



Werribee Uniting Church

17 December
2023
Advent 3

We acknowledge the people of the Kulin alliance, the original custodians of the land which was never ceded and on which our buildings for worship stand and on which we gather.



OUR COMMUNITY NEWS FOR TODAY AND THE COMING WEEK

An Advent reflection

In our gospel passage (John 1:6-8, 19-28) the author retells the story of John in a way that emphatically confines his role to that of a witness to Jesus as alone the Messiah and bringer of forgiveness and light. By contrast, the reading from Isaiah (Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11) is like an explosion of joy and positivity. Writing probably in the late sixth century, the prophet, whose sayings are now incorporated in the book of the much earlier prophet, Isaiah, reports his inspiration and his brief. God’s Spirit inspires him to announce hope in a context where his fellow Israelites were experiencing oppression. Liberation beckons and it fills the prophet with joy, depicted as like the joy of a wedding celebration, a favourite image of hope. Why? Because “the Lord God will cause righteousness/justice and praise to spring up before all the nations”. Luke knows a tradition according to which Jesus adapted this job description as his own and declared it before members of his own local synagogue in Nazareth (Luke 4:16-20). Feasts, wedding feasts, also filled his vision of hope and remain alive in celebration of the eucharist. A vision for Israel, it became a vision for all peoples: justice and joy. One of the ways we can make that vision our agenda is to support programs like Act for Peace’s partners in Jordan to help refugees rebuild their lives. (Rev. William Loader)

CHRISTMAS BOWL WEEK 3

Third Sunday of Advent **Finding Joy in resilience**

Twelve long years have passed since Rima* and her family fled their beloved home in Syria as the devastating civil war unfolded. Forced to leave everything behind, they sought refuge in Jordan, carrying with them only the essentials. With your kind gift to the Christmas Bowl, you can support Act for Peace's local partner, the Department of Service to Palestinian Refugees, continue to provide vital food packages, hygiene kits, and the long-term support that refugees need to rebuild their lives. **Please give today.**

*Name changed for safety reasons

CALL: 1800 025 101 VISIT: christmasbowl.actforpeace.org.au

The Christmas appeal of Act for Peace, the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. ABN 86 619 910 188

At Christmas time when we think of others, Werribee Uniting Church is blessed to be able to support refugees around the world through the Christmas Bowl Appeal. We join with Christians all over Australia in supporting this appeal which is run by the National Council of Churches. We remember that Jesus and His family were actually refugees. We want to show God’s love to today’s refugees.

This week we will learn about Syrian refugees traumatised by the conflict in their country.

Thank you to those who have already donated. Your support is much appreciated. The appeal is open until the end of December. Please donate by Sunday 31st December.

If you would like to donate, please place your donation in the Christmas bowl at the back of the church, use the envelopes provided at church, visit our church’s Christmas Bowl donation page with this link: mycb.link/45154, scan the QR code on the posters in the foyer, or call 1800 025 101.

A prayer of intercession today

Creator God, We thank you for Rima and Kateb and the joy they experienced on their farm. We pray for all people leaving their family farms and moving across borders seeking safety. We pray especially for the families fleeing Syria. We thank you for the work of the Near-East Council of Churches and their provision of lifesaving food. We pray for the Syrians who have fled war, often more than once. We pray that your Joy will reign and that Rima and Kateb may return to their family farm. Bless them.



Rima* makes kubba in the makeshift kitchen of their tent home. Rima cooks and sells kubba to neighbours and friends to earn a small income to provide for her family.

NEWS AND NOTES

Robert Renton interviewed by Neil Tolliday

"I say thanks to all those people who have worked together over my years on Council to make Crossroads Uniting Church a vehicle for God's love towards the people of Wyndham municipality. Now God gives us a new opportunity to worship and serve with our brothers and sisters from Hoppers Crossing UC."

As the Rev. Robert Renton steps down and two former church councils wind up, he comments on some of the events of his 8 year term as chairperson. "Having been a Presbytery minister with experience of how the Uniting Church works, I was elected to Council and asked to take the chairperson's role."

"An important part of our congregation's mission over many years was the partnership with Werribee Support and Housing and the Opportunity Shop, led ably by Carol Muir, located on the congregation's properties. Government funding for counselling services saw change in its professional operations. Since 2021 renamed and re-badged as Uniting and now re-located to Watton Street, the social work agency requires professionalism beyond the capacity of the local church. Do we still have a common task?" says Robert.

"With the Rev. Mike Lewis as minister, our council was beginning some new initiatives. Then Mike moved on, the Rev. Annetia Goldsmith began her ministry and immediately Covid19 pandemic imposed problems unforeseen, stopping our plans and calling for new strategies," says Robert.



A slightly younger Robert with Sally

He continues: "In order to assist people with health concerns staying at home during Covid outbreaks, Church Council responded with on-line worship programming, available to members by link and available on Facebook. To bring this about, we had a great deal of help with the technology from Roland Geilen and his team. There is still room for improvement, calling for a better lighting system and volunteers are needed to manage its operation."

"The coming of Hoppers Crossing congregation is the salvation of the Uniting Church in this place; membership is doubled, and the Samoan folk who comprise a significant number of our people, are generally much younger. So, there is hope for the future with our combined Werribee Uniting Church," says Robert.

TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

Worship services

17 December: Rev. Angela Tampiyappa
17 December: 7pm Carol Service
 24 December: Rev. Angela Tampiyappa
 25 December Rev Annetia Goldsmith
 31 December Rev Sani Vaeluaga

What's On This Week

Monday: 9.30am Playgroup
Wednesday: 9.30am Property C'tee
Thursday: 9.30am Gardening Group

Bible Readings 10 Dec. & 17 December

17 December: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8; 19-28; Ps 126
24 December: Romans 16:25-27, Luke 1:26-38; Luke 2:1-20.

Rosters for 17 December & (24 Dec.)

Greetings: Margaret D (Jan B)
AV: Christian R-K (Paul C)
Morning Tea: Margaret F & Asanka P (Marie C & Virginia S)
Flowers: Lorna H (Jennie K)
Music: Wendy B (Wendy B)
Prayers: Emily M (Jan B)
Reader: Emily M (Elaine B)

Werribee Uniting Church online

Our Facebook page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/621987747878234/> <https://crossroadsunitingchurch.org.au>.

Church Office

Church office is open Monday to Friday, 9.30-12 noon. Phone 9741 1084. Email office@crossroadsunitingchurch.org.au.

WUC News: For any inclusions, please contact the editor **by Tuesday** (ph. 0427 812 606) or email robert.renton@bigpond.com. Our 'roving reporter' is Neil Tolliday (0402 817 673)—if you have a piece of news or a good story, please contact Neil.

Bank Accounts: Crossroads BSB 083-909 A/c 516109795. Hoppers Crossing BSB 013-915 A/c 354439707 Reference: Your surname.

Boom gate Remember the code: 0459#

To book for an event at any of Werribee Uniting Church facilities, please email bookings@crossroadsunitingchurch.org.au. Elizabeth B manages the bookings.