

# Anniversary



Honouring The  
Past, Building  
The Future

This year our congregation will come together to celebrate the anniversary of the Uniting Church at a 10 am Combined Service on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> June. We hope you may be able to join us for worship on that day and stay for lunch in the Hall afterwards. This year we have decided to share a finger food lunch with surnames A – L to please bring sweets and M – Z to please bring savouries.

The Uniting Church came into being on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1977. This was 39 years ago. Some in our congregation were not even born then, and others like me, have spent more than half their lifetime in the Uniting Church. Others who are older still, value the heritage and traditions of their previous denomination. We thank God for the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches and what each of the three denominations brought to the Uniting Church. Our theme affirms our desire to honour the past. Each of the denominations was made up of people with a strong faith, a commitment to worship, the sacraments and pastoral care, a commitment to discipleship and making disciples, and sharing the good news of the gospel in the wider community. These denominations were also committed to offering ministry in outback Australia and overseas. The three previous denominations were also committed to maintaining strong ecumenical relationships.

I have been reading the Major Strategic Review 74 page report to be presented to this year's Synod meeting. The Report highlights that the Uniting Church has been in existence for 39 years and while many of our structures and practices have served us well over the years, it is time to look at some changes to enable the Church to move forward more confidently in the coming years. The report highlights how rapidly Australia is changing in terms of demographics, languages spoken, different faiths or no faith at all, technology, science and social expectations. Overall the membership of the Uniting Church has been declining and ageing except for the ethnic specific congregations of the Uniting Church that have been growing. This is not news to us.

When our congregation held focus groups to look at our vision for the future we highlighted the changing society in which our congregation is placed here in Glen Waverley.

I do not want to focus on the structural changes that the report suggests. The report is challenging the church that for the next 6 years it should consciously focus on developing our ministry with families, youth and young adults as well as have a focus on further nurturing and integrating cross cultural ministry. This is not to suggest that we let ministry to older members slip. I am confident that if our older members are supported, nurtured and cared for that they will also be excited to see a strengthening of family, youth and young adult ministry. Older members want to see the next generations engaging in the life of the church, even if church starts to look a little different in the future.

The thrust of the MSR report is consistent with the direction that we have been seeking to follow as a congregation. The congregation affirmed an extension of Alanee Hearnshaw's ministry with a change in her focus of ministry. Alanee will remain involved in youth and young adults ministry half time, but also oversee and resource children and family ministry as well as engage in Kingsway ministry (cross cultural ministry). I am excited to realise that Alanee's role reflects the ministry direction being proposed by the MSR team. I felt that this is very affirming of the ministry and mission that this congregation is already involved in and is proposing to grow.

The theme for the Anniversary service is "honouring the past, building the future". That is something we need to be able to do together. But it is not something we can do in our own strength. We need to pray and be led by the Holy Spirit. We need to remember that this is not our church but we are part of Christ's Church. The Basis Of Union, the founding document of the Uniting Church, declares "...she (Uniting Church) is a pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal... On the way Christ feeds her with Word and Sacraments, and she has the gift of the Spirit in order that she may not lose the way".

These lines from the Basis of Union have been important to the Uniting Church over the years. They are often repeated and affirmed. They speak to our situation as a congregation today. Let us embrace the future confidently, fed by Christ and with the gift of the Spirit in order that we may not lose our way.

Yours in Christian Service

Neil on behalf of Alanee and Alison.

## Dates

10 July: **Senior Service** 2.30pm

17 August: **Cupcake day for the RSPCA at The Hub** 10am -12noon

25 August: **Outreach Forum** 12pm

23 September: **Seniors Seminar** 10 - 3pm

9 October: **Senior Week Music event** 2.30pm

15 October: **Grand Fete**

16 October: **Combined Service** 10am

27 October: **Seniors morning tea at The Hub** 10am -12noon

27 November: **10am Combined Service** followed by Christmas lunch

28, 29, & 30 November: **Children's Nativity Photos** at The Hub

6 December: **Remembrance Service** 8pm

8 December: **Christmas Morning tea at The Hub** 10am -12noon

21 December: **Kids Christmas** TBC

24 December: **Christmas Service for kids** 7.30pm  
**Christmas Eve** 11pm

25 December: **Christmas Service** 8.30am  
**Christmas Service** 10am

8 -12 January: **NCYC Yurora**