



Werribee Uniting Church

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 we gather.

10 August 2025

Choosing love over fear, together

by Gershon Nimbalker (Common Grace)

This past month, we've seen two contrasting visions of justice for young people in Australia. In the ACT, a long-overdue but welcome reform has been passed, [lifting the minimum age of criminal responsibility to 14](#). It's a move grounded in the evidence and guided by compassion, and one that recognises the inherent worth and potential of every child.

But in the Northern Territory, we've witnessed the troubling reintroduction of spit hoods and the expansion of adult sentencing for minors; steps backward that deepen harm rather than prevent it. In the NT there is a disproportionate number of young people, particularly Aboriginal children, caught up in the criminal justice system. Some of the worst dimensions of colonisation was how it used fear, violence and punishment to control people. It's sad to see systems that still echo this approach, rather than ones that seek to build healing and hope.

As followers of Jesus, we are called to choose love over fear. Our faith compels us to pursue the flourishing of all people. Scripture tells us, "There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear" (1 John 4:18). At the heart of our faith is the belief that love is the very essence of God, and the most important part of who we are created to be (1 John 4:7-8). It is this love that heals, restores, and reimagines our communities—not fear, not control, not punishment. The evidence coheres with our faith, it is love, support and compassion that is being shown to transform lives, where punishment and fear appear to embed resentment, distrust and trauma. This crackdown on children comes even as more evidence emerges that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remain among the most incarcerated in the world. Thirty years on, the vast majority of the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody recommendations remain unimplemented. Accepting and acting on those findings is long overdue. Supporting and loving our children is a good first step.

July also saw our tiny pacific neighbour, Tuvalu, become the first country in the world to begin a planned mass relocation due to climate change. Of its 11,000 people, 8,700 have applied for residency in Australia as part of a resettlement agreement. The climate crisis is existential and present for Tuvalu. It's heartbreaking that across the world, the people least responsible for climate change are paying the highest price.

Injustice and harm, whether in our youth justice system or our warming climate, are not abstract issues. They are real. They are urgent. And they call us, as people of faith, to

TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

Worship services

10 August: Rev. Ian Pearce

17 August: Rev. Ian Pearce

For Pastoral Care: Please contact Raymond Surujpal, convenor of the pastoral care team on: 0432 619 184 or Margaret Bull: 0417 500 961.

Bible readings

This week: Isaiah 11:10–20; Psalm 50:1–8, 22–23; Hebrews 11:2–3, 8–16; Luke 12:32–40

Next week: Isaiah 5:1–7; Psalm 80:1–2, 8–19; Hebrews 11:29–12:2; Luke 12:49–56

What's on this week

Monday: 9.30am Playgroup

Tuesday: 9.30am Bible Study

Wednesday: 9.30am Property Group;
7.30pm Social Justice Task Group

Thursday: 9.30am Gardening Group;
5.30pm Health & Fitness;

5.30pm Choral Practice

Friday: 1pm Sew 'n' Sow;

6.30pm Youth Group

Saturday: 7.30am Samoan Health & Fitness

Rosters 10 August (17 August)

Greetings: Margaret Bull (Paul Kirkman)

Audiovisual: Noel Savory (Paul Kirkman)

Morning Tea: Julie Rees & Margaret Dent
(Elaine Belcher & Mary Dixon)

Music: Gina Lee (Wendy Barnes)

Prayers: Margaret Bull (Lauina Levave)

Reader: Emily Metusela (Lauina Levave)

Werribee UC on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/621987747878234/>

Church office

Open 9.30am to 12 noon. Phone 97411084

Email office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

WUC Newsletter

Send information for inclusion to the Editor at robert.renton@bigpond.com or 0427 812 606.

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BSB 083-909 A/c 516109795

To book facilities at WUC:

Email: (Elizabeth Barnes)

bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

Samoan service

3rd Sunday, 4pm, in the Church: All welcome.

respond with love, action and the prophetic imagination that believes a better world is not just possible, it's inevitable.

Let us continue that work together.

(<https://tinyurl.com/57uwa5x2>)

Thank you

The Wade family send their thanks and appreciation to all the Church family for their assistance at Roland's funeral.

Occasional Sunday Lunches Out

O.S.L.O. On August 24th we are booked into the Club Tarneit, 622 Leakes Road Tarneit at 12md. There is an extensive senior's menu, no lamb's fry but sausages and mash! Please contact Elaine 0435 998 013 or Lorna 0419 101 766 for catering numbers if you are coming or cancelling by Thursday 21 August, as it is important to notify as near as possible the hotel for setting up the tables.

Did you watch the news today?

I have a correspondent in the USA who sends out thought provoking pieces every week. Her name is Diana Butler Bass. This week this was an extra one that I've abbreviated for you to consider. (Ed.)

"I hope you didn't watch the news today.

Because today is one of those sorts of Trumpy Fridays — tariff insanity, stock market decline, a dismal jobs report, firing the director of the bureau who produced honest unemployment numbers, moving a convicted human trafficker to a cushy prison (most likely to pardon her), continuing crisis around the Epstein scandal, threatening Russia with nuclear submarines, \$10 a pound ground beef, the dismantling of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, altering history, extortion of universities, and innocent people arrested and detained for no reason at all (except that they speak Spanish).

Welcome to America.

Here in the United States, we've just passed through the first six months of the second Trump term. If you are a reader who lives in a different nation, it is probably difficult to understand how difficult it has become here.

In May and June, I spent nearly a month in Europe. It was lovely being in places where people were laughing in the streets, who enjoyed being together and were not consumed with politics. Speech wasn't guarded; no one cast furtive glances to see if ICE might suddenly appear.

When I returned home, it felt as if I'd been dropped off in a toxic waste dump. The air itself seemed poisoned in comparison to the month I'd just experienced. I couldn't sleep. I was shaking. It was hard being here.

Instead, I shared a simple practice that is helping me right now — the Serenity Prayer: 'God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.'

Accepting the things I cannot change doesn't mean being passive or complicit. It means recognizing that I'm not

God, I'm not that powerful, I'm just one limited human being. But there are things I can change. Those things that I am called to do, relationships in my part of the world. I can give, volunteer, write, be generous and kind, stay informed, tend to my soul and my own fears and griefs. I can even take some risks. I can still vote. I can speak out. I can do my work well. I can love. I can do good, even when it seems too little. I can't change everything. I can change some things. And that's where wisdom comes in. Can we pray the prayer together? In community, sharing our restless fear and relentless sorrow?

Give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed. Like there's no real going back. We're going to have technology and AI. We're going to be living with the consequences of climate change. We can't change the past mistakes and sins of our ancestors. We need an honest assessment of reality. We will shed many more tears over what cannot be changed.

What must we learn to accept?

Give us courage to change the things that should be changed. Not what we can change. But what should be changed. We might feel we can't do big things. But there is so much that should be changed — for future generations to thrive, for the planet to flourish, for humanity to live justly and in peace. What should be changed? Do we even have the courage to ask the question?

What should be changed?

Give us wisdom to distinguish what cannot be changed from what should be changed. Only in that tension, the deep irony of the human condition, between the realism of what is and the dream of what should be, will our nightmares cease and our love increase. Wisdom, oh wisdom, we need you.

How would knowing the difference shift our lives and communities?

If enough of us embrace serenity, courage, and wisdom, things will change. But not because a some Golden Age is dawning or a political saviour will save us. There's only the long, hard work of being human — of striving toward love and justice, accompanied by the tender compassion of grace."

