Acknowledgement
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Next issue: Compassion
The gospel is full of stories about Jesus’ compassion, demonstrated through both word and action. As followers of Christ, we are called to be compassionate and to share God’s love through acts of kindness. This edition explores the many ways we care for others, and the reasons we are called as Christians to do so.

DEADLINE FOR NOVEMBER 2015 Wednesday 7 October

Cover details
Suzanne Leong-Scott is a member of Rosefield Uniting Church and recently concluded a position as an intern for New Times. She has also experienced depression. Suzanne shares her thoughts about acknowledging mental illness on page 9.
When the going gets tough

Growing up, I often felt uncomfortable talking about feelings or tough situations. Not because my family are cold or make me anxious – my parents and siblings are (I say, oh-so-objectively) some of the kindest, most caring people I know. But our dynamic has always naturally been one of laughter and positivity, even through hard times. (We frequently liken my father to Ned Flanders, the chipper, sing-songy neighbour on The Simpsons.)

As a family unit, we like to joke around and laugh about things; to simply say “it’ll all work out”. And although my parents always told me and my siblings that we could tell them anything, I usually preferred to keep things to myself. I’ve actually always liked this aspect of my family life – lots of laughter and silly dances, over the heavy stuff.

In recent years, as I’ve become more certain in my opinions and identity, I have found it easier to overcome my discomfort in talking through my emotions and experiences – particularly when speaking to people one-on-one.

My family and friends have welcomed these more serious talks, offering encouragement and insight. These talks have often helped to lighten the load or to clarify my own perspective on issues.

When you keep problems or issues to yourself, it’s easy to feel alone in them or to ignore them. I’ve found that acknowledging problems – talking about them with family, friends, colleagues and God – helps me to overcome them.

“Anxiety weighs down the human heart, but a good word cheers it up.” – Proverbs 12:25

Talking about the “tough things” has been helpful to me personally. I’ve also found that it encourages other people to feel comfortable displaying the same level of honesty. In my experience, this mutual sharing fosters trust and helps to develop more meaningful relationships.

This edition of New Times provides an opportunity for us to talk about some of the things that we find tough to face as a church community, in addition to those good things we sometimes forget to talk about.

By engaging with these topics, it is my hope that we – the Uniting Church SA community – can encourage one another, grow stronger in our relationships, and nurture spaces where everyone feels safe to share.

Catherine Hoffman

Uniting Church acknowledged at ARPA awards

Representing the Uniting Church in South Australia, New Times Editor Catherine Hoffman won best profile story (bronze) at the 2015 Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) awards in Brisbane this August!

The winning piece, “The emigration of Emanuel”, details the journey of Rev Dr Emanuel Audisho from Iraq to Western Australia, and was published in the October 2014 edition of New Times.

Other Uniting Church publications also won awards including: Queensland’s Journey for best feature, single author (silver); Western Australia’s Revive for best theological article (silver); NSW/ACT’s Insights for best faith reflection (bronze); and Vic/Tas’s Crosslight for best feature, single author (gold) as well as publication of the year!

The ARPA awards judged Christian print and online publications throughout Australia and New Zealand.

Uniting Church editors and communicators at the ARPA awards, including Catherine Hoffman (fourth from left) and Bindy Taylor (right).
The importance of acknowledgement

On Sunday 13 September, we had the launch of the new community space at Playford Uniting Church. At the event, we acknowledged the many people who contributed to making the dream of Playford become a reality. A gift for everyone who attended the opening included the words: “Thank you, dreamers, architects, builders, engineers, partners, prayers, givers, friends.”

The Playford Uniting community space was full and overflowing with gratitude to God. There was a great sense of joy from all those who were witnessing the development of this Christian community, which is already contributing to the life of the community around it.

In the process of acknowledging, we recognise the many and varied people and gifts it takes to shape and be the Body of Christ. At the heart of our acknowledgement is our recognition of God at work in us, faithfully present, inspiring us toward compassion, and surrounding us with grace. Acknowledgement is about being thankful to God, and thankful for those who are part of our lives as a church. It is also about noticing the people around us – acknowledgement is at the heart of compassion.

Jesus’ acknowledgement of people and the circumstances of their lives opened the possibility for healing and hope. He acknowledged the suffering of the bent-over woman and brought healing to her life (Luke 13:10-17). He acknowledged the Samaritan woman, and his encounter with her led to her discovery of “living water” (John 4). He acknowledged children and invited them to come to him and into the community of the people of God (Mark 10:13-16).

Our acknowledgement of people’s suffering may be the beginning of a healing process that invites people into a space where they can flourish and experience restoration. One of the foci of the Uniting Church SA’s “Beyond Violence” campaign is to acknowledge and respond to people who have experienced domestic and family violence. One of the difficult things for people who have experienced domestic violence is to not be believed, when they disclose their story to another. Acknowledging the person and listening to their story is an important part of the compassionate care that we can offer as friends and as Christian community. (Read more about the importance of acknowledging domestic violence on pages 14-15.)

Our compassionate acknowledgement of one another, and God’s acknowledgement of us as beloved daughters and sons of God, are gifts that provide possibilities for a hope-filled present and future. It is the kind of acknowledgement I see in the community at Playford Uniting Church.

I found one of the prayers of Joyce Rupp inspiring as I was prepared this article. In her book Fragments of Your Ancient Name, Joyce addresses the God we see in Jesus, who acknowledges us and compassionately draws us into friendship, healing and renewed life:

Tender One:
Like a parent cradling a distressed child,
A friend embracing the hurt of another,
A lover softly enfolding the other with care,
So you, Tender One, take us to your heart.
Your gentleness lessens our distress.
Your sympathetic care relieves our sorrow.
Your easy way of touching us with kindness
Diminishes what tries to overpower us.
Your tender-heartedness reaches far
And reminds us we are never totally alone.

Dr Deidre Palmer

Dr Deidre Palmer with Rev Pete Riggs at the Playford Uniting Church launch.
As the church, we exist to make Jesus known rather than ourselves. However, it is a rich and wonderful thing to gratefully acknowledge the countless ways that people get involved in pointing others to Christ. There are so many people that I would love to acknowledge in this article, but I want to draw attention to one particular group in the life of the church:

I want to acknowledge the great sacrifice made by the families of those who serve in part-time or full-time ministry. There are so many examples of this throughout the life of the church. Let me give you two instances, which hopefully help to articulate the kind of sacrifice that I am seeking to acknowledge.

I recently had the joy of attending the opening service of Playford Uniting Church. It was a fantastic occasion for so many reasons. I was in awe of what God had done in and through those who had committed to making the vision of building this new church a reality. During the course of the service, it struck me how much the Riggs family had sacrificed to lead this church community into the place it is today. This was not the first time I had been to Playford so I had seen the way in which the whole family was, and continues to be, completely invested in making the church thrive. From seeing the Riggs’ children welcoming people and engaging in worship to Rachel leading the congregation in worship through music, followed by Pete preaching up a storm, it was clear that this is a ministry of their entire family.

The Riggs’ have made a total investment in the plans and purposes that God has for the community in the Playford area. This has meant moving house, changing schools, new friendship circles being formed, familiarising themselves with a new part of Adelaide, and much more. However, whilst they have undoubtedly had some struggles during this transition, the Riggs family are a fantastic example of how giving your all for Christ is worth it.

The second example that I want to reflect on may seem a little self-indulgent, as it relates to my own family. I want to acknowledge them and the incredible example that they are of sacrifice, resilience and adaptability. As I write this article, I am actually sitting on a plane to Canberra for a two-day conference. In my work, there are many times when I must leave my family for short periods, but they are gracious and faithful in committing to the life of ministry that we are all in. I want to acknowledge the incredible gift that they are to me, and to the Church. The way that they have so freely moved with God’s call to take up a new life in this magnificent city, always with the hope that others might come to know Christ and live for him, has been amazing. I could say so much more. To Jo and my amazing children, I want you to know that I am so blessed by you all.

In the Uniting Church SA, there are countless families who have, do, and will give up everything for the cause of Christ. I acknowledge and honour you for your willingness to count the cost so that Christ might be proclaimed in and through the ministry of your family.

Rev Nigel Rogers
A strength of the Uniting Church is our involvement in the provision of community services and aged care to those in our community who are most in need. This is a missional imperative based on our understanding of the ministry of Jesus in which the Church continues to share. Some aspects of those services operate from a congregational base, but increasingly they are provided by the community service and aged care organisations, such as Resthaven, that have been part of the life of the Uniting Church for many years.

Many of these organisations are separately incorporated, and have been so since before the inauguration of the Uniting Church. The boards of those organisations, rather than the Church, are responsible for the day-to-day management of the businesses they conduct. They remain part of the life of the Church, but in a legal sense they are responsible for their own lives. Beyond the legal reality, however, the relationship of these organisations with the Church lives on in a myriad of ways – ranging from volunteers recruited from local congregations, to the provision of chaplains who are Uniting Church ministers or lay people trained to provide a specialist ministry within the organisation, to the support provided by UnitingCare SA in the appointment of board members and changes to constitutions.

Traditionally, the relationship with the Church was expressed through references within the organisation’s constitution. As corporate governance has progressed from its early origins, however, government regulations and compliance expectations demand that constitutions be quite specific about the way an organisation is structured and managed. Neither the Church nor those organisations want the history of an organisation and the details of the multi-faceted relationship with a founding body, such as the Uniting Church, to be pushed aside. One way of keeping this relationship to the fore is to detail them in a Memorandum of Understanding so they remain on record in an accessible way. The new memorandum with Resthaven is a good illustration.

“Rest Haven”, as it was then known, was opened in 1935, following approval given by the Methodist Conference for a home for elderly ladies to be established at Brighton. Resthaven has been closely related to the Church ever since.

The first of its kind, a Memorandum of Understanding between The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of South Australia and Resthaven Incorporated was signed at the opening of Resthaven’s new head office on Wednesday 23 September, 2015.

UnitingCare SA is now providing opportunities for organisations to prepare and sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Uniting Church so that we are able to place on record some important aspects of our multi-faceted relationship. Such a Memorandum details the history of the organisation’s relationship with the Church and provides an opportunity to spell out the expectations that the organisation and the Church have for each other.

**Reflected our multi-faceted relationship**

*Rev Rob Brown*

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**Important information about 2016 Calendars**

Each year, Uniting Church SA calendars provide congregations and individuals with lectionary readings, important dates and the proposed Mission and Service Fund budget. This year, some changes have been made to ordering.

**COST:** Printed 2016 calendars will attract a charge of $1.00 per calendar to supplement the cost of printing.

**ORDER:** All congregations and organisations wishing to receive printed calendars must place an order no later than Monday 12 October 2015.

Updates regarding ordering and distribution of the 2016 calendar will be provided through UC e-news and at sa.uca.org.au/calendars-annual-reports
The UnitingWomen 2016 conference will provide a unique opportunity for women of the Uniting Church in Australia to gather together and share stories of hope in their everyday lives and communities.

Over four days and three nights, from 6pm on Thursday 28 April to 12 noon on Sunday 1 May, 2016, Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church in Adelaide will welcome women from Uniting Churches across Australia and from Pacific Island partner churches. Together, women will engage in a diverse program, hearing from female community leaders and change-makers. Featured speakers and presenters include:

- International TED Talk presenter and anti-genital mutilation advocate Khadija Gbla
- Social justice advocate and political commentator Julie McCrossin
- Social activist and Joint Campaign Director of Recognise Tanya Hosch
- Disability spokesperson and Head of Social Work at Flinders University Lorna Hallahan
- Gender inclusion and organisational development consultant Katheryn Curnow

Workshops will be held at nearby Prince Alfred College, and will encompass a broad array of topics – from the psychology of hope to gender in the workplace, and positive action for an abundant life.

More speaker and workshop announcements will be made in the coming months.

Registration costs $195 for the entire conference, and includes all sessions, workshop materials, morning and afternoon teas, and a welcome bag.

Conference organisers are inviting expressions of interest from volunteers to assist before, during or after the conference; men are also encouraged to be part of the volunteer team.

UnitingWomen 2016 presents an amazing opportunity for Uniting Church women to gather as a group. Bring a friend or two, or come as one – the conference will provide plenty of time to make new friends and spend time with other women who are followers of Christ.

At the upcoming Presbytery and Synod meeting (29-31 October), Uniting Church SA Moderator Dr Deidre Palmer will host a special tea for women interested in finding out more about UnitingWomen 2016. The gathering will also hear from a guest speaker as a prelude to the conference. Invitations will be included in the Presbytery and Synod mailings and UC e-News in the coming weeks.

Further information, promotional materials, and resources are available at UnitingWomen.org.au or by emailing info@unitingwomen.org.au

Placements News

Placements finalised since the September edition of New Times:
Rev Jenny Walker to Prospect Road from 1 January, 2016
Rev David Kowalick to Walkerville from 1 February, 2016

Vacant placements:
Susan Doughty to be ordained at Port Lincoln Uniting Church on Saturday 10 October, 2015

Vacant placements:
The following is the current list of vacant (or soon to be vacant) approved placements:
Profiles available – Ascot Community Church (0.8); Berri Barmera (from 1 February 2016); County Jervois (Arno, Cleeve, Coolarie, Cowell, Driver River); Kadina Wallaroo Parish (0.8); Kalparrin and Murraylands Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (0.5); Keith “One Church” (Uniting Church and Church of Christ); Malvern and Unley (from March 2016); Parafield Gardens (from 1 January 2016); Salisbury (from 1 February 2016); Summertown; Whyalla.

Profiles not yet available – Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations; Lefevre UC Taperoo; Moonta and Districts (from 1 April 2016); South West Fleurieu Linked Congregations (0.6); Tumby Bay and Districts (0.5); Windsor Gardens (0.5); Covenanting Officer (0.5) (to be advertised).

For more information on any of these placements, or to view national placements, please visit sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations/placements-vacant
Christmas 2015 postcards

The Uniting Church SA Christmas 2015 postcards are ready to order! This year, the campaign focusses on “Journeying together this Christmas”:

Throughout the year, our individual journeys can often take us in vastly different directions. Christmas provides an opportunity for paths to cross and merge. It is a time for people to come together - to reflect on the past year’s journey and on the continuing relevance of the Christmas story, to rejoice in Christ’s birth and the hope represented by the Christmas star, and to renew our purpose as we prepare for the journey ahead.

Postcard designs

Two design options are available this year, allowing your congregation to choose the design you think will be most appealing to those in your local community.

Back cover

The back cover for both designs will feature the following verse and a message – the message can be the one written below, or you can choose to write your own of a similar length.

“When they saw the star, they were filled with joy!” - Matthew 2:10

Wherever your journey takes you throughout the year, there’s a place for you in the Uniting Church. Join us this Christmas for a time of reflection, rejoicing and renewed purpose.

Postcard cost

Postcard cost: $75 per 1,000 (minimum of 1,000)

Poster cost: $10 for 10 A3 posters (minimum of 10)


To find out more or to place an order, please visit sa.uca.org.au/postcards or contact Communications on 8236 4249 or communications@sa.uca.org.au

Education with Uniting Church Schools

Our seven independent schools provide education for around 6,000 students in South Australia from Early Learning to Year 12.

They offer a variety of learning environments, and a world-class standard of excellence in facilities and academic standards.

While these schools respect the faith diversity of all students, the story, values and practices of the Christian faith are expressed with integrity in order to nurture young lives for sound learning, faith, compassion and responsible service.
I’m going to share something with you that I have only told my closest friends and family. This may come as a surprise to those of you who know me, as I have always been a friendly, sociable and happy person. And to those on the outside, it may seem like nothing changed, but this could not be farther from the truth. I have suffered from depression. It all began in late 2013, when I was undergoing a period of significant change. I was in my first year of university, and whilst on paper I was succeeding, I felt lost and without purpose. Meanwhile, my friends seemed to have seamlessly transitioned from school to university life.

I began to withdraw myself from social activities. I was incredibly moody, and had breakdowns on a frequent basis. I became lethargic. I couldn’t get out of bed in the morning. Once an active person, I lost the motivation to exercise and gained weight. I fought with my family, but could see no logic behind my emotions. I had a part time job that I dreaded, which only made things worse. I stopped going to church; I withdrew from Christianity.

In my experience, it is important to remember that a mental illness is not a character flaw. It is not a spiritual disorder, nor is it a result of a person’s faith not being strong enough. Depression and anxiety are biological illnesses caused by the imbalance of chemicals in the brain. There is no shame in not being healed by faith – although spirituality does play a role in the recovery process of some individuals.

For me – and for many others – one of the most important aspects of recovery is having someone to speak to; a support system. This is often the first step towards recovery, and also the hardest.

Christians who are dealing with a mental illness may well turn to someone within the church community. Therefore, churches need to educate congregations on how to sensitively approach the topic, and who to ask for help. This could mean dedicated sermons, the creation of a mental health ministry, or supplying a wide range of resources.

The stigma associated with mental illness is one of the main reasons people are so reluctant to seek help. By addressing the topic head on and inviting open discussion, the congregations and the Uniting Church as a whole can help to demolish the negative connotations of mental illness. The church needs to be a place where people feel safe and encouraged to discuss what they are going through.

With mental illnesses approaching epidemic proportions, this issue can no longer be swept under the rug. As a place of healing, I believe the church should be front and centre in the fight against mental illness.
One man’s ministry

Several Uniting Church SA ministers will mark 50 years since ordination at a Wesley Kent Town anniversary service on Sunday 8 November this year – an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge their many and varied contributions to the Uniting Church community.

Catherine Hoffman spoke to Rev Lindsay Faulkner, one of the ministers being honoured at the service, about his life serving the church community.

“It all started when I was 16,” Rev Lindsay Faulkner recalls. “I was doing a food course in Melbourne and saw a job advertised at a Methodist residential college in Alice Springs.”

Lindsay got the job, turning 17 shortly after his arrival in Alice in the mid-1950s. He soon got to know local Methodist minister Rev Aubrey Quick.

“It wasn’t long before my faith took off – I felt called to become more like Aubrey.”

Heeding this call to ministry, Lindsay moved to Adelaide where he studied at the Wesley Theological College and began a placement undertaking some “local”, or lay, preaching at the old Maughan Uniting Church.

Lindsay’s life has been full of stories just like this one – stories of seeming coincidences and changes in location, times when God has called Lindsay into specific situations, often without Lindsay knowing exactly how things would work out.

His stories are also funny ones – ask him about some of the strange funerals he has been involved in if you ever get a chance. “They’re not for writing down though,” he cautions.

During his time serving in the Methodist, and then Uniting, Church, Lindsay has been involved in significant community and church developments.

His first appointment was to Port Augusta, and he was later ordained and served at Salisbury North – both church communities are now home to Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress congregations.

It was while at Salisbury North that Lindsay met and married his wife, Nessie.

“I did something that would be frowned upon now – I married my Sunday School teacher,” Lindsay smiles, a trifle mischievously.

The pair moved to Lock on the Eyre Peninsula where Lindsay was subject to interrogation from the Australian League of Rights (a group similar to the United States’ John Birch Society).

“They charged me with heresy,” he says. “They had all kinds of strange ideas, about Jewish people taking over the world, and communism – it was the height of the Vietnam War.”

Lindsay was exonerated of the heresy charge, but decided it was time for a move – he and Nessie made their next home in Tasmania. From there, Lindsay served as an immigration chaplain on one of the last migrant ships that made its way from England to Australia, and then as a minister in Mildura.

While in Mildura, Lindsay was part of the team of people planning for the creation of the Uniting Church in Australia. He was also the chairperson of the Sunraysia Council of Churches, where he was involved in disaster response ministry.

In the following years, Lindsay became involved in congregations and communities in South Australia, Tasmania, Victoria, New South Wales and the Northern Territory. The congregations he ministered to were often large and multicultural (Dandenong in Victoria held six weekly services in different languages). In addition, he helped to establish community outreach programs, and held positions on school councils, the National Lifeline Committee, and numerous boards.

Nessie also played a significant role in each of these communities, serving in various capacities, often utilising her skills as a typist.

“I couldn’t have done any of this without my Sunday School teacher from Salisbury North – she’s marvellous, and always showed me so much support. I don’t know how I deserved her,” Lindsay pauses for a moment. “I didn’t deserve her.”

In 2000, Lindsay returned to the church in Alice Springs where his journey had begun. It was from that church that he was elected Moderator of the Northern Synod.

Lindsay stayed in the Northern Territory for approximately four years before moving back to Adelaide to retire. He has since received an Order of Australia, undergone triple bypass surgery, served as President of the South Australian Council of Churches, and became Chairperson (“or President, depending on who you talk to”) of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship – a position he has held for the past two years.

Through all of the stories he shares, and the experiences his been through, Lindsay draws a common theme: “From big things, little things grow.”

He also acknowledges the varied experiences of the other ministers celebrating 50 years since ordination.

“If I have so many stories, just imagine how many there will be to share at the anniversary service!” Lindsay smiles.

For more information about the Wesley Kent Town ordination service, please see the diary note on page 21.
Speaking about suicide

During September, Uniting Church congregations across South Australia actively engaged with the Church’s “Suicide: it’s no secret” campaign.

Each year, “Suicide: it’s no secret” events and services act to remind us that we must dispel the stigma around suicide, and encourage people to talk about the issue. It is a reminder that discussion around suicide is needed not only during September, when events are held on or close to World Suicide Awareness Day (10 September) or Mental Health Week (4-10 October), but throughout the year.

“Recent research supports the view that having intentional conversations about suicide is important,” says Adrian Nippress, the Uniting Church SA Transforming Justice Coordinator.

“We’ve seen a lot of progress in this area – more people, especially young people, are recognising the good that can come from talking about issues like suicide.”

Despite killing more people per year than car crashes in Australia, suicide is not a subject that is engaged with on a regular basis.

But the “Suicide: it’s no secret” campaign has continued to gather momentum in the Uniting Church SA since its inception in 2011. This year, events were held in locations from Adelaide to Murray Bridge, Berri to Bridgewater and Mt Gambier. Time was given for conversation, reflection and grieving.

“We are involved in this campaign to encourage and support those who are living with the grief of losing a loved one to suicide,” explains Dr Deidre Palmer, the Uniting Church SA Moderator.

“The ‘Suicide, it’s no secret’ campaign encourages people to share stories and grief in a supportive community of friendship where we can draw comfort from each other. It also focusses on ways individuals and communities can support suicide prevention.”

Church communities are in a unique position to help people to talk and grieve about issues like suicide. Individuals and groups provide support around this topic through UnitingCare organisations, campaign events and pastoral care.

John Dawkins MLC is the Liberal Spokesperson for Suicide Prevention, and has been involved in campaigns related to suicide prevention for approximately 10 years.

“Many of the networks I’ve been involved with have a great deal of involvement from people from different denominations,” John says. “There are people like Lifeline [and Uniting Communities], as well as Wesley LifeForce and others, who are working in different spaces in this area. A lot of church individuals and groups, across SA and elsewhere, are also really involved.”

Adrian encourages more congregations to get involved with existing programs or to hold a “Suicide: it’s no secret” event throughout the year, ensuring conversations about suicide continue to take place in our communities.

For more information about “Suicide: it’s no secret”, please visit nosecret.org.au or contact Adrian Nippress on 8236 4203 or justice@sa.uca.org.au

Need to talk to someone? Calls to Lifeline are free from landlines and mobile phones. Lifeline provides a 24 hour counselling service every day, and can be contacted on 13 11 14. Further information on services can also be found at nosecret.org.au
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Symposium and RUSSLR Law and Religion Lecture 2015
A joint activity of the Research Unit for the Study of Society, Law and Religion, The University of Adelaide and Pilgrim Uniting Church, Adelaide

Speakers:
Rev David Pattee, M Div Chicago Theological Seminary Senior Pastor, Kent United Church of Christ, Cleveland/Akron OHIO USA, Visiting Preacher Pilgrim Uniting Church – October/November 2015 Annual Lecturer, Research Unit for the Study of Society, Law and Religion, School of Law, The University of Adelaide.
Topic: Political and Theological Reflections on Just Marriage, Queering the Holy Estate

Rev Dr Margaret Mayman, PhD in Religion and Ethics, Union Theological Seminary, USA, Minister, Pitt Street Uniting Church, Sydney, Australia, previously Minister, St Andrews on the Terrace, Wellington New Zealand.
Topic: The History of Marriage

Professor Carol Johnson, BA Hons PhD, University of Adelaide, FASSA, Post Graduate Coordinator, Department of Politics and International Studies, University of Adelaide.
Topic: Church and State: The Politics of Same Sex Marriage

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Acknowledging grandparents

Mary Jo Zwar

Growing up, I had the traditional complement of four grandparents. Three of them were staunch church people, one a minister. These people played a huge role in the faith lives of my parents, and ultimately in my life, and those of my children. Through their demonstrated faith and that of my parents, I was raised with a tradition of attending worship, Christian education, home devotions, participation in church activities and service.

My fourth grandparent sometimes seemed to just go along with the others, and although generally present, he was usually quiet in church affairs. However, he is the one to whom I probably owe the biggest debt. He would ask me things like: “How are you getting on with Jesus?”, “What do you want me to pray about for you?” and “What can we do to make her feel better?” No great fanfare, no special sacred space or time – just simple faith talk as part of ordinary conversation. I am so thankful to him for these moments.

It feels to me as though grandparents today are getting younger. They don’t look like my grandparents looked to me when I was a child; they don’t smell or act like them. However, many grandparents in our churches are doing the same things my grandparents did – continuing faith traditions, instigating faith conversations, and praying.

Grandparents’ roles are changing rapidly as society and family configurations change. Some are called on to provide nearly full-time care for grandchildren; some are grandparenting children who are not directly related to them; some have little contact with grandchildren due to physical distance or relationship disputes. Grandparenting is not easy.

“Nothing brings me greater joy than to know that my children are walking in the truth,” wrote John in his third letter (3 John 1:4). That holds true for many grandparents today. Unfortunately, for many, their greatest sorrow is that their children and grandchildren are not “walking in the truth”.

For some, their children are openly hostile; for others, children have simply drifted away from the “faith of their fathers”. And the grandparents wonder: “Why? What did we do wrong?”

Here are some of my suggestions for dealing with those questions:

✦ Don’t let it shake your faith. Don’t be consumed with feelings of guilt. Your faith is about Jesus’ compassion and forgiveness.
✦ Keep on praying for your children and grandchildren. You may also find opportunities to tell them you are praying for them. Not long ago I came across this helpful statement: “You can’t be a perfect grandparent; but you can be a praying grandparent!”
✦ Talk about your hopes and disappointments with a trusted friend or in a supportive group of Christian grandparents.
✦ Keep on talking about Jesus with your children and grandchildren as natural a way as you can manage, whether it’s in face-to-face conversation, electronically, or in an occasional hand-written letter.
✦ Keep on ‘walking in the truth’ yourself. Be a model of compassion, honesty, humility and faithfulness.
✦ Consider the possibility that showing up for church regularly on a Sunday is not the only way of ‘walking in the truth’. When you notice Christ-like behaviour in your children and grandchildren, name it and let them know how happy it makes you.
✦ When grandchildren are with you – unless their parents directly forbid it – involve your grandchildren in your daily devotional pattern, take them to church, let them join you in community service activities. Let them know that this is important to you.
✦ Love your grandkids and their parents – unconditionally!

The Uniting Young People website provides numerous resources for families, including two specifically acknowledging and discussing the role of grandparents. “Great Grandparenting” is a workshop congregations can provide for grandparents. “Honouring Grandparents” is an all-age worship service. For more information or to access these resources, please visit sa.uca.org.au/uyp
Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

These words are often spoken at weddings – both Christian and non-Christian. They are words that describe the way love should be; the kind of love many long to feel, particularly in relationship with a significant other. Unfortunately, this passage expresses something very different than the “love” experienced by the many people who live with domestic violence.

What is domestic violence?
While the term domestic violence has traditionally been most closely associated with physical acts of violence within the home, the definition is much wider.

According to the Parliament of Australia, domestic violence “refers to acts of violence that occur between people who have, or have had, an intimate relationship in domestic settings.” This encompasses emotional, verbal, social, economic/financial, psychological, spiritual, physical, and sexual abuse.

It is not defined only by acts of abuse. The National Council to Reduce Violence Against Women and Children states that “a central element of domestic violence is that of an ongoing pattern of behaviour aimed at controlling one’s partner through fear… the violence behaviour is part of a range of tactics used by the perpetrator to exercise power and control.”

Family violence is a term that is sometimes used in conjunction, or interchangeably, with domestic violence, and often encompasses the definitions above. The Parliament of Australia describes it as “referring to violence between family members as well as violence between partners.”

Although domestic violence is sometimes perpetrated upon males, numerous studies in Australia have shown that it is most commonly perpetrated by males against their female partners.

Studies have also shown that domestic violence is more prevalent in regional and rural communities, as well as within some cultural communities. But it is also something that can happen to anyone – young or old, rich or poor, educated or uneducated. Unfortunately, it often goes unrecognised and unreported.

Despite the numerous definitions available, domestic violence is something that is incredibly difficult to understand. It can be hard to comprehend the kinds of abuse it encompasses, the way it can affect anyone, why many people take so long to report an incident, and how hard it can be to leave abusive situations.

Jess Hill, an Australian freelance journalist who conducted a year-long investigation into domestic violence and its causes, wrote in the Guardian:

“It wasn’t until I’d spent months researching and writing about it that I began to understand why most people don’t get domestic violence: it doesn’t make sense…

“But the more you learn about the nature of domestic violence, the more sense you can make of it.”

Domestic violence in the public sphere
Domestic violence is a topic occupying a good deal of public space at present, with politicians and advocates increasingly speaking out against it. Many hope that increasing awareness and knowledge about the issue will help to put an end to it.

A Special Taskforce into Domestic and Family Violence was established in Queensland in September 2014, drawing together members from social services and politics, including Anne Cross, the Chief Executive Officer of the UnitingCare in Queensland. The taskforce released a report on its findings earlier this year, encouraging the community to take action on this issue.

The Royal Commission into Family Violence held a series of hearings from July to August this year, and is due to hold several more this month. They expect to release their findings in February 2016.

Australian campaigns such as White Ribbon Australia, Counting Dead Women (an initiative of Destroy the Joint), the United Nations’ He for She, and 2015 Australian of the Year Rosie Batty’s new Never Alone initiative have been increasingly in the public eye over the past twelve months. They have each helped to draw further attention to domestic and family violence – as have the recent, highly publicised deaths of several women in Queensland. At the time of writing this, 63 women have been killed as a result of domestic violence in Australia since the beginning of 2015.

Domestic violence is an issue that has also been emphasised by the new Australian Prime Minister. In one of his first interviews after taking over the leadership position, Malcolm Turnbull told Today
host Lisa Wilkinson that “the issue of family violence… has been overlooked, has been ignored to some extent, for far too long – and we must have zero tolerance for it.”

Domestic violence and the church

Although there has not recently been a strong Christian voice on this topic in the media, many Australian church leaders have long held a “zero tolerance” stance on domestic violence. The Uniting Church in South Australia has been particularly active in speaking out against domestic violence over the past two years.

“Domestic and family violence undermines love and trust, and establishes environments of fear and despair,” says Uniting Church SA Moderator Dr Deidre Palmer.

“The Uniting Church – through its congregations and through Uniting Care organisations – is committed to creating and supporting communities where all people can flourish in environments of love, trust and nonviolence.”

It was with ideals like this in mind that the Church’s Beyond Violence campaign was created.

Launched in early 2014, the campaign offers valuable resources for ministers and pastoral carers to provide education and guidance around the topic of domestic violence.

As part of Beyond Violence, a number of Uniting Church SA ministers signed a pledge for White Ribbon, speaking out against the abuse of women. Others in the church took part in Beyond Violence dinners, helping to put together videos addressing the importance of starting conversations about domestic violence.

These have been important steps to take in educating people about this issue, but they are actions that have mostly engaged church leaders within the public sphere. Domestic violence is still rarely discussed within congregational settings.

There has been little research done into the prevalence of domestic violence in Australian churches. However, a 2002 survey of 1,000 people undertaken in the Methodist Church in the United Kingdom found that 17% of respondents had experienced domestic violence – 13% several times, and 4% frequently. These figures mirrored those of the wider population according to data drawn from the 2001 British Crime Survey.

Statistics are similar in Australia. The 2012 Personal Safety Survey, based on interviews with over 13,000 women, found that 17% of women had experienced violence by a partner since the age of 15. In addition, 25% of women surveyed had experienced emotional abuse perpetrated by a partner since the age of 15.

These results demonstrate the high likelihood that people in Uniting Church congregations are being affected by domestic violence, through people they know or their own experiences.

“This is an issue that is relevant to us because it’s recognised that domestic violence is widespread in communities,” says Adrian Nipress, Transforming Justice Coordinator. “People in our congregations may have it touch on their lives. It is important to know how to recognise and respond.”

Starting conversations

In their closing remarks, the Special Taskforce in Queensland emphasised the importance of all communities engaging with domestic violence prevention:

“[W]e, as a community, can repudiate unhelpful stereotypes about domestic and family violence, clarify its true nature, and collectively identify steps… to stamp out domestic violence wherever it occurs…

“The Taskforce believes that all of the constituent parts of our society – families, groups of friends, neighbourhoods, churches, community organisations, workplaces… and individuals – have an active part to play in opposing domestic and family violence, and promoting healthy family relationships.”

This is a call that the Uniting Church SA community can also take to heart. But how do we start having conversations about domestic violence?

Events specifically focussed on domestic violence education are one way to begin engaging with this issue.

On Sunday 27 September, a Beyond Violence workshop conducted by Dr Deidre Palmer and Uniting Communities’ Chris Dolman was held at Barmera Uniting Church. Open to all people in the Riverland’s church communities, the workshop’s aim was to educate attendees about domestic violence. All congregations are welcome to hold Beyond Violence workshops.

People can also engage with the resources offered by the Beyond Violence campaign, talk to church leaders about the issue, or engage with the White Ribbon Australia campaign on White Ribbon Day (25 November). Marriage courses can provide another avenue for education.

“We have to play a role in the dialogue and show leadership, particularly in the way we interact with others and especially when there is a power imbalance – because of gender, age or cultural differences,” says Adrian.

A large part of this is about learning how to recognise abusive relationships and the complexities of domestic violence – and helping others to do the same.

“As people of God we are called to shape relationships – personally, in our congregations and wider communities – which are safe havens, where there is mutual respect, care and nonviolence; environments where people are free to make choices about their lives and are able to flourish,” says Deidre.

We are called to loving, nonviolent relationships – and God has given us a reminder of what this should look like:

Love is patient, love is kind…”

If you are experiencing domestic or family violence, or know someone who is, please seek help. Contact the Domestic Violence Crisis Service on 1300 782 200 or Domestic Violence Helpline on 1800 800 098. For information about other services, or resources on domestic violence, please visit beyondviolence.org.au or contact the Transforming Justice Coordinator on 8236 4203 or justice@sa.uca.org.au
This year, Resthaven celebrates 80 years of outstanding care and support to older people and their carers. We acknowledge the significant contributions that older people make to our community.

Resthaven was established as Australia emerged from the depths of the Great Depression. In the 1930s, there was no government support or welfare services for frail older people. In response to great need, the 1935 Methodist Congress agreed to establish ‘Resthaven’ as a new home mission that offered ‘security, serenity and rest in life’s eventide’.

Resthaven now offers fully accredited support for more than 9,000 older people, whether they live in their own home or in residential accommodation. Support is provided by more than 2,000 staff and 450 volunteers.

‘Resthaven’s core values remain true,’ says Resthaven CEO, Richard Hearn.

‘We continue to respond to individual need, offering choice and flexibility in the decisions that older people make to sustain their quality of life.’

‘Resthaven has experienced very strong growth due to the high demand for quality aged care services. We have outgrown our current Head Office, which has been spread over several buildings at four locations.’

‘It is fitting, then, that in our 80th anniversary year, we can celebrate this milestone in our new, purpose built Head Office, located at 6 Bartley Crescent, Wayville.’

‘We were delighted to have been invited to establish out footprint on this land. This purchase continues the proud tradition of the Uniting Church, as the land was previously used for education of the young - now in service of the aged.’

‘Formally dedicated by Dr Deidre Palmer, Moderator of the Uniting Church in South Australia, the building was opened by Resthaven Board President, Mr Mark Porter, on Wednesday 23 September.’

‘The building incorporates many innovative features, including solar panels, natural lighting to all internal spaces, steel ‘shading’ fins, rainwater collection and an atrium staircase providing central access as well as a sculptural architectural feature.’

‘Along with the 80th anniversary celebrations and Head Office dedication, we launched Resthaven’s 2015-2020 Strategic Plan, incorporating our values of Trust, Dignity and Choice.’

‘They reaffirm our Statement of Purpose, Working together: outstanding care and support for older people and their carers.’

‘This is exemplified by our continual growth in response to the diversity of need in the South Australian community.’

‘Our most recent development saw the opening of Resthaven Port Elliot, a $24m, state of the art residential aged care facility, in May.’

‘Adjacent to the residential site is a new community services office base, located in the renovated, heritage listed, old Port Elliot school building. From this community services site, we hope to assist more people from across the Fleurieu to live independently at home, and provide a wellness and activity centre.’

‘For those who need the additional support of residential care, I am confident that Resthaven Port Elliot will offer a much needed service for people from throughout the Fleurieu and beyond, as we do at our other service locations.’

‘We are now in planning stages for our next development, a new residential facility at Aberfoyle Park, responding to demand for services in this area. We are also planning redevelopments at Mitcham, Malvern and Murray Bridge.’

‘In this, our 80th anniversary year, Resthaven reflects on our proud history, and looks forward to a bright future.’

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**Residential Care Services**
High quality, fully accredited aged care and accommodation. Enquiries: **08 8373 9113**

**Retirement Living**
Forget the maintenance and enjoy independence with peace of mind! Enquiries: **08 8370 3756**

**Home Care and Support**
Quality support and wellness services for older people living at home. Enquiries: **1300 13 66 33**

**Respite for Carers**
In-home/centre based enquiries: **1300 13 66 33**
Residential respite enquiries: **08 8373 9175**

**www.resthaven.asn.au**
I think we all understand the value and importance of being able to read and hear God’s word in our language. It is something many of us take for granted. As a native English-speaker, I have easy access to dozens of versions of the New and Old Testaments. I love being able to compare texts from one version to another to get deeper insight. It is a privilege I often take for granted.

For many others, accessing Bibles in any language can be a dangerous, even life-threatening endeavour. This is a reminder that we should never be apathetic in response to God’s word and our access to it. The ease with which we can read and access the Bible is something for which we can give daily praise to God!

With this in mind, I was hit with a great conviction when Alicia Barnett shared recently during our evening service at Seeds Uniting Church. Alicia and her husband are raising support so that they may return to Ernabella in the far north-west of South Australia. There they will work alongside Indigenous leaders as they toil to complete a translation of the Old Testament into the Pitjantjatjara language – a project being undertaken through Wycliffe Australia. Though a Creole Bible and some translations of the New Testament are available, there is currently no complete translation of both testaments in a native Indigenous Australian language.

The New Testament translation into Pitjantjatjara was completed and released in 2002. This translation included approximately 15% of the Old Testament, and has been widely distributed amongst Indigenous communities. However, they hunger for more of God’s word, to have the complete revelation of scripture available to read in their native tongue.

“When we read the Bible in Pitjantjatjara, it is really clear, we understand it, and it reaches deep into our hearts. When we read the Bible in English, it [our understanding] is only half-half,” said one member of the community at Ernabella according to the Wycliffe Australia website.

In her message to those gathered at Seeds, Alicia shared her passion to see the dream of a full Pitjantjatjara translation realised. She spoke about the thirst for the word of God amongst the Indigenous people, who are keen to be involved in the work of translating in order to have this need met.

If they are able to raise funds to return to Ernabella, Alicia and David will coordinate and support teams of local Indigenous translators, providing training, teaching, workshops and resources. They will also need to provide a suitable English translation (front translation) to facilitate the work of the teams. This work is being undertaken through Wycliffe Australia, but many other organisations and churches are also partnering in this project.

As we acknowledge the need the Indigenous community has to access scripture in their native language, we can help this project become a reality. I feel there is an exciting opportunity for us to help right this wrong – what a privilege to be able to partner financially and prayerfully in this important work!

For more information about the work of Wycliffe Australia, please visit wycliffe.org.au

Christy Rayner, a youth pastor at Seeds Uniting Church, is passionate about ensuring all are able to read the Bible in their native tongue. She writes about her newfound realisation that easy access to the Bible can’t be taken for granted, and shares information about an important project that will see the Old Testament translated into Pitjantjatjara.
Active faith

Jenny Esots on faith, worship and community at Willunga Uniting Church.

As usual, I have recently been immersing myself in art, books, music, worship and gatherings. My weekly worship times provide a valuable chance to connect with the word and with other people of faith. Worship is an opportunity for us to acknowledge the good things in our lives – community and friendship, songs and music, a cuppa and a chat, the sacred word. It also provides space to acknowledge our human frailty – personal struggles and doubts, old aching bodies, establishment pressures and doctrines.

But time spent in worship is sometimes questioned by those people who see the wider world passing by these traditions. So, I ask myself, how do we live by faith?

To me, the answer is two-fold. I find great value in my time spent in traditional church worship on Sundays. But I also agree that we must move beyond the church walls. I do not believe it is a question of “either/or” – we need the nourishment of worship, and we need to follow Jesus in every place in the community. An active worship, and an active faith lived out in the community. One doesn’t cancel the other out.

At Willunga Uniting Church, we are currently preparing for our annual Spring fair – one of the ways we share our faith with one another and the wider community.

A great deal of work and collaboration goes into creating this event, with its craft stalls and plants, food and cakes, art exhibition, model railways, and much-loved Devonshire teas. The event, which will be over by the time this article goes to print, creates space for people to share with one another. I would like to take this time to acknowledge the many talented people who contribute to the fair through their gifts of hospitality, their culinary skills, green fingers, planning abilities, and more.

Uniting Church congregations across South Australia connect with the wider community through events, such as fairs, art exhibitions and topical lectures. For more information about upcoming events, please see the diary notes on page 21.

Prayer flags outside Willunga Uniting Church at their 2014 annual Spring fair.
The first time I walked into the St Andrews by the Sea Uniting Church building, I was impressed – not so much by the beautiful timber furniture, the well-maintained worship space, or the display case noting an impressive history, but by the glass doors looking out onto Jetty Road, Glenelg. To me, these doors represent both the church’s hope and its distinct character – things I have come to experience as one of the ministers in placement at the church.

Firstly, the doors signify the kind of faith we seek to embody as a community – that is, one shaped by our ordinary, everyday lives. Practices such as worship, small groups, and formation attempt to bring our daily experiences into dialogue with our faith. Worship, for example, is not an escape from the world outside, but a time to look for God’s presence in and through life. Conversations with the Spirit are nurtured with ordinary things such as art, poetry, symbolic actions, and interactive space settings. These engagements help us encounter the sacred in ways that speak into and out of what is real.

The glass doors also remind us that St Andrews is more than the people who gather inside for worship on a Sunday morning; that it is made up of many communities. This is most obvious among those who participate in the various programmes of UnitingCare Glenelg. Over one hundred volunteers invest themselves in expressions of hospitality, compassion and justice through the UnitingCare ministries. In doing so, they become part of rich communities that each have their own character and focus.

Furthermore, St Andrews has historically been a congregation intent on building bridges and creating networks, working with others who share our vision for a Glenelg full of love and goodness. As part of this aspiration, Rev Adam Tretheway is leading UnitingCare and St Andrews in implementing the principles of Asset Based Community Development (ABCD).

A central feature of ABCD is the view that all of us have needs and all of us have gifts. Such a perspective transforms relationships from us/them or “haves/have nots” to the possibility of mutual self-giving for the flourishing of the whole. Once again, the glass doors are a symbol of this change in heart as they promote a lack of distinction between those who are “inside” and those who are “outside.” From this vantage point, we are able to be a community that welcomes vulnerability, and express our desire to be open and kind towards everyone, as we are all carriers of the sacred.

Finally, the doors encourage us to see ourselves not as an isolated congregation, but as those who are enjoined to the wider body of Christ and the Uniting Church in Australia. I am grateful to the previous generation who made the courageous decision to install the doors during one of the numerous renovation projects, for they make it possible to look in and look out – the very essence of Christian life and ministry.
Be topical, be brief, be timely.

Letters over 150 words will be edited; responses to previous letters/articles will be considered within two months of the original item’s publication only.

All letters are published at the editorial team’s discretion.

Send your letters to:
newtimes@sa.uca.org.au
or PO Box 2145, Adelaide 5001.

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Vacancy

The Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia is seeking to appoint a new member to the Board of UnitingCare Queensland. The appointment will take effect from early 2016.

On behalf of the Uniting Church, UnitingCare Queensland provides health and community services to thousands of people every day of the year through its service network - Blue Care, UnitingCare Community, UnitingCare Health and Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS).

Our 16,000 staff and more than 9,000 volunteers provide health care and support people from all walks of life, including older people, people with a disability, and children and families. We have an extensive geographic footprint with a strong regional and remote presence across Queensland and the Northern Territory.

The UnitingCare Queensland Board is responsible to the Church for developing the overall strategic directions for the organisation, ensuring the organisation is dynamic, visionary, true to its mission, values driven and sustainable into the future.

Community service, health, business and professional leaders who can demonstrate appropriate qualifications and outstanding achievement are encouraged to express their interest. We are seeking candidates who have board and senior executive experience in large complex organisations.

Community service, aged care or health industry experience will be highly regarded.

To obtain an information kit or to submit an application please email Geoff Rogers, Director Human Resources at UnitingCare Queensland (geoff.rogers@ucareqld.com.au) or phone mobile: 0421 053 971.

Applications close Friday 23rd October 2015.

Vacancy

Westbourne Park Uniting is a vibrant Christian community for all ages with a strong emphasis on children and families ministry.

We are seeking a person with passion and vitality to provide oversight, deepen and grow this area as an integral member of our ministry team. Central to this role is a heart for supporting families in their faith journey and responding to pastoral care issues. Other key elements include a strategic approach to raising, resourcing and nurturing leaders and event management and communication skills.

This role is currently funded for 20 hours per week.

For information about the position please contact the WPUC office by email wpuc@internode.on.net or phone (08) 8271 7066.

Please address application to Rev. Tony Eldridge

Applications close Friday 31st October 2015
Please visit our Website at: www.wpuc.org.au

Music Director Clayton Wesley Uniting Church

Clayton Wesley Uniting Church is seeking a musically gifted and innovative person to join our community. We are looking for someone who will lead, develop and encourage musical excellence in worship at Clayton Wesley.

The successful person will love music both ancient and modern and be able to lead and inspire others in presenting wonderful music within a congregational setting.

More information and Position Description available from Rev Paul Turley on 0488 537 781 or paul.turley@claytonwesley.org.au

Board Members

The Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia is seeking to appoint a new member to the Board of UnitingCare Queensland. The appointment will take effect from early 2016.

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Applications close Friday 23rd October 2015.

Vacancy

Howells Requiem

The Choir of Pilgrim Church

A candle-lighting service of remembrance for friends and loved ones.

7pm Sunday 1 November
Pilgrim Uniting Church
12 Flinders Street, Adelaide

Send your letters to:
newtimes@sa.uca.org.au
or PO Box 2145, Adelaide 5001.

Be topical, be brief, be timely.
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PORCELAIN EXHIBITION. A private collection and display of exquisite hand-painted porcelain (mostly trinket boxes) can be found at The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale) from Tuesday 15 September to Thursday 15 October. This display is promoting the Porcelain Art Teachers 15th Exhibition and Convention in Adelaide. The collection can be viewed from Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 3pm. Entry is free. For further information, please visit thecorner.org.au

UNLEY COMMUNITY MARKET. End the holidays on a high note! Unley Community Market will be held on Saturday 10 October, 10am-2pm at the corner of Unley Road and Edmund Avenue, Unley. This free event will showcase local talent, provide fun for the whole family, and help raise funds for Pan South Sudan – a local charity building a school and orphanage in South Sudan. Selling homewares, jewellery, plants, food & drink. Live music, bouncy castle, face-painting, and henna.

ANNIVERSARY CONCERT. “How can I keep from singing?” is MiniM’s 5th Anniversary Concert. Sunday 11 October, 3pm, at Brougham Place Uniting Church (193 Brougham Place, North Adelaide). Cost: $10. Tickets available at the door. All welcome.

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SHOWCASE. Looking for inspiration for the Advent and Christmas season? Come along to hear about new ideas and resources for this season of festivity. Get your worship team ready to celebrate! Tuesday 13 October, 7pm, at Rosefield Uniting Church (2 Carlton Street, Highgate). Cost: $10pp or $50 for a church group. Resource booklets available for purchase on the night.

ART EXHIBITION. From Thursday 15 October to Friday 6 November, The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale) will display work by local art students. The exhibition will be on display from Tuesday to Friday, 10am to 3pm. Entry is free. For further information, please visit thecorner.org.au

ANNUAL FETE AND AUCTION. Dernancourt Uniting Church (corner Balmoral Road and Vingara Drive, Dernancourt) on Saturday 17 October, 9am to 1pm. The auction starts at 9.30am. A variety of stalls, food and children’s activities will be available. Everyone is welcome to join the fun, and donations of goods are welcome. For more information, please phone the church office on 8369 0802 or email office@dernancourt.unitingchurchsa.org.au

SPRING COMMUNITY FAIR. Adelaide West Uniting Church (312 Sir Donald Drive, Brooklyn Park) on Saturday 17 October, 8.30am to 3pm. Pancake breakfast, hot food and BBQ. From 10am, gourmet cakes and coffee will be available accompanied by continuous, café-style entertainment, featuring the Henley and Grange Concert Band, Testi’s School of Dance, Nazareth Catholic College Choral and Band Groups, Adelaide West Uniting Church Men’s Choir, plus local musicians and artists. Stalls include plants, secondhand books, clothing and bric-a-brac, excellent new crafts, great produce, and cakes. All in air-conditioned comfort. Free entry all day. Enquiries: 8234 1199.

The GREAT OUTBACK BBQ at The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale). Join The Corner for a fun lunch to raise funds for Frontier Services on Sunday 18 October from 12noon. Cost is $5 for a barbecue lunch and ice cream. Please RSVP for catering purposes on 8350 5400, or visit thecorner.org.au for more information.

CONCERTS @ KENT TOWN. Wednesday 21 October at 2pm. Tickets $10 at the door. All are welcome to attend this wonderful afternoon of music at Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church (corner Grenfell Street and Fullarton Road, Kent Town). For more information, please visit wesleykenttown.org.au

MESSY CORNER. Sunday 25 October, 3.30pm-5.30pm. Join the fun with Messy Church at The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale). Songs, drama, craft activities, and fun for the whole family, including a shared meal. Cost: $5. For more information, please visit thecorner.org.au

STATE MISSION FELLOWSHIP. Tuesday, 27 October, 10.30 am, at Scots Church (corner of Pulteney Street and North Terrace, Adelaide). Rob Floyd, Director of UnitingWorld, will be this month’s guest speaker – so come armed with all your questions! All welcome. Come early for morning tea and stay for lunch if you can. Enquiries to Lesley on 8261 3843.

50 YEARS OF ORDINATION SERVICE. At 3pm on Sunday 8 November, an anniversary service will be held at Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church marking 50 years of ordination for several Uniting Church SA ministers – Lewis Kelsall, David Purling, Duncan Morris, Jim Gallagher, Lindsay Faulkner, John Cameron, Cecil Duke, Thomas Atherton, Ray Gifford, and Don Bell. The service will include an address by Rev Prof Andrew Nuttney, song and worship, and an afternoon tea. While not all of those celebrating 50 years can be present, friends and family will be invited to recall their significant contributions to the church and community. All are welcome to attend. For more information, please contact Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church on 8362 2544 or office@kenttown.org.au

150 YEARS SERVICE OF SPIRITUAL FELLOWSHIP. Moonta Mines Uniting Church will be holding a special service to celebrate its 150th anniversary on Sunday 6 December at 2pm. Following Cornish tradition, items will be rendered by Kadina, Wallaroo, Moonta Band and the local Sing Australia Choir. The Moderator of the Uniting Church SA will also present a short address. All are welcome to attend this service, particularly those with previous connections to the church or Sunday School. For further information, please contact Fred Reynolds on 8825 2665 or Lilian James on 8825 2544.

To have your upcoming event or message published here, email diary@sa.uca.org.au with ‘Diary’ in the subject line.
Theological thinking for everyone

Book: Testing Tradition and Liberating Theology: finding your own voice
Author: Val Webb.
Recommended for: people who would like to start learning more about theology.
RRP: $39.95
Available from: Morning Star Publishing
★★★★

Testing Tradition and Liberating Theology is a little Aussie gem from the Uniting Church’s own pre-eminent lay theologian Dr Val Webb.

Webb’s goal in this book is to unlock theological process from the rarefied academic world of the seminary and encourage everyone to do their own theological thinking, “rather than continually accepting the often dumbed-down scraps from the altar of others”.

The book makes theology accessible for the average reader, using clear language and everyday images that open up the mysteries of religious belief.

It provides a comprehensive overview of the history of theology through the last 2,000 years, presenting an intelligible overview of key theologians and their contribution to the development of theological thought.

If you have ever wondered what systematic theology, Pelagianism, neo-orthodoxy or the “filioque” clause are all about, then the early chapters of this book are for you.

Webb then goes on to explore and explain liberation and feminist theologies, and appropriately concludes with the contribution eco-theology can make to understanding our relationship with the natural world.

Whether it is ancient and traditional theology or emerging, evolving and progressive theologies, Webb summarises the significant while acknowledging the impossibility of a comprehensive analysis in one small book.

Her précis provides plenty of revision to what we may already know as well as moments of revelation and discovery. Reading this book is to be empowered by a credible lay theologian.

What could have been a dry read is flavoured by an autobiographical thread which covers Webb’s own theological journey from the early certainties of evangelical faith to more complex current contextual understanding.

While she deals equitably with the flow and history of theological thought, Webb doesn’t hide her own theological preferences and unashamed partiality for contextual theology.

“Many people today are ‘doing their theology’ with their feet – walking out of churches that continue to preach outdated and unbelievable ideas from former ages, rather than helping people find answers in their present situation,” she writes.

This perspective won’t sit comfortably with many who favour the neo-Barthian (look this up in her book) fondness that dominates much Uniting Church thinking.

Testing Tradition and Liberating Theology submits that there are many ways to think theologically, and Webb leaves the reader to make their own decision.

Bruce Mullan

Note: Dr Val Webb will be visiting Adelaide to speak on her book in late November. She will be speaking at the Effective Living Centre and Pilgrim Uniting Church. Details will be provided in the November edition of New Times.

For more information, please contact the Effective Living Centre on 8271 0329 or Pilgrim Uniting Church on 8212 3295.
“Climate change may not seem like a serious issue to many of us. But Christianity has always been about looking beyond ourselves and becoming aware of the needs around us.”
– A Climate for Change: global warming facts for faith-based decisions, Katharine Hayhoe and Andrew Farley

“Each of you should look not to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”
– Philippians 2:4

Have you ever thought what the world will be like for the grandchildren of this generation? Maybe you have wondered, at a personal level, what the world of your own grandchild will be like. What climate will they be living in twenty years from now? How will this affect them – physically and mentally?

“God’s creation is running a fever” (New Times, June 2015) addressed the effects of excessive burning of fossil fuel, and outlined ways these could be mitigated. This article builds on those ideas, focussing on the intergenerational effect of climate change – something which is rarely mentioned by world leaders.

One leader who has spoken on this topic is Executive Secretary for the United Nations Convention on Climate Change, Christiana Figueres. She is responsible for producing the draft agreement to be discussed by world leaders at the climate summit in Paris in December 2015.

Last May, Christiana spent two days in Sydney, during which time she addressed the morning assembly of students at St Catherine’s School. She was introduced to the 1,000 girls seated on the floor of the hall, walked to the microphone, looked around at the students, and began to weep. After a short period, she composed herself and started her address with the following words: “My generation has done something amazing – we have diminished the quality of your planet.”

She later explained that while she is rarely emotional about climate change, her emotions sometimes take over when she is talking to a group of young people.

In a recent development, youth everywhere were recognised as having environmental rights.

In Australia, this led to the establishment of the Australian Youth Climate Coalition who pursue actions consistent with their founding statement:

“We believe that climate change is the single greatest threat facing humanity, and puts young people and future generations at risk. We also believe that addressing the climate crisis is our biggest opportunity to create a world that is more sustainable, just and fair.”

The group now has a membership of 120,000.

In the United States, legal action has been initiated with people in several different states seeking to “phase out as soon as possible the use of fossil fuels in order to ensure a hospitable climate and planet for young people and future generations”. Such actions are sought under the human rights section of the United States’ Constitution. In all cases the plaintiffs are groups of young people aged 12-19 years.

Late last year, the United Nations and its Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change delivered a stark warning to Australia that its climate and clean energy policies are at direct loggerheads with what the world needs to do to address climate change. This means that we, and other nations, must cease burning fossil fuels by 2050.

So what can the individual do? We must remind ourselves of the ballot box and the options open to us in government elections at all levels, taking into account the various positions on climate change and the burning of fossil fuels. We can write to the appropriate politicians and members of local councils. We can raise the issues within local communities, particularly within our local churches, and we can collect information on climate change to share it with others.

This article is one in a series submitted by the Uniting Church SA Environment Action Group. Feedback about articles in this series should be sent to justice@sa.uca.org.au
There’s an old saying: “We cannot do great things, only small things with great love.” But sometimes, perhaps, we can do both.

Kakuma refugee camp is a sprawling mass of humanity on the border between Kenya and South Sudan. Under canvas and tin supplied by the UNHCR and the Kenyan government, more than 150,000 people make their homes, many separated from brothers, sisters and parents by fighting across the border in South Sudan and Somalia. Into this maelstrom, another little life emerged last month. Her name is Deborah, and she might never have been.

It was an ordinary morning for young South Sudanese midwives completing their prac in the Kakuma Mission hospital. Many in their early 20s, they’ve been relocated, with the help of the Uniting Church in Australia, from the South Sudanese town of Leer due to heavy fighting. Their training facility was torched. Many of the women fled into the surrounding bush as rebels stormed the area. Some still don’t know where their families are – husbands are missing, and children.

The young women carry on with their studies, supported by the Presbyterian Relief and Development Agency of South Sudan, a UnitingWorld partner. They’re determined to finish their midwifery courses, and when stability returns, go back to their country and serve their sisters. In the meantime, they study at Kakuma and serve their fellow refugees.

“A woman from the camp was brought in to us,” recalls Rachel, a trainee midwife supervisor. “She was haemorrhaging and her child [was] experiencing foetal distress. An emergency caesarean was required to save her life and the life of her child. She was South Sudanese and spoke only Dinka, and the doctor requested that our student speak with the distressed woman in Dinka and explain the procedure to her.”

Further complications arose. Permission needed to be granted for an operation that would save the mother’s life, but would also make it impossible for her to have further children. Again, the student midwife was called upon to assist, patiently persuading the family of the absolute necessity of the operation in spite of the risks and long-term outcome. Some hours later, a healthy child was born and the mother’s life also saved.

“As the mother began to recover, she told our midwife, Deborah, how much her support and encouragement had meant to her,” Rachel says. “It was so important to the young mother that she has named her child after the midwife.”

“In South Sudan, too many mothers and babies die in childbirth,” Deborah says. “I have wanted to be a midwife since I was in primary school. I want to make sure that mothers don’t suffer.”

It is amazing to reflect on this love and determination, given that these young women are themselves displaced from their homes, living as refugees with no way of knowing where their families are or when they might see them again.

UnitingWorld offers opportunities for individuals and communities to help support people like Deborah or to assist in the training of Christian leaders to share the good news of Christ in India, the Pacific and Africa. This Christmas, UnitingWorld is offering an opportunity for people to give gifts that do great things, with great love, through the “Everything in Common” catalogue. For more information, please visit everythingincommon.com.au