



# 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.

11 May 2025: Easter 4

## To be a Christian in a multicultural society like Australia

*I grew up in what I might call a fairly laid-back church community. Most members were genuine about their religious beliefs but were generally hesitant about any kind of evangelism, perhaps because they were unsure about how to explain why they believed and what they believed. We knew about missionary enterprises, and even sang hymns that celebrated the work of missions. That was in an age when we thought of Australia as a "Christian nation". That understanding of Australia has changed dramatically, and like it or lump it, we are now a multicultural/multifaith nation (which includes, of course, an increasing number of people whose faith is to claim no religious faith). So how are to respond today to this society in which we live? The following (edited) article suggests an answer. (Editor)*

Christian theologian Marcus Borg speaks of the importance of affirming our Christian faith while also accepting the validity of other faith expressions as well. [He grew up in a strict Lutheran church.]

The primary motive for Christian missionary work [in an earlier age] was that there were souls perishing, lost in shades of night, and the presupposition of all of that of course was that Christianity was the only way of salvation, and that Jesus was the only way of salvation...

That has changed for me. One reason is the common-sense reason for my letting go of Christian exclusivism. Does it make sense that God, the creator of the whole universe would choose to be made known in just one religious tradition, which fortunately just happens to be our own?

I had to let go of Christian exclusivism. And for a number of reasons what we might call emerging or progressive Christianity really needs to let go of Christian exclusivism. Partly because it's not true, and partly because Christian exclusivism is one of the biggest obstacles for non-Christians and people on the fringes of the church to take Christianity seriously.

So what does it mean to be a Christian who affirms other religious traditions?

I begin with a negative statement. We shouldn't water down Christianity, or water down Christian language, or try to move away from Christian language, in order to affirm religious pluralism.

A very quick example: some years ago I was teaching a prayer to a church group, and the prayer begins "Lord Jesus Christ, you are the light of the world," and in the question and answer time afterwards a person asked me, "Couldn't we say, 'Lord Jesus Christ, you are a light of the world' rather than the light of the world?" and of course I got the point of the question.

## TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

### Worship services

11 May: Rev. Ian Pearce

18 May: Rev. Bruce Watson

**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:** Acts 9:36–43; Psalm 23; Revelation 7:9–17; John 10:22–30

**Next week:** Acts 11:1–18; Psalm 148; John 13:31–35; Revelation 21:1–6

### What's on this week

**Monday:** 9.30am Playgroup; 7.30pm Social Justice Group

**Tuesday:** 9.30am Bible Study

**Thursday:** 9.30am Gardening Group; 5.30pm Health & Fitness; 5.30pm Choral Practice (chapel)

**Friday:** 1pm Sew 'n' Sow

**Saturday:** 7.30am Samoan Health & Fitness

### Rosters 11 May (& 18 May)

**Greetings:** Judy & Hamish (Paul Kirkman)

**Audiovisual:** Jacob Lewis (Noel Savory)

**Morning Tea:** Marie Craw & Site Tupua (Jan Bradley & Julie Hamilton)

**Flowers:** Church

**Music:** Gina Lee (Asanka Pakura)

**Prayers:** Ashok Sherwal (Tulua Seulupe)

**Reader:** Lyn O'Meara (Sandra Savory)

### 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](mailto:office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au)

### WUC Newsletter

Send information for inclusion to the Editor at [robert.renton@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.renton@bigpond.com) or 0427 812 606.

### Bank Account & Boom Gate (0459#)

BSB 083-909 A/c 516109795

### To book facilities at WUC:

Email: (Elizabeth Barnes)

[bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au](mailto:bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au)

### Samoan service

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

The person was uncomfortable speaking of Jesus as the light of the world because it suggested to them that Jesus was the only light of the world. And so in a sense Jesus is a light, and there are other lights.

But my response was, for us as Christians Jesus is the light of the world, just as for Muslims the Quran is the revelation of God. This is part of what it means to be Christian, to see Jesus as the light. We can affirm that, while seeing that there are other lights as well.

So the task is not to water down Christian claims, but the task for Christians is to live ever more deeply into the Christian tradition itself. Here I've grown very fond of an analogy that I owe to Huston Smith, a contemporary scholar of religion. Huston Smith says, "If what you're looking for is water, it is better to dig one well 60 feet deep than to dig six wells ten feet deep." And that's what I mean by living ever more deeply into our own tradition, and I find that it's precisely people who have lived most deeply into their own traditions who are most capable of inter-faith dialogue. Inter-faith dialogue between a watered-down Christian and a watered-down Muslim and a watered-down Buddhist is actually not very interesting. You end up agreeing about banalities. But inter-faith dialogue between people who have been transformed by living ever more deeply into their traditions is extraordinarily rich.

So to be a Christian in an age of religious pluralism means to find Christianity as one's home, even as one recognizes that there are other equally rich homes in the world.

## Youth Group

There will be a meeting in the church straight after the Morning service next Sunday 18 May. (Tupu Latu)

There's a monthly emailed newsletter for young people—see <https://victas.uca.org.au/younger-generations/>.

## Interested in attending Synod?

### 2025 Synod Meeting - 30 August to 2 September

Nominations are now open for those who wish to attend the 2025 meeting of the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania as a representative from our congregation. The Synod meeting will take place at the Box Hill Town Hall, 1022 Whitehorse Road, Box Hill commencing Saturday 30 August concluding on Tuesday 2 September 2025.

Nominations must be submitted by 5.00pm on Wednesday 14 May 2025.

If you are interested in nominating or want further information please contact Margaret Bull on 0417 500 961.

## With Love to the World

Lyn O'Meara has three complimentary copies of the daily Bible reading and prayer guide *With Love to the World* available at church this morning for anyone who would like to find out what they are like.

## Next O.S.L.O.

O.S.L.O Occasional Sunday Lunches Out May 25th. We will be dining at The Brook on Sneydes Rd 12md. Please contact Elaine 0435 998 013 or Lorna 0419 101 766 by Thursday 22nd May for catering numbers. Everyone welcome.

## Werribee Theatre Company

The Werribee Theatre Company, which uses the church hall, has a new play commencing this coming week. Here's their description: "Drinking Habits. It's a lot of fun! Here's what it's about: The Sisters of Perpetual Sewing are in trouble. They are on the verge of being shut down by the Vatican for being 'insignificant', leaving the Sisters to turn to drastic means to survive. Sister Augusta and Sister Philamena are forced to start making sly booze in order to keep their doors open, right under the long and severe nose of their Mother Superior. When the local town starts being flooded with award winning wine, a couple of local reporters approach the convent to sniff out a source. Dressed undercover as Sisters, Fathers and Cardinals, (sometimes all at the same time) these two discover a heartwarming surprise at the end of the scandal. It's full to the brim with goofy characters and implausible fun, this show is sure to fill your chalice."

May 16, 17 - 8pm

May 17 (Saturday) - 2pm matinee.

Tickets are \$25 for Adults and \$22 for concession.

Suitable for children aged 12 and over. Mild adult themes.

Tickets are on sale now! Book now to secure your seats.

<https://www.trybooking.com/CYMOY>

## Backpacks For The Pacific Islands

UCAF have again agreed to support the program 'Backpack Pacifica' sending filled backpacks to children in the Pacific area – Samoa, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati, or the Solomon Islands.

The program will run until the 30<sup>th</sup> June and if you would like a back pack to fill, or the list of contents required to fill a backpack, please see Margaret Gook or contact her on 0417-513-984. Everyone welcome to participate. Thank you.

If only we could...

