

LINK



Turn clocks
forward
on 5 October
at 2.00am

The next LINK deadline is
Sunday 16 November 2025.
Please send contributions
to gkp@netspace.net.au

Connecting the people of St John's Elsternwick

October–November 2025

In these next two months the church Season is called "Ordinary Time". In Ordinary Time, the Scripture Readings invite us to take stock of what we have at hand to help us focus on what is life-giving into the future.

Luke's gospel readings emphasise this, revealing how the little things often matter. These include the parable about how a tiny mustard seed can produce a large harvest (Luke 17: 5–10), and the story of how only one person healed from leprosy by Jesus, returned to say thank you, whilst the other nine, also healed, did not (Luke 17: 11–19).

In a similar vein, stories are told about individuals who find new opportunities for liberation and justice – a widow, whose passionate voice pleads her case before an unjust judge and against all odds is finally granted justice (Luke 18: 1–8) and Zaccheus the tax collector, who encounters Jesus' acceptance, and vows to change his ways by giving back the money to those he has cheated (Luke 19: 1–10).

Sometimes, it is not easy to see how the little things and small actions in life can produce a larger effect. We have choices to trust and join with God in our church and communities by participating in acts of love, welcome, justice and peace. Our seemingly insignificant acts of welcoming people, offering gratitude, standing with and supporting those seeking justice or in need link with God's love for the world and can transform lives.

I find the opening lines from Jan Richardson's blessing, entitled "The map you make yourself" empowering. They speak of our pilgrim task and suggest that we already have within us the resources to find our way. I hope they also inspire you.

The Map you make yourself
For today
choose the door
that opens
to the inside.

Travel the most ancient way of all:
The path that leads to the centre of your life.

No map
but the one you make yourself.

No provision
but what you already carry
and the grace that comes
to those who walk the pilgrim's way.

Jan Richardson, *Circle of Grace*,
Wanton Gospeller Press, 2015, pp. 77–78).



Blessings
Rev Dr Lynette Dungan



The Justice and International Mission (JIM) Cluster of the Uniting Church produces postcards to encourage you to write to key decisionmakers on selected social issues. One side of one card is shown at left. On the reverse is suggested text and spaces for you to provide your name, address, signature and a stamp. The addressee for this card is the Hon Harriet Shing, Victoria's Minister of Housing and Building. This and other cards are on the East Room table. Why not check these cards next Sunday? JIM's website is <https://justact.org.au/>

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Cathryn.Peppiatt@victas.uca.org.au Monday and Wednesday

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CHURCH EMAIL: elsternwickuc@victas.uca.org.au **CHURCH WEBSITE:** <https://elsternwick.unitingchurch.org.au/>

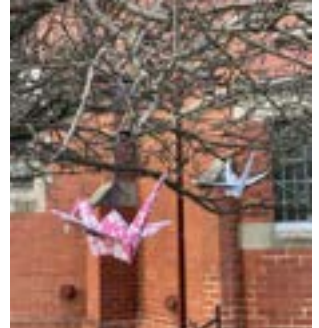
VENUE HIRE: <https://elsternwick.unitingchurch.org.au/facility-hire/>

Peace Cranes for Hiroshima Day

Wednesday 6 August was the 80th anniversary of the dropping of the first atomic bomb on Hiroshima in Japan. To acknowledge this, an extended peace vigil was held under the Peace Tree from 1 to 5pm.



In the lead up to the day, origami peace cranes were made to offer to people passing by, with a blessing for peace. Participants at both Chatty Café and the Monday Afternoon Craft, Games and Chat session were keen to learn how to make the cranes and were tutored in their endeavours by Cathryn, who had become quite proficient at making them. The story of how the origami peace crane came to be associated with Hiroshima Day is included at the end of this article. Thanks to Cathy and Alex for their work in hanging the paper cranes in the trees on the footpath and in the church garden.



The church was open in the afternoon to give people the opportunity to light a candle, reflect and pray. Passersby stopped to chat and talk about what peace means to them. One gentleman commented that without inner peace, there cannot be peace in the world. A number of people acknowledged the dedication of congregation members and said that the world needs peace now more than ever. People were also able to stop and learn how to fold a peace crane – a bit of a challenge!

Later in the day, our Peace Pole was installed in the Peace Garden, thanks largely to the efforts of Greg who prepared the ground and mixed and poured the concrete.



Our church held its first peace vigil on 21 September 2024, International Peace Day. Dedicated congregation members have gathered every Wednesday afternoon since to welcome people with a greeting of peace as they pass by.

This year, International Peace Day fell on Sunday 21 September. A special event was planned for that afternoon, commencing at 2pm. Soulsong choir provided songs of peace, paper cranes were again given out, the Peace Pole was blessed and dedicated, and Devonshire teas were available. We pray that this was a witness to the community as we strive for peace in our local area and the world.

The Story of Sadako Sasaki and the Hiroshima Peace Cranes

Sadako was two years old, and two kilometres away from the atomic bomb when it was dropped on Hiroshima. Most of Sadako's neighbors died, but Sadako wasn't injured at all, at least not in any way people could see.

Up until the time Sadako was in the seventh grade (1955) she was a normal, happy girl. However, one day during a school race that she helped her team win, she felt extremely tired and dizzy. This got worse and worse, until one day Sadako became so dizzy that she fell down and was unable to get up. Her school-mates informed the teacher, and Sadako's parents took her to the Red Cross Hospital to see what was wrong with her. Sadako found out that she

had leukemia. At that time they called leukemia the "A-bomb disease". There was a low survival rate for A-bomb disease and Sadako was very scared.

During Sadako's hospital stay, her best friend, Chizuko, came to visit her. Chizuko brought some origami (folding paper) and told Sadako of a legend. She explained that the crane, a sacred bird in Japan, lives for a hundred years, and if a sick person folds 1,000 paper cranes, then that person would soon get well. After hearing the legend, Sadako decided to fold 1,000 cranes and pray that she would get well. Sadako kept folding cranes even though she was in great pain. Even during these times of

great pain, she was known by hospital staff and other patients as cheerful and helpful, and always asking for scraps of paper or material to continue folding cranes. Although Sadako knew she would not survive, she folded well over 1,000 cranes and continued to be strong for the sake of her family. In October 1955, with her family standing by her bed, she died.

Sadako's classmates had lost many of their friends to the A-bomb disease and were saddened by the loss of Sadako. They decided to form a unity club to honour her and stay in touch after they all left school, which grew as students from 3,100 schools and from nine foreign countries gave money to get a statue built to recognise the many children who lost their lives because of the bomb. On 5 May 1958, almost three years after Sadako had died, enough money was collected to build a monument in her honour. It is now known as the Children's Peace Monument and is located in the centre of Hiroshima Peace Park, close to the spot where the atomic bomb was dropped.

The act of folding a crane started by Sadako and her classmates turned into a national, then an international, children's peace movement. Children from all over the world still send folded paper cranes to be placed beneath Sadako's statue. In so doing, they fulfill the wish engraved on the base of the statue:

***This is our cry, This is our prayer,
Peace in the world.***

from Cathryn



Sadako in 1954, one year before her diagnosis (Photo: Masahiro Sasaki)

Source: <https://theelders.org/news/story-sadako-sasaki-and-hiroshima-peace-cranes>

St John's Peace Pole



The Peace Pole movement was started in Japan by the visionary **Masahisa Goi**.

He was deeply distressed by the catastrophic devastation caused by the atomic bombs dropped on **Hiroshima and Nagasaki**, instantly killing an estimated 200,000 people.

In 1955 he began a mission to spread the simple message

**"May Peace
Prevail
on Earth"**

This peace pole is one of over 500 planted across Australia. It joins over 250,000 planted worldwide.

Les Bruce Muir 1928–2025

St John's Opening bat

by Rev David Brown

Les was born into a turbulent world. It was recovering from World War 1 where his father fought (and lost a leg) then the flu pandemic hit (much worse than COVID) followed by the Great Depression.

As an infant, Les was unlikely to be aware of all that. Infants relate to the world through their parents and real times of course.

A consequence of the turmoil is that Les's family moved from Thornbury to South Melbourne where they lived until World War 2, when they moved to Balaclava.

The 30s shaped Les's brain. He became forever a South Melbournite. I showed a '39 South Swans banner at the funeral.

Les attended primary school in Dorcas Street, opposite the church where his funeral was held. As a family, they attended the Cecil Street Methodists just around the corner. Saturdays meant shopping at the Market and VFL footy at the Lake oval. *Carn the Bloods!*

Les was a good scholar. The subjects he shone in during secondary school – Commercial Principles and Practice, Accounting and Maths – were especially useful for keeping cricket scorecards and Les's lifelong career in the Trustee industry managing often the large estates of well known and wealthy families.

Les was to find himself alone in the world at a quite young age. About 25. His father died late '52 and his mother early in the next year.

Les returned to his first home in Thornbury. It was a move that meant he had to travel a lot, especially at weekends to sport, church and family. He was very happy to have a VW Beetle car to get around. Crunching the gears, sometimes as he did so!

Cricket wasn't his only recreation. There was also badminton, squash, table tennis etc, so he stayed a very fit young man.

Les continued to go to church at Cecil Street Meths, among other things being a Sunday School teacher until the building was sold and the congregation moved to the Presbyterian church (today's Uniting Church) around the corner.



So it was the cricket team, not the congregation, that attracted Les to St John's. And he was an important opening bat in the team. His partner was John Taylor, who died a few years ago now.

Together they hit many centuries on their Caulfield Park ground. And helped with many Premierships in Central Park East Malvern. Les was awarded the 76–77

President's Trophy for his efforts.

To the best of my knowledge, Jim Aylmer, who attended the funeral, is the last person still living from that team/generation. Jim attends High Street Mount Waverley Uniting Church.

That so many of Les's former workmates, together with his last team, attended his funeral points to the respect and affection he was held in. They also noted his precision and attention to details.

Listening to the tributes and private conversations, I noted how people spoke of a private shy man who was polite, kind and gentle in his dealings with people. Les never pushed himself.

Les wasn't much interested in concerts, plays, novels, films or crowds – except for THAT one at the G on the last Saturday in September! But Les had his interests and heroes: Bradman and Menzies of course.

And another skill, not mentioned so far, that needed care and precision was photography. There are hundred of photos of cricket teams, Sunday School anniversaries, football grounds and family events: birthdays, Christmas etc. All Les's relatives and workmates have records of Les's photographic skills. Les was a great contributor to others.

This seems like a good place to stop. Vale Les Muir. We may not see your kind again.

Church Council August Report

At the August meeting we were sad to receive Andrea Casey's resignation. We thanked her for her years of service with a presentation of a thank you card and Peace Lily at morning tea the following Sunday.

We reflected on the number of visitors to worship but the fact that none has returned for a second visit. We affirmed that we have Safe Church processes in place – all the leadership group have a current Working With Children Check, have completed the three-yearly training and committed to the CC Code of Conduct. Any issues can be discussed with Ken Wallis and incidents can be recorded on the forms in the drawer in the Vestry.

Our future planning includes discussion around priorities, community connections and considering stewardship of our resources. As part of the Lease Application for the Community House, Greg has produced a thoughtful document outlining our partnership, spoken to key people, written letters to Presbytery and Synod, and completed the required form.

Unfortunately, the community survey received only six responses and they did not provide any clear directions. Cathryn has engaged people folding peace cranes for Hiroshima Day, organised and promoted the International Peace Day event and is beginning plans for a Christmas Project for pre-school-lower primary aged children.

Property upgrades include refresh of East room with installation of split system, painting and carpeting. Painting internally and externally and new curtains and blinds at the manse.

Cathy



Bible Word

Melchizedek

(MEL-CHE-SE-DEK)

Melchizedek was the King of Salem (Jerusalem). The name means "king of righteousness".

After a battle in which Abram rescues his nephew Lot, Abram is visited by two kings – the king of Sodom, who came to express his gratitude, and the king of Salem, who came to bestow a blessing. "There is nothing mysterious about Melchizedek; he was king of some Semitic clan, which still occupied Salem before the Jebusites captured it."²

In Genesis 14:18 we read:

Then Melchizedek brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram, saying:

"Blessed be Abram by God Most High

Creator of heaven and earth

And blessed be God Most High

Who delivered your enemies into your hand".

And Abraham gave him a tenth of everything.¹

The significance of Melchizedek lies in his universal and unlimited priesthood; his dual office of king-priest; and in his name. This is the first appearance of the word "priest" in Scripture.

The term used for The Most High God is El-Elyon, meaning the Supreme God. Later, Abram identified El-Elyon with Jehovah.

Giving tithes shows the pre-Mosaic date of the custom. It acknowledged Melchizedek's God as the true God and Melchizedek's priesthood as the true one.²

Hebrews 5:6, 10; 6:20; 7:1. Several times in the book of Hebrews, Psalm 110:4 is quoted: "You are a priest forever in the order of Melchizedek", referring to Jesus.

Hebrews chapter 7 details the difference between the priesthood of Aaron and that of Melchizedek. The Aaronic priesthood was temporary, ending on the death of the priest and involved sacrifices and blessings daily for the people. The priesthood of Melchizedek was forever and involves one sacrifice, which, when applied to Jesus, was his death on the cross.

Jesus has a permanent priesthood because he always lives to intercede for us.

¹ *New International Version of the Bible.*

² *The New Bible Commentary.*

Andrea

Church Calendar

October 2025

1	International Day for Older Persons
2	International Day of Non-Violence
6	World Habitat Day
10	World Mental Health Day
11	International Day of the Girl Child
12–18	Anti-Poverty Week
13	International Day for Disaster Reduction
16	World Food Day
17	International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
19	2001: SIEV-X sinking and drowning of 353 asylum seekers
24	United Nations Day
24–30	Disarmament Week

November 2025

5	World Tsunami Awareness Day
11	Armistice Day
20	World Children's Day
25	International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women
29	International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People

Source: Justice and International Mission
<https://justact.org.au>

The Liturgical Calendar

Normal time

Lynette mentions on page 1 Normal Time continues in October and November with the liturgical colour being green.

Three Special Days are also celebrated in these months: All Saints Day, Christ the King, and Advent Sunday.

All Saints Day

On 1 November of each year, and the nearest Sunday, we speak the names of those in our community who have died, beginning with those who have died in the past year.

Candles will be lit. These names will be expanded to faithful disciples, the extraordinary and ordinary, in every time and place. At the close, candles will be ablaze for them all, burning with our love and with our memory. All Saints Day comes to us with sorrow and joy, with history and hope. The liturgical colour is white.

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All Saints Day Bible readings are Daniel 7:1–3, 15–18; Psalm 149; Ephesians 1:11–23; and Luke 6:20–31.¹

Christ the King Sunday

23 November 2025

This is the last Sunday of the liturgical year before Advent starts. The day celebrates the kingship of Christ in contrast to the baby Jesus in the manger at the start of the church year.

Christ the King Sunday was inaugurated by Pope Pius XI in his *Quas Primas* ("In the First") encyclical promulgated on 11 December 1925 in response to such "manifold evils in the world" as war and depression.

These evils resulted when most people "thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives . . . and as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Saviour, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations. Men must look for the peace of Christ in the Kingdom of Christ."²

Advent Sunday

Advent is a season of preparation, beginning on Advent Sunday, the fourth Sunday before Christmas. In Advent, the church recalls its hope and expectation in the coming of Christ, past, present and future. On Advent Sunday we light the first Advent Candle. Purple is the liturgical colour.

- 1 Drawn from *For all the Saints: Reflections on All Saints*. <https://uniting.church/all-saints-reflection>
- 2 *Quas Primas*, paragraph 1. <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en.html>

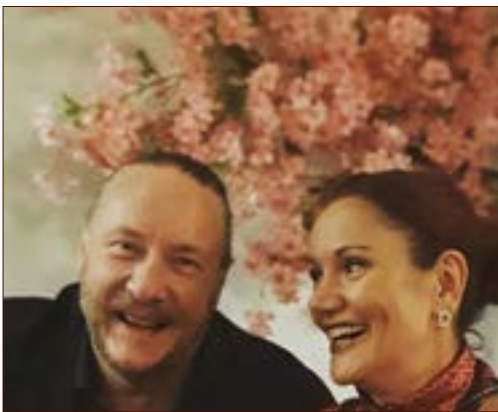


Spotted on Port Douglas Golf Course.
Don't look for your ball here! Colin

Envirotip

To attract native birds, plant a diversity of local native plants with varied flowering times for continuous food sources, and provide a safe, accessible water source such as a bird bath.

A huge Gold Coast hello



After a visit to the Op Shop, Constance joined St John's and was baptised by Philip Liebelt in 2017 before her nursing took her to Queensland.

A huge hello to all at St John's from Constance and Damien on the Gold Coast.

I pray the Lord is shining His light over you in every way.

The other day I was chatting to Cathy about the blessings of the Lord over our lives here in Queensland and she suggested I pen a few words for Link.

Hubby and I (pictured left) tackled the process of a knock down rebuild and moved into our new home about two years ago. Unfortunately, COVID about halved our budget so the house we ended up with is also about half the size and not quite finished yet. But we love it and are very grateful. The upside of it all is the joy we receive when each new project is imagined, drafted, saved for and completed. We had plantation shutters installed yesterday so no more dressing in the dark with stubbed toes . . . happy days.

The other exciting news is my opportunity to serve as a chaplain at the Gold Coast University Hospital and Health Service (see photo of my first day). I will be finishing my chaplaincy diploma in June 2026. In the Lord's synchronous ways, he has already organised my serving under a wonderful Team Leader in the multi-faith Team where I'm learning so much and really feeling valued.

I continue to attend Hillsong Central at Highland Park. You'll see me each 8.30am service on the front door welcoming everyone "home".

I'm also blessed to be involved in facilitating the Alpha program, (see pic of my last group of graduates below) and helping out with venue safety and fund raising for CityCare Australia who do such good work.

Recently my husband and I have started a monthly home group of "bring a plate of food to share" after the Sunday service. We wanted to open our home so that people could enjoy more fellowship, especially newbies. I also invite people I come across in the secular environment so they can see we don't have two heads. We had 24 people come last Sunday with games, prizes. Of course, we broke bread and gave thanks to Jesus without whom none of us would ever have met.



As I write this at my desk, I continue to remember the warmth and support I received from your wonderful congregants when Jesus was the door I considered walking through to a new life.

I pray He will continue to strengthen and provide for you as you continue in the many projects you are involved in. Few in number but mighty in service. His grace is sufficient.

Bless you all,

Constance

A letter to the Prime Minister

CALLED BY GOD. SHAPED BY JESUS
EMPOWERED BY THE SPIRIT



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY

The Hon Anthony Albanese MP

Prime Minister of Australia
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

The Hon Penny Wong

Minister for Foreign Affairs
Parliament House
Canberra ACT 2600

24 July, 2025

Dear Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,

As the 80th anniversary of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki approaches, I write on behalf of the Uniting Church in Australia Assembly to urge your Government to take the long-overdue step of signing and ratifying the *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* (TPNW).

These anniversaries are a solemn reminder of the catastrophic consequences of nuclear warfare. In 1945, two cities were destroyed and more than 200,000 lives were lost. Survivors continue to bear the physical and emotional scars of those events, and their testimony continues to call the world to peace.

For more than four decades, the Uniting Church in Australia has rejected the use, proliferation and threat of nuclear weapons in the strongest possible terms. Our national Assembly has consistently declared that these weapons are morally indefensible and fundamentally incompatible with the Gospel of Christ, which calls us to be peacemakers and reconcilers in a world where violence and enmity threatens human life and God's creation.

We believe that reliance on weapons for peace and security can never achieve a just and lasting peace.

Australia now has an historic opportunity to be on the right side of history. The *Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons* provides a clear legal and moral framework to advance global nuclear disarmament. Australia has been left behind by the more than 90 signatories to the Treaty, including many of our neighbours in the Pacific who have endured the toxic legacy of nuclear testing.

In the Pacific, nuclear disarmament is not an abstract policy question. It is a matter of justice, health and survival. Australia has a particular responsibility to

**This letter continues
at the foot of the left
column on page 9.**

President: Rev Charissa Suli General Secretary: Andrew Johnson

I pay respect to the Traditional Custodians of the land, past, present and future.

Uniting Church in Australia National Assembly

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Elsternwick Toddlers' Open Day



Elsternwick Toddlers' Playgroup (ETP) held an Open Day in the hall and play spaces at the church on Sunday 20 July.

The place was abuzz with families enjoying the many activities that were available, including a jumping castle set up in the hall. ETP hired the services of children's entertainers, Team Dream, which saw the children up and jiving.

Parents were able to divest themselves of children's clothing that they no longer needed and perhaps pick up items in "the next size up" at the free clothing swap that was set up in the East Room. The clothes remained in the corridor outside the kitchenette at the church for a few weeks after the event, and many parents added to and took from the piles of clothing in this time.

The church took the opportunity to offer children's books from our bookshelves for free, and I saw many grateful parents taking quality books to read with their children.

A range of painting and craft activities was set up in the central area, and role play activities and space for reading books in the West Room.

All this was rounded off with a food truck in the car park. I can vouch for the freshness and deliciousness of the hot chips!

ETP committee member, Shamina, was thrilled with the response to the event and reports that some new families have signed up for membership as a result of coming to the Open Day and seeing the facilities and activities available. Shamina was also very thankful for the support of the church in its advertising of the event.



Cathryn

A letter to the Prime Minister

[Continued from the previous page](#)

listen to our regional neighbours, to honour our shared history and stand with them in building a future free of nuclear threats.

We acknowledge with thanks your personal and public commitments to a world without nuclear weapons. We urge you now to translate those commitments into action by immediately signing and ratifying the Treaty, and offering leadership in international disarmament efforts for the sake of the whole creation.

In the name of peace, and in remembrance of the victims of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, we ask you to act now with courage and conviction. The future of our common humanity depends on it.

Grace and peace,

(Signed by Rev Charissa Suli)

Ministry of Flowers



Recent Events

1. Morning tea giving thanks for Andrea's Church Council service.
 2. Chatty Church in August.
 3. Rev Jay Robinson preached in August.
 4. Friday Friends in Glen Huntly.
 5. Sunday Night at St John's in October.
 6. Audrey and Gwen at the Peace Vigil.
 7. Games and Craft on Mondays.
 8. Peace Pole dedication gathering.
- More photos on the next page



1



2



4



3



5



6



7



8



Peace Pole Dedication



Cathryn introduces the afternoon



Jeff and Greg provide music and song



Soulsong's singing is welcome



Lynette dedicates the peace pole and prayer tree



Mervyn represents the Rotary Club of Caulfield



Devonshire tea and fellowship concluded the afternoon

All we can do is pray

Sometimes
All that we feel is helpless
Sometimes
All the hope has gone away
Sometimes ... There's nothing left worth saying
All we can do is pray

The leaders bent on war
as the bombs begin to fall
see the children, mothers, blown away
Father, how can this go on
When it all seems so wrong?

Sometimes the loss –
too hard to live with
such a hole within our lives
So I come to you
To help me see it through
and hold this pain I have inside

We tread with a heavy heart
When the ones we love
Struggle thru the day
And we can't do no more
I guess that's what love is for – it holds us,
When there's nothing left to say

Oh Father hear our prayer
We hope that you can meet us here
Help us find the words to say
And may your kingdom come
May your will be done
We know you'll get us through the day
Help us follow in your name
'Cause you lived the pain
And you came to rise again

Sometimes
All that we feel is helpless
Sometimes
All the hope has gone away
Sometimes ... There's nothing left worth saying
All we can do is pray.

**Composed by Greg and
sung at the
14 September service**

**Peace Vigil
Wednesdays 4.00–5.00**



Some time in Scotland

Lochs, Highland "Coos" and contemporary spiritualities.

I had a great time in Scotland in July and August. I spent time in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and walking in the magnificent Highlands and Isle of Skye.

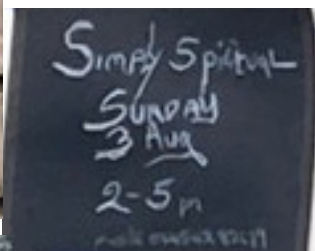
I finished up in London and Berkshire, with a niece, nephew and a family get-together.

I was interested to come across churches engaging

with their communities in ways that reflected some of the approaches shared by our congregation. Edinburgh's St John's Episcopal church features a Peace Pole and park with an attached café and "developing world" bookshop. Also in Edinburgh, a Unitarian church positions itself as a church for the "open minded and warm-hearted".

Good to be away. Good to get home.

Greg



From Uniting



Uniting Vic Tas is the Uniting Church's community services organisation, delivering services and programs

across Victoria and Tasmania. Uniting strives to make a difference for individuals, families and communities.

Join the Coffee Cup Challenge

Uniting invites you to join the Coffee Cup Challenge (CCC) across Victoria and Tasmania who are donating the cost of a weekly cup of coffee to help people in crisis.

From International Coffee Day on Tuesday 1 October 2025 through to Shrove Tuesday on 17 February 2026, we invite you to take part in the Coffee Cup Challenge by setting aside the cost of one cup of coffee each week.

Each donation goes into your CCC, helping support people facing crisis, vulnerability, and disadvantage.

When you register, you'll receive details on how you can access a tax-deductible receipt.

To register or make a donation go to <https://www.unitingvictas.org.au/fundraising/fundraise-for-us/coffee-cup-challenge/>

Uniting Charity Christmas Cards

Uniting offers a new range of Christmas cards, including an Australian native flora mixed pack. Every purchase helps support individuals and families doing it tough this Christmas. Check these cards at this website or the Uniting newsletter on the Church table, or talk to Cathy.

<https://fundraise.unitingvictas.org.au/shop/viewitem/native-flora-mixed>

Sign of the Times



Grand Final doughnut

My walking holiday

My recent overseas trip revolved around two multi-day walks, a short section of the Via Francigena in Italy and width of England along Hadrian's Wall. The first with my walking girlfriend Frances and the second alone.



Frances surveys the beginning of the walk

The Via Francigena is one of many ancient pilgrimage walks criss-crossing Europe. The whole walk goes from Canterbury to Rome but we did just a short, 95 kilometre section, from Lucca, near Pisa, to Siena. We walked 11–20 kilometres each day along paths and quiet roads through picturesque Tuscan

countryside, with rolling green hills, vineyards, and olive groves with small terracotta roofed towns. We visited various churches, learnt new bird calls, and stayed in walled towns with bell towers. We were blessed with good weather and fortunate that the only rainy day was our "rest" day. Our accommodation was in very comfortable hotels. It was great to meet up with fellow walkers in Siena and share stories of our experience.



San Gimignano, a walled city on a hill

The Hadrian's Wall walk was 135 kilometres spread over a leisurely eight days of 16–24 kilometres. I started on the east coast near Newcastle-upon-Tyne and finished at Bowness-on-Solway west of Carlisle. The first section along the river and through the city of Newcastle was followed by farming country then more rugged rocky hills and ending in the wide tidal salt marshes of the firth. The middle section had remnants of the wall, turrets, milecastles and forts but, even more interestingly for me, the associated earthworks of mounds and ditches. As I clambered up hills, over stiles and through mostly farming land, I was entranced by the wide sweeping

views. One day my accommodation was a long way from the wall and it was a dramatic change to be looking at the ruin of a massive monastery made from the pink granite of the wall. Walking alone was not a problem as there were other people walking, some in the same direction and some from west to east, and also day trippers to chat to.



The highest and mid-point of the Hadrian's Wall walk



Hadrian's Wall following the line of the hill.

Since returning I have reflected on the contrast between the two walks – one a pilgrimage, the other a historic fortification; one dotted with churches the other with historical remnants of wall and ditches; both are old pathways connected to Roman times 2000 years ago; both are now popular touristy walks through spectacular country.

Walking makes you slow down, take in the country, offering time for contemplation; walking with a friend meant chatter and discussing what we were seeing; walking on my own meant more time for thinking and praying, although the dramatic scenery was distracting!

For me, walking across England was a long-held dream while walking in Italy was a chance to see how much my attempts to learn Italian could be put to use. I had the luxury of choosing to walk and accommodation was organised in advance. I thought of others who'd walked before me, walking because that was the only way, not being sure of a warm, clean bed and nourishing meal at the end of the day, but, maybe, being more purpose driven. I felt very blessed to be able to enjoy my walking so comfortably and easily.

Cathy

People who are proud will soon be disgraced. It is wiser to be modest.

Proverbs 11:2

Synod Report



Early in this month I attended the Synod as a nominee of our congregation and the Presbytery for Port Phillip East. The Synod determines leadership and policy directions of the Victorian/Tasmanian Uniting Church.

A series of Bible studies influenced the directions of the Synod over its four days. These included reflections on being led by the spirit into new directions, incorporating "difference" in cultures and individualities as a characteristic of our faith communities. Studies reflected on how the Western church had selectively used the Bible to avoid responding to diversity. We were reminded of the symbolism of Jesus being crucified outside the walls of Jerusalem.

I came to respect the practices developed by Synod over many years, to make decisions in ways that respect the diversity of opinions inevitable in such a (literal) broad church. In these ways the Synod confirmed a "Faithful Futures" framework of priorities for coming years. A feature of this framework is to

coordinate ministries across geographical areas, in ways that support individual congregations to complement each other. These seek to extend current initiatives in sharing ministers, intercultural programs and all-age growth. Through discussion, the Synod added a goal of renewal of existing congregations.

On a personal level, I was pleased that the synod unanimously supported the recommendations of the Yoorrook Justice Commission. The Commission encourages churches to consider returning particular landholdings to the traditional owners, or providing a proportion of the re-sale of lands. I was proud of the UCA in providing leadership to the broader community. The Synod also passed a resolution supporting non-violent anti-genocide initiatives relating to the conflict in the occupied territories of Palestine. It includes condemnation of antisemitic acts against Jewish synagogues in Ripponlea and Melbourne.

In a discussion group I brought attention to the engagement of our congregation with local communities, including the challenges we have faced in receiving support for our relationship with Caulfield South Community House. A subsequent group included further discussion about the forms of "mission" that should be supported in property decision making.

Greg

Presbytery report

The third Presbytery-in-Council meeting for 2025 was held on Zoom on Wednesday 17 September. 71 attended.

Rev Jay Robinson opened worship with the recording of [*All of this is us*](#). The Bible reading was Luke 15: 11–32 and the Rev Peter Rivett, Wesley College Elsternwick Chaplain, gave a reflection and prayer.

The first item was a celebration of Service for the Rev Rivett as Uniting Church minister and Wesley Elsternwick Chaplain, followed by reflections by five school chaplains.

Rod Dungan outlined the interactions between his chaplaincy and students, teachers, parents and the wider community from the viewpoint of a chaplain in a government school.

The other chaplains who spoke worked in Uniting Church schools: Steve Terrell and Jo McKenzie-Crisp Beaconhills College; Bradon French Wesley Glen Waverley; Claire Dawe

Cornish College, and Peter Rivett Wesley Elsternwick.

Each spoke on their chaplaincy to students and staff in their different Uniting Church school settings. An interesting Q&A followed which further highlighted chaplaincy roles.

A further item was the announcement of the Team Leader for the Casey Cardinia Project. The leader is the Reverend Chung-bae Byun who will commence duties in November.

The final item of business was feedback from, and discussion on, the recent Synod meeting. One item of note was an additional goal in Future Projects which relates to new churches and new ways of being a church. A wide ranging discussion ensued.

Geoff

The editors, Andrea, Patricia and Geoff, thank all *Link* contributors. Many thanks to Colin for his proofreading.

From the wider church

CIUC 40th anniversary

Four members of St John's attended the 40th Anniversary service of the Caulfield Indonesian Uniting Church (CIUC) on the late afternoon of 13 September.

We were entertained by great choir singing and music prior to, and during, the service.

The sermon by Reverend Tracie Mulia used the theme "The Grace of God" based on the 23rd Psalm and God as the good shepherd. It was a reminder to us all that God's love and care surrounds us always at the very beginning of life, in the deep dark valleys, at the table and at the end of our life.

Children of all ages, dressed to represent all the nations, gave a beautiful presentation with singing and dancing. A video was also presented with church members reminiscing of past years.



Guest speakers were the Consul-General of the Republic of Indonesia for Victoria and Tasmania Yohannes Prasetyo, UCA Moderator Rev Salesi Faupula, Rev Jay Robinson representing Presbytery and CIUC chair, Ucok Dedy.

At the end, birthday cakes were lined up, lit and happy birthday sung by the congregation.

Dinner in the hall then followed.

Patricia



Rev Dr Ji Zhang Induction Service

On Saturday 9 August, Greg and I attended Ormond Uniting Church for the induction of the Rev Dr Ji Zhang.

Writing in *Pathfinder*, the Rev Dr Zhang identified three highlights of this service.

The first was the church full of people from local communities, neighbouring congregations, the Presbytery and the Synod.

The Choir from Chinese Zion Christian Church opened the service singing *The Lord is my Shepherd*. Worship was presented in English and Chinese involving different age profiles and cultural backgrounds. The service ended with abundant food and fellowship.

The second was the beautiful newly-rebuilt church which was "truly wonderful". Rev Dr Zhang continued: "for me it is not just the building, but also the people who have made the Church truly beautiful".

The third was the sermon, entitled *Do Not Fear, Little Flock* (Luke 12: 32–40), preached by Rev Link October–November 2025 page 15 of 16

Viola Leung from Mulgrave Uniting Church. Both Revs Dr Zhang and Leung are first-generation Chinese now Ministers of the Uniting Church.

Rev Leung outlined three steps in spiritual awakening: **1.** Receive the Promise of God; the Kingdom is freely given to us by God; **2.** Make the priority right; seek first the Kingdom of God; **3.** Prepare ourselves with a non-sleeping faith; stay awake for the Christ's return.

Rev Dr Zhang concluded his *Pathfinder* article:

Certainly, we have a first class building in this Presbytery. Now we need to fill this Church with people and ministry. We are still walking on the same journey of the saints who laid the foundation for this house of God over a century ago. Now it is also our calling to faithfully live out the mission that God has entrusted to us in this new season.

Pathfinder is Ormond Uniting Church's monthly newsletter which is on the Church Table. The above report is based on Rev Dr Zhang's article in the September 2025 issue. This newsletter also includes the text of Rev Leung's sermon mentioned above.

Geoff

St John's Uniting Church, Elsternwick

Roster & diary dates for October and November 2025

October	5 Pentecost 17*	12 Pentecost 18	19 Pentecost 19	26 Pentecost 20		October Diary Dates
Leader	Rev Dr L Dungan	Rev Dr L Dungan	Rev Dr L Dungan	Dr Greg Smith		Birthdays 13 Tim 19 Ken
Lectionary Readings	Lam 1:1–6; Ps 137 or Lam 3:19–26; 2 Tim 1:1–14; Lk 17:5–10	Jer 29:1, 4–7; Ps 66:1–12; 2 Tim 2:8–15; Lk 17:11–19	Jer 31:27–34; Ps 119:97–104; 2 Tim 3:14 – 4:5; Lk 18:1–8	Joel 2:23–32; Ps 65; 2 Tim 4:6–8, 16–18 Lk 18:9–14		Events 8 Sunday at St John's @5.30 12 St John's Church Anniversary 31 Friday Friends Lunch @ 12.15 26 Lighting a Candle at CSCH @ 7
Prayer	Patricia	Cathy	Greg	Audrey		Weekly Craft & Chat Monday @ 1–3 Chatty Café Wednesday @ 10–12 Peace Vigil Wednesdays 4–5
Greeters	Raj	Wendy	Rhonda	Colin		* Holy Communion
Readers	Cathy	Don	Alex	Patricia		
Data Projector	Geoff	Geoff	Cathy	Cathy		
Steward/Offering	Cathy/Raj	Andrea/Cathy	Patricia/Raj	Andrea/Colin		
Morning Tea	Patricia/Colin	Luchee/Audrey	Rhonda/Denise	Alex/Barbie		
Flowers	Patricia	Alex	Rhonda	Audrey		

November	2 Pentecost 21*	9 Pentecost 22	16 Pentecost 23	23 Christ the King	30 Advent 1	November Diary Dates
Leader	Rev Dr L Dungan	Rev Dr L Dungan	Rev Dr L Dungan	Rev Dr L Dungan	Cathy McNicol	Birthdays 10 Judy
Lectionary Readings	Hab 1:1–4, 2:1–4 ;Ps 119:137–144; 2 Thes 1:1–4, 11–12; Lk 19:1–10	Hag 1:15b – 2:9; Ps 145:1–5, 17–21 or Ps 98 2; Thes 2:1–5, 13–17; Lk 20:27–38	Is 65:17–25; Is 12 2 Thes 3:6–13; Lk 21:5–19	Jer 23:1–6; Lk 1:68–79; Col 1:11–20; Lk 23:33–43	Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122; Romans 13:11–14; Matthew 24:36–44	Events 9 Sunday at St John's @5.30 22 Mini Fete @ 9 28 Friday Friends Lunch @ 12.15 23 Lighting a Candle at CSCH @ 7
Prayer	Patrica	Lynette	Greg	Cathy	Audrey	Weekly Craft & Chat Monday @ 1–3 Chatty Café Wednesday @ 10–12 Peace Vigil Wednesdays 4–5
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Data Projector	Cathy	Cathy	Geoff	Greg	Greg	
Steward/Offering	Andrea/Raj	Cathy/Andrea	Cathy/Raj	Andrea/Raj	Andrea/Cathy	
Morning Tea	Patricia/Alex	Luchee/Colin	Audrey/Barbie	Rhonda/Denise	Patricia/Geoff	* Holy Communion
Flowers	Patricia	Alex	Rhonda	Audrey	Patricia	