

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

WITH DOOKIE UNITING CHURCH



NEWS FEBRUARY 9, 2023

EPIPHANY 7 - TRANSFIGURATION

MINISTERS

Rev Loni Vaitohi

Sick Leave

Rev Kerrie Needham

Pastoral Care Convenor Shirley Marven

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Church

4805 1120

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SUNDAY FEBRUARY 19 Joan McRae

DOOKIE 9.30am Rev Denise Naish HC

MESSY CHURCH 4.30 – 6.30pm, including a meal.

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 22 Ash Wednesday Service, 7.00pm Rev

Kerrie Needham

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 26 Rev Kerrie Needham

DOOKIE 9.30am Elders/Zoom

SHEPPARTON WORSHIP 9.30AM

Worship online www.youtube.com/user/SheppartonUniting

We acknowledge the Traditional owners of the lands and waters of the region, the Bangerang Peoples of the Yorta Yorta Nations and pay our respects to their elders, past, present and emerging.

THIS WEEK

Tuesday, February 21 Friendship Group *Pancake Day. Quiz, Crazy Whist*
10.00am

Pancake Day 6.30pm – with Uniting See details below, and RSVP!

Wednesday February 22 Women's Afternoon Group 1.30

Thursday, February 16 Cuppa and Chat 10.00 to noon

DATES FOR DOOKIE CONGREGATION

Monday February 20 *Congregational meeting and AGM, church hall,*
7.30pm **Sunday** *Harvest Thanksgiving, St Andrew's* 9.30am

Friday March 3 *World Day of Prayer service, St Andrew's,* 7.30pm

Sunday March 5 *Former Rural Parish service and lunch, St Andrew's*
10.30am

REV LONI VAITOHI

Following a series of tests during the first week of February, Loni has been given the news that, while the cancer in his lung has reduced considerably, cancer cells have been found in his brain. He commenced radiotherapy this week, however the outlook is poor and a time frame of approximately 4 months has been given.

Loni and his family want to thank the congregation for their prayers, love and support over the last few months and they wish to be open about the journey ahead.

Loni reassures us that while this is not the news he was hoping to receive, he is confident in God's love and grace.

The Vaitohi family regards the Shepparton Uniting Church as their home and Loni has encouraged them to 'lean on the Church' during the days ahead.

We, the people of the Shepparton Uniting Church, assure Loni, Moti, Lavinia, Joey, Danny and Henry, and the little ones, of our prayers, love and support.

GREETINGS FROM KERRIE

Hello. Today you will receive a printed copy of the news announced to the congregation on 5th February. It is printed in the newsletter because there are some people who did not hear the report on Loni's health. Reading it is not the easiest way, but hearing it second hand is also not easy. If this is the day you receive the news, know that we as a congregation can and will be praying for each other. If you need pastoral support - a need to connect

and talk - reach out to someone, or call me. My number is on the newsletter.

Joan Fisher and I have arranged for a couple of half-hour prayer sessions during the weeks leading up to Easter. We originally planned on three per week, but changed it to two, as we have opportunity to pray together on Sundays too. You will find accurate day/ times in this week's newsletter. The prayer sessions are to enable us to pray for those in our congregation, and for situations in our region and for those very concerning situations we hear in world news. I want to invite something further to our prayer times: the opportunity for us to recognise the blessings -whether they be directly linked to us, or to the community or even further afield. News of adversity can take up all our attention to the point of forgetting about all the good and wonderful things with which we are blessed... or the things we can do to be a blessing on others.

Depending on when you read this, Presbytery will be/will have occurred on Saturday. Some very important conversations will be had at that meeting which is open to leaders of congregations as well as elected members of Presbytery.

Last week, Don and I travelled to Wodonga to attend the induction of Rev. Hee Yung. In March there will be another induction in this Presbytery. Watch for news in a future newsletter.

I am on a deadline to get my letter out for printing today, and working on a computer that takes time to start up and be ready for the day. I also find it difficult to go from serious to chatty in the same letter. Next week, I will bring some chatty news...maybe a report on the upcoming Pancake Day which I am looking forward to. God bless you in the coming week. Kerrie

PRAYER SESSIONS DURING LENT

Special sessions for prayer will be held during Lent to pray for Loni and for Syria and Turkey and New Zealand and to give thanks. See Kerrie's letter. Wednesdays 4.00- 4.30pm after the Lent Study Fridays 10.00 to 10.30am.

LENTEN STUDIES

The Presbytery's online Lenten Studies, again shared with Loddon Mallee Presbytery, begin Sunday February 19 and Wednesday 22. There will be six sessions, offered with a choice of Sunday evening (6.30-8.00pm) or Wednesday afternoon (2.30-4.00pm). Each study will have a different leader, three from each presbytery. You will be able to join online at home or in a group at the church.

REPORT FROM FEBRUARY CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Church Council met on February 8 and it was resolved that Shirley Marven would act as Chairperson in the absence of Rev. Loni. Lea Watts led devotions reflecting on Rev. Gereldine Leonard's monthly letter to the congregations.

Church Council was delighted to recognise Josh and Narelle Freeman as Members in Association, co-opt Narelle to Church Council and appoint her as secretary.

Church Council spent some time reflecting on the latest news in regards to Loni's illness, and spent time in prayer for Loni, his family and the congregation.

We received with some sadness the news that Rev. Joan Fisher will conclude her role as Minister in Association. We have been blessed with Joan's ministry and leadership for the last seven years and are thankful that she will remain an active member of our congregation.

Reports were received from the Minister, the Worship Group, the Youth, Children's and Family Committee, the Young Adults' Committee, Property and Maintenance Committee, the Treasurer and the Project Control Group (Op Shop).

Decisions made arising from the reports include:

a. The Op Shop will operate from the Old Church during the building of the new Op Shop, with temporary walls being installed to separate the temporary Op Shop from the Hospitality Space and to provide a designated sorting space. Clothing racks and shop fittings will be transferred from the old Op Shop to the temporary Op Shop. Entry will be through the west door of the Old Church. Church Council will apply for Property Sales Proceeds from the sale of the Maude St property to cover all the costs.

b. The Wesley Organ Committee has been dissolved and transferred money from the Organ Account to Shepparton Uniting Church with a request that it be used to purchase a new organ/musical instrument. A task group will be appointed to investigate the purchase of an organ/
musical instrument that will best suit the needs of our congregation.

PASTORAL PRAYERS

We remember Emily and her family; Eve

All with Covid, or Long Covid, in the continuing serious pandemic. *The Presbytery* prays for Emmanuel, West Wodonga, and Kergunyah. *The WCC* prays for the lands and peoples of France, Germany and Monaco, as well as for Turkey and Syria. The Assembly invites prayers for *Refugees who flee their homes in search of safety and for those who work to make

Australia a more welcoming and compassionate nation. *The leading of the Spirit as the work of Act2 continues across the country. *Advocates and panel members of the Assembly Circles of Interest as they seek to nurture and encourage input from Circle members. Loni was thanked for his gentle and wise leadership of the Working for Justice Circle for the past five years.

Kerrie and Don
Zealand and Ukraine.

Loni, Moti and the family.
Syria, Turkey, New

PANCAKE DAY, TUESDAY FEBRUARY 21

Join in a social evening on Shrove Tuesday to support Uniting's Pancake Day fundraiser. Come to the church from 6.30pm for Dessert Pancakes and a cuppa, learn more about Uniting and make a donation towards the fundraiser. The Catering Committee will be providing the pancakes and are donating the ingredients and their time. For catering purposes, add your name to the list in the narthex or contact Lorraine or Jillean to indicate your attendance or if you need transport.