



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia

Issue 74
December 2021

Revive

a fresh perspective on faith, church and life



Accessibility and the church

**It's all in the story:
Pastoral and spiritual
support in aged care**
Adrienne Inch

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Revive is published quarterly for the Uniting Church WA. The Uniting Church WA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. *Revive* is produced at the Uniting Church Centre, which sits on the lands of the Wadjuk Nyungar people and we pay our respects to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the Nyungar people as the sovereign First Peoples of this place.

Opinions expressed in *Revive* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, or the policies of the Uniting Church.

Revive welcomes contributors. Contact the editor in the first instance at revive@wa.uca.org.au.

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Are we yet alive?

Two years ago as the season of Advent approached, as if by premonition, I felt an urgent need to visit my birth country, India, and greet in person my siblings and other family members.

However, it was not until February 2020 that my husband and I were able to make the journey. As we were preparing to leave, we heard about an unknown virus emanating from China. A day after we returned to Australia, we experienced our first lockdown.

Everyone has their own version of 'the 2020 that was' – full of uncertainties, cancelled or severely restricted family events, including weddings and funerals; worship services curtailed; education moving online; and whole new concepts of how daily work tasks could be undertaken.

Like the people of old longing for liberation from their oppressors, as God had promised, those of faith and those without faith, longed for the advent of 2021, that somehow miraculously would put 2020 behind them as the year everyone would rather forget. However, it was not to be.

This year came with positive expectations and dreams, but for the majority of Australians those dreams deteriorated into something of a nightmare, with more lockdowns and increasing despair. Living as we do

in Western Australia, we have been isolated from much of the social isolation and resultant destroyed opportunities. This can bring with it the risk of a self-induced sense of complacency, if not disinterest, so long as it does not directly affect us or our way of life.

As I have reflected on our rather unique situation, increasingly I find disturbing parallels. The daily barrage of information about the pandemic causes fatigue and if it is not directly affecting us, there can be a tendency to switch off. We can allow ourselves to be desensitised to the suffering and misfortune of people elsewhere, sometimes as a way of coping in the midst of crises.

In preparing for Advent this year and the year beyond, we need to be continually reminded that the problems of the world will not suddenly disappear. Fears will still remain, whether it is of other nations or other peoples. We cannot hide behind pacts or closed borders to shield us from being part of God's world. It is not part of who we are – people called to make a difference.

As Moderator, my hope and prayer for 2022 is that we learn to be gentler with each other in the life of the church. Sometimes our own perspective, my own included, can shield us from the guidance of the Holy Spirit and unintentionally we can cause hurt or sow seeds of



Susy Thomas
Moderator, Uniting Church WA

resentment. Each of us knows we are better than that.

As with a pandemic, the temptation is to look for quick answers or easy solutions, but they will not be forthcoming. A lot of hard work has to be undertaken to rebuild faith and confidence in the life of the church, which will require a return to the basics of seeking guidance through a faithful and diligent discernment of scripture.

Advent celebrates the coming of God's light to the world. Our very Uniting Church symbol emphasises that, with the light of the cross triumphing over the darkness of the abyss, emboldened by the dove symbolising the Holy Spirit that descended upon Jesus at his baptism.

As we prepare to welcome that light once more, may we also recall the words of Paul to the Romans I chose as the theme for my time as your Moderator:

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."
(Romans 15:13)

My continual prayer for us at this time is, let it be so!

Susy Thomas
Moderator, Uniting Church WA

Moderator's Diary

December

- 5 December Annual Miinale at Beth Shalom Uniting Church
- 6 December Scotch College Junior School Presentation
Ecumenical Engagement National Gathering
- 7 December St Stephen's School Duncraig
Secondary Presentation Evening
- 9 December Presbyterian Ladies' College Speech Night
- 10 December Wesley College Council End of Year Function
- 12 December Worship Together Christmas Celebration at MLC
- 13 December Synod Standing Committee
- 15 December WA Heads of Churches Meeting

January 2022

- 4 January Presbytery Standing Committee

February

- 14 February Synod Standing Committee
- 15 February Wesley College Council Meeting
- 17 February Assembly President and Moderator's Meeting
- 20 February Preaching at South Mandurah Uniting Church

March

- 1 March Presbytery Standing Committee

After almost 13 years of working with the Uniting Church WA, this will be my final edition as Editor of *Revive*. I have been offered a new opportunity that I am excited to take-up.

I began here at the Uniting Church WA as a staff writer, brought on board in my final year at university to help out with *Revive* just one day a week. What continued, was more than a decade of learning and growing as my role here expanded and eventually became Editor.

I love magazines. It had been a dream of mine to edit a magazine since I was a teenager; a dream which to be honest I never really saw ever being a reality. While a publication for the Uniting Church was not exactly what 'teenage me' had in mind (as I flipped through countless editions of *Cosmopolitan*, *Cleo*, *Marie Claire* and later, *Frankie*, *Peppermint* and *Vogue Knitting*), it has certainly been an honour to produce *Revive* over this time, especially as print media declines.

My hands-down favourite part of writing for *Revive* has been the people I've met along the way. The 'Profile' section has been such an amazing opportunity to hear stories from so many people. I have been part of some incredible conversations.

People have shared with me some of the most intimate stories of their lives – including their traumas, joys and faith – which I've always tried to share respectfully and with sensitivity.

I can assure you I don't take this honour lightly.

When I first began working for the Uniting Church WA, I was tasked with writing an article for *The Transit Lounge* (a joint online publication of the Uniting Church in Australia and the WA Synod which no longer exists) on the global financial crisis that was occurring at the time – a topic I knew nothing about. I was given the advice that I didn't need to be the expert, I just needed to find one to interview.

This proved to be some of the best advice I've received as a writer, as I went on to interview experts in their various fields for feature articles on so many topics. Scientists, activists, academics and theologians; I've learnt so much from these people, who've been so patient in sharing their knowledge for me to make sense of and turn into an article.

I've worked with so many amazing people I can't include them all here. From Uniting Church WA members, to staff at the Uniting Church Centre, and of course all my incredible friends and colleagues who have worked in the Marketing and Communications Team.

I'm sad – and to be honest, slightly terrified – to be leaving *Revive* after so many years. But I'm also really excited for where life is heading.

Thank you all so much for having me.

**Heather Dowling,
Editor**

5 minutes with...

Rev Dr Andrew Williams



Rev Dr Andrew Williams will be the new General Secretary of the Uniting Church WA, beginning his role on 1 January 2022. From his current role as General Secretary of the Northern Synod, he spends 5 minutes with *Revive* to introduce himself.

What are you passionate about?

I am passionate about ministry – I have been in ministry all my adult life and it has been the driving force and constant reference point that I can hold on to. Also, I like riding my bike. It has been a good day when I ride my bike and at the moment that is far too infrequent.

Who do you look up to?

I would name St Francis of Assisi as top of the list; he is a constant source of inspiration. It was a high point in life to visit Assisi a few years ago.

Second would be Desmond Tutu. I first encountered him in 1987 at a NCYC (National Christian Youth Convention) in Ballarat. I was left with the impression that being a minister was a good life choice. Every subsequent meeting with him has left me equally inspired.

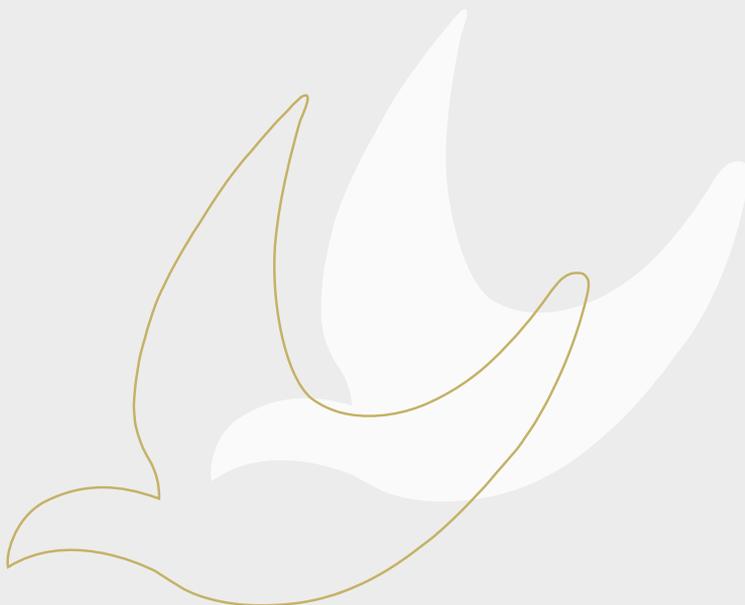
How would you describe your journey in ministry?

Convolutd is the first word that comes to mind! WA will be the fourth Synod I've worked in, as well as two stints in overseas roles. I often say I could not have written the script of my life that worked out this way. Local church ministry, Synod roles, General Secretary roles and overseas mission engagement work – it has been varied to say the least. I have seen the world, and I have always had the feeling that one role has led on to the next and I could build on experiences learned.

What are your hopes for your time as General Secretary for the Uniting Church WA?

This is the hardest question. I will need to get to know the Synod and earn people's trust. Our moment in the church is difficult on many fronts – a reality which has been brought home to me as I have undertaken the interim General Secretary role here in the Northern Synod. I hope that the church can reclaim some boldness rather than stagnating or merely marking time.

That will need courage. I hope to find a courageous, risk-taking church in WA.





Hospitality fundraiser for the IDPC

Leeming Uniting Church's fundraising dinner for the Uniting Church WA's International Partnerships and Development Commission.

Leeming Uniting Church

The Uniting Church WA International Partnerships and Development Commission (IDPC) is engaged with four key partners: in West Papua, Timor Leste, West Timor, and Sri Lanka.

During COVID-19, all the partners have had to adapt to the crisis to promote health advice, support access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and basic sanitation and hygiene, as well as support access to emergency food supplies due to broken supply lines. With the impact of COVID-19 on our international partner churches, there was a call for more support.

Leeming Uniting Church responded by donating the money from our annual fundraising dinner to be held in February to this worthy cause. The congregation also agreed to match all money raised dollar for dollar. Sadly, due to a COVID-19 shutdown this was postponed to

later in the year. Due to the need for urgent funds, Leeming donated \$2 500 in anticipation of raising that amount.

The event was eventually held on Saturday 9 October with Rev Brian Thorpe and Lyn Callaghan, members of the IDPC, speaking at our service prior to that, inspiring us with stories of IDPC projects.

At our annual fundraising dinner, held at Leeming Uniting Church member's Shirl and Roy Francis' home, we normally aim for 60 guests where we serve a three-course meal with alternate plate drops. We ask for a minimum donation which is collected on an honour basis. With raffles and the generosity of those attending who enjoy their meal and are willing to pay more, we are usually able to raise a generous amount of money.

Although this is a fundraiser it is also an opportunity for us to build relationships with those in the community as we invite our friends, family and neighbours to share a

meal with us. A team of volunteers under the co-ordination of Shirl Francis work hard to make this happen. We have chop-slice-dicers, those who help set-up, those who plate up, serve, clean-up and of course those who spend the time to invite their friends – as without that we would not raise much money.

Our attendance numbers were down to 41 in October due to many various circumstances. All we could do was place it in God's hands and hope that we could raise the \$2 500 already gifted.

God never disappoints. Despite our low numbers we exceeded all expectations and made a profit of just over \$3 200. This means that the IDPC can expect the balance of about \$3 900 shortly.

Thank you to all those that attended and helped, and to Brian, Jan and Lyn who volunteered to help serve. Never underestimate the gift of hospitality. God can use that in a powerful way.



Rabbi Sheryl blows the Shofar, an ancient Jewish instrument, at the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) protest outside the office of Federal Member for Swan, the Hon Steve Irons.

Perth faith groups join global demonstration for climate justice

Increasingly impatient that governments, corporations, and financial institutions have not addressed the climate crisis despite decades of warnings from scientists and mounting climate impacts, the Uniting Church WA joined with the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) and diverse faith communities around the globe in a co-ordinated action under the banner of Faiths 4 Climate, in October.

Ann Zubrick, Presiding Clerk of Quakers Australia joined the Western Australian branch of ARRCC as they gathered outside the office of Federal Member for Swan, Hon Steve Irons MP. Supporters in Bunbury also gathered outside the office of the Federal Member for Forrest, Hon Nola Marino MP.

"We have already seen with fires and floods what happens when the

science of climate change is not heeded," Ann said.

"By contrast, we've seen during this pandemic that good outcomes are achieved when scientific advice is followed but, when governments do the wrong thing, it's the poor who are hurt the most.

"Climate scientists are urging the strongest action possible to mitigate climate change, hence our call for much stronger action by 2030. Governments like Australia's need to wake-up out of their complacency."

Geoff Bice, Executive Officer: Social Justice for the Uniting Church WA and President of ARRCC WA said, "Western Australia needs to play its part in reducing emissions too. There have been some encouraging developments in renewable energy, but the State Government seems to avoid talking about emissions from the gas industry which is by far our biggest polluter."

The action in Perth was part of a global series of events organised

by the GreenFaith International Network, a global, multi-faith alliance. Actions took place all over the world, including in New York City, London, Jakarta and Sydney.

The worldwide action gave voice to a set of demands developed by grassroots people of faith which surpassed those included in a statement issued by the Vatican and high-level religious leaders on 4 October.

These demands include: an immediate end to new fossil fuel projects and tropical deforestation; universal access to renewable energy; policies creating green jobs and a just transition for impacted workers and communities; support for those forced to migrate due to climate impacts; and reparations from countries and industries responsible for the lion's share of historic greenhouse gas emissions.

Over 200 high-level faith leaders and 100 religious groups representing more than 100 million members have signed onto these demands.

Find out more about ARRCC WA on their Facebook page.



Some members of the St Martin's Forrestfield and Kalamunda Uniting Church's combined Covenant Yarning Circle with a copy of the *A Guide to Congregations in WALKING TOGETHER AS FIRST AND SECOND PEOPLES*.

Intentional relationships bring new life across the church

Life is better when it's shared with others.

This is true for us as individuals, and can also be applied to our groups and organisations. Working in collaboration and partnership is a foundation of the Uniting Church.

In this vein, some Uniting Church WA congregations are finding support and renewed life by creating mutual partnerships. Our congregations are diverse geographically, culturally and theologically. Each has its own gifts that they bring to life, which through an intentional relationship could be shared for the benefit of others.

St Martin's Forrestfield and Kalamunda Uniting Churches have, for over ten years, held a Memorandum of Agreement for a shared arrangement. Included in this is a Joint Co-ordinating Committee, which consists of members from each congregation whose role is to facilitate the process, as well as encourage opportunities for shared ministry and for growth in leadership.

The two congregations work together in mission, share ministry costs, have two joint social justice groups, share discipleship and formation studies, and hold regular joint worship services.

Noranda and Margaret River Uniting Churches have also recently formed an intentional relationship, holding a virtual joint worship service where pre-recorded elements were played out in each congregation's worship. Other congregations, both metropolitan and rural have also enjoyed these kinds of relationships.

The Presbytery is encouraging congregations to consider whether they too are called to develop relationships with another – not as an amalgamation, but as an intentional partnership which works for the benefit of both congregations.

Alison Xamon, Chair of the Presbytery of WA, said there are an exciting range of reasons for congregations to form intentional relationships with each other.

"We're quite excited about what intentional relationships can offer for congregations," Alison said.

"It's an opportunity for meaningful relationships beyond their immediate congregations with other members of the Uniting Church. And to learn different ways of worship, to gain ideas about different ways to do mission and an opportunity to deepen connections across the Uniting Church.

"This is an opportunity to expand, strengthen and grow congregations through increased connection."

The Presbytery of WA is offering to support congregations as they discern if this is something they would like to pursue, by connecting congregations who might be a good fit for each other.

Alison invites all congregations to prayerfully consider how they might be able to connect in this way and whether this is something they would like to pursue. If your congregation would like to know more, contact Rev Dr David Ferguson, Presbytery Officer for the Uniting Church WA, on 9260 9800 or email david.ferguson@wa.uca.org.au.

Scarborough celebrates the harvest

Delys Griffith

In October, Scarborough Uniting Church celebrated a special Harvest Service led by Darren Mouchemore, one of our Elders.

Darren's family have been involved in the fishing industry in Albany for many years. Darren had his father's last fishing net which he used in Mosman Bay, he decided to make it a service celebrating the harvest of the sea, as well as a harvest of the land. We took the opportunity to invite folk who haven't worshipped with us for some time. Although some weren't able to come as it was a long weekend, those who did helped to make it a special service.

The theme of harvesting the seas and the land was reflected in the display in the church.

Darren draped his father's fishing net, which is 76-years-old, over a frame behind the display of food. Some of the food was brought

forward by the congregation during the showing of a film on the fishing industry in Albany and was placed on the display.

Displayed was wheat grown from seeds provided by a farmer friend of another Elder, Margaret Hockridge, and as Darren tells us we were lucky to have it to display, as a friend's dog decided it looked pretty good to eat!

Margaret and Alan Hockridge's daughter, Nerida baked a pastry sheaf of wheat for the display. Darren is a keeper of bees and although he wasn't able to provide a full frame of honeycomb, he was able to place in front of the display what was available on the day. It was a family affair as Darren's wife, Judy was on the flower roster for that Sunday.

It is a number of years since we have celebrated a Harvest Festival and it was good to set aside that Sunday to reflect on the bountiful harvest God provides.

The congregation was very generous in providing food for the service.

At Scarborough, the congregation brings non-perishable food to church for Uniting Aid each Sunday. All the non-perishable food was taken by Denis Guyatt and Olwen Henley to Uniting Aid, an agency of the church supporting people in the City of Stirling. Darren took the perishable food to Chrystal Halliday Juniper, in Karrinyup.





It's all in the story: Pastoral and spiritual support in aged care

Adrienne Inch, Juniper's Team Leader of Pastoral and Spiritual Care.

Heather Dowling

Adrienne Inch knows the power of storytelling.

As we age, it is normal to question our life's purpose and meaning. For residents at Juniper, a Uniting Church WA agency providing aged care, this becomes even more prevalent.

In her role as Team Leader of Pastoral and Spiritual Care at Juniper, Adrienne Inch supports people as they work through these thoughts, and more.

Juniper provides community, retirement living and residential aged care services to people all over the state. But it is in residential care that the Pastoral and Spiritual Care Team work. The twelve staff on the team not only lead and arrange worship services for the sites, but also provide one-on-one pastoral



care for residents and their families, as well as staff at the facilities. Adrienne also provides volunteer training for people who want to support the work of the team.

Adrienne explained one of the first things they do with supporting residents in their pastoral care is through a process of assessment designed to get to know who they are and where they find meaning in life. The assessment asks questions around religious beliefs, but also about their hobbies, family life,

and where they find joy and meaning.

“We have to understand what the pastoral care needs of the residents are. And that comes through a process of getting to know them,” she said.

“If people are Christians that’s fairly straightforward – we know a bit about them, though everyone’s faith is different. We have people of all denominations, and we have a few people of other religious beliefs.

“The growing group is the group of people who say they don’t have any religion, or they were once part of a religion and they’re not anymore.

“We do a pastoral and spiritual assessment to understand what the needs are, and that’s made-up of several things. We find different ways of asking people ‘what gives meaning and purpose to your life?’ And not everyone has a Christian point of view.

“We see spirituality as a fairly broad concept about meaning and purpose, and who and what you’re connected to.”

For older people, grief can become a big part of life – as past grief begins to resurface, or as people experience more and more loss as they age.

“Sometimes people have grief from the past that still might need resolution,” Adrienne said.

“People won’t tell you everything in the first conversation. This information, you acquire over time, because people aren’t going to share their deepest secrets with you straight away.

“But you might discover they had a child who died in childhood, or a sister or brother who died, or a parent who died young.

“Particularly of the older generation, people weren’t always that aware of grief – people just had to get on with their lives. So sometimes when they’re older and

have more time to think about it, then they revisit the events of their lives.”

It is when talking to people about their lives in this way that residents begin to open up and tell their stories.

“They have fascinating stories. People say, ‘oh I haven’t done much in my life’, and then tell you they’ve lived through WWII, they’ve lived through the depression, had next to no money, they did this and that – amazing stuff,” Adrienne said.

“Some of the stories are just amazing, the things people have done and survived.”

“In that reminiscence with them, you can ask them questions or reinforce the significance of their lives. Clearly they made meaning out of their lives even when they were in very difficult circumstances.”

For people who are living with dementia, or who are non-cognitive, this process can become more challenging. However, there are other ways of connecting, such as sitting and talking with the family, or using symbolism.

Adrienne said there are a number of ways to strike up conversation with residents, which go beyond chatting about the weather.

“If you and I meet friends in the street, inevitably the weather is the first part of the conversation. It’s like an opening ritual,” she said.

“When you’re talking to people in residential aged care, they live in an airconditioned environment and while they do enjoy time outside, the weather is not always the best way to start a conversation, you have to find other ways to do this.

“So, I say to our volunteers, use the environment that you’re in, even what people are wearing. If you go into people’s rooms, observe what’s in the room – I spent a couple of

Profile

hours with a man once who told me all about the photos on his wall.

"Find something immediate that you can talk about: How was lunch today? Or how was church for you today?"

"Everybody benefits from talking.

"One of the most fascinating things I like to ask is 'what was your first paying job?' One lady wrapped chocolate in a chocolate factory in England, someone else worked for bookbinders and her job was to lay the paper out and take it into the room where the men bound them – it was all done by hand.

"They've got fascinating stories, amazing stories, and people come from all over the world."

As is throughout religion and spirituality, symbolism and rituals become extremely important in this aged care environment – particularly for people with dementia or who have limited-cognitive.

The Juniper Pastoral and Spiritual Care Team lead regular church services in the facilities, which are interdenominational and general.

The team also arrange for religious leaders from local churches or worship places to visit and conduct specific sacred rituals, such as communion.

"People can't always express verbally what's important to them, but if you set-up a cross and you have hymns, people have the sense that they're in a church service," Adrienne said.

"We have a number of Catholic residents, so we try and connect with the local Catholic church, so the priest can come in and give communion to the residents.

"Particularly people with memory loss, if they see a priest wearing his collar they know what that is, they can connect.

"Finding the emotional and spiritual needs can be a challenge if people can't communicate with you. It takes time."

While Juniper is a Christian agency of the Uniting Church WA, residents of the facilities come

from all sorts of backgrounds and religion, including no religion. It is not the job of the pastoral care team to evangelise people to Christianity, but to support people in their own journeys and facilitate the religious and spiritual rituals that are requested.

"Our work is in response to the residents. We're not there to put up the flag for Christians, our role is to respond to who is there and what they're looking for and how they want to be supported. We do what we can to support them in the best possible way that we can," Adrienne said.

"We're not classically evangelical, we're not here to convert everybody before they die. We're here to support them and connect them to what is important to them.

"That's not to say we don't get to share our faith.

"The team create a Christian community in the facility, and that has really been very helpful for people to feel encouraged in their faith. People like what happens and its fairly informal, but it does have formality to do with church.



Adrienne Inch, Juniper's Team Leader of Pastoral and Spiritual Care leads worship.



Juniper's Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Carol Somerville (right) hosting a staff morning tea for Pastoral and Spiritual Care Week.



Juniper's Pastoral Care Co-ordinator, Kelley Carpenter (right) assisting Juniper residents to lay a wreath at an ANZAC service.

"We try and involve the residents in the church services. Residents read the Bible readings, or come and light the candle. Some of them can't, but where we can we encourage them to participate.

"Services with people with dementia always have to be fairly flexible. People can come and go, walk-in and out, people call-out. You just have to be flexible because you're never quite sure what people are going to say or do next; they lose some of their inhibitions."

Again, Adrienne said that stories are a powerful medium for communication and connection.

"Stories are the best way to communicate meaning," she said.

"We use the Uniting Church Lectionary, so stories are often the best way, rather than trying to tackle complicated theology.

"We do have people sitting in the room who are very cognitive, so we can't make it childish. We need to draw a line between simple for people to understand, but not childish.

"It needs to be adult and stimulating for people who are cognitive and who have been going to church all their life."

As many residents age into the end of life, pastoral and spiritual care can turn to supporting people through grief, loss and dying. A lot of this is done with the residents themselves, but also with their families and the staff who have been caring for them.

When deaths occur, funerals and memorial services are held to honour and celebrate people's lives – residents, staff and family are all invited to attend.

"We've developed a number of resources that we use, as we deal a lot with grief and dying," Adrienne said.

"Quite a bit of our work is with family members who are coming to visit, and you get to know some of

them too. It's not easy for people to watch their loved ones deteriorate and die.

"Some of my team have done things particularly for staff – the staff get very connected to the residents.

"End of life support is really quite important. Although people are old and we expect them to die, it's still difficult.

"When they're gone, it's difficult. It's still a major event for people. It's still a loss."

A huge part of sharing in people's stories in pastoral and spiritual care is active listening.

"Talk therapy is the best therapy, that's the bread and butter of what we do," Adrienne said.

"I think that listening is a spiritual gift because it's so rare to be honest. We're not good listeners, generally speaking. We all want to tell our own story, which is fine, but we're not that great at sitting and listening."

"When I do volunteer training, I say to people to observe their listening through the week. And when they come back, they often say 'I'm a terrible listener.'

"When you're sitting with friends, that's fine. But if you want to be an intentional listener then you need to hold your own story and focus on what the person is telling you. Help them to explore their own story – that's what we do here."

For Adrienne, working in pastoral care in an aged care environment is more than a job – it gives meaning to her own life.

"There's something about being with vulnerable people that connects you with your own vulnerability," she said.

"When I think about the gospel, Jesus was someone who spent time with vulnerable people – that's pretty clear.

"Aged care is not for everyone. You need patience, you need to be able to listen, accept and love people as they are.

"Over time you learn how to go with what is – where people are in the moment.

"I find their lives and stories fascinating, just amazing. If I can do something to help in their last few years to make it as good as it can be, then that's a great thing to be doing – that's a great ministry and a great service to be involved in."

Want to get involved?

Juniper's Pastoral and Spiritual Care Team welcomes volunteers, who assist in a range of ways. Volunteers help bring residents to and from church, provide music, help with activities, and provide one-on-one conversation with residents.

Volunteer training will be happening in the new year. To find out more get in touch with Adrienne at adrienne.inch@juniper.org.au.



A close-up portrait of Hugh Mackay, an elderly man with white hair, wearing a dark blue suit jacket, a light blue shirt, and a patterned tie. He is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a blurred outdoor setting with green foliage.

Be part of the kindness revolution: Summer Spirit 2022

***Summer Spirit*, a continuing education and discipleship event of the Uniting Church WA, will be held on Friday 18 and Saturday 19 February 2022. This year's event will explore values, as the Uniting Church WA goes through it's own process of considering its values for its next strategic plan.**

Included in the line-up of speakers is Hugh Mackay AO, Australian psychologist, social researcher and author of 22 books, including *The Kindness Revolution*. Hugh will be sharing insights from this new book, as well as from his book, *The Inner Self: the joy of discovering who we really are* and will encourage guests to think about the kinds of values that Australian society aspires.

Hugh believes that through kindness, we can create a better world.

"I would define kindness as anything we do to show another person that we take them seriously

– and that can be anything from a friendly smile or wave to an offer of a meal, a helping hand in a crisis or, most particularly, our commitment to being attentive and empathic listeners," he said.

"In *The Kindness Revolution*, I'm suggesting that whenever we face a crisis – like the pandemic, or fires, floods, wars, etc – we always rise to the occasion and act in ways that are true to the best of our human nature.

"We are kind to friends and strangers alike. We look out for the most vulnerable people in our communities. We rediscover the importance of neighbourliness. We make sacrifices for the common good.

"The question is: why don't we go on acting like that, even when the crisis has passed?

"The answer is that our innate capacity for kindness, because we belong to a social species that needs social harmony to survive, can easily be overlooked in favour of more selfish,



Summer Spirit 2022 keynote speaker, Hugh Mackay AO.

ego-driven impulses – especially at a time in our social evolution when our society is being reshaped in the direction of becoming more socially fragmented, with a threat to our social cohesion and a growing problem of social isolation (associated with epidemics of loneliness, anxiety and depression).

“Crises and catastrophes like the pandemic can act as a circuit-breaker to the effect of these trends, reminding us of what it really means to be human.

“So, can we turn this crisis into a revolution by refusing to let go of the lessons the pandemic has taught us about our interdependency and interconnectedness?

“If we dream of a kinder, more compassionate, fairer, less violent, more egalitarian society, there’s only one way to make that dream come true: each of us must start living as if it is that kind of society.”

Hugh believes that churches have a lot to offer when it comes to kindness. He said the best way for Christians to be part of the kindness revolution, is to read the Sermon on the Mount, and then put it into practice.

“If Christianity’s role is not to foster kindness and compassion, then it’s hard to see what its social purpose is,” he said.

“When churches let dogma and doctrine – or even ‘religious identity’ – get in the way of serving others and responding to the needs of a wounded society, their true mission is lost.

“By influence and example, Christians can help bring about the transformation into a culture built on kindness and compassion. What if Australia became known as ‘the loving country’ rather than simply ‘the lucky country’!

“Kindness is the purest form of human love, because it involves no emotion or affection. We can be kind to people we don’t like, couldn’t ever agree with, and don’t even know – this is how we make sense of Jesus’ injunction to ‘love your enemies’.

“As Samuel Johnson wrote: Kindness is in our power, even when fondness is not.”

Summer Spirit will also feature two afternoon workshops with staff of the Uniting Church WA: Rev Hannes Halgren, Associate General Secretary (Strategy); Rev Dr Christine Sorensen, Presbytery Minister (Formation and Discipleship); Rev Rob Douglas, Presbytery Minister (Mission); and Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, Presbytery Minister (VET).

These sessions will work through the values of the Uniting Church WA, as a Christian community of hope, justice, creativity, compassion, integrity, accountability and compassion.

Guests can also join a discussion exploring how they can live out their values in their own contexts.

Summer Spirit will be held on Friday night 18 to Saturday 19 February at All Saints Floreat Uniting Church. All Uniting Church members, leaders, ministers and friends are invited to join.

Registration is \$120 per person, or \$100 concession. Register five people and get the sixth free!

For more information or to register, visit eventbrite.com.au/e/summer-spirit-2022-tickets-200697380267 or email PA.Education@wa.uca.org.au

Accessibility and the church: creating a community of faith, love and inclusion



Heather Dowling

We celebrate International Day of People with Disability on 3 December, but how inclusive are we really in the church – spiritually, physically and online?

Accessibility in churches reaches beyond the physical barriers, and can also be about social inclusion and good theology around disability.

Robbie Muir, from Maylands Mount Lawley Uniting Church, lives with hearing and sight disabilities and feels it is important to teach the church how to be more inclusive. He also works with Good Sammy Enterprises, volunteers with Revive packing, and sits on the Uniting Church WA Disability Royal Commission Synod Task Group. He has presented his thoughts to Presbytery of WA meetings in the past, to encourage churches to become more accessible.

"A lot of my experience has been trying to teach the church what to do," he said. "It's alright for people to say 'oh yes we care for the disabled', but if they haven't got things in place, it's no good."

Robbie encourages congregations to use overhead screens that are clear to see and free of backgrounds or busy images; make available large print copies of texts; provide hearing loops that are down the front of the church; have good lighting; have minimal steps or provide ramps; and have bathrooms that are easily accessible.

He thanked the church for its progression in this area, but also said he would like the church to be more aware of the issues that affect people with a disability and their inclusion in church.

"Quite often we've had to come up with ways to get around things," he said. "I have an IrisVision that I can put on and see the overheads, but for a few weeks we had somebody who couldn't do the overheads and we had sheets – and no one enlarged the hymns for me.

"It makes you feel a bit useless and that the church isn't for you. It makes you feel isolated and excluded."

He also encourages people to talk to members of their congregation who have a disability, and ask them what would help their experience at church.

"I think a lot of people don't talk to the disabled because they think they're stupid or don't understand. Ask the disabled person [what they need], don't just think 'oh well they'll manage'. Ask them. We're not dumb, we're not stupid."

Dr Scott Hollier, CEO of The Centre for Accessibility Australia, is passionate about supporting organisations to create accessible digital spaces. He is also legally blind, and a member of Kalamunda Uniting Church.

Scott said that creating accessible spaces, and therefore inclusion, for people living with disability, is easier than we think. With some intentional thinking and planning, we can all get better at creating an accessible environment.

"Look at the quick wins," Scott said. "You don't have to solve every disability issue instantly; it will be a journey. But once the key pieces are in place it becomes a different way of doing things, rather than extra work.

"For example, once you've got that slide template high contrast, well, every slide will be high contrast.

"Quite often it is just about an awareness. Once people are aware of it and people are happy to do it, then it just happens after that point going forward."

Melanie Kiely, CEO of Good Sammy Enterprises, a Uniting Church WA agency providing employment solutions for people living with



Dr Scott Hollier, CEO of The Centre for Accessibility Australia.

Melanie Kiely, CEO of Good Sammy Enterprises

disability, agrees that our digital and physical spaces need accessibility, and that we can go further on inclusivity.

"It's so much more than just space and physical accessibility. If we just focus on that then we've lost an opportunity here," Melanie said.

"It's about inclusion, it's about welcoming and embracing everybody – regardless of their ability and their background – into a church environment.

"It's what we cover in the sermon, it's the language we use, it's the hymnbooks we use. Obviously, it's the ramps and what have you, but it's more than that.

"It's about running churches that embrace everyone.

"We should be having people with disability in every church service as part of everything we do in the church. And they should feel completely included and we should learn from them, as much as they can learn from us.

"We're about creating a community of faith, love and inclusion – that's what I would like to see.

"Include everyone in the sermon, let them talk about their experience. Let's include them in the choir, playing music and in the art. Include all levels of creativity, so that we're embracing the differences of all our people in our congregations.

Melanie said that living with a disability does not have to be a negative thing. All people are unique and have gifts and skills, which should be welcomed and celebrated.

"We shouldn't assume people with disability are flawed. We're all different, we all have abilities of different natures and we shouldn't assume that people need to be fixed," she said.

"We should accept people and embrace people with all their unique and special characteristics.

The *Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability* (Royal Commission) was established in April 2019 and is still ongoing. It is likely that the Uniting Church WA will be affected by the Royal Commission. However, the church has a longstanding belief of inclusiveness, and works towards this end.

Dr Scott Hollier said that the Royal Commission is an opportunity for us to learn from the past.

"I think the Royal Commission has revealed that people with disability have not always been treated well in the church, and that needs to be acknowledged," he said.

"I think the Uniting Church has done well in acknowledging the issues

and trying to put processes in place going forward, and I think that's a good thing.

"That said, my focus, and the focus at the Centre and as a legally blind person, is that we need to learn from the past. The Royal Commission has been important in understanding what has happened.

"Accessibility – whilst certainly that type of exclusion is nothing on the scale of physical abuse and spiritual abuse – does tap back into the importance of inclusion and equity moving forward.

"I would see accessibility as one more mechanism where we can focus going forward on making sure everyone is included in a worship space, and have that opportunity for full participation."

Melanie Kiely, believes the Royal Commission is a good thing for Australia.

"It's going to be a good thing for everyone," she said. "You take the lid off the can of worms and we can improve and stop bad behaviour and get better. We've got to keep improving.

"We're not about protecting ourselves and we're not about covering things up. We're about learning from our past mistakes and moving on and not making them again.

"What we're aiming for is a society that truly embraces diversity and

inclusion, and that includes people with disabilities, and adapt the model of what we think perfect is, to be one that is beautiful diverse and imperfect."

Melanie said the Royal Commission will be felt throughout the church – in our agencies, schools and congregations.

"I would see accessibility as one more mechanism where we can focus going forward on making sure everyone is included in a worship space, and have that opportunity for full participation."

"I think it's right across the board and I think it may or may not include an element of redress," she said.

"It's very wide reaching, and at this stage it's going to go for another two years. There's going to be a lot more hearings on a lot more topics."

Dr Elaine Ledgerwood, Uniting Church WA Presbytery Minister – Education and Training, is a theologian with past experience in Occupational Therapy. Having

worked with people with disabilities and listening to their stories, mixed with studying and continuously learning about God's all-inclusive love, Elaine believes we are all vulnerable to disability throughout our lives.

"You are only temporarily able," Elaine said. "For many people, this is likely to change.

"People with disabilities are like the rest of us – we all have our different hopes and fears, different personalities and different understandings of faith. One day you might have a disability too; when that's the case, I am sure you would like others in your congregation to ensure you are included in their activities."

Theologically, Elaine said that sometimes people can make comments about a disability which may be in good faith, but which can actually be quite harmful.

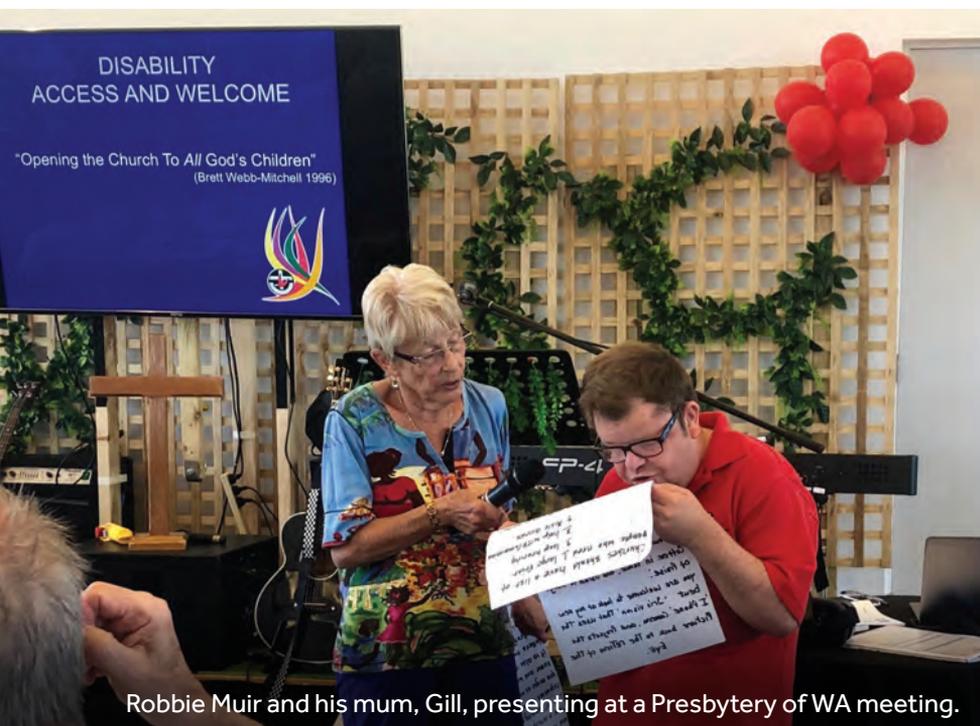
"Spiritual abuse is a problem, such as when people get told they need to pray harder for healing," Elaine said. "Instead, ask questions to help people find their own connection between their faith and disability.

"Using disability as a metaphor for the bad things in life – for example, talking about the Pharisees being 'blind' – can often be experienced as being judgemental about disability. Yes, it is something the gospel writers did, but we now understand the harm this can cause.

"Disabilities can be part of someone's identity. So, saying things like 'in heaven you'll be walking', or similar, is not always helpful. How would you feel if a key part of your identity was dismissed as not being important? Remember the resurrected Christ still carried the wounds of the crucifixion."

However, living with disability does not always define a person, and Elaine said we should not make assumptions about anyone and their abilities.

"Disabilities do not define people. Just because you've known someone else with the same disability doesn't mean you know this person. Get to know each person as an individual."



Robbie Muir and his mum, Gill, presenting at a Presbytery of WA meeting.



Dr Scott Hollier believes that we have come a long way in Australia towards creating more accessibility, but that there is still a way to go.

“There’s been a generational shift around views and attitudes of people with disability and inclusion in society. That’s not just a church thing, but more broadly,” he said.

“I think as we continue to move forward with more awareness and education of the rights and needs of people with disability, that across society, and that includes religious organisations, that will get better.

“One of the great things about church is that it is a really supportive and inclusive environment. The lack of accessibility has never suggested to me that people don’t care or that people aren’t wanting to provide support – often it’s a lack of awareness.

“It’s been my experience that once people understand what the needs are, they’ve been very willing to make those accommodations. There’s a lot of great people who are willing to do great things to support equity, and it’s just a matter of letting people know about it.”

Tips for being an accessible church

Dr Scott Hollier shares these great tips for how your church or organisation can become more accessible in digital and physical spaces.

- Make sure overhead slides have large font with good colour contrast, eg a dark background with white text. If people are still unable to see the slides, having devices (like an iPad) available with a link to see them can also be helpful.
- Make sure videos have captions.
- Distribute electronic versions of meeting documents before meetings.
- Make sure PDF documents and newsletters are digitally accessible.
- It is an Australian requirement that websites are compliant with the WCAG 2.1 AA standard, which has a range of key components. When building a new website, make sure to read up about these requirements or ask your web designer to work them in.

- Make sure physical access to, from and around the building is clear and open, giving thought to things like space, handrails, and clutter.

Resources for more information about how to get your congregation on board with accessibility can be found on the website for the Centre for Accessibility Australia at accessibility.org.au.

The Centre for Accessibility Australia can also work with congregations and organisations as they commit to this journey. Contact them for more information on **0466 099 101** or email admin@accessibility.org.au





Discovering mission for God's world

Rob Douglas

Perception can be an interesting thing.

Prior to starting work with the Uniting Church WA, my wife and I were in the Kimberley region in the far north of WA doing a locum ministry with a Baptist church. For well over 12 months, I had been producing good news stories on video for my YouTube channel and blog (inspirenewscast.com) and the Kimberley was a rich source of stories.

I had produced a number of inspirational videos for residents of the Esther Foundation and decided to do a reflection on the termite mounds that dotted the landscape across the Kimberley. I was thinking along the lines of these mounds representing the church and the great work that people were doing in working together. Termites basically chew, spit and poo. Hey presto! They produce a massive mound that serves as a means of climate control for their nests.

But the more I thought about it, the more I realised that there was something wrong with this first perception. Yes, that's what the church is often like – a safe and secure place where we can work together and achieve our goals – but is that what God has really intended for us? That became the question for the video I finally produced, which you can watch at inspirenewscast.com/2021/08/27/what-about-mound-building

In September this year, I commenced as the Uniting Church WA Presbytery Minister (Mission). I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with congregations within the Presbytery discovering more about God's mission in the world, and how we can connect with what God is already doing.



Rev Rob Douglas, Uniting Church WA Presbytery Minister (Mission) reflection on termite mounds across the Kimberley landscape.

alive, I saw everything I did as mission. This gave me a deep sense of purpose and I hope to share this as I carry out my work in the Uniting Church.

Perhaps it comes down to that 'perception' thing I talked about earlier. When we are involved in our local church, do we perceive that we are building a termite mound that is safe and warm, where we can work together with our friends? But when we go to work, or look after the grandchildren, play golf, participate in the local Rotary club, study at university, that's something else altogether?

I have a sense that God has called us to serve in this wonderful world and our purpose is to discover God's fingerprint in everything that we do.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to go on a journey with you as we together discover God's mission for us. I'm really hopeful that just as I began to get a different perception of the story of the termite mounds as I thought about what story to tell on video, we can also develop some different perceptions of the nature of the church.

That we can begin to tell stories about a church that is no longer isolated from society like a mound that has been created through the spit and poo of busy termites; but instead, we will have vibrant stories to tell about the Spirit blowing a fresh wind of new life through our local communities.

I look forward to our journey together.

Recently, a team of people, organised by the Presbytery of WA's Thrive Mission Committee, spent a weekend being trained as mission coaches. These people will be available to work with congregations that are seeking to discover the mission God has called them to and help them in their mission journey. I am excited to see the possibilities that will emerge from this training.

Mission has long been the thing that makes me tick. I've been a Baptist pastor for nearly 40 years and for about 15 years served as a bivocational pastor. As the name suggests, I served as a pastor part-time and was part of the regular work force for the rest of my time.

Rather than think about my 'secular' work as just a way to make money to keep the family

Help build the Archive collection

Marissa Krajcar

The Uniting Church Archive has long been a vibrant and bustling hive of activity and this year, celebrated 39 years since its inception in 1982. As we look to the future of the Archive, there is much eager anticipation for its 40th anniversary in October next year and all the activities that this celebration will bring.

There have been many changes over the past 40 years, but what has been consistent has been the dedication and enthusiasm brought to the Archive by the many wonderful volunteers who have generously given their time and expertise. We currently have nine active volunteers who are working on a variety of projects such as digitising marriage registers, collating photographs and updating people and place histories.

We are also grateful to the members of the wider Uniting Church community, who continue to identify and value items that reflect our history and then send them through to the Archive for inclusion in our collection.

The past 39 years spent archiving the Uniting Church's history has created a collection that is an eclectic one. It is a mix of physical items such as a stained glass window, textiles, books and photographs from the 1800's, through to the digital records of today.

As we look forward to our 40th celebrations next year, we would like to send out a call for any items that may be suitable for inclusion in our collection. Items such as Baptismal, Marriage and Death Registers, minutes of meetings,



Uniting Church WA Archivists.

correspondence, historical and biographical records, photographs, financial records, parish newsletters and brochures, architectural plans, membership rolls and so on would be gratefully received.

Any queries can be directed to the Uniting Church of WA's Archivist, Marissa Krajcar at archiveswa@wa.uca.org.au or by calling 9260 9865.

Blessing the animals

*NorthWay Uniting Church
Beldon/Carramar*

In conjunction with St Francis of Assisi Day, on Monday 4 October, the NorthWay Uniting Church Mission Team organised a Community Celebration and Blessing of Pets Service on Saturday 2 October. A total of 32 people came long, including children, excluding pets!

Our guests of honour were City of Joondalup Mayor, Albert Jacob and Caitlin Collins MLA, Member for Hillarys.

The informal morning celebration opened with that beautiful creation hymn, 'All things bright and beautiful' followed by the much-loved 'How much is that doggie in the window' and 'Old MacDonald had a farm', which were sung lustily by both pets and their owners.



After each animal was introduced by name, each pet received a special blessing.

A brief reflection was shared by the Minister and the service ended with the singing of a locally written song about kangaroos and cockatoos, fish and fowl and moths and sloths. The half-hour celebration was followed by an elaborate morning tea.



PLC Pipe Band celebrates 40-year anniversary

The Presbyterian Ladies' College (PLC) Pipe Band is celebrating 40 years since its first performance and its unique status as the first girls' school pipe band in Australia.

Historically, pipe bands have been an all-male pursuit, however, thanks to the foresight of PLC's then Musical Director, Eric Page, the introduction of the PLC Pipe Band has gone from strength to strength and is now a source of immense pride for the school.

Throughout its four decades, the PLC Perth Pipe Band has been a regular feature at events throughout Perth, including ANZAC Day Parades in Perth city, the Perth Royal Show, Lilac Hill cricket matches, and many military events.



Marking this momentous occasion, a book has been published, celebrating the 40-year milestone.

Historian, Old Collegian and current parent, Lucy Hair has researched four decades of the PLC Perth Pipe Band to bring together an amazing collection of photographs and stories about the origins of the band,

its tours and awards and fascinating insights from across the 40 years. Lucy has also compiled a comprehensive list of every pipe band member since its inception in 1981.

To purchase a copy of this piece of history visit trybooking.com/events/landing?eid=752222&

Local community connection delivers new Foodbank facility in Yanchep

Uniting WA's Financial Wellbeing Services team member, Paul Jordan, has been instrumental in facilitating the delivery of a new mobile Foodbank service in Yanchep.

Living and working in the local community, Paul identified an exceptionally high need for food relief in Yanchep and surrounding suburbs and a lack of services extending beyond Joondalup.

Understanding that travel to Joondalup was out of reach for many people, Paul went above and beyond to facilitate the delivery of a new Foodbank service to meet the needs of families in Yanchep.

Harnessing his community connections and working closely with Foodbank WA, the City of Wanneroo and Yanchep Men's Shed, Paul played a significant role in sourcing a new venue for the service.

The Yanchep Community Men's Shed kindly offered ongoing use of their facility, and the new service to help families struggling to put food on the table was launched on 24 August 2021.

Amanda Hunt, CEO of Uniting WA, said a significant number of people in Yanchep and surrounding areas are living under food stress.

"With the government's COVID support removed, pressure on working families has never been greater," she said.

"Evidence tells us that place-based solutions work.

"We're proud of the work our team has done with Foodbank WA to facilitate a solution that will meet the specific needs of the local community."

The mobile Foodbank truck distributes food hampers from the Yanchep Men's Shed Bracknell Street carpark every Tuesday from 9.30am to 10.30am.



One of Paul's former clients, Margaret, who received financial counselling support after being made redundant at the age of 70, is volunteering with Uniting WA to support delivery of the service.

If you need help or know someone who does, free-call the Foodbank Emergency Relief and Food Assistance Hotline on 1800 979 777, Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 5.00pm.

Worship Together this Christmas

Susy Thomas, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, invites you to the Worship Together Christmas Celebration.

It will be held on Sunday 12 December, on the Lower Great Court lawn of Methodist Ladies' College (MLC), 356 Stirling Highway, Claremont. Gates will open at 4.00pm, with Christmas Carols to begin at 5.00pm.

Chris Lock, from 98five Sonshine FM will MC this fun, family friendly evening.

The event will be a sunset Christmas celebration for the whole Uniting Church WA family, and the wider community, to come together and enjoy the Christmas season.

Come along to enjoy music by the Victoria Park Brass Band, as well

as from members of the Uniting Church WA. There'll also be a sausage sizzle, plus ice-cream and coffee vans.

Bring down a rug, picnic chairs, and a picnic dinner to enjoy carols and community.

"Come and join us as we celebrate the birth of Christ together as one people of the Uniting Church WA," said Susy.

"Christmas is such a special and joyous time. I am delighted to be able to share in this Christmas event with you, and to spend an evening praising God and reflecting on the birth of Jesus, as one church."

For more information, email maree.kemp@wa.uca.org.au or call the Uniting Church Centre on 9260 9800.



Advertorial

Shout out to all our Church Councils and Elders!

The Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) is offering training for Uniting Church WA Church Council Members and Elders.

These leaders bring a wealth of knowledge and wisdom from their own faith, life experience, professional skills, community participation, and involvement within the church.

They give their time, energy, enthusiasm and so much more, so that our congregations, and the broader church, can run effectively. Yet, rarely do we take the time to help them shape what they bring for leadership into the specific demands and context of leadership in the councils of the church.

Within the Uniting Church constitution, we ask church

councils and elders to do spiritual oversight and pastoral care, build-up the congregation in faith and love, sustain its members in hope, and lead them into a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. The training starts looking at the DNA of the Uniting Church. We also consider the language we have to talk about spirituality for ourselves, with the people in our congregations, and the communities beyond. We also think about the dynamics in church meetings, and how participating in Christ's mission requires taking time to consider our communities and how we might connect, and how to develop new ways to engage.

We have now run this program twice, with great feedback. Participants have enjoyed the



interactive space and the chance to develop deeper background into the work of leading our churches.

CEDAL will be running this program again in 2022 at a place near you! To host the training for Uniting Church WA congregations in your local area, get in touch by calling CEDAL at the Uniting Church Centre on 9260 9800, or email cedal@wa.uca.org.au.

Aussie Divinity Candy

Christmas is just around the corner! This Australian version of an American treat makes for great, sugary homemade gifts, or addition to the Christmas spread.

The 'Divinity' candy is believed to have originated in the south of the United States of America as early as 1915, when corn syrup started to become widely used as a substitute for sugar.

It's unclear where the name came from, but a popular theory is that when first tasted it was declared to be 'divine'. We invite you to make up this sweet treat and experience the sugar rush for yourselves!

**We want to share your recipe!
If you have a recipe you'd like
to share, send it in to
revive@wa.uca.org.au.**

Ingredients (makes 16):

1 large egg white
1 1/2 cups castor sugar
1/3 cup water
1/4 cup glucose syrup
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup macadamia nuts, roughly chopped
1/2 cup glace cherries, roughly chopped
rice paper sheets (optional)

Method

Place egg white in bowl and let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes. Meanwhile, prepare mini cupcake tray with mini patty pans, or line the bottom of a loaf pan with rice paper, cutting to fit.

In a large, heavy saucepan, combine the sugar, water, and glucose syrup; bring to the boil, stirring constantly to dissolve sugar. Cook, without stirring, over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 146°C. Just before the temperature is reached, beat egg whites on medium speed until stiff peaks form.

Slowly add hot sugar mixture in a thin stream over egg white, beating constantly and scraping sides of bowl occasionally. Add vanilla. Beat until mixture holds its shape, about 5-6 minutes. (Do not overmix or mixture will get stiff and crumbly.) Immediately fold in macadamias and cherries.

Quickly drop heaped teaspoons onto prepared patty pans. Let stand at room temperature until dry to the touch. Store between baking paper in an airtight container at room temperature.

If using rice paper, pour into prepared pan. Press firmly into the base. Top with the remaining rice paper sheet. Set aside in a cool, dry place for 4 hours to set. Turn candy onto a chopping board and cut into 3cm squares to serve.

Alternative:

Use chopped Turkish Delight and pistachios instead of cherries and macadamia nuts.

Maid,

2021, created by Molly Smith Metzler,
streaming now on Netflix



Heather Dowling

Netflix's ten-part series *Maid* is an uncomfortable watch, portraying what feels like a hopeless cycle of poverty and family abuse. While set in America with its very different welfare systems to Australia, the underlying themes of hardship certainly ring true here too.

Adapted from the 2019 memoir of Stephanie Land, the series casts real-life mother and daughter, Andie MacDowell and Margaret Qualley, in what comes across as an honest portrayal of the relentless hard work living in poverty can be.

What struck me about this show was the way it tackled issues around emotional abuse – abuse that doesn't leave any physical scars. Alex becomes a single mum with a two-year-old daughter after fleeing her abusive boyfriend in the middle of the night. When offered a space at a domestic violence shelter, she is genuinely surprised that her experience is classed as abusive because her boyfriend, Sean, never physically attacked her.

The series explores why women return to abusive partners, without judgement, but with a sensitivity that teaches the viewer compassion and understanding of a highly complex situation.

On top of dealing with an unreliable mother who suffers undiagnosed bipolar disorder, her ex, unstable living conditions, and the laborious work of cleaning rich people's houses for minimum wage, Alex is met with red tape in the welfare system at every turn.

As soon as she makes some progress in one area, she is knocked back in another. We can literally

see her bank balance decline on screen as she makes a purchase or pays a bill, and feel her confusion of legal language as the fate of her daughter's care rests in the hands of a lawyer and judge who's fast-talking make for even faster decision-making.

The series does also portray hope, while sparing the viewer of a traditional 'happily ever after'.

Alex meets some amazing women through a domestic violence shelter she lives in with her daughter who give this story something to hold onto.

While trying not to give too much of the ending away, she also makes friends with a wealthy client after supporting her through her own struggles. Highlighting the all-true concept of 'it's not what you know, but who you know', Alex's hope for a brighter future only begins when her wealthy client offers to help with legal support.

Maid is beautiful, hard, viewing, which led me to the verge of tears too many times to count.

Green Rider

By Kristen Britain, DAW Books, 1998

Andrea Garvey

If you are looking for a stocking filler for Christmas or just to fill in some relaxing time over the break, then this captivating heroic fantasy adventure is for you.

Green Rider, the first book in the Green Rider series, recently celebrated its 20th anniversary. Following the success of this book another five were added to the series - *First Rider's Call*, *The High King's Tomb*, *Blackveil*, *Mirror Sight*, *Firebrand* and a novella, *The Dream Gatherer*. On 14 September 2021, a seventh book called *Winterlight* was released.

The *Green Rider* series is suitable for both young adult and adult readers, falling into the categories of supernatural/classic fantasy. The underlying message of the series is that running away from a problem does not solve it and choosing to do 'nothing' at times is also an action.

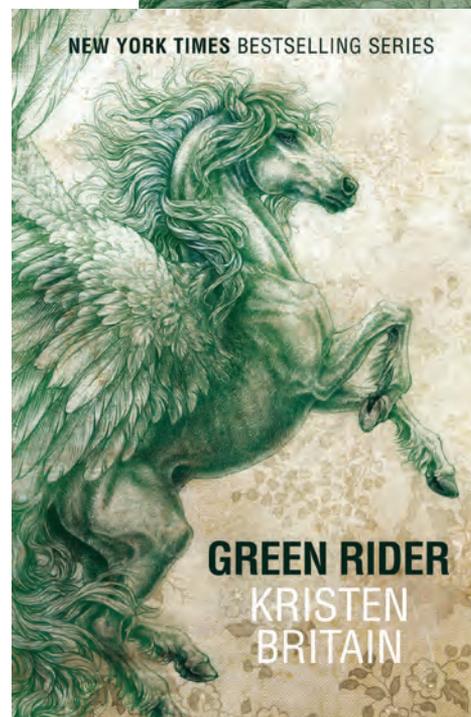
The book begins with our protagonist, Karigan G'ladheon, a merchant's daughter, who has fled from school following a duel in where she bested a wealthy aristocrat, an incident that will likely lead to her expulsion. As she makes

her way through the deep forest, a galloping horse pounds up to her, its rider impaled by two black-shafted arrows.

With his dying breath, he tells her that he is a Green Rider, one of the legendary elite messengers in the king's service and makes Karigan swear to deliver their message he's carrying. Giving her his green coat, with its golden winged horse brooch, the symbol of his office, and whispers on his dying breath, "Beware the shadow man...". This promise given changes Karigan's life forever.

Pursued by unknown assassins and following a path only her horse seems to know, Karigan unwittingly finds herself in a world of deadly danger and complex magic, compelled by forces she cannot understand. Karigan is hounded by dark beings bent on seeing that the message, and its reluctant carrier, never reach their destination.

In a world with kings, elves, and monstrous creatures emerging from a breach in the wall, this book manages to step outside of the typical cliché fantasy without losing its heritage. All in all, it is a great read.



Making room for all the colours of Christmas

Rev Dr Ian Tozer

What is the colour of your Christmases past?

As a child, the Christmas colours I recall are mainly green, red and white. There were cards with snowy scenes, holly and evergreen trees and table decorations in these colours. Most people decorated pine trees. Santas were red and white (influenced by Coca-Cola).

I was still a child when I knew a person who bucked the trend. He had an orange flowering Western Australian Christmas tree, or Moodjar.

Not everyone approved. It seemed that most people thought we ought to use northern hemisphere – English and North American – colours.

The colours of our Christmases may not suit us as we conform to family expectations or traditions which we might otherwise not follow.

What colour do you associate with Christmas present?

For many, Christmas this year is bright.

In some places, especially where it is celebrated in the shadow of COVID-19, Christmas is muted or dark.

This may affect us if presents do not arrive because of world supply chains and the sheer volume of post and parcels. This may affect us if those dear to us have had a hard time or continue to live with deprivation, uncertainty or consequences of the times that are hard to manage.

I know some for whom a dominant Christmas colour is blue.

'Blue' symbolises Christmas being sad or hard, including for those feeling losses keenly or a particular reminder of some distressing experience, such as a gap in our gatherings for Christmas.

Not everyone finds this a 'wonderful time of the year'. Over time, a deep blue Christmas may become lighter, yet never stop having a bluish tinge. One Christmas letter I received last year said the person had known over 20 people who had died in 2020.

The message of Christmas is for those for whom Christmas is blue.

What colour do you associate with Christmases yet to come?

The good news of God's work is that the season when we celebrate the coming of the light has the power to encompass all the colours of the spectrum.

At times the colours shift and different ones dominate – that is inevitable. A time that is bright for us may not be bright for everyone around us. John's gospel reminds us that the light of Christ shines in

the darkness and the darkness will never overcome it.

So, we hold to the Christmas hope, peace and joy whenever we can and remember that the core of the season is a message of God's love for all. This is a gift we can always offer each other.

"Joy to the world... Let every heart prepare him room..."

The love of God which is embodied in Christ and the Christmas stories has a particular focus in the gospel for this year.

For Luke, God was revealed not to the powerful, the confident or comfortable, or people central to social life or the power structures, but to those whom others saw as inferior or not to be included in the circle.

'Shepherd' in some minds in the first century meant 'unclean,' dirty, smelly, crooks and cheats, even when the poverty they lived with was beyond their control. In Luke's story, these are the ones who have a central place.

There are many ways of experiencing being outside the circle. It may be that our colour

doesn't fit with some others' expectations, it may be that we feel unable to share what is really going on with us.

There are many versions of Christmas, many experiences of Christmas. Different versions speak to different people.

Some enjoy the frills, and some prefer plain. Some may attract us, and some repel. As there are many different colours of Christmas, there are many dimensions to be explored.

What about you?

We are invited to come with hearts prepared to make room – for the joy – and for whatever is real for us, whatever colour or combination of colours are ours this year. Making room means allowing for God to reveal new dimensions of Christmas to us.



What will Christmas look like around the world this year?

Some of UnitingWorld's partners have let us know!

Cath Taylor



UnitingWorld
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Irene in Bali

I spent last Christmas watching the livestream of our Christmas service home alone in my flat, and it felt really hard to be honest. I really hope things are different this year, but I'm not sure they will be. I think there'll still be restrictions on gatherings and maybe on travel back to our home towns as well.

With most people in Bali being Hindu, the Christian festival is celebrated in shops with music and decorations, but present giving isn't really a tradition. Instead, we all travel home to our family villages where we'd usually have a potluck lunch with traditional Balinese food and some western treats that the kids enjoy like apple and pumpkin pie.

For me, Christmas is all about remembering Christ's life come to Earth as a human because of his love for us. I start listening to Christmas carols in September. I love them – my favourite is 'Angels we have heard on high' and 'The First Noel'.



Samson in India

Most things are opening up in Punjab at the moment and I'm hoping that we'll be able to travel back to our home villages this year – it's been a long time!

Christmas Day is about a family outing – maybe lunch in a restaurant with cakes and sweets that families prepare for the day. Even though Christianity isn't the main religion, there's a big focus on buying and displaying lights, decorations and Christmas trees. I learnt the Christmas song 'Mary did you know?' when I was at school and it's still my favourite.

The main thing I celebrate at Christmas is the love we've received and how we can share that with others. It's not just the worship, but about forgetting yourself and sacrificing time for others in need. It's the tradition of our diocese to spend time at Christmas going to bus stations, to the streets where people live and giving out blankets and food."

Joy in The Solomon Islands

Usually at Christmas I would go home to my village from Honiara. In the months before Christmas, all the families plant their gardens with enough extra to harvest for the returning families. They will go and hunt pigs so we can feast together on pork, fish, potatoes, cassava and bananas.

On Christmas Day we go to church in the village and then we celebrate by going house to house to sing for everyone and take small gifts like soap or matches. It's also a chance for us to give messages about Jesus that encourage people to receive him as a new birth into their lives.

Music is a big part of our tradition – my favourite song is 'Jingle Bells!' In two weeks' time the Women's Fellowship will hold its traditional choral competition and this year we have chosen 'Good Christian Men Rejoice' – the best choir will win, and we look forward to that very much.



Celebrate with the church around the world by giving gifts that beat poverty and build hope this Christmas! Check out UnitingWorld's full catalogue of life-changing gifts to support the work of our global partners at everythingincommon.com.au

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