



Shepparton
Uniting Church

Third Edition
June 2015

on the *Vine*

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

Lest we forget

Faith in Action

Walk for justice for refugees

Prayer Points

How effective is prayer?

Getting to Know...

A journey to faith

Fun for the Kids

Pentecost

Global God, Local Focus...

So what happened??





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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Welcome to all

The Nations of Australia and New Zealand have been reflecting on 100 years since the Great War, the building of the ANZAC spirit and the ultimate sacrifice of ones self for loved ones and strangers alike.

Ok, so many of the men and women that served may have been caught up in all the propaganda surrounded around enlisting. A quick search of the internet shows many posters saying "will you help us keep that promise?" (to Britain), or "God Bless Daddy" (for fighting) or "saving her (Australia) from this shame". As a past Australian history student I can see how this propaganda would be enticing, but at the end of the day it was the love and willingness to fight for others that made men (and women) get off those boats and face the danger and ultimate sacrifice of war in the hope that it would create a better world for all. Although on the opposite side to Australia, the Turks went into battle with the same feelings of a better world as well.

God and Jesus' ultimate sacrifice may not have been staring down the barrel in

the middle of a world war but God did give his own son, Jesus, who gave his own life to a cause that they felt would bring about the kingdom of God for all they love here on earth.

// Could I really give up my life for someone else? //

When we think about ultimate sacrifice, I myself often think "Could I really give up my life for someone else?" and as a parent I often think "yes, I would for my children, but could I for others?"

But sacrifice doesn't have to mean death. For me it means 100% commitment to a cause that I feel strongly about and to fight for it with all my heart. Jesus teaches us to fight for our cause with love, care and respect for those we know personally and those that we will never meet. This doesn't mean that we won't have moments of doubt. Even in the garden before he was betrayed Jesus prayed to his father that "this cup would pass over me" but in the end it is the commitment to fulfil the promise he made that

makes him a hero.

The disciples may have been caught up in the propaganda and high life on that first Palm Sunday but they also stayed committed to the cause. The letters found within the bible to many of the first Christians shows their commitment and sacrifice to "the cause" of sharing God's love in many different ways and places.

We encourage you during this national time of reflection to think about what you would fight for, what sacrifice you can make for your cause and how you will do it with the love, care and respect that Jesus has shown us. Your fight may be to help others, show love in a time of trouble, share God's love through action, information or theology or it may be as simple as putting yourself second in a particular situation. Within these pages there may even be something that speaks to you. Whatever your fight/cause may be, we urge you to commit 100% to it with God's love and know that you too are a hero in God's eyes and of the people whose hearts you may touch, even if you never know it.

Melissa



Prayer points...

How effective is prayer?

To pray are we doing more than talking to ourselves? This is a serious question. In part we are talking to ourselves, that is true; but would anyone in their right mind only talk to themselves? From a Christian perspective we only come to understand the nature and character of God as we have come to learn of the teachings of Jesus. Beyond the crucifixion Jesus is seen to have entered a spiritual resurrection to be our advocate and mentor. In a measure we live by faith that we can experience a relationship in a common life with His new state of being. Our appreciation of who God is for us is only that which we have been given by Jesus. Other religions may well have been influenced by the nature of God for there is no reason to suppose that only one religion has exclusive insights into the mind of God.

We journey with the Hebrew people. Finally to us is given the good news as experienced by the life and teachings of Jesus. We enter a spiritual intimacy that is available to all. Sometimes we talk of the living "God". The freedom of the spirit of truth and reality is not ours to hold. We can relate but never possess. We can share our lives with this fuller experience and be participants.



So how then should we pray? This question was brought up by the disciples and most of us know that this was given as - "Our Father who art in Heaven, Hallowed be thy name". It remains as a sacred point of entry to which we can advance our deepest thoughts and concerns. We are to love others as we also care for ourselves. Compassion and justice are at the heart of what Jesus taught. Very much central was the message that the "Kingdom" is close at hand, in and around us.

The serious question then is to whom and what are we saying that is meaningful? We see ourselves entering a relationship of intimacy as to the "Father."

At our beginning we are

being met where we are. We are already known and all that we might say is already recognised. We speak to relieve something deep within us that needs to be said and for a special mind to acknowledge us. It is healthy to bring from deep within our sub-conscious mind our concerns. We may not realise how clogged our minds are with the pathos of what is happening in the World, but we need to offer prayers for all who suffer and are victims of atrocities.

Prayer is therapeutic, but it also aligns us to the Spiritual unseen that is truth and life. The Kingdom of Heaven is all around us and it is to this that it is said: "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven".

Alan English

From the Minister's desk

Grateful and thankful

This is my first post for the 'Vine' since inducted as one of your ministers in this parish. I must say I am deeply grateful for the welcome and support from our members, both here in Shepparton and the rural congregations, and I thank you.

The very short time I have been here with you demanded that I stay focused and take time to listen to what people are saying, and also to what they are not saying. Julian Hamilton picked up on this theme of 'Listening' in his bible study and my only regret was

that most of us did not get to hear him.

Listening and hearing are often taken for granted because we are surrounded by sound, whether we are awake or asleep. We hear all the time. The wonder of it soon becomes familiar and grows ordinary, but being able to listen and to hear is a miracle indeed. We, as a church community, are given this great gift of really listening and hearing, which becomes the platform for fostering relationships and community building. Listening and hearing

are extraordinary privileges, which can also be costly. Because what we listen to and hear has the power to change us. A community that has the capacity to really listen to God and to each other will always be refreshed, renewed, and grow.

It is my prayer that we hear Christ's command "Ephphatha", which simply means "open up". As Julian Hamilton mentioned, it is the most crucial issue with the Christian church today. Listening!

Blessings

Loni

Uniting Care Kildonan

Youth Homelessness Sleepout

On Wednesday April 8th, I for the first time did a sleepout at Shepparton Uniting Church (Wesley site) to help raise awareness about youth homelessness.

I've never done something like this before - sleeping on the cold hard ground and not having the feeling of hopping into my bed as I normally do every night. I found the experience worth it because it not only made me realise that youth homelessness is a big issue - it made me realise what I really take for granted and having a roof over my head, food, shelter and all the support networks around me to help me when I need

it really does mean a lot to me and without them - I would definitely not be where I am today. I am grateful for the opportunity to do something like this and to give back to the community and would recommend that if you haven't done something like this before and want to try this - just for one night - you can bring your friends as well - and raise awareness on this important issue. I'm definitely looking at doing this again in 2016 and once again with the support of my friends and close ones helping bring an end to youth homelessness.

Thank-you.

by Jo Farren age 18



Youth Homelessness Matters "Sleep-out" for National Youth Week was about raising awareness and visibility around couch-surfing in Shepparton

People were asked to go without their beds for the 26,000 young people who don't have one. Instead of a couch, the participants were encouraged to sleep-out in the car-park (or on the carpet) at Wesley Hall/Sacred Space.



Group Profile

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship at Work

The UCAF meets monthly at Scots Hall.

On April 5th we hosted a "Kaye Classic Fashion" Parade which was successful in raising \$700 and many people were happy with their purchases.

Last year we hosted a visit from Anne Cannon who, with her husband John, work as the Uniting Church Missions Liaison Group. Anne is also world President of Methodist Women and travels widely in this role.

John was a minister in Tonga a number of years ago and he and Anne travel back regularly to help there. On one occasion Anne was asked to fill in for a teacher at the school but they had nothing really only the dirt to write

in and Anne hadn't bought any chalk for the blackboard!

Out of this came the idea for Victorian UCAF members to make and fill backpacks, for the children, that would last a year. Many UCAF's took up the idea and the Tatura Toolamba group that I belonged to for many years, sent 9-10 each year. Now our group is carrying this on with members and others making backpacks from recycled curtain fabric and filling the bag with \$30 each worth of goods, exercise books, pens, crayons, texta, rubbers, ruler, pencil, sharpener, scissors, handtowel and soap, toothbrush,



lunch box and drink bottle, handkerchiefs and a ball or skipping rope.

The opp shop has sent many parcels to Vanuatu and other South Pacific areas through the Mission Liaison Group.

Each year, for many years, this UCAF Group has been making and collecting goods for the Old Timers Fete in Alice Springs to help raise money for the hostel there.

Any enquiries contact Annette Orrman (President) or Judy Luscombe (Secretary)

Interfaith News

Indonesian Interfaith Visitors

The Revd Yanne Erika and Moh Abar arrived in Wodonga in March after experiencing difficulties in obtaining visas. They were happily settled with members of St Stephen's Uniting Church. I was delighted to meet them at Howlong on April 19 and found them to be very friendly

and easy to talk to. They were keenly interested in the service and in the Howlong church.

The previous weekend Yanne and Abar had been to the Ballarat Uniting Churches' combined camp at Hall's Gap.

They are studying English at

Wodonga TAFE to improve their already good English.

Yanne and Abar came to Shepparton on May 15 and were hosted by Alan English who has been an email correspondent of Yanne for about a year. An interesting programme was arranged for them in Shepparton.

Interfaith News *(cont'd)*

Church of North India Meets United Church

The Revd Vijay Kumar, a minister of the Church of North India at Amritsar, spent April in Numurkah and Nathalia while on exchange with the Revd Deacon Jean Mayers. Vijay was guest at a lunch with Rosalie, the Revd Gi Won Kang from Mooroopna, Loni and Joan McRae.

The Church of North India is another of the United churches. It was formed when six churches joined in November 1970, and is thus seven years older than the Uniting Church. The CNI covers all but the four most

southern Indian states - where the Church of South India, formed in 1947, is the second largest church.

As you can imagine, the lunchtime conversation was fascinating. Vijay related that he had been a Hindu who was converted to Christianity. He has been ordained for three years and ministers at the CNI cathedral in Amritsar. In those three years, the congregation has grown from 100 to 341, evidence of Vijay's passion for mission. His mission plan is simple: he asks each member to bring one person.

And they do! The CNI is not only very engaged in mission, but is also very involved in interfaith activities - Amritsar is the home of Sikhism; members of other faiths also live in Amritsar.

The conversation moved gracefully between Gi Won's South Korean expression of ministry and the mission possibilities he sees in Mooroopna, Loni's Tongan approach to ministry, Rosalie's mission experiences in and after her years in Thailand and Vijay's ministry experience, as the newest Christian of the group. All four ministers were enthusiastic and excited about mission and its possibilities. 'In our congregation?' I wondered. 'If only they were all hearing this...'

Rural Round Up

St. Andrew's Uniting Church Fellowship Group Dookie

The Uniting Church fellowship Group followed on from the Presbyterian ladies guild, when the Uniting Church began.

Over the years the fellowship have donated to many causes, some of them been Frontier Services, Royal Flying Doctor service, Cutting Edge, Chaplaincy, Old Timers Fete (Alice Springs), food to the ministers food bank and Salvation Army which was collected from Harvest Thanksgiving.

The guild ladies have held debutante balls with a Scottish theme, the official parties were escorted to their positions by a highland piper. Many

local girls made their debuts. The first ball was held by the Presbyterian ladies guild on 2nd June 1964 and was held every 2nd year or whenever there were sufficient girls wanting to make their debut, the last Debutante ball was held on the 17th May 1991.

The girls were trained by Vera Handley and the music for practice and presentation was played by Edna Batey. The guild ladies also provided the catering for the balls.

Through the years the guild has held casserole teas, wedding dress displays, and progressive teas. Every year the guild hold the "Old

Friends Meet" afternoon, where members of the community are invited to catch up with friends and new comers to the district, then later as people moved to Shepparton for retirement they also were invited back. A meal of soup sandwiches and slices is served, and then followed by entertainment. Some of the entertainment has been guest singers and musicians, joke- story tellers, community singing and guild members performing skits. At the end of the afternoon people attending were presented with a small posy of flowers that had been collected from members gardens.

The guild meeting is held the 4th Monday of the month at 2pm at the church hall in Dookie.

Assembly Action

President launches National Cyclone Relief Appeal

With so many natural disasters happening around the world over the last 6 months it has been hard to keep up with them all. The media seems to move from one as fast as they are happening and leaving the previous ones forgotten.

Earlier this year Australia was stuck, on the same day, by not one but two Cyclones, Lam and Marcia. I for one took

a few weeks to realise the damage set by both as on TV, the media seemed to focus on one more than the other.

In March the president launched a National Cyclone Relief Appeal with funds still needed for many communities and individuals. The following is about those affected by the cyclones and the appeal that continues today.

Friday, 13 March 2015

Rev. Prof Andrew Dutney has launched a national appeal to assist communities hit by cyclones in the Northern Territory and Queensland.

Cyclone Lam struck Arnhem Land on 20 February causing extensive damage to homes and public buildings. Sixty dwellings were left uninhabitable and there was extensive damage to the natural environment.

On the same day Cyclone Marcia battered the Queensland coast from Yeppoon to Rockhampton. Wind damage caused property and crop losses just before

annual harvests with flooding affecting areas as far inland as Biloela.

"We are very concerned for the communities affected by these disasters. Please join me in praying for the church in these areas too - for their safety and recovery, and for their service and witness to their neighbours in need after the cyclones," said Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney.

"I encourage UCA members wherever they are to do what they can to support our brothers and sisters in this time of need."

President-elect and Moderator of the Northern Synod Stuart McMillan said the damage

across Aboriginal communities had been widespread.

"Cyclone Lam hit Gapuwiyak, Ramingining and Milingimbi. These already under-resourced communities need our support - pastorally and practically - to recover and rebuild."

Rev. Dr Stephen Robinson, the National Disaster Recovery Officer has been on the ground at Elcho Island and in Central Queensland, working with members of the Northern Synod and the Central Queensland Presbytery.

"I've seen the damage first hand and there has been not only destruction of buildings, but considerable personal losses as well."

"Funds from the President's appeal will go to providing direct financial support and targeted recovery programs to people in the worst-hit areas."

"It's going to take a long time before life gets back to normal. Your donations will help the Uniting Church be alongside these communities at the time they most need our support," said Rev. Dr Robinson.

Contributions to the President's Cyclone Appeal can be made on the Assembly website through the National Disaster Relief Fund <http://assembly.uca.org.au/donate>. Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.



Elcho Island -
Galiwin'ku, NT

NATIONAL CYCLONE RELIEF APPEAL

For The Kids

Have Fun!

The Birthday of the Church

Acts 1&2

Fill in the words missing from the story. When you are finished, copy the letters inside the boxes to the spaces below. Then you will know the special name for the birthday of the church.

Jesus told his followers to tell the good news to _ _ _ □ _ _ all over the world.

Then Jesus went back to _ _ _ _ □ _ .

Fifty days after Passover, the followers were together in _ □ _ place.

Suddenly they heard a noise that sounded like _ _ _ _ _ □ wind.

Then they saw something that looked like _ _ _ _ _ □ of fire.

The flames were separated and stood over _ _ □ _ person.

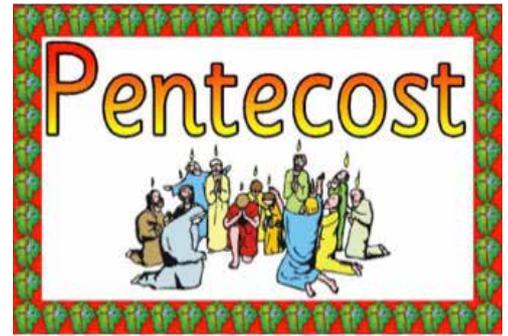
The followers were filled with the _ □ _ Spirit.

The Spirit gave them the ability to □ _ _ _ _ in foreign languages.

Then _ _ □ _ _ stood up and spoke to the crowd.

The special name for the birthday of the church is...

- speak
- violent
- tongues
- people
- Peter
- Heaven
- each
- one
- holy



- | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Yesu Ježíš
Swahili | יהושיע
Hebrew | Sai
Hausa | 예수
Korean |
| Иисус
Russian | Иисус
Latin | عیسی
Farsi | Ісус
Ukrainian |
| Íosa
Irish | Jesus
English | Jesús
Spanish | Jeesus
Finnish |
| Gesù
Italian | İsa
Turkish | Iisus
Romanian | Иисус
Bulgarian |
| イエス
Japanese | Jésus
French | Jézus
Hungarian | Isus
Croatian |
| | | | Iesu
Welsh |

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Getting To Know...

A Journey to faith

Spending time with Moti and Loni and hearing their life journey filled us with excitement, laughter and inspiration not only because it is centred in faith and the love of God but because at one time it was not.

Similarly, both Loni and Moti were born in Tonga, Loni the eldest child within a strict Methodist family and Moti the eldest child of a Methodist Minister.

After receiving a 4 year scholarship to Auckland University Loni moved to New Zealand, against his mothers pleading to stay, with a job in the Tongan government (fisheries and environment) waiting for him when he finished. After finishing his degree and coming to Australia, Loni never made it back to Tonga for his job, for he fell in love with the lifestyle he had found here. Part of this included going out with his cousins and playing rugby.

In January of 1977 Moti went to Perth for NCYC before commencing studies in Youth Work with Wesley Mission in Sydney.

This is when Loni met Moti. After some time, they decided to marry but both families disagreed with the idea of their union. They decided to marry anyway in Brisbane. Unknown to them at the time, the Minister they approached for marriage taught Moti's father at the Tongan theological college. They have now been married 35 years

and have 4 children Lavinia, age 34, Joey, age 32, Henry, age 22 and Danny aged 19.

After being brought up in a strict Methodist home, Loni felt a sense of freedom when moving to New Zealand, and pulled away from the church. It was however during a visit to the local church that he found out that his mother had passed away and had been buried a fortnight earlier. He had not been told as his family feared he would lose his scholarship if he returned to Tonga for the funeral. This loss and feeling of betrayal from his family sent Loni down a path of drugs and alcohol.

Also being brought up in a Methodist home, Moti knew of Loni's lifestyle but was not accustomed to this way of living. After a holiday in Melbourne, Moti and Loni decided to settle down there as they liked the feel of the area. Being further away from negative influences, this gave them a chance to start afresh.

Moti continued to engage with her local church even though Loni wouldn't. Loni would sit in the car while Moti was at church until she was ready for home and it was at one of these services during Easter that things started to change. The group needed an extra person to be in the Easter performance and Moti asked Loni to come out of the car and join them. He had only one sentence in the play as one of the other robbers- "please remember me when

you enter the kingdom". Being tied to the cross while not entirely sober, Loni recalls that he felt that the words were his rather than that of a character he played. This was a turning point for Loni's faith.

// Please remember me when you enter the kingdom //

Loni decided to do some theological studies. While Moti was accepting of this, she was worried about his motivations and intentions and was afraid that he would bring shame on the family. Funding his own studies through night work as a bouncer, Loni was an independent student, which allowed him to choose his own subject rather than be told what to study as candidates are. Much of Loni's family struggled to believe that he was taking on these studies or even considering to candidate until they attended his graduation and realised how he had changed.

During these studies Loni's way of life changed and he became more of a family man having a greater commitment to Moti and his children rather than the social life he had previously held. This was an indicator to Moti that he was a changed man.

This past life has influenced Loni's Ministry and has helped him build relationships not

only with Christ but those that he ministers to whether it is in the pews or out in the streets. Loni feels that the biggest risk in meeting new people is changing them or being changed by them.

Loni feels challenged by:

- Staying in touch with the God that called him
- having his faith questioned
- The churches idea of worship slowly being nudged into idolatry
- Watching people fall through the cracks of church. When we are well and active we are remembered but when we are frail and sick we are too easily forgotten.

We often come to church to worship as a collection of individuals not a community of faith. When one of is hurting a community hurts with them. Often, this is not the case. Loni challenges us that we need to relearn what it means to be a community of faith- let's be a community genuine in our relationship.

Among other things, the potential to become more than we are now excited Loni about the Shepparton Uniting Church. "Our job is not to make the church relevant to the people but to make the people relevant to the kingdom."

However, this transition to the country has had some

personal challenges for Loni, Moti and their family. Moti has been a source of strength and understanding for Loni through his life and transition into Ministry, moving several times with him to wherever his call takes him. With this move, however, she feels torn between her role as wife and her role as mother. Moti is currently living in Melbourne during the week to support her children and in Shepparton on weekends to support Loni. Loni and Moti ask that you pray for them during this time of struggle and resettling.

On behalf of the congregation we extended our welcome to Loni, Moti, Lavinia, Joey, Henry and Danny.



L-R: Danny, Moti, Loni, Henry and Lavinia

Faith In Action

Walk for Justice For Refugees

**“Say it loud,
say it strong!
Refugees have
done no wrong!**

**Say it loud,
say it clear!
Refugees are
welcome here!”**

This year my experience of Palm Sunday was much how I imagine the first Palm Sunday may have been. There were crowds chanting, palm branches waving, and a sense of unity, a feeling of hope, and the expectation of greater things to come.

We came together, people of all races, ages, backgrounds, and faiths; over 15,000 of us walking through the streets of Melbourne with one thing in common. Our demand for Justice for Refugees.

A small group of us from Weeroona UCB attended the march, which was led by UCA National Assembly President Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney and UCA Vic/Tas Moderator Dan Wootton. It stretched all the way from the State Library, 1km down Swanston Street, to the Queen Victoria Gardens.

I was completely overwhelmed by the sheer number of protesters. And even more encouraging was the fact that marches were

held in 12 other Australian cities, and 19 overseas cities simultaneously.

On a personal level, I have become more and more disappointed and disheartened with Government Policy regarding refugees and asylum seekers. I am particularly concerned about the impact that prolonged detention has on children.

Australia currently holds about 800 children in mandatory closed immigration detention for indefinite periods, with no pathway to protection or settlement. This includes 186 children detained on Nauru.

A recent report from the Australian Human Rights Commission provides compelling first-hand evidence of the negative impact that prolonged immigration detention is having on the mental and physical health of

children. Data from the Department of Immigration and Border Protection describes numerous incidents of assault, sexual assault and self-harm in detention environments. The evidence given by the children and their families was fully supported by psychiatrists, paediatricians and academic research.

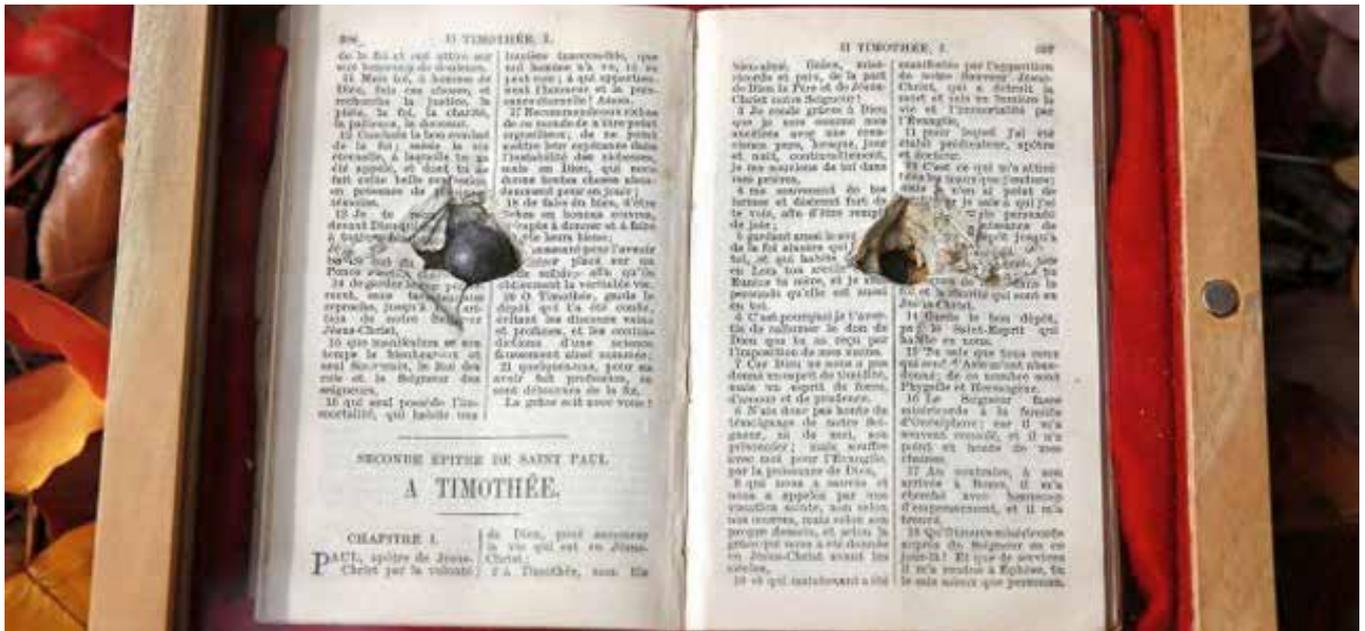
On Palm Sunday, I marched for these children. The forgotten children.

The march may have come and gone, but there is still plenty you can do. Write to your local MP, sign petitions, donate to organisations that support refugees and asylum seekers, educate yourself about the issues, challenge misinformation, join your local refugee action group, and pray pray pray!

Keren Wall

*Weeroona Uniting Church
Bendigo*





Bullet In The Bible

Insights Magazine Apr 24, 2015

One of the most unique and unforgettable sights Australians can witness during the 100-year anniversary celebrations of Anzac Day is a bullet in the Bible.

Presented by the Bible Society, a national touring display of memorabilia and information focuses upon the bravery of particular soldiers and the Bibles they took into World War One combat.

Nine Bibles are at the centre of "Their Sacrifice" exhibition, which was at Sydney CBD's Westfield until May 5. The exhibition, which also comprises videos, animation and sound, will tour around Australia for one year.

"The stories of these brave men and the Bibles that sustain them under fire underline the value of the Bible during wartime, or indeed during any time of

crisis," said the Bible Society CEO Greg Clarke. One of the most spectacular examples of this was Elvas Jenkins, an Australian Lance-Corporal. In 1915, Jenkins had his life saved by his French-language pocket Bible. An exploding shell fired a lead ball at his heart. He would instantly have died, had the tiny Bible not trapped the bullet in its pages.

Jenkins' Bible not only is a centrepiece of "Their Sacrifice" exhibition, which aims to inspire a new generation with the hope and peace provided by God's Word – even amid the horror, pain and evils of war. The Bible Society also has produced a documentary about Jenkins, called *Bullet In The Bible*. It will be available on DVD later this year.

For information about when the travelling exhibition will

be near you visit: www.theirsacrifice.com/home

The site also contains other stories of WWI service, sacrifice and salvation – told through interactive presentations.

"Their Sacrifice" exhibition is coming to Victoria as follows:

DONCASTER:
17th – 30th August 2015
 Westfield Doncaster
 (Opposite store Guess):
 619 Doncaster Way, Doncaster

BALLARAT:
1st – 6th September 2015
 Ballarat Central Church
 of Christ
 37-39 Peel Street South,
 Ballarat

GEELONG:
7th – 13th September 2015
 Westfield Geelong
 (Opposite store Glue)
 95 Malop Street, Geelong

Global God, Local Focus...

So what happened??

On Friday 1st to Monday 4th of May Shepparton Uniting Church had the privilege in hosting the North East Presbytery run event, Global God, Local Focus, with special Guest Julian Hamilton, Methodist Minister and Chaplain to Trinity College, Dublin.

The weekend kicked off with the United Youth Service that was run by the combined effort of Youth groups from across the Shepparton and Mooroopna Christian Churches. It included a band and was attended by an estimated 100 Teenagers, Young adults and leaders from across Shepparton, North East Presbytery, and Melbourne and of course one from Ireland. During this service Julian (aka Jools) began his weekend sessions on the Gospel of Luke.

Saturday, although fewer people, was a time to engage with the word of God and putting our faith into action. The morning started with Jools leading us in bible Study. He continued his focus on the Gospel of Luke and what it means for our lives here today. This study also included moments of reflection on our own and in small groups.

Saturday afternoon started with participants, through a simulation exercise, learning about the inner workings of the chocolate industry and how we as consumers can work to gain better equality and working conditions for cocoa farmers and their communities by petitioning governments and buying only fair trade sourced chocolate.

There were a number of electives available for participants for the last part of Saturday afternoon to choose from. Electives ranged from looking at prayer to being a youth leader and Discipleship action to artful faith creations.

Saturday night finished, once again, with worship and guest speaker Julian further deepening our understanding of Luke's Gospel and a spontaneous magic show, lead by one of the teenage participants, that had everyone in awe and laughter.

Sunday's events started with a combined worship service at the Shepparton Uniting Church, which was filled to almost capacity with people from across the Rural, Mooroopna and Shepparton Uniting Church as well as many of the participants and leaders that had been engaged with the events over the weekend.

Morning tea allowed time for people from across the variety of churches and age groups to meet, greet and share their experiences of the weekend.

Lunch allowed for the young adult participants from across Shepparton, North East Presbytery and Melbourne to get together socially with Julian, get to know one another and share their stories of being young adults within a Christian faith.

Once again the church was filled for Sunday Nights Worship as Shepparton Uniting Church took their turn hosting the Shepparton Combined Churches worship service. Once more Julian spoke on the Gospel of Luke. Inspiring

many (of those that could understand his accent) to go out into the world around us as God's disciples allowing people to feel his love through our actions.

Monday saw the finale to the weekend's events with two sessions on 'Leadership in the church' led by Julian, his first being during the day at Wangaratta and the second in the evening at Mooroopna. These sessions were aimed for all those in leadership positions from youth leaders to church councillors, from committee conveners to those with an interest in leadership.

Although the weekend had a youth and young adult focus to it, overall the events enriched individuals, young and old, on their faith journey to allow them to continue their personal paths as God's Disciples within their local patch to bring God's care and love to the world.



Reflecting on...

A listening way

During a recent bible study with Julian Hamilton, he introduced us to a different way of reading the bible. A listening way.

A passage is read out. Listen for the section which stood out to you. The passage is read again. This time, listen for the word or phrase which stands out to you. Why?

It was quite a strange time discussing the single words which stood out to people. When two had chosen the same word, the reasoning was always different.

The diversity of our backgrounds- home life, age, work, family, challenges, love- all shapes us. When I was five I had my view of the church and the world. When I was fifteen I had a totally different view. When I was twenty five it was a whole new view and I'm excited to think how much it will change before I'm thirty five or eight five!

As we grow and change, so does our faith. What was important today may be different from tomorrow, next week, next year. And this is good!! Every time I revisit a verse or passage I find something different, something new. It could be that I've learned more about the social or cultural background of the people and time when it was written, or it could be whatever is happening in my life and the relevance to the situation. Regardless, I'm always growing and always changing. It's like my taste in wine, clothes I like to wear or books I like to read. Always changing as I grow.

That's not to suggest that the bible goes in and out of fashion like books and clothes, but cultural and societal changes influence the ways we interpret the readings and what stands out to us from the others.

In many ways, the church is also in this ebb and flow of

understanding. While society's youth may prefer the lights and bands which come with some other churches, others aren't looking for flashy worship. Though it is nice to try something new for a change. Seeing the blue of the Maude Street cross backlit with a green wash on the wall was an interesting point to reflect. That same cross I stare at each week had a slightly different way to it. Instead of looking 'old' it looked 'new'. The colours and lighting were 'cool' and suddenly people were paying attention to the front of the church again. The same front of the church which has been there for decades. Where generations of youth have stared at that blue cross and wondered what made it blue. It was relevant again.

I've come to realise that what's important is not if the numbers are growing, but if the faith, understanding and love of the congregation is growing.



Around the Congregation



Congratulations to...

John and Dora McKenzie who celebrated their 63rd Wedding Anniversary in May.

Jim and Alsa Cook (pictured) who celebrated their 60th Wedding Anniversary. They were married on the 9th of April

1955 at 5pm at Wesley Methodist Church with a reception held in the Sunday School building catered by the Church Ladies Guild.

May both couples share many more years of love together.

Congratulations to...

Christian Vaitohi who has just competed in the boys 100meter race at the Stawell Easter Gift. He placed fourth and was the only 9 year old competing in the event against boys aged 11-15. This accomplishment adds to the collection of Gold, Silver and Bronze medals already received from local and regional events.



Keep in our prayers...

Joan Fisher who is currently participating in the Ecumenical Accompaniment program in Palestine. We pray that Joan, the other participants and all that they are watching over are kept safe.

Neema Mukasa who has been selected to participate in Notre Dame College's Mission immersion program to Fiji later this year. If you would like to assist

Neema with some of her costs associated with this trip please place money in an envelope, with her name on it, into the offering plate and the church council will ensure that she receives it.

To the many that are sick and struggling with life.

To those that are caught in the destruction of natural disasters.

Do you have news? Like to share?

If you have some news, event photos or article 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 or see Melissa Graham or Jen Shields.

Synod Snippets

Ethnically Diverse Images

It seems that a successful formula for Australian drama is to have a “young, successful, sexy and white cast”. This is clearly reflected by the cast of Network Ten’s *Wonderland*. Early last year, Jay Laga’aia, an Australian actor voiced his opinion on Twitter: “Dear Channel 10, your new drama *Wonderland* seems to only have white people in it! Are there any ethnics that aren’t cabbies in your show?” he tweeted, following the show’s initial promotions.

Malaysian-born former *Neighbours* star Remy Hii, was another actor who had joined the social media war against *Wonderland*’s ‘white casting’. He tweeted: “Thoughts so far: *Wonderland* is about how ten people living in Bondi have got by without befriending one person of non-Anglo descent.”

We all know that Australia is a nation rich in ethnic diversity; we speak over 200 languages. A quarter of Australians were born in a country that is not Australia, while 43 per cent have at least one parent born in another country. However, the Australia represented on television shows, like *Wonderland*, does not reflect the nation’s multicultural mix.

Some of you might be wondering where I am going with this.

Recently I visited a congregation on



Sunday morning. It’s a pretty ethnically diverse congregation. As I participated in the worship service I was taken by the interesting images projected on the screen. However, all images of people, bar two, were from Anglo (white) backgrounds. One non-Anglo image was used in Prayers of the People. Another image had an Anglo man distributing items to a group of Asian (poor) children.

Last year I spotted a brochure advertising an Assembly program that targets youth in our Church. All the images of young people were from Anglo backgrounds. I raised this with my colleague who promised that it would be changed.

Did you hear that even Apple is catching up with the issue of ethnic diversity? One of the most talked about developments is the fact that Emojis (the little cartoon-like drawings you can attach to a text message) will soon,

notionally, be more racially diverse. There have long been calls for this, and it seems the developers have finally listened. Early reports are that you can hold your finger over any one face to change its skin tone. Wow!

If you are in a congregation that uses Power Point (or Keynote) presentations on Sunday mornings or publications that has photos please pause and think whether your images reflect the ethnic diversity in Australia and in a multicultural Church. I am also appealing to Korean, Chinese, Fijian congregations etc. in our Church.

Blessings!

KOH SweeAnn, Intercultural Unit Director

April 2015

To view the Intercultural Unit’s bi-monthly newsletter enter the link below into your internet browser: <http://blogs.victas.uca.org.au/crosscultural/>

Preaching Plan **June 2015** / July 2015

June 2015	7th Pent 2.	14th Pent 3.	21st Pent 4.	28th Pent 5.
9.30am Shepparton Afternoon/ Evening	Loni HC	Rosalie 5.00pm Loni	Loni 4:30pm Messy Church Rosalie	Rosalie 2.00pm Kialla Gardens Rosalie
Dookie 9.00am	Joy Sims	Loni	Joy Sims	Loni
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Joy Sims			
Kialla West 11.00am		Rosalie		
Katandra West 11.00am			Joy Sims	
Lectionary Readings	1 Sam 8:4-11, 16-20 Psalm 138 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1 Mark 3:20-35	1 Sam 15:34-16:13 Psalm 20 2 Corinthians 5:6-10, 14-17 Mark 4:26-34	1 Sam 17:32-49 or 17:57-18:5,10-16 Psalm 9:9-20 or Ps 133 2 Corinthians 6:1-13 Mark 4:35-41	2 Samuel 1:1,17-27 Psalm 130 2 Corinthians 8:7-15 Mark 5:21-43

July 2015	5th Pent 6.	12th Pent 7.	19th Pent 8.	26th Pent 9.
9.30am Shepparton Afternoon/ Evening	Rosalie HC	Loni 5.00pm Shirley	Loni 4:30pm Messy Church	Lorraine 2.00pm Kialla G HC Loni
Dookie 9.00am	Loni HC	Richard Speedy	Joan McRae	Loni
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Loni HC			
Kialla West 11.00am		Richard Speedy		
Katandra West 11.00am			Joan McRae	
Lectionary Readings	2 Samuel 5:1-5, 9-10 Psalm 48 2 Corinthians 2:2-10 Mark 6:1-13	2 Samuel 6:1-5 12b-19 Psalm 24 Ephesians 1:3-14 Mark 6:14-29	2 Samuel 7:1-14a Psalm 89:20-37 Ephesians 2:11-22 Mark 6:30-34, 53-56	2 Samuel 11:1-15 Psalm 14 Ephesians 3:14-21 John 6:1-21

Upcoming Events **June 2015** - August 2015

June 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
1	2 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	3 10am Church Council Executive	4 10am Multicultural Play G 1:30 Bible Study series 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice 7:30 Bible Study series 7:30pm Young Adults	5 5pm KUCA	6 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	7 9:30am Worship
8 Queen's Birthday Public Holiday	9 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	10 7:30pm Church Council	11 10am Multicultural P.G. 10:45am Worship Banksia L 1:30 pm Worship at Hakea L 1:30 Bible Study Series 2pm English Conversation G 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice 7:30 Bible Study series 7:30pm Young Adults	12	13 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	14 9:30am Worship 7pm Evensong
15	16 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	17 1:30pm UCAF	18 10am Multicultural Play G 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice 7:30pm Young Adults	19 5pm KUCA	20 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	21 9:30am Worship 4:30 Messy Church
22 UCA Anniversary	23 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 2:15pm Worship at Acacia House 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	24 1:30pm Worship at Ava Maria 7:30pm Women's evening Group	25 10am Multicultural Play G 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice 7:30pm Young Adults	26	27 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	28 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Garden Service
29	30 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls					

July 2015

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1 10am Church Council Executive	2 10am Multicultural Play G 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice	3	4 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	5 9:30am Worship
6	7 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	8 7:30pm Church Council	9 10am Multicultural P.G. 10:45am Worship Banksia L 1:30 pm Worship at Hakea L 1:30 Bible Study Series 2pm English Conversation G 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice	10	11 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	12 9:30am Worship 7pm Evensong
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27	28 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 12:15pm Worship at Acacia House 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	29	30 10am Multicultural Play G 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice	31		

Upcoming Events June 2015 - August 2015

August 2015

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
31						1	2 9:30am Worship
3		4 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	5 7:30pm Church Council Executive	6 10am Multicultural Play G 2pm English Conversation G 4pm Together in Voice	7 5pm KUCA	8 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	9 9:30am Worship 7pm Evensong
10		11 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Junior/Senior Youth Group 7:15pm Indoor Bowls	12 7:30pm Church Council	13 10am Multicultural P.G. 10:45am Worship Banksia L 1:30 pm Worship at Hakea L 2pm English Conversation G 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice	14	15 1pm Wesley Social Indoor Bowls	16 9:30am Worship 4:30 Messy Church
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**Shepparton
Uniting Church**

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