

SHEPPARTON UNITING CHURCH

WITH DOOKIE UNITING CHURCH



NEWS FEBRUARY 26, 2023

LENT 1

MINISTERS

Rev Loni Vaitohi

Rev Kerrie Needham

Pastoral Care Convenor Shirley Marven

Church

Sick Leave

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SUNDAY FEBRUARY 26 Rev Kerrie Needham
DOOKIE 9.30am Harvest Thanksgiving

SUNDAY MARCH 5 Rev Kerrie Needham HC
DOOKIE 9.30am Rev Joan Fiaher

SUNDAY MARCH 12
DOOKIE 9.30am Anglicans

SUNDAY MARCH 19 Shirley Marven
DOOKIE 9.30am Rev Denise Naish HC

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

Sunday February 26 Lenten Study 6.30-8.00pm
Tuesday February 28 Friendship Group; Crazy Whist 10.00am
Wednesday March 1 Prayer 10.00-10.30am Lenten Study 2.30-4.00pm
Thursday March 2 Cuppa and Chat 10.00 to noon
Friday March 3 Prayer 10.00-10.30; World Day of Prayer 10.00
GVCF

DATES FOR DOOKIE CONGREGATION

Sunday 26 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
Table Talk has resumed: first and third Tuesdays at the church, 7.30pm.

GREETINGS FROM KERRIE

Hello. Last Sunday I cried. So did just about everybody who attended church or viewed online. Rev Loni gave us the most beautiful gift any congregation could be given. He came and preached for us.

Knowing we were grieving, knowing people were worrying and wanting to say their thanks and show him the love they maybe felt they hadn't expressed as fully as they wanted, he arranged to preach.

On that day, Rev Loni let us see him, still looking well, still able to stand and talk and minister (and most of all preach). What a powerful sermon. We are to come down from the mountain transformed and ready to work; not just transformed – transformed to be strong in the work of God's kingdom. Rev Loni thanked people for their letters and cards and flowers and emails. We... thanked God for Rev Loni.

How can you be sad, tearful and regretful, and smilingly joyful all at the same time? When God shows you the very message being told - is in the life of the person the preaching it. Thanks be to God.

I promised to give a report on the Pancake Day (Shrove Tuesday). It can be easily explained as: mmmmm!!! However... I guess you want more. (As did most of the attendees!)

The catering team donated their time, work and ingredients. The team not only cooked at night- they served pancakes in the morning too. And cleaned up after both events.

They produced perfect pancakes and had copious fruit and ice cream to be added to make a most satisfying dessert. There were also toppings, and gluten free pancakes were offered.

Some workers from Uniting joined us, and later shared an outline of the many programs which Uniting is offering under our roof. Allison still plans to come and visit one Sunday to tell us some of the wonderful supports they give our local community. All donations raised are going directly to Uniting in this place and will be used to give extra support to clients.

Don and I enjoyed a 'Sunday drive' after church last Sunday. Our first exploration for the sake of exploration in this area. We went to the Strawberry farm which is out on the way to Tocumwal. There was a big strawberry, undershade parking and a huge café/ restaurant and gift area. I bought Melon and Lemon jam, and Melon and Ginger jam because they were my Dad's favourites. I found butterballs which took me right back to my Nan and my four year-old self in a little shop which sold boiled lollies out of jars and biscuits out of tins too. A place out of time even then. (And strange as it is, writing this brought back the memory of my Nan telling the butcher next door she wanted sausages without sawdust in them this time!)



God bless, Kerrie

LORRAINE'S REPORT OF PANCAKE DAY

More than 60 people from the congregation, Uniting VicTas and friends gathered on Tuesday evening to enjoy dessert pancakes and a time of fellowship. Many thanks to the Catering Team for providing the delicious pancakes and toppings, and to the Uniting VicTas Team who served us. The Uniting Team engaged in some 'speed dating' type exercises by moving from table to table to share aspects of their work. We heard from Alison, Team Leader for the Men's Behaviour Change Programme, about the work of this programme. Other members of the Uniting Team spoke briefly about their roles in the community. Thanks also to Don and Kerrie for providing a portable speaker system so that all those who spoke could be heard. The evening was a fundraiser for Uniting and to date \$605 has been raised. This money will be used to provide various types of vouchers to participants in the Men's Behaviour Change Programme. There is still time to contribute to the Pancake Day Fundraiser if you wish to - just put your donation into an envelope marked Pancake Day and place it in the Offering bowl at Church, or hand it to Lorraine or Lea.

LENT is the period of 40 days between Ash Wednesday and Good Friday in which Christians commemorate the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert – fasting and being tempted about how he would engage in ministry- before his public ministry began. Traditionally, Christians have fasted, given up certain luxuries and given alms (gifts to the needy) in what was called the

Lenten sacrifice. These days the focus is also on 'what more' can form part of our spiritual life – more prayer, especially; finding aspects of our self which are less Christ-like and letting them die. And we join in Lenten studies. In all of these our focus is on the sufferings and death of Jesus. Uniting Church Act2 Project Lead Andrew Johnson reflects on Lent as an invitation to make space for the new thing God is doing among us. May we all be blessed in our journey this Lent.

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.

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, continue Sunday February 26 and Wednesday 1. There will be six sessions, offered with a choice of Sunday evening (6.30-8.00pm) or Wednesday afternoon (2.30-4.00pm) Join online or in a group at the church.

PASTORAL PRAYERS

We remember Emily and her family; Eve

All with Covid, or Long Covid, in the continuing serious pandemic. *The Presbytery* prays for Seymour; Avenel Nagambie. *The WCC* prays for the lands and peoples of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands and the Ukraine Council of Churches which has called for a day of national fasting and prayer Friday 24 (today), a year since the invasion of Ukraine. 500 churches and religious sites have been damaged or destroyed in that time.

The Assembly invites prayers for *Uniting Church congregations celebrating Lent" may it be a time of deep reflection and meaning pointing us to a new life. *God's grace in endings and beginnings. *World Pride celebrations in Sydney and all those working to nurture faces of inclusion, safety and welcome.

Loni,
Moti and the family. Kerrie and Don Syria and Turkiye (note: this name was accepted by the United Nations in 2022), New Zealand

FAREWELL TO REV DEACON KEL HODGE, BENALLA

Kel's final service in this presbytery and the Service of Release will be held at Benalla Uniting Church on Sunday February 26 at 2.30 pm. You may have met Kel during his ministry and when he was Chairperson of Presbytery. Do come!

WORLD DAY OF PRAYER

Friday March 3. GV Christian Fellowship, Pine Road, 10.00am. This year's service has been prepared by the churches of Taiwan.

THE REFERENDUM: FIRST NATIONS VOICE

The Uniting Church has joined a coalition of faith organisations calling on Federal parliamentarians to support the referendum on a First Nations Voice. Uniting Church President, Rev Sharon Hollis, a signatory, said this is 'an invitation to move towards healing, unity and reconciliation.'