



Shepparton
Uniting Church

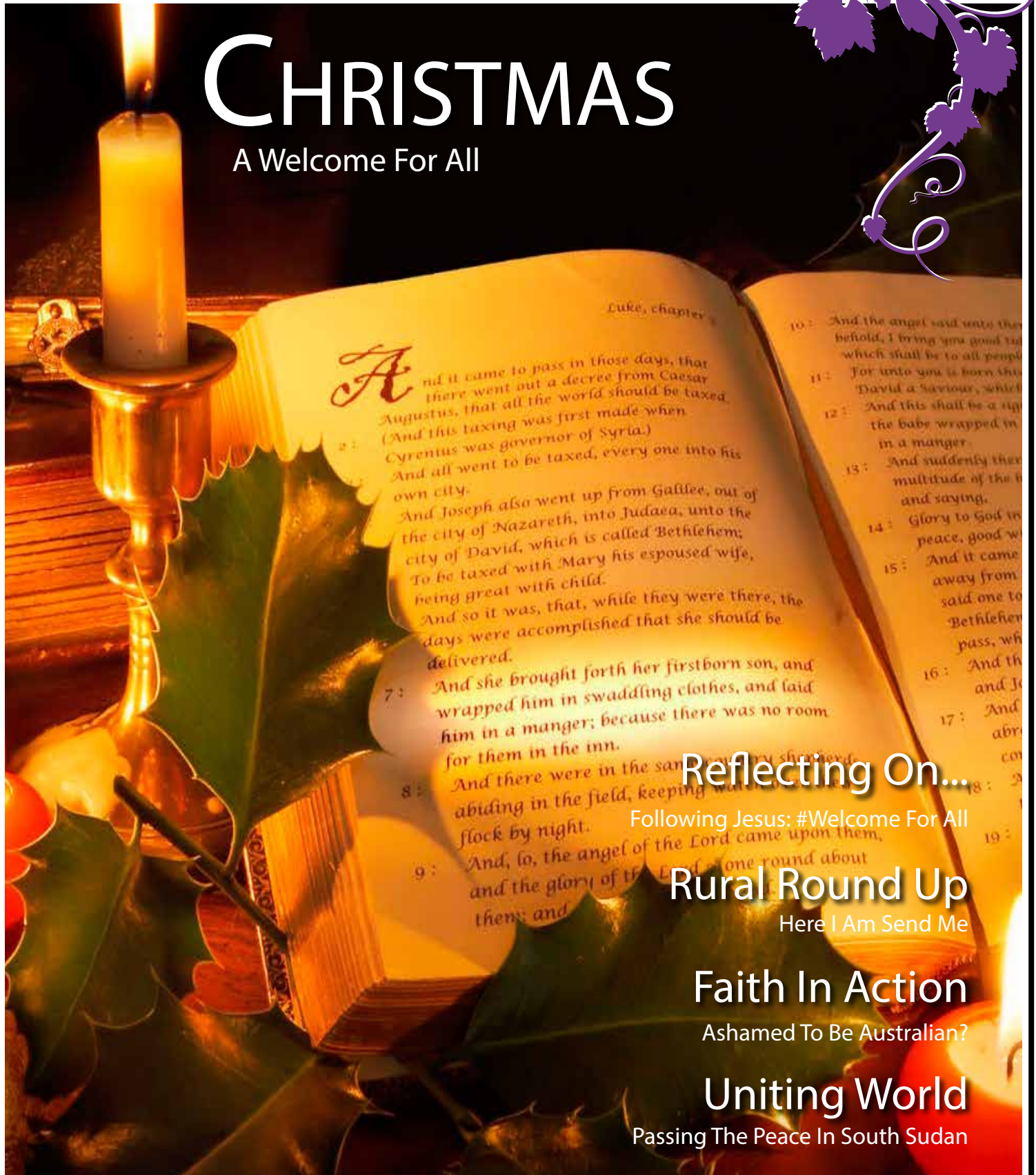
Ninth Edition
Summer 2017

on the *Vine*

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

CHRISTMAS

A Welcome For All



Reflecting On...

Following Jesus: #Welcome For All

Rural Round Up

Here I Am Send Me

Faith In Action

Ashamed To Be Australian?

Uniting World

Passing The Peace In South Sudan



Rev.
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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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Welcome For All

It's our Summer edition of On The Vine for 2016/17. In this issue we take a moment to think about what welcoming others really means. God's gracious gift of welcome is open to all, but how do we express that welcome? Do we express a true unconditional welcome, offering God's peace and love?

As we think about the welcome that we have given the new comers into the life of our congregation, this issue poses the question about welcoming others on a more personal level as individuals and a congregation of Christ. Through a letter written in response to an ABC Four Corners Programme (page 8) our welcome is questioned. Is it ok to just welcome those that come to us in the good times and through

the 'right channels'? Or do we also need to open our arms and make a stand, no matter the personal cost to ourselves, to welcome all no matter what their situation is? Should this also include welcome into our country?

Christmas is often a time when we look in to our hearts and openly share God's gift of welcome and acceptance. Many of us take time to give to those less fortunate to us. This can take many forms.

Giving through the UnitingCare Target Christmas Appeal is one way to do this (page 7). This year the Appeal turns 25 years old and I personally feel comforted knowing that my donations (over the last couple of years it has been a gift or two , chosen

by the kids) helps share God's unconditional love to others as they struggle through what should be a joyous time of year.

As we continue into the Advent season of preparation then onto Christmas and the new year I invite you to share God's welcome, God's gift of love to all that come into your life.

May the peace and love of Christ be with you all this Christmas and may the light of that shining star, above that ordinary stable, shine bright in your hearts so that others may also feel the love and peace of God's purest gift that came on that first Christmas morning.

Wishing you a blessed and merry Christmas and a peacefilled 2017.

Melissa Graham and Jen Shields

Christmas 2016

The following are the special worship and event times for Shepparton Uniting Church, Christmas 2015:

Wednesday 21st December:
9:30am - 11:30am
Countdown to Christmas

Thursday 22nd December:
9:30am - 11:30am
Countdown to Christmas

Friday 23rd December:
9:30am - 11:30am
Countdown to Christmas

Saturday 24th December:
7:00pm Christmas Eve family Service. Starting with family sausage sizzle at 6:00pm

10:00pm Candlelight Service

Sunday 25th December:
9:30am Christmas Day Celebration

All Services and events will be held at:
Shepparton Uniting Church, 134 Maude St, Shepparton

Special Service times for Shepparton Rural Parish are as follows:

Sunday 11th December:
7:30pm Carols Service at Katandra West

Friday 23rd December: 7:30pm Christmas Family Service at Pine Lodge

Sunday 25th December:
9:00am Christmas Day Celebration at Dookie

From the Minister's Desk

God's Gracious Gift

Forty-five new people have entered into the life of our congregation between March 2015 and the end of October 2016. These include people from various cultural backgrounds, Aboriginal, Anglo-European settlement, Sri Lankan, Congolese, Tongan, Fijian, and Chinese. The majority are under 60 and include children and teenagers and have engaged with different aspects of the life and worship of our congregation including 9:30 am Sunday Worship, Messy Church, Café Praxis, and the Tuesday night Youth Focus Service.

Whether people are simply with us for a few weeks or several months or stay on for the next forty years we pray that they may find a welcome and a place where their Faith is nurtured. As a congregation our life is enriched by each and every one, their experiences of the faith and the gifts they bring.

Christmas says to me that God hasn't forgotten us. Time and time again we may forget God or relegate God to a superficial or peripheral place in our lives but God hasn't forgotten us. What is more God comes to us and gives God's self to us. God was doing what love had to do. God loved the world so God gave. What was given was God's Son, Emmanuel -

God with us. Unlike Santa, whom children are told comes only to good boys and girls, God comes to all because God's love and the gift of God's Son is there for all.

Walk down the street and look into the faces and lives of people you see everywhere. Do you see God's love for these people. God's love and God's gift is there for each and every one. That gift is a saving gift. Paul reminds Timothy that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). John writes that Jesus came not to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him (John 3:17). Do we see God's love and saving grace there for all who make up our community, our nation and the different corners of the world, or are we quick to condemn them for one reason or another. Do we recognize our ongoing need for God's saving grace or do we think we've got it all worked out? Today as much as at any time we need God's love gift in order that we might be saved from ourselves, our own innermost deceptions, saved from the sin that would work to destroy us, destroy our relationships, and the created world in which we live.

What is proclaimed throughout Advent and celebrated at Christmas is that God's purpose is

not only to rescue, to save, but to create, or rather recreate, a new person, a new humanity, a new community, characterized by righteousness, justice and peace.

For so many reasons what we proclaim seems unbelievable. And yet the reality is that as we receive this gift of love and grace we find our lives changed as we begin to discover what it is to live out of the Hope, Peace, Joy and Love proclaimed throughout Advent and which finds its fulfilment in the coming of Christ. Hope, Joy, Peace and Love that is so needed in our world, in our community, in our own families.

May God's gracious gift become more real than ever for you this Christmas and may the way we celebrate and worship at this time enable others to discover that gift afresh.

Rev. Rosalie Rayment- Hewitt



Reflecting On...

Following Jesus: #Welcome For All

Recently Rob and I went to the Disturbed concert. For those who don't know, Disturbed are a heavy metal band from America, most recently famous on mainstream radio for their amazing rendition of Simon & Garfunkles' Sounds of Silence.

While in the centre of the mosh pit, enjoying the concert (instead of writing my Reflecting On article for On The Vine), I had a number of thoughts enter my head.

We were watching the support act, Twelve Foot Ninja, and I noticed many people doing anything they could to get the attention of a band member. Eye contact, a wink or a head nod from a band member and the fan was happy.

I wondered what it was like for Jesus. We read many stories in the Bible of people doing all they could to catch a glimpse of Jesus such as Zacchaeus climbing a tree, Luke 19:1-10. In Luke 8:40-55 We hear about the crowd almost crushing Jesus as he goes to the house of Jairus and his dying daughter. One bleeding woman even grabs Jesus' cloak. The Bible is filled with many stories like these.

Thinking about this and all the technology around, what would we do if Jesus was to return today? Would we be the ones like Zacchaeus climbing the tree for a glimpse of the messiah? Would we follow Jesus on Facebook, twitter, Instagram, snapchat, tumblr and any other form of social media so we knew where he was and what he was doing at all times. Thus giving us the opportunity to jump on a plane, train or bus and be with him, giving us the chance to grab his cloak or beg him to come to our house to heal our loved ones. Or would we be the ones in the crowd complaining about all his new followers that have jumped on the bandwagon since he found the "mainstream" airplay.

Yes, there were "original" Disturbed fans in the crowd complaining about the "new" fans that have probably only heard the song Sound of Silence due to the mainstream airplay. David the lead singer of Disturbed, made a good point that I think we as Christians could take heed of. He basically said, it doesn't matter how people come to our music the fact is they came because something spoke to them.



I believe the same is said for the love of Christ, it doesn't matter how someone came to know the love of Christ. It doesn't matter what they look like, what race or sexuality they are, what their past is or even what music they do or don't love (heavy metal included). We as Christians should not be so narrow minded. The fact is that something has spoken to them, they have heard and/or felt the love of Christ and we as Christians need to welcome them with open arms.

We could wait around for the return of the "modern messiah" to take away all the hatred" or in the further words of Disturbed: "This is the world we live in And these are the hands we're given Use them and let's start trying To make it a place worth living in" (lyrics from Land Of Confusion)

Melissa Graham

Prayer Points A Christmas Prayer

Loving Father,
Help us remember the birth of Jesus, that we may share in the song of Angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men.

Close the door of hate and open

the door of love all around the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings, and teach us to be merry with clear hearts.

May the Christmas morning make

us happy to be thy children, and the Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.
Amen

Robert Louis Stevenson

UnitingCare New UC Agency First CEO

Public sector and community services professional Paul Linossier has been appointed as the inaugural Chief executive officer of the new Uniting Church community services organisation.

The new organisation will be formed from the merger of 20 UnitingCare agencies and Wesley Mission Victoria (WMV).

The network of UnitingCare agencies and WMV operate across metropolitan, regional and remote parts of Victoria and Tasmania offering a broad range of services and advocacy to support vulnerable people.

With a combined annual budget of about \$237 million, over 3500 staff and 4000 volunteers, the services of the new organisation will include emergency relief, financial counselling, housing and homelessness services, employment services, early childhood services and Lifeline.

Linossier, currently the CEO of WMV, has more than three decades experience in leading organisational change and systems reform.

Inaugural Board chair Bronwyn Pike said she was delighted that Linossier had agreed to lead the new organisation given his broad experience.

"Paul is highly regarded in the public and community services sectors with a significant background in Uniting Church and other community service agencies, as well as experience in state government," she said.

"He will bring to the organisation important skills in the areas of strategic planning and organisational review, which will be important as we seek to establish the new organisation." Linossier said he was both humbled and excited by the challenge of leading the new agency.



"UnitingCare agencies have a long history of supporting vulnerable Victorians and Tasmanians," he said.

"As one unified agency and ministry of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania this vital support will now be expanded and strengthened. I am proud to be working together with our agency leaders, dedicated staff, volunteers and community partners to continue to serve and advocate alongside those most in need."

Linossier began the position on Monday 22nd August, 2016.

Gali Blacher, August 23, 2016

Rural Round Up Here I Am Send Me

The rural parish held a combined service on Sunday 29th of October, conducted by Joy Sims.

These services are held on the 5th Sunday when occurring, and take place in one of the four rural churches on rotation.

On the 29th October it was held in the Katandra Uniting church hall.

Members of the congregation from the rural churches sat around the hall in a circle singing hymns and also favourite hymns from the congregation. We spoke about "counting our blessings", of which there were many offered.

Have you ever thought about the moon and been thankful for it. A wonderfully made moon, sun and

earth all fit together because for one without the other the world would not be. The moon is exactly the right shape, size and distance from the earth and the same with the sun.

We formed into groups of 3 and 4 to discuss "Hear I am, send me."

Maybe you might like to think over this question.

Which ministry would be the most difficult for you to say "Hear I am, send me".

ALL TOGETHER FOR A GOOD CLAUS – MAYOR SUPPORTS CHRISTMAS APPEAL

The UnitingCare Target Christmas Appeal got some backing from Town Hall when Melbourne Lord Mayor Robert Doyle turned out to help Santa spread hope and cheer to those who otherwise might have little reason to celebrate.

"It's inspiring to see the incredible work that UnitingCare do to support communities across Australia," Mr Doyle said.

"I encourage those visiting their local Target store to give generously by purchasing gift tags for \$1 or by donating an unwrapped gift for families in need this Christmas.

"Together we can spread the joy and excitement of Christmas to those who need it most."

UnitingCare Vic/Tas CEO Paul Linossier, who also was at the event in Melbourne's CBD Target store, encouraged Australians to remember those who are struggling this Christmas, with



one recent report stating there are 731,300 children nationally who live below the poverty line.

"Christmas is a time of great celebration but also a reminder of the shortcomings for many people," Mr Linossier said.

"The UnitingCare Target Christmas appeal is a fantastic initiative that gives every Australian the opportunity to support those who are in need."

The appeal is now in its 25th year and organisers are hoping to raise at least \$1.5 million. It is on track to meet that target, with nearly \$300,000 already raised.

Funds from the appeal will support UnitingCare community service programs that provide emergency relief, crisis accommodation and food relief.

More than 2.1 million gifts have been donated to the appeal since its inception, including 45,000 gifts last year.

Supporters are invited to drop an unwrapped gift underneath the Christmas tree at the front of any Target store. They can also purchase gift tags for \$1 at the checkout.



"Whether it's financial support or that special Christmas present under the tree, these gifts enable a real difference to people's lives," Mr Linossier said.

All donated gifts stay in the local area and donations made at the registers are distributed throughout the state to where it is most needed.

This year, businesses, workplaces, churches, schools and community groups are invited to host their own gift collection. It can be a creative alternative to the traditional office Kris Kringle and will make a difference to the lives of those struggling to put food on the table this Christmas.

The UnitingCare Target Christmas Appeal website has a list of gift ideas tailored to different age groups.

The appeal will run until 24 December.

Visit <http://www.unitingcarechristmasappeal.com.au/> for more information.

November 17, 2016
<http://crosslight.org.au/>

Could it be:

- =tell a friend about Jesus
- =lead neighbourhood prayer group
- =work with children
- =prison visitation
- =hospital/nursing home visitation
- =homeless shelter
- =open my home to others
- =befriend a lonely person
- =foreign mission
- =ethical decisions at work/ meetings/with friends
- =other

If every member of this

congregation, went to the elders and said, "Hear I am, send me" how do you think they would react?

- a. Shock and disbelief
- b. Relief
- c. Surprise
- d. Affirmation
- e. Good ideas
- f. Rejection

Thanks to Joy Sims for allowing me to use part of her service material.

Majorie Shields



Faith In Action

Ashamed To Be An Australian?

re. ABC Four Corners programme Monday 17th October

I don't often feel this way, but this time I did - the teenage refugees on Nauru incarcerated for approximately three years, losing hope and health. Were they themselves responsible for being there? I think not, in any case THREE YEARS IS SIMPLY TORTURE.

In the programme we met two young Iranian men who would be wonderful future assets for Australia. The same can be said of all the other young people interviewed. Why and who are we that we do not see this. Are people scared of the consequences? Do our politicians think that human resources are less important than resources left in the ground such as coal in the

Galilee basin? Do scared old men cling to power by preventing the young from developing? I hope not. Do the female politicians think it's OK because they are not their children? Well IT'S NOT OK, and it never will be.

In fact those children showed more potential, humility and humanity than their incarcerators, Mr. Dutton, Mr. Turnbull and senior government members. Remember that EVERYONE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE and unfortunately you are denying that right to these young people. Time is of the essence now, no excuses, get your act together or give

someone else a go.

Do you not know that there would be many Australian country communities that could benefit from the resettlement of these refugees?

I believe the Uniting Church of Australia and other denominations could and would accept, nurture and provide for all of these young people.

Nauru did not emerge unscathed either, perhaps instead of getting a prison they needed a TAFE college, domestic science teachers, data comm. technology, sports venues, music and art schools, an outdoor stage for comedy or a rock festival.

Dreamer

This letter, sent to the Shepparton Church Council, poses a number of questions both as individuals and as the Congregation of Shepparton Uniting Church.

Firstly, what does this situation mean for us here in Shepparton? Do we need to get involved? How does this conflict with our own morals and social understandings as individuals, and as Australians?

Secondly, how is God calling us to respond as the people of Christ? How does this situation contradict with our understandings of Christ's teachings of love and compassions for all as the

congregation in Shepparton, and a faith body of the Uniting Church?

The Church Council of Shepparton Uniting Church are in Contact with the Synod's Justice and International Mission Unit (JIM) to see how we, as individuals and as a congregation, can actively respond to this call for basic human rights for all refugees.

If you would like more information or be involved with this issue please contact Lorraine Threlfall on: (03) 5821 4627.



Photo: <http://wwwuca.unitingchurch.org.au/?p=3787>

Lorraine is liaising with the JIM unit on behalf of the Church Council on this issue.

Alternatively you can view JIM's website to find out other social Justice Concerns and their latest Campaigns at:

<http://www.justact.org.au/>

Synod Snippets

What Does The UCA Look Like?

UCA Young Justice – Becoming the church we wish we were.

What does the UCA look like?

Well for me in the last month I have had the privilege of ministry with around six hundred youth and young adults including about two hundred young adult leaders from around eleven cultural groups and six indigenous peoples.

Backing onto Vic/Tas Synod where I facilitated the involvement of young members at synod, affably named 'Young Justice', was the Tongan National Conference (TNC). Here I was a privileged 'Palangi', invited to help support and provide input for the 'Step up' program that aimed for increased confidence in faith, culture and leadership. TNC was followed by the National Young Adult Conference (NYALC) where a hundred and thirty young leaders spent time together thinking about leadership, faith and the future of our movement. NYALC is hosted by the UCA President and Chair of Congress (UAICC) and had a third indigenous, a third multi cultural and a third 'white' participants. After this I travelled to Bendigo for leadership day.

Then I slept.

What does the UCA look like? This.

Our young leaders are collaborative; using the tools of their generation. At Synod, a statement by young justice was delivered by one of the group after a joint effort to

produce their sentiments about the future focus of the synod mission on a closed social media group called the 'Bat Cave'. The TNC 2nd Gen team have monthly devotions via email and challenge each other to provide the best they can in service of God.

Our young leaders are committed. The leadership teams of young adults plan and debrief continually both online and in person. At TNC, the reflections of the day and briefing for the next days activities, usually happened around 2am, with a program that began with Zumba at 6am. The personal cost of leaders attending leadership training is more than the registration and flights but the time off work. They are solid people looking towards hope.

Our young leaders are deep. I heard testimonies of struggle with mental health, family, discrimination and racism. There were reflections on being between worlds as young people, as second generation and as migrant leaders. I heard the call for treaty, the longing for sovereignty and amazing grace of welcome from our first peoples. I heard the second peoples including the migrant culture groups longing for a way to understand themselves, the church and God as second people on aboriginal land. How do we understand sin when we all benefit from dispossession? I heard refugee and asylum seeker voices naming the role of religion in colonisation and



dispossession. I watched their posture of inclusion while attending an inter faith Eid ul-Fitr lunch hosted by our Muslim friends. I was amazed as five hundred young plus people engaged in a sacred space prayer experience with devotion, tears and a sense of hope.

Our young leaders are diverse. As Galations 3 proclaims, we are most definitely neither black, or white, jew or greek, male or female, slave or free, gay or straight, ordained or lay, documented or undocumented but we are all one in Christ. A fantastic vision of the kingdom.

As my role in the Synod comes to an end in December, I find myself reflecting on the past ten years has the Young Adults Discipleship Educator and it is heartening to see that these sorts of gatherings and people will be a continuation of my dream for our movement. These are a glimpse of a true Australian Church that references it's own identity and theology from covenant with first peoples, seeking to live as second people's who embody justice, love, kindness, hope and inclusion as part of our compassionate spirituality.

We are becoming the church we wish we were.

Thanks

Adrian (Age) Greenwood

Assembly Action

All Of This Is Us

As many of you are aware, our Church will celebrate a significant birthday next year.

On 22 June 2017 it will be 40 years since our three predecessor churches came together in union. Today we launch a 40th anniversary logo that we hope captures the joyous spirit of the occasion.

The diversity starburst/dandelion is a firework explosion in earthy colours that reflects celebration and our commitment to covenant with First Peoples who are deeply connected to the land. The dandelion head shape also hints at our Church's spreading God's love around the world like seeds on the wind of the Holy Spirit.



The tagline "All of this is us" encourages us to embrace the diversity of our people, councils and agencies.

President Stuart McMillan

Prayers For Our NZ Partners

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia Stuart McMillan has called Australians to keep New Zealanders in our prayers after a series of powerful earthquakes hit the east coast of the South Island.

Two people are confirmed to have died and there has been extensive damage to roads and infrastructure.

"Right now our sisters and brothers in Aotearoa need our prayers as they confront the effects of another serious earthquake," said President

McMillan.

"Our ecumenical friends in the Presbyterian Church of New Zealand begin their annual Assembly this week. We have informed them and the Methodist Church of Aotearoa and New Zealand of our prayers and concern.

I'm sure all Uniting Church members will join me in praying for their safety and security."

The magnitude 7.8 earthquake struck about 90 kilometres northeast of Christchurch.

Aftershocks were felt as far away as Wellington, over 200 kilometres from the earthquake's epicentre.

A number of residents on the east coast of the South Island were forced to leave their homes and move to higher ground as tsunami warnings sounded.

Authorities are still assessing the extent of the damage.

Monday, 14 November 2016
<https://assembly.uca.org.au/>



People staying outside during the tremors. Photo: Getty Images

Uniting World

Passing the Peace in South Sudan

I didn't grow up in a Christian family, but living in the Bible Belt of the United States meant that I wasn't short of church experiences when I was a kid. For a long time the norms and traditions of the church felt strange and unfamiliar to me, and there were a lot of things about 'doing church' that I didn't quite understand.

I remember the thing that seemed the oddest at the time was 'passing the peace'. I learned very quickly what to say and do, but the reasons behind the custom didn't make a lot of sense to me. After being a Christian for more than ten years, I still thought of passing the peace as some sort of nicety that we do as a means of encouraging fellowship and making one another feel at ease within the congregation. That is, until a trip to South Sudan made me see peace in a whole new light.

On my first full day in the capital Juba, I attended a peace and reconciliation workshop run by the Presbyterian Church of South Sudan, UnitingWorld's partner church in the country. With pride of place right up the very front, my eyes couldn't help but be drawn to the banner hanging in the middle of the stage. Written on it in both English and Arabic, was the theme of the training inspired by Ephesians 4:3:

"Do your best to preserve the unity which the spirit gives by means of the peace that binds you together."

Reading that banner I started to think about peace and my experiences of it. In Australia, peace is abundant. And I often take it for granted. But sitting in that church hall in Juba, I started to really think about what it means when peace isn't present in a place.

As Christians, we're called to love our neighbours and forgive those who sin against us. We're bound together in unity because of the peace that exists between one person and another. But how many of us in Australia have ever had to forgive someone who has killed their family member? Perpetrated a war crime? Violated a loved one? How many of us has ever looked into the eyes of someone who has wronged us and unconditionally offered them peace?

For the people of South Sudan, peace isn't a passive state of being. Without the luxury of taking it for granted, they are constantly working towards peace. Fighting for peace. Praying for peace. Throughout the Bible, all of us are called to seek peace, and many faithful South Sudanese people are



answering this call. But I wonder – are we answering?

When our typical experience is the absence of conflict – the reality for most Australians – it's easy to forget what it means to seek peace, especially when the peace we're seeking is halfway across the world. But seeking peace doesn't mean we have to be in the room at the ceasefire negotiations. It doesn't mean that we have to be the ones laying down arms.

Seeking peace takes many forms. It's the prayer you say before bed every night. It's the letter you write your MP asking them to put peace at the top of their agenda. It's the monthly donation you put aside to support the ministers working towards reconciliation.

It's passing the peace, not just to your immediate neighbour, but those sisters and brothers that are keeping faith and building a church of peace in the hard places of the world.

We can all make a difference. We are all peacemakers. And together we can help bring peace to South Sudan.

Megan Calcaterra
October 26th, 2016
<http://unitingworld.org.au>



EVERYTHING | THE
in COMMON | GIFT
CATALOGUE



Welcome
to the Uniting Church
in Australia's own
gift catalogue

<https://everythingincommon.com.au/>

Ecumenical Report

The Uniting Church's Ecumenical Committees

The Synod Ecumenical Relations Committee

This committee has responsibility to inform the Synod and Synod members of ecumenical issues and interchurch developments, to facilitate relationships with the Victorian Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches in Australia, to facilitate discussions with corresponding committees of other denominations, to liaise with the Assembly Christian Unity Working Group and to encourage congregations, presbyteries and Synod bodies to undertake ecumenical initiatives, because churches should do everything possible together.

Recently the ERC met members of Joint and Co-operating Congregations, including that of Emmanuel, West Wodonga, to hear their stories and share their experiences. Among these congregations are Joint Congregations, such as West Wodonga (Anglican-Uniting), Greensborough (Uniting-Churches of Christ), Churchill- Boolarra (Anglican-Uniting-Churches of Christ), Karingal (Lutheran-Uniting)

and Southern Mallee (Uniting-Baptist). Other congregations have various relationships for co-operation, between two of these denominations. The ERC can assist congregations who would like to enter into co-operation with a congregation from another tradition. The Anglican-Uniting Report Weaving a New Cloth has guidelines for any congregations, not necessarily Anglican and Uniting, wanting to share with another tradition.

The Assembly Christian Unity Working Group

The Christian Unity Working Group is situated in Melbourne. Its members are drawn from the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania; the Executive Secretary is the Revd Dr Chris Walker who comes from Sydney for the meetings.

In October the CUWG Annual National Conference was held, the members being joined by representatives from the other Synods, usually of members of the Synod's ecumenical relations body. The UCA Co-Chairs of national dialogues were also present, to report on the progress of their dialogues.

The Synod committees also reported. There were reports from UC members of World Council of Churches committees, from the World Communion of Reformed Churches, the Christian Conference of Asia and the Pacific Council of Churches. The Revd Charity Majiza (Echuca) reported on the United and Uniting Churches of the WCC. The Revd Prof. Robert Gribben presented his final report from the World Methodist Council, as his term is completed.

The theme of the 2016 conference was 'What has Luther to say to today's church?' A panel presented reflections on this topic. Prof Katharine Massam, CTM and a practising Catholic, and the Lutheran and Uniting Co chairs of the Lutheran-Uniting Church Dialogue, Dr Jeff Semmler and Dr Anna Grant-Henderson, both from Adelaide, presented interesting and challenging papers on the theme. In the remaining year to the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, CUWG members will reflect further on Luther's gifts to the church.

Joan McRae

Shepparton Uniting Church Building Project Update

As of 13/11/2016

The first week in November saw the completion of the work of the Property Planning Task Group in relation to checking the work of the Project Control Group, asking questions and making suggestions for changes. The drawings were completed in the second week of November when the costing by the builder could commence. Form 3H29 Application to Build was completed and forwarded to the Presbytery Property, Finance and Administration Committee for their approval of the project. The application for Use of Property Sale Proceeds has also been completed. It was hoped that the final costing could be received and approved and the application sent to PART, Synod Property Services, in time for their December 1 meeting, but it now seems that a December 8 submission for the December 15 PART meeting will be more likely. The worst case scenario would be the PART meeting in late January.

I set up another committee, the Sanctuary Group, to consider

the worship space interior as specifically for worship, especially in the sanctuary area. The very thoughtful work of that group was discussed with the Revd Prof. Robert Gribben who approved of the group's thinking. Some changes were made to the interior plans after consultation with the PPTG.

The Property Planning Task Group is delighted with the work of the Project Control Group, which includes Andrew Hutchinson (Synod Property Services Consultant), Bruce Mactier whose firm did the CAD work, Brian Pethybridge, GMR Engineering Services (Project Manager), Building Services Group, Albury (Mechanical, Electrical, Fire and Hydraulic Services), Tony Villani (preferred builder), Laurie McGoldrick and Zane Streeter. As expected, the problems which became clear with the more detailed CAD plans were able to be dealt with at this stage, rather than as surprises during the building phase. This has saved both time and money.



The Congregation can now look forward with confidence to receiving the final costing, and to moving to the next phase of this long-drawn-out project. Very soon there will be something to see!

Joan McRae
Chairperson, PPTG

Profile Elaine Brewster



Born: 1939 at Mooroopna Base Hospital and a younger brother Barry followed four years later.

Early years and family life: Elaine had a very happy, carefree childhood with lots of family living close by.

School began at Orrvale Primary before continuing at the Fryers Street School.

Elaine attended the Shepparton High School and finished after form four. She worked at Varloine studios as a colourist and in her

spare time was a member of the Shepparton Ladies Pipe band as a drummer. The band would compete at Highland Gatherings throughout Victoria.

Elaine married in 1961 and has three daughters, Lisa, Carolyn and Melinda who all had their faith nurtured at St Andrew's.

Elaine is a keen lawn bowler and a member at Kialla Park. She is grateful for each day and wishes there was more family time.

Faith journey: Elaine's dad's family had a

Salvation Army background which meant that he went to church many times on Sunday's - Elaine thinks that may be one reason why he was not interested in ever going to church later in life. On the other hand, Elaine's Mum-although not a churchgoer either- spent time each day in prayer.

During her early years Elaine felt the need not only to belong to her family but also to God - a feeling she describes as powerful.

She started Sunday School at Scots Presbyterian Church and later

became a Sunday School Teacher. "How times have changed," the Scots Hall was filled every Sunday with up to 60 children.

Elaine recalled that Pat Smith and the Reverend Bill Morgan were great mentors and both had a profound influence with her spiritual development.

From that time on Elaine has been part of the church and has no desire not to be at worship on Sundays.

Her baptism at Scots was a special event at about 18 years of

age and sometime later Elaine's confirmation occurred.

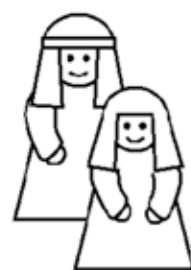
Elaine enjoyed time as a PFA member, a Church Councillor at St Andrew's, has been a flower monitor and helped with morning tea.

She is a Pastoral Care Team leader and an Op Shop volunteer, both in which her deep love of the Lord, her gentle manner and infectious smile shine through as she lives out her faith.

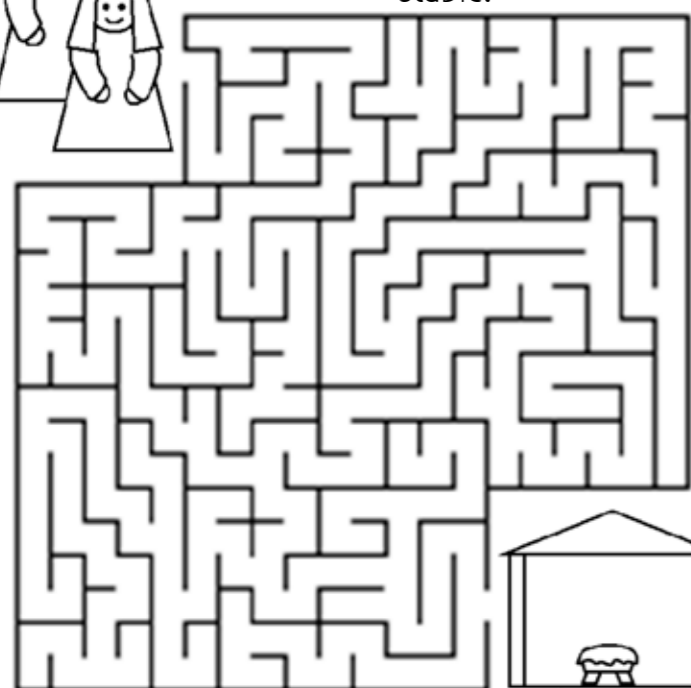
Jeni Fitzgerald

For The Kids

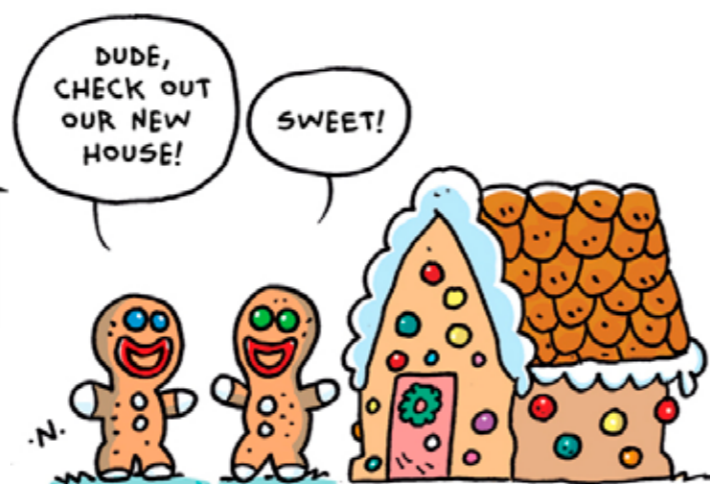
Have Fun



Help Mary and Joseph get to the stable.



For more creative learning ideas check out
www.makinglearningfun.com



When: Wednesday 21st.
Thursday 22nd and
Friday 23rd December
Time: 9:30-11:30am
Cost: \$12 (to cover craft cost for the
whole program)
Age: 4-12 year olds
We'll be working in age-based
small groups
Where: Shepparton Uniting Church
150 Maude Street,
Shepparton

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

REGISTER BY DECEMBER 1st
We have a limit of 50 places.
Register your name, age, parent/
guardian's name and contact
phone number by December 1 to
make sure you're in on the fun.

Parents are welcome to join in the
session with their child if they wish.
Phone Lyn 5821 1242, or send
your details 28 John St.
Shepparton

PLUS!!!
Join us in our Christmas
Eve Family Service
Saturday 24th December
at 7pm with a sausage
sizzle beforehand at 6pm

Shepparton
Uniting Church

Countdown to CHRISTMAS

Around the Congregation

Pews For Sale

As planning proceeds for the redevelopment of Scots Uniting Church suite of buildings and the building of a new worship space we find that there are a number of the original timber pews surplus to the requirements.

So we have FOR SALE beautiful timber pews (with cushions) in 2 sizes: 2400mm and 3000mm.

They are approx 100 years old and in

excellent condition. Price \$500 ono.

There are also 2 x 3000mm pews with swing backs – originally used by Scots Choir.

Do you or someone in your family have a connection with Scots Church and would like to own a piece of its history?

For further information or to inspect the pews contact

Lorraine Threlfall 0427 214 627.



On Friday 11th November 2016 Cameron Shields, on Behalf of the Shepparton Uniting Church, Layed a cross at the Remembrance Day Service



Sizzling Sausages

As I write this, the Shepparton Uniting Church has participated in two local BBQ fundraisers. One Love Your Local Twilight Lake Market on the October 22 and one Bunnings BBQ on November 5th.

Although the Lake market was almost blown away due to the cold stormy weather keeping people away (we did cover our costs), the Bunnings BBQ more than made up for the lack of people at the lake. At these two BBQ's we raised approximately \$1600.

We hope, over the next few months, we will once again be able to participate in the Love Your Local Twilight Markets on January 28th,

February 25th and March 18th 2017 from 4pm-8pm.

These markets will be a great opportunity for our congregation to not only raise some funds for the building fund but to also become a visible presence in the community.

If you would like to help with these BBQ's by assisting on the night to help set or pack up, cook sausages or serve customers please contact Cam Shields on (03) 58214767 or 0417579936.



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 March, April and May.

Preaching Plan

December 2016

December 2016	4th Advent 2	11th Advent 3	18th Advent 4	21st-23rd	24th Christmas Eve	25th Christmas Day
9.30am Shepparton	Rosalie and Loni Baptisms HC	Rosalie	Rosalie and Joan McRae No Messy Church	9:30-11:30 Countdown to Christmas	7:00pm Christmas Family Service	Loni No service at Kialla Gardens
Afternoon/Evening						
Dookie 9.00am	Joy Sims	Joan Fisher	Loni HC			Rosalie
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Joy Sims		At Katandra West	23rd 7:30 pm Christmas Service Loni		
Kialla West 11.00am		James Carter				
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge	7:30pm Carols Joy Sims	Loni HC			
Lectionary Readings	Isaiah. 11:1-10 Ps. 72:1-7 18-19 Romans 15:4-13. Matthew 3:1-12	Isaiah. 35:1-10. Psalm 146:5-10 James 5:7-10. Matthew 11:2-11	Isaiah. 7:10-16. Ps. 80:1-7, 17-19 Romans 1:1-7 Matthew 1:18-25	Isaiah 9:2-11 Psalm 96 Titus 2:11-14 Luke 2:1-14	Is. 62:6-12. Ps. 97. Tit. 3:4-7. Lk. 2:8-20.	

Preaching Plan

January / February 2017

January 2017	1st Christmas 1	8th Baptism of Jesus	15th Epiphany 2	22nd Epiphany 3	29th Epiphany 4
9.30am Shepparton	Loni HC	Rosalie	Loni No Messy Church	Rosalie NCYC 2:00pm Kialla Gardens Brian Hardy	Rosalie
Dookie 9.00am	Joan Fisher	Shirley Marven	Joan McRae	Loni and Elders	Dookie 10:30 am Combined Service Loni HC
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Joan Fisher		At Katandra West		
Kialla West 11.00am		Rosalie HC			
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge		Joan McRae		
Lectionary Readings	Isaiah 63:7-9. Psalm 148 Hebrews 2:10-18 Mathew 2:13-23	Isaiah 42:1-9 Psalm 29 Acts 10:34-43 Mathew :13-17	Isaiah 49:1-7. Psalm 40:1-11 1 Cor. 1:1-9 John 1:29-42	Isaiah 9:1-14 Psalm 27:1, 4-9 1 Cor. 1:10-18 Mt. 4:12-23	Mic. 6:1-8 Psalm 15 1 Cor. 1:18-31 Matthew 5:1-12

February 2017	5th Epiphany 5	12th Epiphany 6	19th Epiphany 7	26th Transfiguration of Jesus
9.30am Shepparton	Loni HC	Loni Tues 14th 7:00 pm Youth Focus Shepparton NCYC	Joan McRae 4.30pm Messy Church Rosalie	Rosalie 2pm Kialla Gardens Loni
Dookie 9.00am	Shirley Marven	Joy Sims	Loni HC	Loni and Elders
Pine Lodge 11.00am	Shirley Marven			
Kialla West 11.00am		Joy Sims		
Katandra West 11.00am	At Pine Lodge			
Lectionary Readings	Isaiah 58:1-9a Psalm 112:1-9.1 Cor. 2:1-12. Mt. 5:13-20	Deut. 30:15-20 Ps. 119:1-8. 1 Cor. 3:1-9. Mt. 5:21-37.	Lev. 19:1-2, 9-18 Ps. 119:33-40. 1 Cor. 3:10-11, 16-23 Mt. 5:38-48	Exodus 24:12-18 Psalm 2 2 Peter 1:16-21 Matthew 17:1-9

Upcoming Events

December 2016 - February 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
			1 10am Multicultural Play G. 10am Craft Group 4pm Together in Voice	2	3	4 9:30am Worship
5	6 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 10am Worship Ava Maria 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group	7	8 10am Multicultural Play Group 10am Craft Group 10:45am Worship Banksia L. 1:30 pm Worship at Hakea L 2pm Fellowship Group 4pm Together in Voice	9 5pm KUCA	10	11 9:30am Worship 6pm Faith Sharing Group
12	13 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	14 2pm Fellowship Group 6:30pm Church Council Dinner	15 10am Multicultural Play G 10am Craft Group 10:45 Worship at Mercy Aged Care 4pm Together in Voice	16 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	17	18 9:30am Worship
19	20 10am Worship Ava Maria	21 9:30am-11:30am Countdown to Christmas	22 9:30am-11:30am Countdown to Christmas	23 9:30am-11:30am Countdown to Christmas	24 6:00pm Family Sausage sizzle 7:00pm Family Christmas Service	25 9:30am Christmas Celebration Service
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
30	31					1 9:30am Worship
2	3	4	5	6	7	8 9:30am Worship
9	10	11	12	13	14	15 9:30am Worship
16	17	18	19	20 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	21	22 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
23	24	25	26	27	28	29

Upcoming Events

February 2017

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
		1 10am Church Council Executive	2 3pm Together in Voice	3	4	5 9:30am Worship
6	7 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist	8 7:30pm Church Council	9 10am Multicultural Play Group 10am Craft Group 10:45am worship Banksia L 1:30 pm Worsip at Hakea L 2pm Fellowship Group 3pm Together in Voice	10 5pm KUCA	11 h	12 9:30am Worship 6pm Faith Sharing Group
13	14 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 6pm Tea & Youth Service	15 1:30 UCAF	16 10am Multicultural Play Group 10am Craft Group 10:45 Worship at Mercy Aged Care 3pm Together in Voice	17 6:30pm Cafe Praxis	18	19 9:30am Worship 4:30 Messy Church
20	21 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 10am Worship Ava Maria 1:30pm Crazy Whist 7pm Youth Group	22 7:30pm Women's Evening Group	23 10am Multicultural Play Group 10am Craft Group 3pm Together in Voice	24 5pm KUCA Dookie Family tea	25 8am Men's Breakfast	26 9:30am Worship 2pm Kialla Gardens Service
27	28 Shrove Tuesday TBA 10am Craft Group 10am Friendship Group 1:30pm Crazy Whist 2:00pm Worship at Acacia House	1 March Ash Wednesday Service TBA				

*From all at Shepparton
Uniting Church,
We wish you and your
loved ones a very
joyous, peaceful and happy
Christmas filled with the
love and care of Christ.*



Shepparton
Uniting Church

Shepparton Uniting Church
150 Maude Street, Shepparton
P.O. Box 7032, Shepparton, 3632

