nations.

Lastly I ask, that as those justified by faith in the God of all, and who have experienced the wholeness that God brings, to avoid corrosive and divisive behaviour in the church, and to focus on Christ's renewal and transformation of the whole of creation. We must speak the narrative of love and compassion; practise God's justice (James 3: 10-18), and purify our hearts (James 4: 8) whose desires lead us to sin.

Rev. Loni Vaitohi

UnitingCare Pancake Day

Once again the Shepparton Uniting Church will be holding a Pancake day event for the Share Appeal Pancake Day Fundraiser.

It is to be held THIS Tuesday 7th March 2017, 6pm at Shepparton Uniting Church,

Maude Street, Shepparton.

Gold Coin Donation per pancake.

Hope to see you all there supporting the Share Appeal and the very important and vital community service work of UnitingCare.



Rural Round Up

Faith, Fellowship, Fun: The Year Ahead

The Rural Parish had a busy time over the Christmas Season, as I guess you all did. We started with a carol service mid December at Katandra where we lit the candles of Blessing, Miracles, Hope, Love and then the Christ Candle interspersed with favourite carols, followed by a lovely supper and fellowship.

A family Christmas Service at Pine Lodge a couple of days before Christmas where the children of the district dress up as angels, wise men, shepherds, Mary and Joseph to help us remember the story and all the people in the Christmas story, singing of carols and a message from Loni all made for a memorable evening. This year we were blessed to have Arlo, baby son of Wayne and Lauren Jeffery play the part of Baby Jesus. The service was followed by cold drinks and icy poles for the young, cuppa and biscuits and a chat for the parents and friends.

In Dookie we had a community carols night the Sunday before Christmas when there was a great gathering of families to share in a BBQ tea provided by the Lions Club. This was followed by carols led by a combined churches choir, who also gave a few items. Loni and his family sang for us and Loni

spoke to us about trust.

Christmas morning Loni led worship in Dookie where again he spoke to us about trust and challenged us to trust as God trusted us and sent His Son to us. We were thrilled to welcome so many family members who were home to share with parents and family, to our service.

Late January Pine Lodge/ Katandra Fellowship met to plan for the year and we have some interesting things happening.

In February we have our annual meeting at the home of Joy and John Sims. The competition is an arrangement of weeds, not a good one for the good gardeners. Here we will make pancakes for our afternoon tea which we serve with mixed berries, cream and ice cream.

In March we hope to have a basket making demonstration and the completion will be for the best bloom.

April is yet to be arranged possibly a games afternoon with a memory game as our competition.

Dookie Fellowship meet at the



end of February to plan their year.

The Dookie church will celebrate harvest thanksgiving the last Sunday in February.

Now we are excitedly planning for our Palm Sunday service on the Mount. Gates will open at approx. 4pm for a service at 5pm to finish at sunset. We will have a piper and hopefully the Sing Australia Choir. Watch the notice sheets for more information and times.

Then on Easter Sunday we will have the Moderator, Rev. Sharon Hollis with us for a combined service in Dookie at 10.30am followed by a bring and share lunch.

All exciting stuff and we invite the members of the city church to join us. I pray Gods guidance and blessing for us all in 2017.

Blessing.

Joy Sims



Assembly Action

To 40 and Beyond: A Message From the President

2017 is a special year for the Uniting Church in Australia.

Together we mark 40 years since church union.

At the inauguration service on Wednesday 22 June 1977 the first President Rev. Dr Davis McCaughey, the primary author of our Basis of Union, remarked that church union 'meant absolutely nothing, unless it drives us back to the fundamental questions - where do you come from, where are you going, and who are you?'

"Are you and I prepared to find our bearings afresh?" asked McCaughey, as he urged the 1977 faithful on a new pilgrimage, to engage the world through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of his spirit.

Here we stand almost 40 years later. We are still adjusting our bearings - a pilgrim people together on the way to the promised end.

There's a lot to celebrate. We have developed a ministry that values the gifts of women and men, lay and ordained.

We sought reconciliation between First and Second Peoples by apologising for the sins of the past and walking alongside

our Indigenous sisters and brothers.

We have maintained strong, principled positions on issues of justice and peace, notably the treatment of refugees and asylum seekers.

The UnitingCare network is one of the largest providers of community services in Australia.

We have declared that we are a multicultural Church and are working to give fuller expression to the richness of our culturally and linguistically diverse community.

We have declared that a person's sexual orientation should not be a bar to full participation or leadership in the life of our Church.

The way we make decisions in councils of our Church remains open and inclusive.

These are just some of the ways the Spirit has led us. I'm sure you have your own highlights or things you're proud of.

Over the course of the year UCA members are planning a number of activities and events.

40 Days of Prayer/Week of prayer and fasting

From 14 May until our Church anniversary on 22 June I will

lead 40 days of prayer.

That period of prayer will start with Moderators, General Secretaries and myself coming together for 40 hours of continuous prayer. Prayer resources will be shared across the church.

That 40 days will include A Destiny Together - a week of prayer and fasting for justice for First Peoples.

Conferences

The Uniting Church History Association will be formally launched at a national conference at Pilgrim Uniting Church in Adelaide from 9-12 June.

Later in June and in August there will be President's National Ministers' Conferences, open to all people in specified placement. The first conference will take place in Darwin from 29 June-2 July under the banner Honouring First Peoples as Sovereign. The second conference will run alongside the Uniting Leaders 2017 conference in Adelaide, South Australia from 22-24 August.

The Assembly Working Group on Worship and Formation, Education & Discipleship will also host the Transforming Worship conference at Burnside Uniting Church in

Adelaide from 27-30 July.

Information on these and other 40th anniversary year events will be published on our <http://uca.org.au> website, so please notify us of your event by sending an email to comms@nat.uca.org.au

We will aim to share details of as many anniversary events as possible on the website.

As we continue to adjust our

bearings and discern the direction of the Spirit, I look forward to you joining me in celebration, reflection and prayer, as we give thanks to God for our past and present blessings and pray for God's love which has sustained us in our first 40 years to continue to nourish us for the next 40 and beyond.

Mägayamirri Rom



Stuart McMillan
President, Uniting Church in

Interfaith News

Shepparton Interfaith Network

Have you heard of Shepparton Interfaith Network? This group, which grew out of decades of multi-faith work by the Shepparton InterChurch Council, has been working for over five years. Membership is open to people of any of the major faith groups. The Network receives grants from the Victorian Multicultural Commission to enable it to work on a variety of projects. These have included virtual tours of the Sikh Gurdwara or Prayer House, mosques and churches.

Among the events which the Interfaith Network supports are the annual Harmony Day celebrations, United Nations World Day of Tolerance, the PATHWAYS Diversity Education Presentations in secondary

schools and UN Human Rights Day. The IFN holds forums and gatherings which encourage interfaith dialogue. In 2016 it held Multifaith Prayers for Peace.

In 2016, The Interfaith Network shared in sponsoring Shepparton Multicultural Film Festival, ANZAC Day Forum on Just War, Shepparton Library's Multicultural storytelling in Refugee Week, and Speed Date a Muslim, an opportunity to meet Muslim women at a social occasion. Light the Dark, a community event organised by Afghani, Sikh and Al-Kasem youth groups, was attended by over 400 people. In December, the Network provided morning tea and gifts of books to the children attending the

multicultural play group run by Kildonan. Picnic for Peace, held at the Lake the last two Septembers, is another very successful event, supported by hundreds of people. As well as the September Picnics, other smaller Picnics are held every month. See Liz Arcus' website for details.

The Interfaith website is a very valuable source of information relating to the major faiths and inter-faith events. It contains papers presented at interfaith forums, including some by Rosalie and Joan, and numerous interesting articles. Check it at sheppartoninterfaith.org.au/

Joan McRae



Prayer Points

Prayer of Confession: Smashing Barriers Down

The theme for Yurora 2017 was "Uniting Culture", and we spent that time celebrating the diversity of cultures that gathered for this festival, through music, dance, storytelling, food and fun. Here's the thing: uniting cultures is really hard. It's easy to exist together; it is much harder to truly unite. It's difficult because there are so many aspects of who we are that become barriers that divide us up from one another. At their worst, these barriers can make us see the "other" as the enemy, to be feared and hated and ridiculed. This is particularly true in our world today, our world of Brexit and Trump and terrorism and asylum seeker policy and other things. But this is not the way of Christ. In worship and bible studies we heard some stories of how Jesus and other men and women of faith worked to break down those barriers that divide all God's children. At the core of that ongoing work stands the simple truth: all people are created in the image of God. All people - not just the ones that are like us. In his great prayer in John 17, Jesus prays "that they may all be one" - still unique, but recognising the image of God in each other, beyond the things that make us different. So today, we are going to pray a prayer of confession,



confessing some of the barriers that we place between one another, and in so doing, we will literally smash these barriers down. It is our hope that in doing so, we might go a step closer to truly uniting cultures. Will you join me in prayer?}

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to ethnicity. We confess the times we think of our ethnicity as supreme over others, the times we buy into stereotypes about other ethnicities, and the times we think fairness is real beauty. There is no longer Jew and Greek, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to age. We confess the times we say some are too young to be real leaders in the church, the times we say some are too old to still be of value in the church, and the times we dismiss the young as being leaders for tomorrow, not today... and we wonder when tomorrow will come. There is no longer old and young, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to education. We confess the times we think of the more educated as nerdy and snobby, the times we think of the less educated as stupid and useless, and the times we equate education with intelligence. There is no longer educated and uneducated, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between

us due to gender. We confess the times we think males are more suited to be leaders in the church, the times we think females are more suited to be servants in the church, and the times we value physical beauty over other God-given attributes. There is no longer male and female, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to mental health. We confess the times we grow impatient in engaging with people who struggle with mental illness, the times we think of depression not as a disease, but as self-indulgent, and the times we suggest that church is only for cheerful fun people. There is no longer happy and sad, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to sexuality. We confess the times we subconsciously think that God's love is reserved for straight people, the times we have bullied and demeaned those who identify as LGBTQIA+, and the times we think of non-heterosexual people as lesser than us. There is no longer straight and gay, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

Reconciling and renewing God, we name and confess the barrier we place between us due to geography. We confess the times we close our eyes and ears to the living situations of those in vastly different circumstances to our own, the times we make urban cities the holders of power, and the times we stay in our comfort zones, afraid to step out in faith. There is no

longer urban and rural, for all are one in Jesus Christ.

And so we join in the great prayer of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: may we be truly One people, united in our faith, and empowered together to be passionate disciples in the world. Amen

Reflecting on...

Us and Them: Barriers in front of us

Ephesians 2:11-22 and Jeremiah 1: 5-10.

There is a limit in life. A line - a barrier. A point in which we turn away and say 'no thanks, that's just wrong'. Disgust is something which has been explored and studied by many scientists and philosophers over the years and is an emotional response usually to the taste, smell or texture of something- much like the idea of drinking someone else's spit.

While this is a very common example of disgust something which everyone will find a limit to, we continually see examples of disgust or displeasure towards people in our community. This is not a new thing. The Bible is full of reference to 'us' and 'them', usually in terms such as Jew and Gentile the Jewish community and pretty much anyone else who is not a Jew. Those who are clean and those who are unclean. Those who adhere to the rules and expectations of our generation and our setting, then those who are new to this and don't pick it up via osmosis.



Hear the Good News, my sisters and brothers: neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor ethnicity, nor age, nor education, nor gender, nor mental health, nor sexuality, nor geography, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of

God in Christ Jesus our Lord. Our sins are forgiven; thanks be to God.

We are a forgiven people. What are you going to do about it?



or not, here I come! And God can call us into anything sometimes ordained or lay ministry. It's not always for a life time, rather for a season. He may call you into being the youth leader or putting the glass of water under the lectern for someone to drink. God forbid we all became ordained ministers who would clean the floors or prepare the tea? But are we willing to go?

We have a wonderful group of people who just caught a bus to Stanwell Tops and back and heard some cool things and perhaps may have even heard God calling to them in that time. Or since. Or maybe not yet. God can be unnervingly quiet at times. God unites us together as one he constantly is we're uniting, not united. God breaks down those barriers so that we can live together and learn together as people who all love the same God. We all have one thing in common being Christian. No more too young, too old, too tall, too short. We're all on the same level ground so be brave. Have no more fear of the 'other'. For if you hear his voice, he wants you to follow.

Jen Shields

Faith In Action

NCYC: Sharing Faith with Others

NCYC has been and gone for another couple of years. This time, we took a busload of youth, young adults and young at heart adults with us from our presbytery, synod and beyond. We left Shepparton on the 7th of January with 36 on board the bus and two cars following behind, headed for Wangaratta, then Albury and finally Wagga Wagga for the night. After an early start it was off again for Stanwell Tops a coastal community between Sydney and Wollongong in NSW. All in all, we had tour group members from around the Horsham, Croydon, Shepparton, Mooroopna, Echuca, Wangaratta, Albury and Wagga Wagga areas. Quite a mixed group and many first timers, it wasn't long until everyone found their feet and created a caring environment where we were able to nurture each other in faith and watch each other grow. We may have been away for a week, but there are friendships which were made that will last a lifetime.

I asked some of our delegates and leaders to reflect on what NCYC: Yurora 2017 meant to them in a series of short questions:

- How many NCYC have you been to?
- Where do you live/ congregation /town.
- Highlight
- Lowlight
- What has stuck with you since you came home?
- What would you tell a young person about NCYC, who has never been?
- What does 'Yurora' mean to

you?

- What were some electives you attended while at NCYC?

- What is your hope for the future of the UCA as we celebrate our 40th birthday?

This is what they said...



Charlotte Delbridge, age 13

-This was my first (but definitely not my last) NCYC that I have been to.

-I live in Albury and I'm with the North-East Victoria Presbytery.

-My highlight was meeting some absolutely incredible people from inside our tour group and outside our tour group in the Babanas group for 14-16 year olds, and getting to know those people. Another highlight of mine was enjoying the worship rallies.

-My lowlight was the beginning when I was extremely nervous about going to NCYC, but within 10 minutes of meeting everyone I had settled in and began having heaps of fun.

-I think that the thing that has stuck with me the most is the ideas of passion that we focused on and trying to still discover it.

-To a young person who has never been, I would say that although it is undoubtedly daunting in the beginning, if you be brave and courageous, putting yourself out there, you will have the privilege



to be a part of one of the most incredible things and communities, meeting amazing people along the way.

-Yurora, which means passion, to me symbolises not only the passion and fire within us, but the people that help us to ignite it. I think that Yurora was absolutely a wise choice for the name of this NCYC camp because in one word it summarises what these things are truly about, finding our passion and discovering ourselves along the way.

-Just a few of the electives I attended at NCYC were poetry workshops, dance classes, multiple music concerts and some very full on and thought-provoking talks such as ones on mental health. The night activities were also one of my highlights from the trip, with everything from board games to trivia or even lip synch battles, and those things were even better when shared with some truly incredible friends.

-I hope that the UCA continues doing fun things like this as it celebrates its birthday and for the following years to come, because experiences like the one I had can be truly life changing I believe.



Matthew Smith, age 18:

- This was my second as a delegate but I also attended the Melbourne

NCYC as a junior delegate.

- I live in Toolamba West and go to the Mooroopna Uniting Church.

- Highlight: Pirate church and meeting people from all Australia and the world.

- Lowlight: There wasn't one, the whole thing was awesome!!

- If we do not open ourselves to all people, we are not fully following the word of God; for if He made all people and loves all people then why shouldn't we, as his people.

- You can make NCYC as great as you want to. You just have to get out there and do as much as you can in the short time you have there.

- 'What on earth does God want me to do with my life?', Pirate Church: a pirates way to witness; Pirate Church; Love makes a way; Joel McKerrow; and the talent show,

- I hope for it to grow and give opportunities like NCYC to more young people around Australia.



Linda Hobbs, age 20:

- This year's was my second NCYC.

- I live in Horsham.

- Highlight: The worship rallies; having that many young and passionate people all in the one space worshipping together creates an atmosphere that is incomparable.

- Lowlight: Not having enough hours in the day!

- It sounds simple, but NCYC has helped me remember that I am loved; who I am is enough, and I matter to God.

- NCYC is an amazing

community to go and find others who share your faith, to talk about your beliefs and your passions.

- Yurora is about coming together with other passionate people to find your passion.

- My favourite electives were those in which we discussed things that you often may not have the chance to, particularly from a viewpoint of faith specifically, refugees and mental health issues.

- That there can be passion shared throughout the whole church. Not just at special events, but every Sunday as we worship, and every day in between.



Cam Shields, Adult Volunteer:

- This is my 6th.

- Shepparton

- Highlight: Bible studies, in particular, hearing Julian Hamilton again.

- Lowlight: Lack of sleep, but at least we had beds this time, not camp mattresses on the church hall floor!

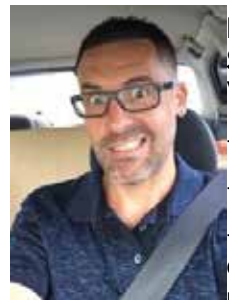
- Although the church doesn't look anything like the church of the 70's 80's or even the 90's it is a long way off dying. The church will be safe in the hands of these young delegates "the leaders of today and tomorrow".

- It's a place to meet fellow young Christians and see a side to the Uniting Church that you may never have seen before.

- To me it's about the youth of the UCA sharing their stories and seeing that the youth do represent the UCA multi-culture values.

- I went as an Adult Volunteer so spent my time helping with first aid, sitting by the pool supervising and went to see Damien speak about gender identity. Jen and I also went to see Pirate Church in their comedy show.

- That the youth of the UCA continue to have the ability and opportunities to grow their faith and have their voice heard.



Damien Stevens, Adult Volunteer:

- One.

- Shepparton.

- Highlights: enthusiasm, presence,

number of young people excited to worship, diversity - the experience.

- Lowlights: having to come home

- Mindset/protected/innocent/safe/caring community.

- I'd tell them to go! Embrace it! Live it! Love it! It'll change your life!

- Yurora means being alive in the church - living in Jesus!

- I went as a volunteer so helped with first aid and swimming as well as running and attending the sexuality sessions.

- Listen to young people, shift as a church to love like Jesus would...now!

Thank you to everyone who prayed for us, followed our journeys online and through the readings shared in the newsletter and continue to support our NCYCers young and young at heart since we returned.

Jen Shields

Synod Snippets

The Energy and Joy of Yurora

I'm writing this column the day after Yurora 17 (NCYC). I am tired of body but full of joy as I reflect on this inspiring gathering of a thousand young people from across the Uniting Church.

Yurora 17 was a diverse community made up of young people and adult volunteers all seeking a better understanding of God's passion for us and our passion to serve God's ways. It was a community made up of First and Second Peoples and overseas guests. It was a community that spoke multiple languages, danced many different ways, dressed in different outfits and yet found unity in a desire to discover, deepen and celebrate passion – a passion for God, and for God's purpose. We were challenged, encouraged, strengthened and fed.

Worship, both in communities and whole gathering rallies, was one of the high points of Yurora 17. In worship we listened to God's word, sang, prayed, danced, wept and laughed. Worship was full of energy and joy, led by and for young adults in ways that honoured God and the many gifts God has given.

As well as community groups and worship there were concerts, workshops, creative spaces, hanging-out-together spaces and play spaces. These provided opportunities to have fun, get to know strangers, ask questions of faith and meaning and explore the many ways people respond to God's call on our lives to be a disciple.

Many young people return from Yurora 17 with a renewed desire to grow in faith and serve God

through the Uniting Church. I rejoice in this.

Yurora 17 happened because of the effort of a large group of adult volunteers. These volunteers are aged from early 20s to their late 80s. They cooked, cleaned, took care of technology and ran around doing lots of boring jobs. They also acted as chaplains, workshop leaders and Bible study leaders.

They did it because they want to see young people have life-changing encounters with God and because, in their ministry of service, they too have life-changing encounters with God.

One of the gifts of the Uniting Church is its intergenerational nature. We need each other and we need to make space for each other. If those of us who are older are willing to listen, to learn and make space for children and young people not only will we gain new insights into the ways of God, but our faith will be renewed. As a synod we need to find ways to do this so that we might give real effect to our mission priority of ministry with, for and to children, youth and young adults.

I am still carrying with me words from the multicultural worship rally on the last night. Queensland minister Rev Fa Matangi said to the young people in the church: "We are coming to worship God."

Young people are already serving and worshipping in the church. They long to be more fully included in ways that make sense to them. They want to worship, to grow in faith and to serve. They are coming.



Yurora 17 was a celebration of what God is doing in our midst. It is a reminder to the whole church to celebrate our young people, who are committed to being faithful followers of Christ and long to find the opportunity to do that within the Uniting Church. They are already serving the reign of God with passion.

If you have young people in your congregation who attended Yurora 17, take the time to ask them about their experience and what they hope to carry with them from that experience. Ask young people in your congregation about what their faith means to them, what their passions are and how you can help them continue to live those out.

If you are members of a church council that has young people in the congregation, plan a way to listen to what they hope and long for. Ask how the congregation can be active in helping them in discipleship and faith formation.

Young people are coming to be faithful, engaged participants with the whole church in God's reign. Let's support their faith formation and be willing to change how we do things to respond to what God is calling them to be and do. Let's welcome them and make space for them. They are coming with a passion to follow Christ, and walk together as First and Second Peoples.

Sharon Hollis
Moderator

Shepparton Uniting Church Building Project Update

As of 21/2/2017

My report to you in November was optimistic in tone, because the work of so many years, and especially the work of the Project Control Group during the second half of the year, was so close to being concluded. We anticipated that the project would begin early in the New Year.

In fact, the revised costing was given to us in the last days before Christmas. It was higher than the previous costing, because the CAD plans provided much more detailed plans, resulting in more accurate costing and fewer possibilities for financial blowout. But the costing was higher than the sum budgeted, so the Value Management process was set in motion just before Christmas. The Project Control Group met on January 19; three members of the Task Group shared the discussions. The preferred builder and the Value Management team looked at possible savings, either by deferring a major part of the project, or by deferring some parts which did not have to be done with the build, but could be


done later as funds became available.

The Synod Consultant reported on the Shepparton Project to the Property Application Review Team (PART), the section of Synod Property Services whose approval is required for any property work in the Synod on January 25. A favourable response was received: this was not the required 'Permission to Build' because confirmation of some of the deferred costing was required.

The Property Planning Task Group received the missing information on February 21 and has advised the Congregation. The decisions made at the February 19 meeting of the Congregation were conveyed to the Synod Consultant who will convey them to PART. It is very pleasing that the next steps can now be taken. The Task Group thanks Church Council and private donors for making extra funding available for the project.

Joan McRae
Chairperson, PPTG





Wisdom's Feast - Crossing boundaries

A feast of workshops, music, art and sharing, exploring identity, respect, faith and culture.



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Uniting World

It's Up to Us - Have your say on Australia's Future in 60 seconds

In 2016, the world received a harsh wake up call – we saw the rise to power of Donald Trump and growing support for nationalist and isolationist views from people such as Pauline Hanson, Rodrigo Duterte and Nigel Farage. We watched the heartbreaking situation in Aleppo, the horrific and inhumane treatment of people on Manus and Nauru and the Government's lack of leadership on climate change. For most of us, 2016 was one big horror film that kept on dishing up the scares.

But we can't afford to give up or give in because the stakes have never been higher and the importance of people power has never been more important.

That is one of the reasons we're reshaping the Campaign for Australian Aid as "Up To Us". Up To Us is a community of people who lead the resistance to nationalism and isolationism and who support an internationalist approach to tackling global issues such as climate change, inequality, and poverty. We are harnessing people power toward a vision for a fairer world.



Late last year, we spoke about an incredible opportunity for every Australian to have their voice heard. Right now, the Government is writing a long-term plan for Australia's foreign policy – they're calling it a

"White Paper." This White Paper will guide the way Australia engages with the rest of the world.

Make no mistake: we're living in one of the most turbulent periods in history. It's vital that the Government listens to all Australians and develops a plan that reflects our views. This means it is critical that people like you and your friends and family have your say on shaping the kind of world we want to live in and the role Australia should have in making your vision a reality. You can have your say today, just by taking the 60 second #UpToUs survey to create a submission to the Government. (Survey is at <http://uptous.org.au/>)

What kind of Australia do you envision in the years to come? If we want Australia to become a global leader on issues like climate change, people seeking asylum and ending poverty, it's up to us to lead the way. Together, we are powerful – we can inspire thousands of globally minded Australians to make submissions and ask for a more sustainable, welcoming and compassionate country.

The need for the world to work together to address shared global challenges has never been more urgent – the world is facing multiple challenges of war, poverty, hunger, displaced people and climate change. Thousands of submissions from people who care like you, will make a powerful statement about the kind of world we want and the important contribution Australia can make in tackling these challenges.

While we've made it easy for everyday Australians to have

their say about Australia's place in the world, our work won't end here. We've got plenty of creative ideas as to how you can amplify your impact with decision makers... stay tuned.

<http://uptous.org.au/?org=unitingworld> In the meantime, head down to one of the Sydney, Melbourne or Brisbane forums to have an open discussion and share some food (and your ideas!) with like-minded people. (For details on the forums, contact communications@unitingworld.org.au).



After the Government releases its White Paper, we'll publish a people powered manifesto (The People's White Paper) that captures the views of our supporters and the public.

Remember, it's up to us to fight for the change we want to see. Time is ticking – submit your views in just 60 seconds right now and look for the it's #UpToUs hashtag on social media so you can spread the message. Don't forget: you can also share this blog post on Twitter and Facebook.

Blog written by the Campaign for Aid, of which UnitingWorld is a member (representing the Uniting Church in Australia).

February 1st, 2017
<http://unitingworld.org.au/blogs/us-say-australias-future-60-seconds/>

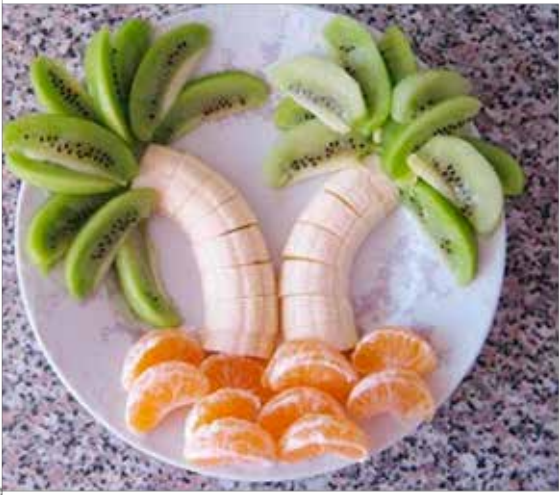
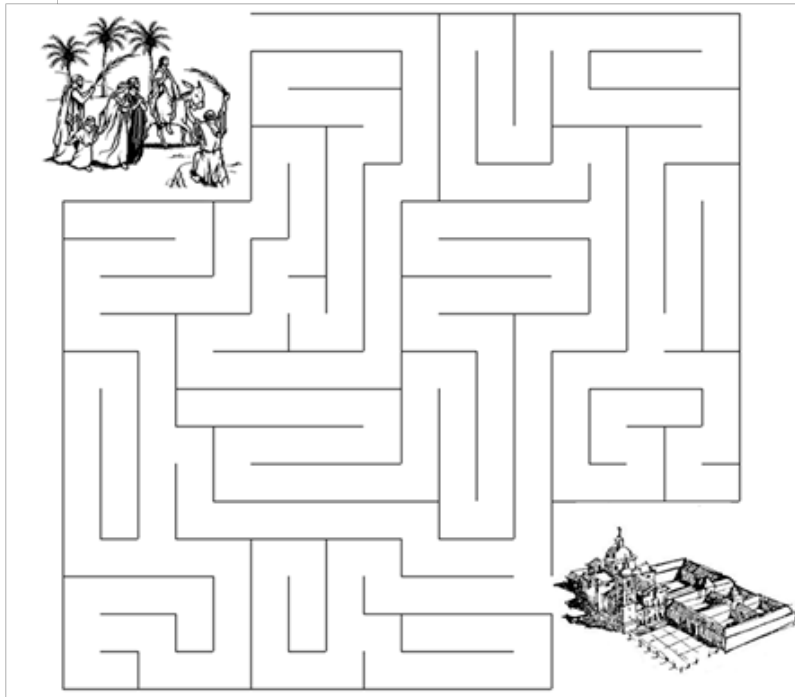
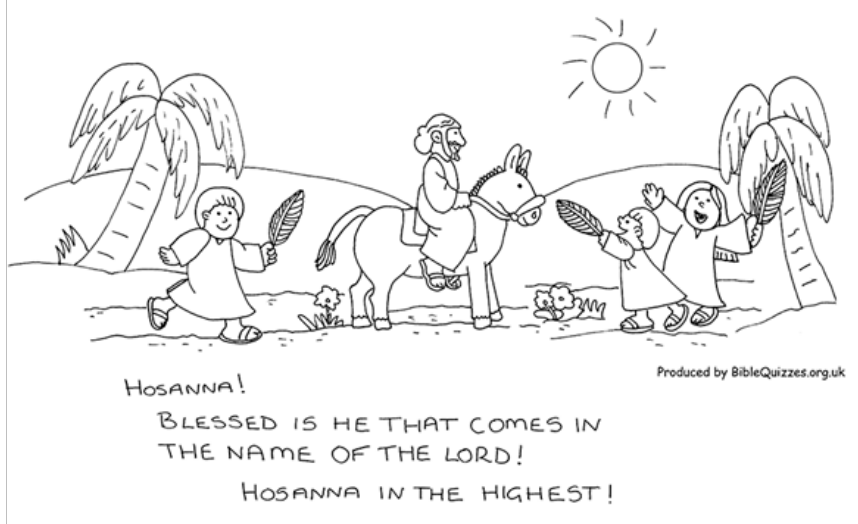
For The Kids

Have Fun!

Palm Sunday celebrates Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and marks the start of Holy Week, the final days of his earthly ministry.



E	S	Y	C	S	A	O	K	S	E	MOUNT
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										TURMOIL
										PROPHET



Make some fruity Palm Trees!

Around the Congregation

Congratulations To....

...Jean and Albert Leirsch who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary on the 26th January this year. Congratulations and we pray for many more years of happiness together.



...Edna and Damian McDonald, who, on the 14th of January 2017 were joined in marriage. We wish them both a lifetime filled with the love of God as they start this new journey together.



We Need Your Help

As the Uniting Church celebrates 40 years of Union the publicity team would love your help in celebrating this fantastic milestone.

If you have any photos or Video from the last 40 years (1977-2017) then we would love to share them both within our 'On The Vine' magazine and our website and social media sites.

Please be sure all individuals in photos and videos have your permission to share their image.

If you have some news, event photos, past or present, articles, prayers for others or thoughts that you wish to share with the congregation please feel free to contact the publicity committee at publicity@sheppartonuc.org.au or drop it off into the box in the front foyer of the Shepparton Uniting Church. Our next issue will cover the months of June, July and August.

Preaching Plan

March 2017

March 2017	1st Ash Wednesday	5th Lent 1	12th Lent 2	19th Lent 3	26th Lent 4
9.30am Shepparton Afternoon/ Evening	7:00 pm Rosalie	Loni and Rosalie HC	Rosalie Tues 14th Youth Focus @ Shepparton Lorraine	Loni 4:30 pm Messy Church Rosalie	Rosalie 2.00pm Kialla Gardens Loni
Dookie 9.00am	No Service	Joan McRae	Loni HC	Joy Sims	Loni
Pine Lodge 11.00am	No Service	Joan McRae	No Service	At Katandra West	No Service
Kialla West 11.00am	No Service	No Service	Loni	No Service	No Service
Katandra West 11.00am	No Service	At Pine Lodge	No Service	Joy Sims	No Service
Lectionary Readings		Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7 Psalm 32 Romans 5:12-19. Matthew 4:1-11	Genesis 12:1-4a Psalm 121 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17 John 3:1-17	Exodus 17:1-7 Psalm 95 Romans 5:1-11 John 4:5-42	1 Samuel 16:1-13 Psalm 23 Ephesians 5:8-14 John 9:1-41

Preaching Plan
April/May 2017

April 2017	2nd Lent 5	9th Passion/ Palm Sunday	13th Maundy Thursday	14th Good Friday	16th Easter Day	23rd Easter 2	30th Easter 3
9.30am Shepparton Afternoon/ Evening	Rosalie HC	Rosalie & Loni 5.00 pm Mt. Major Tues 11th Youth Focus Mooroopna Lorraine	7.00 pm Rosalie	9.30am Shepp UC Loni	Dawn Loni 9.30am Rosalie HC No Messy Church	Loni & Rosalie 2.00pm Kialla Gardens Rosalie	Rosalie
Dookie 9.00am	Loni HC	Joy Sims	7.30pm Pine Lodge Loni		10:30 am Combined The moderator Rev. Sharon Hollis	Elders	10:30am Pine Lodge Combined Loni
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Loni HC	No Service				No Service	
Kialla West 11.00am	No Service	Joy Sims				No Service	
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge	No Service				No Service	
Lectionary Readings	Ezekiel 37:1-14 Psalm 130 Romans 8:6-11 John 11:1-45	Isaiah 50:4-9a Psalm 31:9-16 Philippians 2:5-11 Matthew 26:14 - 27:66	Isaiah 52:13 - 53:12 Psalm 22 Hebrews 10:16-25 John 18:1 - 19:42		Acts 10:34-43 Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 Col. 3:1-4 John 20:1-18	Acts 2:14a, 22-32 Psalm 16 1 Peter 1:3-9. John 20:19-31	Acts 2:14a, 36-41. Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19 1 Peter 1:17-23. Luke 24:11-35
May 2017	7th Easter 4		14th Easter 5		21st Easter 6		28th Easter75
9.30am Shepparton	Loni HC Tues 9th Youth Focus Shepparton Rosalie		Rosalie & Loni		Rosalie 4:30 pm Messy Church Lorraine		Rosalie 2.00pm Kialla Gardens Brian Hardy
Dookie 9.00am	Joy Sims		Joan Fisher		Loni		Elders
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Joy Sims		No Service		At Katandra West		No Service
Kialla West 11.00am	No Service		Rosalie		No Service		No Service
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge		No Service		Loni		No Service
Lectionary Readings	Acts 2:42-47 Psalm 23 1 Peter 2:19-25 John 10:1-10		Acts 7:55-60 Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 1 Peter 2:2-10 John 14:1-14		Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:8-20 1 Peter 3:13-22. John 14:15-21		Acts 1:6-14. Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35. 1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11. John 17:1-11

Upcoming Events
March/April 2017

March 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1 10am Church Council Executive 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	2 10am Multicultural Play G. 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	3 World Day of Prayer 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister	4 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	5 9:30am Worship
6	7 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 6pm Pancake Day Fundraiser 7pm Youth Group	8 7:30pm Church Council	9 10am Multicultural Play G. 10am Craft Group 10:45am worship Banksia L 1:30 pm worship at Hakea L 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice	10 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 5pm KUCA	11 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	12 9:30am Worship 6pm Faith Sharing Group
13	14 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 6pm Tea & Youth Service	15 12pm Fellowship Group 1:30 UCAF	16 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 10:45 Worship at Mercy Aged Care 4pm Together in Voice	17 10am Worship Ava Maria 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	18 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	19 9:30am Worship 4:30 Messy Church
20	21 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group	22 1:30pm Women's Afternoon Group	23 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	24 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 5pm KUCA Dookie Family tea	25 8am Men's Breakfast 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	26 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
27	28 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 2pm Worship Acacia House	29	30 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	31		

April 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
					1 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	2 9:30am Worship
3	4 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	5 10am Church Council Executive	6 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	7 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister	8 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	9 Palm Sunday 9:30am Worship 5pm Mt Major Service
10 7pm Holy Week Service	11 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 6pm Tea & Youth Service as part of the Holy Week Service	12 7:30pm Church Council 7pm Holy Week Service	13 10am Craft Group 10:45am worship Banksia L 1:30 pm worship at Hakea L 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice 7pm Maundy Thursday Service	14 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 9:30am Good Friday Service	15 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	16 Easter Sunday 6:15am Sunrise service at Victoria Lake 9:30am Worship
17	18 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	19 12pm Fellowship Group 1:30 UCAF	20 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 10:45 Worship at Mercy Aged Care 4pm Together in Voice	21 10am Worship Ava Maria 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	22 8am Men's Breakfast 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	23 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
24	25 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 2pm Worship Acacia House 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	26 1:30pm Women's Afternoon Group	27 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	28 10am Worship Ava Maria 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 5pm KUCA Dookie Family tea	29 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	30 9:30am Worship

Upcoming Events

May 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	3 10am Church Council Executive	4 10am Multicultural Play G. 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	5 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister	6 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	7 9:30am Worship
8	9 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 6pm Tea & Youth Service 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	10 7:30pm Church Council	11 10am Craft Group 10am Multicultural Play G. 10:45am worship Banksia L 1:30 pm worship at Hakea L 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice	12 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 5pm KUCA	13 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	14 9:30am Worship 6pm Faith Sharing Group
15	16 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	17 12pm Fellowship Group 1:30 UCAF	18 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 10:45 Worship at Mercy Aged Care 4pm Together in Voice	19 10am Worship Ava Maria 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	20 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	21 9:30am Worship 4:30 Messy Church
22	23 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 2pm Worship Acacia House 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	24 1:30pm Women's Afternoon Group	25 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	26 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister 5pm KUCA Dookie Family Tea	27 8am Men's Breakfast 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	28 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
29	30 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	31	1 June 2017 10am Multicultural Play G. 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	2 12pm Shared Prayer 12:30 Time for Private prayer with a minister	2 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	4 Pentecost 9:30am Worship



Shepparton Uniting Church
150 Maude Street, Shepparton



Shepparton
Uniting Church