

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

SHEPPARTON RURAL CLUSTER



**The building is closed.
The Church is alive!**

NEWS JUNE 14, 2020

MINISTERS

Rev Rosalie Rayment-Hewitt 5821 2077 on leave

Rev Loni Vaitohi 5822 4602

Rev Joan Fisher, Minister in Association

Church 4805 1120

Website sheppartonuc.org.au

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/shepparton.unitingchurch>

SUNDAY JUNE 14 Refugee Week

Praying Together Violet Town, Strathbogie

Readings Gen 18.1-15 Ps 116.1-2,12-19 Rom 5,10 Mt 9.35-10.8

Worship Loni Service streamed on Facebook 9.30am

<https://www.facebook.com/shepparton.unitingchurch>

READINGS JUNE

June 21 Gen 21.8-21 Ps 86.1-10,16-17 Rom 6.1b-11 Mt 10.24-39

June 22 UCA Ezek 37.15-28 Ps 122 Heb 13.1-8 John 17.20-26

June 28 Gen 22.1-14 Ps 13 Rom 6.12-23 Mt 10.40-42

Services will be streamed - see above.

The Narthex will be open two mornings a week - see next page.

*We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the lands of the region,
and pay our respects to their Elders, past, present and emerging*

WORSHIP ONLINE

Waranga Cluster 9.30 am Check warangaunitingchurches.net.au

Brunswick Uniting Church brunswick.unitingchurch.org.au/worship-with-us/

Assembly Service 10.00am Each Sunday, a different church is featured on the *Assembly's Facebook address*. Details of the service are not available until Friday, on Assembly News, so our email version contains them.

NATIONAL REFUGEE WEEK June 14 to 20

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

Ministers are available for pastoral conversation as follows:

Joan Fisher Wednesdays June 17 and 24, 10.00 to noon.

Loni Vaitohi Fridays June 19 and 25, 10.00am to 2.00pm

Small groups If you would like to join with others, please contact Loni.

Synod requirements for buildings - cleaning and disinfecting all surfaces, including chairs and tables both before and after use - **and people** - hand sanitising, listing names and contacts and social distancing - are being adhered to rigorously. You will be safe in the Narthex!

ROSALIE AND JOHN: FAREWELL FROM THE CONGREGATION

Watch for details in next week's NEWS.

WARNING - FROM THE SYNOD JUNE 11: SCAMS

Scam phone calls and emails purporting to come from the Synod:

phone calls from someone saying they are Uniting or some other part of the Uniting Church: do not give any personal details over the phone - including credit card details, bank details or Tax file numbers. It is best to just hang up.

emails: all Synod-related emails will have the name@victas.uca.org.au

Check the address, by hovering your mouse over the name. If it doesn't look right, delete the email immediately.

ANNUAL REPORTS FOR 2019 were due June 3, 2020

Thanks to those who gave me their reports in the last week. A reminder to: the Ministers, Church Council, Pastoral Care Committee, Property Maintenance Committee, Worship Committee, Young Church, Friendship Group. Remember to report two aspects of your work: a. a couple of highlights; b. some directions for the future. And your financial report. To Joan, please. Phone 5812 9320 if you cannot email your report.

SNAPSHOTS

As you know, a minister has been available in the Narthex each morning for several weeks now. What does a 'duty minister' do between visitors? On the first morning, I found Joan Fisher just finishing cleaning and disinfecting all the surfaces in the Narthex and kitchen servery. On Friday June 5, Rosalie was measuring the spaces between rows of seats with a tape, sometimes on her knees. I am yet to be there with Loni! Warmest thanks to all three for all you do for us - including these very domestic things.

RE-OPENING OF THE OP SHOP

The Op Shop re-opens on Monday, June 15.
Opening times: Monday to Friday from 10.00am to 2.00pm

YOUR OFFERING

Please Contact us if you need help to make your offering. Zane thanks all who have made their offerings by EFT or by hand.

PRESIDENTIAL PASTORAL LETTER June 4



President: Dr Deidre Palmer **General Secretary:** Ms Colleen Geyer

Pastoral Letter – Racism and Police Brutality To all congregations and faith communities

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I join with Christian leaders from around the world to express my outrage and deep sorrow over the murder of George Floyd, and the evil of racism, which gives birth to such acts of inhumanity.

I offer prayers for the Floyd family and for all those in the U.S. who live in fear and ongoing discrimination because of the colour of their skin. We join in solidarity with all those who are working for justice, equity and healing in the U.S. and particularly with our partner churches, who are deeply committed to this struggle for justice.

In the Bible, our sacred text, we hear God's cry for justice for those who are living in poverty, those who are oppressed by unjust systems, those who are excluded and discriminated against. For the President of the United States to brandish the Bible as an assertion of power over people seeking justice, is an affront to the prophetic and radical call of Jesus. The Jesus we know from the Gospel stories, calls leaders to use their power in service to others, to call forth in others compassion, justice and kindness, unity and community. These are the leaders, we are called to be and that we need in the world today.

While we condemn what is taking place in the U.S., a country which was my home for nine years, we need to also turn our gaze to our own home in Australia. We need to focus on the racism which blights our land, the racism, which leads to Aboriginal deaths in custody, which has First Peoples experiencing discrimination, poverty, ill health and disadvantage.

We began this National Reconciliation week by saying we need to strengthen our actions for justice, healing and reconciliation. This is not an abstract call – it is seen expressed daily in our relationships with one another in this country.

It is seen when we:

- call out racism;
- tell the truth about the history of colonisation, dispossession and the undermining of First People's culture, language and spirituality;
- advocate for First People's voice to be heard in determining their future;
- respect and appreciate the culture and stories of First Peoples, and work together to deepen our relationships based on reconciliation that arises from justice, and leads to healing; and
- live in harmony with the sacred land that we share.

To stand by and remain silent is to be complicit in contributing to a system and world that is against God's intention for us all. What God desires is for us to do justice, love kindness and walk humbly with our God. (Micah 6:8)

Yours in Christ,

Dr Deidre Palmer

President, Uniting Church in Australia Assembly
Lvl 4 262 Pitt St Sydney NSW 2000 PO Box A2266 Sydney South NSW 1235

Prayer

Risen, Crucified God,

We cry out for justice for the family of George Floyd and for comfort for all those who mourn his death.

Forgive us for the sin of racism, and the ways we fail to acknowledge that all people are equal, created in your image, deeply loved and of infinite worth.

Forgive us for our silence, and the ways we are complicit in racist attitudes and actions.

Stir in us vision, courage and determination to work for justice in Australia.

May your Holy Spirit fill us with your compassion and reconciling love, that we might walk together as First and Second Peoples in mutuality, respect and delight in our shared life and destiny together.

Through Christ, our liberator we pray. Amen.

Deidre Palmer



**Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY**

FROM ASSEMBLY NEWS June 11, 2020

1. NATIONAL REFUGEE WEEK June 14 to 20, 2020

The Uniting Church joined other organisations to call for a financial safety net and access to Medicare to be extended to already vulnerable asylum seekers and refugees living in Australia. Some States have provided some relief to support temporary visa holders. The uniting Church has called for pathways to permanent protection for asylum seekers as well as an end to indefinite mandatory detention and a fair and timely process for accessing claims for protection.

You could write to your MP to express your concern for refugees and

asylum seekers in our community. You could listen to and learn from refugees- in our congregation and community. You could join one of the Refugee Week events taking place online this year. Or you could share a message of support on your social media account - #RefugeeWeek2020

THREE ASKS AND A PRAYER for Racial Justice

Uniting Church President, Dr Deidre Palmer, met Pastor Mark Kickett, Interim Chairperson of Uniting and Islander Aboriginal Congress, in Adelaide on June 10 to discuss the *Black Lives Matter* protests and the deep concern about Aboriginal Deaths in Custody - 431 since 1991.

'At the end of our conversation we suggested three actions for Uniting Church members and a prayer for the coming week and beyond, as we acknowledged that we have longer term commitments and strategies that are part of the Uniting Church's ongoing mission and ministry,' said Dr Palmer.

Uniting Church members are encouraged to take these three actions:

1. Show support. Send your message of solidarity to the national UAICC. uaicc@nat.uca.org.au

2. Change your frame. Update your Facebook profile picture that says what your Church has to say on these issues. We've designed two for you . Uniting Church against racism. Uniting Church against black deaths in custody. You'll find them among Facebook's frame options. (Just search for Uniting)

3. Change the record. The "Change the Record" campaign is a national campaign for social policy measures that will reduce incarceration rates and deaths in custody. They are collecting petition signatures to send to the Prime Minister and Leader of the Opposition. Please sign the Change the Record petition on their website and support their initiatives

And the prayer:

Creator God, our hearts are heavy for all the events that have impacted the world in the past few weeks that have caused us to ask the question, 'Where is the God of Justice, Mercy, Peace and Love?'

We know deep in our heart that you are still all of those things (and more), and that scripture reminds us that you journey with us wherever we go and no matter what condition, or state of mind or circumstances that we may

find ourselves in, your presence is there walking alongside us and often times holding us up. (Ps 139:7f)

Creator God, we reach out in prayer for the lives of all people, in particular for the lives affected by injustice and the ugliness of racism, for we know and believe that you are the God who transforms lives and circumstances, and that through all of this the world may know and feel your healing and loving touch.

We give you thanks for the ministry of the UAICC.

We pray for UAICC leaders, that you will continue to sustain them with hope, give them strength and wisdom, as they minister to their communities and especially as they mentor younger leaders, and raise up the sacred stories of First People in this land.

We pray for all members of the Uniting Church, our congregations, councils, agencies and schools, that we may embody the Gospel of Christ in ways of compassion, justice, love and hope.

May your Holy Spirit be a loving presence throughout our world, bringing comfort to all those who grieve, and breathe new life and hope into situations of uncertainty and despair.

May your Holy Spirit renew us in heart and vision, that we might walk together as First and Second Peoples in mutuality, respect and delight in our shared life and destiny together.

Through Christ, our liberator we pray. Amen

BUILDING A BETTER FUTURE FOR AUSTRALIA

During lockdown, there have been plenty of suggestions that Australia should not automatically slip back into pre-COVID-19 ways of doing things. The Assembly has drawn up a document together with input from across the Church, including our agencies delivering community services on the ground, our Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and others working in the area of justice.

'The principles we believe will guide a better future are:

- Build Resilient Individuals, Families and Communities

- Build a more equal society
- Build a nation where everyone is respected and has a voice
- Creative, collaborative and constructive leadership to rebuild Australia.
- Build for a sustainable future

The Uniting Church has further described 12 key actions to achieve these principles.

- Stimulation of the economy with a focus on job creation by investing in projects that are good for all Australians and for our planet.
- Fix gaps in the social security safety net and ensure a permanent increase to JobSeeker Allowance, providing a liveable safety net for those out-of-work.
- Ensure community services are properly resourced to support vulnerable and disadvantaged individuals, families and communities, and to respond to areas of growing need, including domestic and family violence and mental health.
- First Peoples and rural and remote communities have adequate access to food and health services.
- Initiatives that improve access to affordable housing for all people.
- Ensuring our tax system is fair and transparent, with individuals and corporations contributing fairly to the costs of post-COVID recovery.
- Doing our share for the global recovery from COVID-19 and building a more equitable, safe and sustainable world for the future.
- Reducing fossil fuel usage, and excessive consumption of resources to build for a sustainable future
- Adequate support for people living with disability and older Australians.
- Prioritising work towards Voice, Truth and Treaty for First Peoples, meaningful action on incarceration rates for Indigenous Australians and calling out racism and building inclusion across all Australian society.
- A focus on creating pathways to permanent migration.
- Collaboration between Governments and civil society with political leadership focused on common good' *Assembly News June 11, 2020* 4