



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.

3 November 2024

Not on the Titanic: a reflection and a beginning

Andrew Johnson, the soon-to-be General Secretary of the Assembly of the Uniting Church, wrote a commentary on the common feeling that we are on a sinking ship in the Uniting Church which arises from a look at the statistics about congregational strength. Here's a summary of what he wrote.

'One of the most popular questions we ask is, "Is this [referring to the Act2 renewal project] just shuffling the deck chairs on the Titanic?" This prompted me to ask – do we think we are on the Titanic as a Uniting Church? Do we believe this enterprise of hope we embarked upon over 47 years ago is, like the Titanic, inevitably destined to sink?

Early last year I rewatched the famous box office hit of the same name. Sometimes as I move around the Church, I find people reflecting the behaviour of its various characters. The old couple, in an embrace on the bed, as the water rises around them. The unscrupulous fiancé desperately trying to buy himself onto a lifeboat. The band playing to entertain the masses and distract them, to buoy their mood despite the chaos going on around them. The lead character, Jack, judging the physics, getting to the highest point, seeking to use all his wits to save them.

So do I think we are on the Titanic? Do I believe the future of the Uniting Church is a predetermined heroic tragedy? I do not believe that. I believe that God has a future for the Uniting Church. However, we need to be honest that at least for the foreseeable future it will be a smaller and more marginal future than what we believe we knew in the past.

Yet we have something of distinctive value to offer the mission of God in our nation and globally. Our theological culture, while in need of some ongoing work is marked by an openness and willingness to change, holding in tension diverse perspectives. Our ecclesial culture seeks to be inclusive, consensus building and collaborative.

As a friend said to me, 'I don't think God's given up on the Uniting Church yet'. So, for me, if God hasn't given up then why should I?

However, I have also found myself discovering a deeper and more profound truth. As a people who confesses Jesus Christ, the risen and crucified one as Lord we believe in the power of the resurrection. We do not believe that even if the life of the Uniting Church comes to an end that this is the end of our journey. We do not have a continuing city.

TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

Worship services

3 November: Rev. Bruce Watson
10 November: Rev. Valerie Johnson

For Pastoral Care: TBA

Bible readings

This week: Ruth 1:1–18; Psalm 146; Hebrews 9:11–14; Mark 12:28–34

Next week: Ruth 3:1–5, 4:13–17; Psalm 127; Hebrews 9:24–28; Mark 12:38–44

What's on this week

Monday: 9.30am Playgroup

Tuesday: NOTE: No bible study—resume next week

Thursday: 9.30am Gardening Group; 5pm Health & Fitness;

5pm Choral Practice (chapel)

Saturday: 7am Health & Fitness

Rosters 3 November (& 10 November)

Greetings: Node Madu (Margaret Bull)

Audiovisual: Christian Ropeti-Kilifi (Paul Kirkman)

Morning Tea: Lauina (Marie Craw & Site Tupua)

Flowers: Bev Cox (Margaret Forrester)

Music: Wendy Barnes (Gina Lee)

Prayers: Node Madu (Margaret Bull)

Reader: Lyn O'Meara (Deb Cochran)

Werribee UC on Facebook:

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

Church office

Open Monday to Friday 9.30am–12noon. Phone 97411084 Email

office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

WUC Newsletter (Editor: Robert Renton)

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

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To book facilities at WUC:

Email: (Elizabeth Barnes)

bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au

Samoan service The Samoan language service is held every 3rd Sunday at 4pm in the church. All welcome.

The Uniting Church was born in 22 June 1977 to die. We wrote this sunset clause in our own founding document! We believe that we will behold God doing a new thing. If we conclude that institutionally the Uniting Church will no longer exist, that is ok. We will have been prophets and martyrs to the gospel.

We are called to these ministries, along with the ministry of scholar and evangelist so that the world might know the risen, abundant life of God through Jesus Christ. It is in that hope that we will find renewal, in dying to self and rising with Christ. It is in that we will find the hope of the resurrection and new life.

It is in this vision that I find hope and strength for the journey ahead. God does speak to us both collective and individually in our work of prayer and discernment. As we continue our journey towards the promised goal, let us be nourished by the vision God has placed before us.'

UC Adult Fellowship AGM

Our next meeting has been postponed until Wednesday 13th at 1pm, due to the funeral of Allan Curtis. It's our AGM and every member is encouraged to attend, please. Anyone who hasn't been before or is new to the congregation is very welcome, too!

Carols by Candlelight 2024

As we approach the Christmas season, we are excited to share that Wyndham Carols by Candlelight 2024 is back again and fast approaching! Taking place on **Saturday, 7 December at the Werribee Mansion**, this year's event will feature the incredible Silvie Paladino, Australian soprano, and the Salvation Army Melbourne Staff Band led by the legendary Ken Waterworth who will be concluding 30 years as Bandmaster.

Following last year's sell-out success with over 5,000 attendees, we are anticipating another extraordinary evening of worship through carols, celebration of the story of the Nativity, and sharing God's love through bringing the community together.

How unique that so many different churches of different denominations can come together as the body of Christ to put on this spectacular outreach to our local community.

Wyndham Carols has always relied on the help of dedicated volunteers from the local churches, and this year is no different. We need volunteers for everything from parking to welcoming guests, manning kids activities, or even helping set up and pack up. If members of your church would like to get involved, they can express their interest at

<https://wyndhamcarols.org.au/volunteer>.

Bible Study not this week

Tuesday's public holiday means that there is no bible study this week—it will resume next week at the usual time of 9.30am.

OSLO

Occasional Sunday Lunches Out. Nov 24th at 12pm we will be celebrating Christmas with a carvery lunch at the Hoppers Club, Hoppers Crossing. Everyone very welcome but please contact either Elaine 0435 998 013 or Lorna 0419 101 766 before Thursday 21st for catering numbers.

Successful Fund-raising for Asylum Seekers

The Rev. Bruce Watson sincerely thanks all donors who supported the raising of funds for the **Asylum Seeker Resource Centre** during the recent Melbourne Marathon festival. Bruce successfully completed the half-marathon on October 13th in just under three hours, and raised a total of \$1040. More than 200 hundred participants on the day raised over \$30,000 for the ASRC.

Commentary on the recent news

“High Country killer gets 32 years” (Melbourne ‘Age’, 19 October 2024)

Greg Lynn now contemplates his next 32 years, sentenced for murder of camper Carol Clay by the judge of the Supreme Court Michael Croucher, following a five-week trial.

Lynn may well be thankful that his life is spared, due to the efforts of the 1960s Anti Hanging Committee, of which this writer was a member. I joined and many others the anti-hanging cause, spurred on by the arrogant and intransigent behaviour of the then Premier of Victoria, Henry Bolte. Students and citizens protested the barbaric method of judicial killing which had been used for 150 years in the State of Victoria.

Ronald Ryan's sentence to be hanged by the neck was eventually carried out. I remember the efforts of Barry Jones AC who convened the AHC for 15 years. We picketed the Parliament House and convened a vigil attended by hundreds of people on the day 3 February 1967 that Ryan was executed.

The enlightened government of Rupert Hamer some years later legislated the end of hanging in Victoria, but China, Iran and Saudi Arabia are jurisdictions where capital punishment persists. (Neil Tolliday)

Funeral for Allan Curtis

Allan Curtis, husband of long time member Maureen passed away suddenly last Saturday. His funeral will be held at the Werribee Uniting Church at 11am on Wednesday 6th November. If attending and you would like to contribute please bring a small plate of food to share.