

# *Monthly update*

## *The Uniting Church in Australia*

### **St Luke's Congregation, Highton**

September 2022



### **Season of Creation**

Many churches world-wide are setting aside some of the Sundays in September to reflect on God's creation and how we humans should value and respect creation.

The congregations of Wesley, Geelong, Western Heights and St Luke's each have active environment groups. The group at Wesley had the brainwave that it would be wonderful if the three congregations could work together on services related to the Season of Creation. This has led to an experiment which may become a regular feature on the calendar of these three congregations. This involves each congregation taking responsibility for a different theme related to Creation.

We at St Luke's are looking after the theme of "**Cosmos**" which seems a big topic, but the focus will be on "wonder:" looking up at the whole cosmos in wonder and amazement at the hand of God seen in planets, stars and galaxies. The Wesley team will be focusing on our care for "**Flora and Fauna;**" and the team from Western Heights will be reflecting on that essential compound for life as we know it, "**Water.**"

What this means in reality is that on September 11<sup>th</sup> the St Luke's team will be leading a service at St Luke's on "Cosmos." (We will then repeat the service at Western Heights on the 18<sup>th</sup> and Wesley on the 25<sup>th</sup>). The team from Wesley (led by Rev. Denis Tomlins) will

Office administrator: Robyn Hodge.

Office open hours: Tuesdays and Fridays, 9:30am–12:30pm

lead worship at St Luke's on September 18<sup>th</sup> and the team from Western Heights which will include (I believe) Rev Temukisa Amituana'i-Vaeluaga will lead worship at St Luke's on September 25<sup>th</sup>.

**In preparation for the "Cosmos" service here are a few things to ponder:**

Have you looked at the amazing photographs (like the one above) from the James Webb telescope? Have you sat out on a clear, warm evening and looked up at the milky way? Have you stopped and wondered how small we are in the scheme of things and yet also been amazed that the God who created all this cares for you?

**But there is more:**

**Messy Church** will be having a service of the blessing of the animals at 2.00 pm on Sunday October 2<sup>th</sup>. The day we remember St Francis of Assisi is October 4<sup>th</sup> who of course is remembered for his valuing of all creation. So this Messy service will in a sense conclude the marking of the Season of Creation.

*Paul Stephens, Minister in Placement*

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## Coming Events

**Sunday Services:** 11/9 Seasons of Creation: Cosmos  
18/9 Seasons of Creation: Flora and Fauna  
25/9 Seasons of Creation: Water

**Mid-week Service:** Thursday, Sept 8, 1.30 - 3pm

**Messy Church:** Sunday, October 7 at 2pm (see above)

**Forum:** Sunday, Oct 9 at 2pm. **Forum in response to the problem of gambling in the community.** This will be in conjunction with the **Alliance for Gambling Reform** of which the Uniting Church is a member. Guest speaker: Rev. Tim Costello.

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# Congregation News

## Mission Outreach



### ST LUKE'S CHAPEL COLLECTIBLES

What can be said to keep fresh before your reading eyes – the story of our Chapel Collectibles? By now you will know that a collection of vintage, retro and eclectic treasures gathered from many families who were needing to declutter are now for sale in the Chapel. We raise money from sales to support our Refugee Ministry program, and we support Shaghek Qassabyan our Community Ministry Worker who is employed by our church.

We have a small band of volunteers who faithfully live out our Church's Mission. Some from within St Luke's and others from our community. Strong and powerful support is never ending from our Men's Shed to whom we are so grateful.

So. How can you help?

We are currently keen to increase our 'badge' collection. Maybe you could have a few odd badges sitting in the back of your drawers. Maybe you haven't looked at them for ages. Maybe you don't know what to do with them or what will become of them. We would be very glad of any Badge donations.

Our next opening is:

**September opening:** Friday 16<sup>th</sup>. September between 1pm and 4.30pm.

Sat 17<sup>th</sup>. September between 9am and lunch time.

Closing with a repeated invitation to visit the Chapel in September. Please come and see what is happening – then you can inspire your friends, family and neighbours to come in and enjoy every possible Collectible item from Tupperware, Crystal, Crafts, pottery, porcelain, wicker ware, mirrors, lamps.... the list goes on and on!

*Linda Salamy & Rae Anderson – Collectibles Co-Ordinator*  
*Mobile: 0413 888 884*

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## Pastoral Connections

### CHRISTMAS CARDS

Google tells me that on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September it will be 115 days until Christmas. For those people who still prefer to send/deliver a 'real' Christmas card or if you send overseas, Valerie Grills will have Leprosy Mission cards available as from early October. More details closer the time.



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### COFFEE & CHAT

Join us for a coffee and a chat in the Fellowship Room at **1.30pm** on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month.

Dates for 2022

September 28<sup>th</sup>

October 26<sup>th</sup>

November 23<sup>rd</sup>

***Please note Christmas special : 2nd Wednesday - December 14th***



**Website:** [stlukesuca.org.au](http://stlukesuca.org.au) **Email:** [info@stlukesuca.org.au](mailto:info@stlukesuca.org.au) **Ph:** 5244 2997

## PRAYER REQUESTS received during August 2022

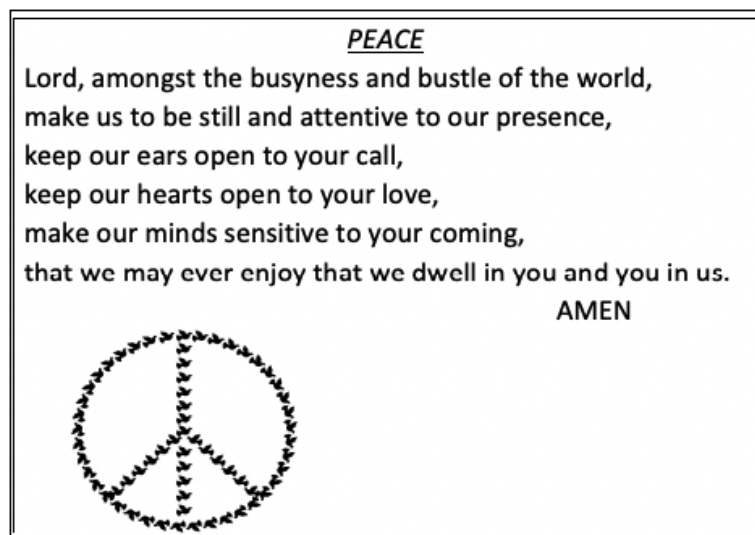


### Praise and Thanksgiving.

- Praise God for the many blessings shared this month, with the baptism of two little girls, an adult baptism and home communion, success resumption of Messy church and positive results at Collectables and furniture sales.
- We give thanks for the many volunteers, (that often go unrecognized), that support the church and community with a wide range of skills and time.
- Praise and thanks for families and friends who are now able to appreciate each other's company. In particular we think of Jenny, Adrian, Peter, Ian, John and those you know and love.
- We are thankful for those people in the community who are in a position to advocate for and assist new arrivals, the homeless, the hungry and those who find themselves in a difficult situation.
- Praise God for the arrival of blossoms and spring bulbs. We give thanks for 'God's wildflowers' the weeds that seem to be enjoying the warmth and growing prolifically at this time.

### General Prayers.

- Our prayers have been focused this month on the lonely in Nursing Homes, living alone, grieving the loss of a loved one, those who are in hospital or struggling with ill health. Peace be with them and their families.
- Special prayers for the citizens of war-torn countries who have nowhere to go and no support. We pray for peace makers who can negotiate and bring stability and well bring to the lives of families.
- Our prayers have focused on Pakistan where floods are causing the loss of so many lives and have destroyed so much property. We pray for the rescuers who, at their own risk, step in to offer help
- We pray for the congregations where churches are closing. We pray for the leaders of our own congregation that they will make wise decisions as they seek to move forward after the COVID disruptions.
- Our thoughts and prayers are with those who are longing for a place to call home. We pray for peace in the homelands of refugees fleeing conflict.





# *News from all around*

## **THE MEET OF THE MATTER**

About 200 members of the Uniting Church gathered at Box Hill Town Hall last month for Synod 2022. The three-day meeting, plus Opening Worship on June 30 which saw Denise Liersch hand over the Moderator reins to David Fotheringham, was a hive of activity. Reports were tabled and resolutions were passed, the most significant being the Church's response to Tasmania's End-Of-Life Choices (Voluntary Assisted Dying) Legislation.

The meeting also included working groups, one of which presented feedback divided into four sections: Signs Of Spring, Emerging From Winter, Synod Priorities, and What Do We Take Home?

Some of the "takeaways" included:

- The need to provide worship in different places other than just on Sundays, fully utilising modern technology.
- Resolving some of the competing priorities between the needs of property and mission.
- How we can best support non-geographical and online communities.
- Leaving behind the idea that the Church's mission is to preserve and protect – in short, to survive.
- Providing a central resource for storytelling about initiatives in congregational life and witness.
- Celebrate "endings", such as the closing of a congregation, and not make them negative events.



*Moderator David Fotheringham conducts proceedings on the final day of Synod 2022, which coincided with the start of NAIDOC Week.*

*From Crosslight, August 10, 2022*

**MUSIC AT THE BASILICA INC**  
**Artistic Director Mr Frank De Rosso OAM**  
**BULLETIN NOTICES**

Could you please place the bulletin notices (below) in your newsletters, bulletins or other publications if space permits.

I have sent this information as an email if I have your address. If you do not receive this information by email, and would like to have it sent as a Word Document and a PFD, please advise your email address to me at [music.basilica@bigpond.com](mailto:music.basilica@bigpond.com) and I will send it. Thank you for your co-operation in helping us to bring this music to the community.

Jeannette Johnston, Secretary P.O. Box1425, Geelong 3220  
 Phone 0408 305868 [music.basilica@bigpond.com](mailto:music.basilica@bigpond.com) [www.musicatthebasilica.org.au](http://www.musicatthebasilica.org.au)

**1. NOTICE FOR BULLETIN FOR SUNDAY 21 AUGUST ONLY**

**MUSIC AT THE BASILICA 2022**  
**Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> August 3.00 pm**  
 St Mary's Basilica 136 Yarra St Geelong  
**Australian Chamber Choir**  
**Director- Douglas Lawrence**  
**TOP DOZEN CHORAL CLASSICS**  
 As chosen by popular vote by ACC audiences.  
 Information at [www.auschoir.org](http://www.auschoir.org)  
 Tickets \$50 Full, \$45 Senior, \$40 Concession  
[www.auschoir.org](http://www.auschoir.org) or at the door.  
 Tickets available at the door.  
 Cash or credit/debit card facilities available  
 Children and school students – free

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**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2.00 pm**  
 St Mary's Basilica 136 Yarra St Geelong  
**'RE-CONNECTIONS' – YOUTH SERIES CELEBRATION – MUSIC AND IMAGES**  
 Music Mentor – Regina Thomae  
 Musicians – Year 12 Christian College  
 Visual Arts Mentor – Gillian Turner  
 Artists – Year 10 and 11 Studio Arts, Sacred Heart College  
 Admission Free

**2. NOTICE FOR BULLETINS FOR 4, 11, and 18 SEPTEMBER**

**MUSIC AT THE BASILICA 2022**  
**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> September 3.00 pm**  
 St Mary's Basilica 136 Yarra St Geelong  
 Dr Joel Brennan – Trumpet  
 Rhys Boak – Organ  
**CATHEDRAL WINDOWS**  
 Baroque, Classical and Contemporary Music  
 Tickets \$50 Full, \$45 Senior, \$40 Concession  
[www.trybooking.com/BZIXG](http://www.trybooking.com/BZIXG)  
 Cash or Credit/debit card facilities available  
 Children and school students – free

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**Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> September 2.00 pm**  
**GEELONG ART GALLERY** – Note new venue  
 55 Lt. Malop Street, Geelong  
**'RE-CONNECTIONS' – YOUTH SERIES CELEBRATION – MUSIC AND IMAGES**  
 Music Mentor – Emily Anderson  
 Musicians – String Ensemble, Sacred Heart College  
 Written Word Mentor – Gillian Turner  
 Writers – Year 7 students, Sacred Heart College  
 Admission Free

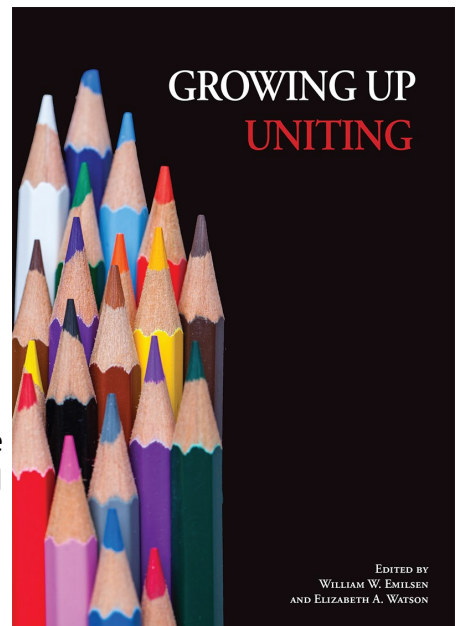
## Readings for the Month

	<i>1st Reading</i>	<i>Psalm</i>	<i>2nd Reading</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
<b>September 18</b> Pentecost 15	Isaiah 8:18-9:1	Psalm 79:1-9	Timothy 2:1-7	16:1-13
<b>September 25</b> Pentecost 16	Isaiah 32:1-3,6-15	Psalm 91:1-6,14-16	Timothy 6:6-19	16:19-31
<b>October 2</b> Pentecost 17	Isaiah 1:1-6	Psalm 3:19-26	Timothy 1:1-14	17:5-10
<b>October 9</b> Pentecost 18	Isaiah 29:1,4-7	Psalm 66:1-12	Timothy 2:8-15	17:11-19

# Growing Up Uniting: A new narrative for our Church

*Edited by William W. Emilsen & Elizabeth A. Watson*

*Book Review by Bethany Broadstock (Assembly Website)*



For many years a powerful narrative about the aging profile of congregations and the absence of younger generations has been shaping the life of the Uniting Church.

In some places, this has been a driving force to set an agenda for action focused on how our communities, structures and indeed the Gospel itself are contextualised and made accessible to each stage of faith and life.

More often than not however, it has been couched in a broader sense of scarcity and decline which has perhaps had even more influence over our collective sense of self than we realise. But it is not the whole truth, as hundreds of highly engaged Uniting Church young people will tell you.

One of the gifts of *Growing Up Uniting*, then, is to remind us that from the earliest days of the UCA, the Uniting Church has been home to whole new generations. Young people have chosen the UCA as the context for their life of faith: growing up quite literally in its communities, shaped by its life and values and going on to make their own contributions.

In an anthology of personal essays from people aged 18-40, *Growing Up Uniting* captures the voices of the first two generations to be formed personally, spiritually and theologically in the Uniting Church.

The experiences they contain are as diverse as the 20 people who wrote them and the places from which they were written. The contributors were encouraged to be honest and creative – and to be themselves. The result is a balanced collection of insights which are neither abstract nor romanticise the UCA. Instead they hold up a mirror to the church, celebrating our identity as the Uniting Church and calling us to reflect on where the Spirit is calling us today.

There is great affection for the Uniting Church in these pages and some clear common themes. The contributors speak of the sense of belonging, openness to questions, commitment to justice and Covenant with First Peoples, liberative biblical engagement and a courageous public voice. For many these are key identity markers.

Elvina Kioa Kramer writes about how the Uniting Church gave her the “freedom to explore, freedom to question, and to learn and choose God’s gift of grace.” Craig Corby writes, “I am proud to belong to the Uniting Church—an organisation that is meant to be a movement first and an institution second.”

Others noted that taking certain things for granted in the Uniting Church – like women’s leadership and an open communion table – was a gift they often only became aware of later. There is much in the UCA’s 44 years to celebrate.

The authors also offer a measured critique, naming the things that may pose a threat to the integrity of our life and witness: aversion to risk, creeping corporatisation, top-heavy bureaucracy and the loss of imagination and vision that characterised union. ( Continued on page 8)



# GROWING UP UNITING



( Continued from page 7 ) Collectively they also warn about the implications of failing to invest in faith formation and mentoring, which may open a leadership and discipleship void. For some contributors this is the true source of decline. Many note the intentional spaces which have been integral to their discipleship including national events like NCYC, NYALC and AboutFace, tertiary ministries, and crucially, local congregations and faith communities.

Contributor Ben Cross speaks of this risk plainly: "If the UCA is collectively either incapable or unwilling to help form young people for Christian discipleship, we might plausibly ask whether it is a good thing for it to continue to exist."

Others reflect on the willingness of the UCA to be forward-facing. Richard Telfer writes, "People in the Uniting Church should be proud of who we are, a church that is committed to walking into the future."

Several contributors note their tenuous links to the founding denominations, having no lived experience from the other side of union. This raises interesting questions about how new generations carry forward the story of union and its dissent from denominationalism.

For those that have known no other tradition nor witnessed the process of 'uniting', the challenge is that a different kind of denominationalism can emerge.

With the Basis of Union committing us to pursue the broader wholeness of both church and world in an ongoing sense, the generations which continue to grow up Uniting must live this out in fresh ways that make sense for their time. Among other things it means holding our traditions lightly, beloved though they are.

Perhaps in the years to come our commitments to unity and ecumenism will take on a different shape that is less institutional. Instead of being primarily focussed on seeking doctrinal or theological common ground with other denominations, though that is important and will continue, it may become more about a spirit and culture of partnership with others in the pursuit of justice and wholeness for all.

This is a timely book. Right now, through the [Act2 project](#), the Uniting Church is embarking on the biggest conversation we have had since union about the shape, identity and life of the Uniting Church. There is much within these pages that will inform the questions we will ask ourselves about moving boldly and with faith into the future.

I commend the contributors to *Growing Up Uniting* for their courage. To consider and critique a movement that is so entwined with personal identity asks both vulnerability and hope. It also takes trust that the church stands ready and willing to listen. I hope all UCA members get the chance to hear the voices and insights between these pages.

You can purchase *Growing Up Uniting* from MediaCom Education.