

CONNEXION

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Position Vacant: Editor of Connexion

Connexion is a rich part of our community life which enables news, reflections, creativity and prayers to be shared in our Wesley Church Family. Each bi-monthly edition captures a moment in the life of our congregation and through it we are built up as the Body of Christ in this place. The role of Editor is one of curious imagination and community building. The Editor chooses a theme for each edition and reaches out to individuals and to the congregation to invite submissions. Could this be you?

Please contact Rachel if you would be interested in exploring this role for a season, and please note that the publication of Connexion is well supported by the Church Office through receiving submissions, formatting and printing.

Images in this issue:

Cover: Rev Rachel Kronberger. Reeds Lookout, Geriwald (Grampians) National Park

Page 12: Official artwork of World Day of Prayer 2023 "I Have Heard About Your Faith", by artist Hui-Wen HSAIO. Read more about this artwork, and the artist's statement, here: <https://www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org/wdp2023/world-day-of-prayer-2023-artist/>

Back cover, "History is Calling" poster. From: <https://ulurustatement.org/education/resources/>

All author pictures their own.

Minister's Reflection

As followers of Jesus, we believe each person and all creation is deeply loved by God, and we are called by Jesus to be communities of justice, compassion, inclusion and mercy... In the midst of the challenges we face, we encourage current and future leaders of our country to work with courage and commitment, and to work collaboratively with communities, to provide all people and all of God's creation with every opportunity to flourish and to live life abundantly."



This wisdom was offered to the Uniting Church by Rev Sharon Hollis, National President (and Wesley congregation member), prior to the 2022 federal election. Her encouragement and challenge to us is part of the UCA's foundational assurance that *our response to the Christian gospel will continue to involve us in social and national affairs* (UCA Statement to the Nation 1977). This principle has guided the Church in its response to climate change policy, asylum seekers and refugees, First Nations people in Australia and other issues of justice.

This week, the legislation for establishing a referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament has passed in the Senate. In guiding its members in a response to the referendum question, the Uniting Church has sought advice from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and taken a clear 'Yes' position. The UCA is already familiar with constitutional change as a powerful act of recognition and reconciliation. In 2009 a new preamble was added to the Church's Constitution, confessing our complicity in the dispossession of land, language, culture and spirituality, and acknowledging these as gifts from God nurtured among First Peoples since time immemorial.

We have seen the way this change in the constitution has brought deeper, positive change for the Church. It has changed the way we worship and pray, the way we hold meetings and make decisions, and has changed the way we see ourselves as a Church. It has built up many expressions of the Covenant between the UCA and the UAICC as we walk together as First and Second Peoples in this land. We have a particular opportunity in this referendum year to be *involved in social and national affairs in response to the Christian Gospel* and I look forward to sharing this journey with you.

This edition of Connexion contains a rich array of reflections on the life of Wesley Church Melbourne, thanks to our guest editor, Rev Dr Sandy Yule, and many contributors. I trust you will find within it information and inspiration for your prayers, your thinking, your conversations and your actions at this important time.

Making the Statement from the Heart

‘The creation of the Uluru Statement from the Heart involved thousands of First Nations people from hundreds of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and from a range of perspectives and experiences. The deliberations were conducted over many days, through Regional Dialogues that culminated at the Uluru National Constitutional Convention.

The Dialogues and the Convention were the most extensive, well-informed and well-formulated constitutional dialogues Indigenous peoples have ever had. They were proportionately more representative than the constitutional convention debates that led to the Australian Constitution in 1901, from which First Nations people were excluded. The Dialogues sprang from a sixteen-member referendum council, backed in the spirit of bipartisanship by Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull and Opposition Leader Bill Shorten, formed in December 2015 to advise the Government on a pathway to constitutional recognition.

The Uluru Dialogues were regional, covering the entire continent and adjacent islands, and the lands of all Indigenous First Nations. They were designed and led by First Nations experts and local leaders, with a commitment to achieving inclusion; the participants were invited in accordance with a formula that ensured representation for gender balance, Stolen Generations, youth and First Nations People Off Country. Also, Traditional Owners from each region were strongly represented.

Translators and experts in constitutional law were readily available at each Dialogue. The experts provided presentations about how the nation’s political and legal systems work and the history of Indigenous advocacy. At the end of every Dialogue the participants endorsed an accurate record of the meeting. And finally, those who attended the meetings elected delegates to take those records to the culminating National Constitutional Convention. The delegates’ job at the Convention was to synthesise the Dialogue outcomes, bringing together a national consensus position - one collective statement from First Nations people.

The priority in all regions and in the consensus reached at the Uluru National Constitutional Convention was to constitutionally enshrine a First Nations Voice to Parliament.’

‘The Creation of the Statement from the Heart’. Thomas Mayo.

Quoted from ‘The Voice to Parliament Handbook’. Ed. T Mayo and K O’Brien. Melbourne, Hardie Grant Explore, 2023, vi-vii.

Yes or No? A Personal Statement

Rev Dr Sandy Yule

This referendum is best seen in the long context of Australian history. It is one small but essential step in the journey to being 'one people' in this land. Reconciliation between first and second peoples in Australia is required because of the unhealed wound of colonial settlement and the dispossession of Aboriginal nations from their land. This dispossession was, until recently, undergirded by the doctrine of 'terra nullius', the idea that the land belonged to no-one (so that any kind of treaty or negotiation was not required). We no longer accept the doctrine of 'terra nullius' in Australian law, so we are now in search of fresh arrangements that deal with the injustices of the past which have continuing impact today.

We took an important step in 2015, when Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull (with the bipartisan support of Opposition Leader Bill Shorten) appointed a sixteen member referendum council to advise the government on a pathway to constitutional recognition of First Nations peoples. What followed is probably the most significant process of consultation involving Aboriginal people in Australian history. The 'Statement from the Heart', formulated at the Uluru National Constitutional Convention in May, 2017, provides the requested advice. This advice was by consensus of those there (noting that there were some who walked out of this gathering), representing indigenous communities and people from all over Australia. The advice is, interestingly, not provided primarily to government, but is directed quite deliberately to the Australian people. The process envisaged is one of voice, truth telling and treaty. The advice seems to me to be clear and plausible; indeed, it seems overwhelmingly generous, but also achievable.

I will be voting 'Yes' to affirm my support for this process and for the view that 'terra nullius' is - and always was - a monstrous lie. Aboriginal peoples have been settled here for well over 60,000 years. What happens about the details of the Voice to Parliament will always be a matter for the Parliament and should not be seen as the main game in relation to the referendum questions. We are not enshrining any particular form of the Voice in voting 'Yes'. We are affirming that the voices of First Nations people have a special status in our society because (somewhat analogous to the voices of scientists) they have long knowledge and culturally consolidated experience about living in this land.

For members of the Uniting Church in Australia, we should know that our church lives in a covenantal relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and that Congress has encouraged us to vote 'Yes' in the referendum on the 'Voice to Parliament'. In 2009, the Uniting Church in Australia acknowledged the long history of First Nations people in this land and enshrined this recognition in our own Uniting 5

Church constitution. Our Assembly has affirmed support for the 'Yes' campaign.

Christian faith is that God in Christ has called us into a unity of love with each other and with, ultimately, all people. So the extremely generous offer to walk together as one people in this land through voice, truth and treaty that is contained in the 'Statement from the Heart' seems to me like a simple gospel imperative. The unhealed wound of the disruption of aboriginal life and culture across Australia continues to fester. This is the time when we need to take this important step as a nation and commit ourselves to truth telling and eventually treaty.¹

In the 'Statement from the Heart', we Second Peoples in Australia have a most generous and open invitation to a process that promises to lay to rest the unquiet ghosts in our land. Voting 'Yes' in the referendum is only the next step in the envisioned process, but it is a genuine next step.

¹ As an international comparison, I learned of a similar situation of internal conquest in the history of the Korean nation. Apparently, fifteen hundred years ago, the southern part of the Korean peninsula was divided into two kingdoms, that of Paekje in the west and Shilla in the east. Shilla conquered Paekje and the consequent dominance of the eastern people over the western people has a continuing influence. This was a part of the explanation that I was given for the violent government suppression of the Kwangju demonstrations in 1980 (killing hundreds of people), where Kwangju is on the western side of the Korean peninsula. The idea that old, large scale injustices can safely be ignored is an illusion.

Bitter Melons Create Happiness

Kerry Phillips

Walking through a market with a refugee, he saw this vegetable; he gently smiled and stopped to point it out to me.



"This is from my home," he said, "it is healthy and good for my skin. It is ten years since I have tasted it." I just saw an ugly green vegetable but he saw a reminder of home and health.

Of course we bought some.

A Quick Word With...**Charity Majiza**

I have been worshipping at Wesley for 5 years now. I came here after retirement from active ministry at the end of 2017.

I enjoy worship services: the liturgy, sermons, organ music, the choir and studies. I like the participation of all ages in the services and the minister's segments with the children. It is also great that from time to time we have guest preachers and joint services with other UCA organisations connecting us to the wider mission of the church.



I was born in South Africa where I received most of my education. I was involved in the church from a very young age. I was a primary school teacher before I felt a call and offered for ministry in the Reformed Presbyterian Church in South Africa. This presented a challenge, as there were no ordained women in the church at that time. I was sent to the Federal Theological Seminary where Methodist, Anglican, Presbyterian and Congregational churches trained their candidates for ministry. Towards the end of my last year of training, the church took the momentous decision to ordain women and I was the first one to do so in 1978. It was a great relief.

There was also another struggle going on in the country at the time. The struggle against the apartheid government and that made things difficult for everybody, including the churches.

After three years of encountering political challenges in a remote parish, the Church sent me to Edinburgh University to do further studies in theology. During my four years, while studying I became a minister in association in different congregations of the Church of Scotland and continued to advocate for the struggle against apartheid. For this reason I lost my South African citizenship and became stateless. I applied for political asylum in Britain and I was refused.

On my last year of my studies I received a letter informing me that, at the end of the expiry date of my permit in October that year, 1984, I will have to leave the country voluntarily or will be faced with deportation.

So became the search for a Presbyterian Church that ordained women. At the time, it was Scotland, Canada, the United States and Australia that ordained women. Fortunately, a door was opened for me in the Uniting Church.

In 1984 I arrived at St David's UC in Albury, and was recognized a minister in the UCA in 1985. From there on, I served in the following places: Mitcham, Chaplain at Wesley College, St Kilda Campus, went back to South Africa and became General Secretary of the South African Council of Churches, returned to Australia went to Noble Park, then Waranga Uniting Churches and concluded at Echuca. While in these settlements I served on other committees of the UCA.

I feel blessed that the door was opened for me to be a minister in the UCA and given a second chance to serve God in this country.

My recreational interests are: Reading, attending concerts, ballets, theatre, walks and catching up for coffee with friends, now that I am retired.

Rev Charity Majiza

Giving to Wesley

You can support Wesley through direct transfer:

Direct Transfer to:

BSB: 013030

Acc: 198339009

For assistance contact: churchoffice@wesleychurch.org.au

Chaplaincy Report

Since the start of February I've been coordinating the chaplaincy team at University of Melbourne. A lot of what I've been doing is providing support to the chaplains and raising awareness in the university about what the chaplaincy team offers. I think in a lot of places in our society folks may presume that chaplains are just there to support people from their own faith tradition. Often people aren't aware that chaplains are available to talk about all kinds of topics relating to faith, life and meaning.



I've been finding opportunities for the chaplaincy team to cooperate with other teams' activities. During Respect Week I was involved in talking to students and staff about the respect pledge, where we were asking participants to agree that they will respect others' consent, that they will believe someone if they say they've been sexually assaulted, and that they will speak up if they witness someone being sexually assaulted. During Mental Health Week, Sr Delma Lamb (our chaplain to international students) and I were available to talk to students about the experience of homesickness, and what makes them feel at home (while making houses out of Lego). Being involved in these events provides opportunities for us to make students and staff more aware of who we are and what pastoral care is.

By being present in staff meetings I've been able to gradually get to know other workers and offer pastoral care to them, demonstrating what pastoral care is, so that they can describe it to students. I've also been working on getting information out to different teams who may come across students who would benefit from pastoral care.

I've also been working with Rev Sam Oldland (our Anglican chaplain) on setting up a multifaith meeting room that can be used by the chaplains and by various spiritual student clubs on campus. This small experiment can inform plans for a larger multifaith centre on campus further down the track.

Farewell to Wilma Tucker

2.4.1928 - 14.3. 2023

Wilma was born at Oakleigh, Victoria, on the 2nd of April 1928. Her early life was spent in N.S.W. She attended Lockhart Primary School and later boarded at Wagga Wagga for her secondary education.

The family shifted to Melbourne during the severe drought conditions in N.S.W. at the time. Wilma studied to be a secretary and obtained a position at the Melbourne Town Hall where she was employed to do the initial work and planning for the 1956 Olympic Games. It was during this time that she met and married Lyle Tucker, a journalist, and they had 4 children, Lynne, Sue, Judy and Edwin. Wilma and Lyle joined Wesley Church in the 1980's during The Rev Kevin Green's ministry.



As a mature aged student, Wilma undertook an Arts Degree, majoring in Psychology and gained a Masters of Educational Psychology at Monash University.

Wilma was a very active member at Wesley – an Elder, Church councillor and member of the Wesley Mission Board. She was a regular on the roster for Bible readings and Prayers of the People. She was a very keen member of Melbourne City Churches In Action.

Wilma had many health problems over the years and when it became difficult for her to physically attend Wesley she transferred her membership to Ormond Uniting Church. She attended Wesley for important occasions when she was able and was always keen to hear news of her Wesley Friends.

Wilma was very generous, a good cook and a very hospitable person who loved her family. She was a keen reader, always keeping up with the latest books and ideas. She had a deep faith and enjoyed an interest in theology.

The last few years of her life were spent in Regis East Malvern where she was well cared for until her death a few weeks short of her 95th birthday.

Her funeral was at Wesley Church on 30th March and conducted by the Rev Rachel Kronberger and the Rev Ron Townsend from Ormond Uniting Church.

Margaret Cross

World Day of Prayer for Christian Unity Service

Melbourne City Churches in Action, together with the Victorian Council of Churches and the German Lutheran Trinity Church, held a World Day of Prayer for Christian Unity service at the German Church late in the afternoon on Sunday 21 May. The preacher at the service was the Rev. Canon Uncle Glenn Loughrey, a Wiradjuri man and Anglican priest attached to St. Paul's Cathedral. The theme of the service, coming from the liturgy produced by church leaders in Minnesota, USA, was 'Do good, seek justice' (Isaiah 1:17), with special attention to the upcoming referendum on the 'Voice to Parliament'.

Glenn pointed out to us that the question is whether or not we want to acknowledge First Nations people in our Australian Constitution. We are not being asked to vote on the details about the voice, as this would be a matter for the parliament (particularly in the event of a positive vote). I was also struck by his account of the frontier war between the Wiradjuri people and the colonial government, which was waged from 1821-24. The colonial government of New South Wales sent troops to 'pacify' the aboriginal people of central NSW, in the context of settlers coming over the Blue Mountains and occupying lands beyond. He made the distinction between what damage the settlers did on their own account and the use of government troops.

The message concerning Christian Unity was that we need to consider the unity of all the communities represented in our churches, not just the unity of those who come as church members. Christian Unity is not complete while the wider community remains unreconciled.

The service was organised by Pastorin Kim Kiessling (the minister of the German Lutheran Church), the Rev. Sandy Boyce (Executive Officer of the Victorian Council of Churches) and Sandy Yule. There was also leadership in the service from the Rev. Michael Bowie (St. Peter's), the Rev. Fr. Alex Chow (St. Patrick's), the Rev. Fr. Jo Dirks (St. Francis) and Ms. Jocelyn Ng (St. Patrick's). The event was attended by about twenty five people. We were grateful for the hospitality of the German Lutheran Church, both for the service and for the supper afterwards.

This service is the second in what we hope will be a developing series of prayer services for Christian Unity. The first service in this series was held at St. Paul's Cathedral last year, as we emerged from lockdown. We think that asking one church to host the event within their regular provision of services is a good model, so watch this space for next year and plan to come along!

World Day of Prayer for Christian Unity

Order of Service

Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country

Call to Worship (from Psalm 68)

L: Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered;

P: **let those who hate him flee before him.**

L: Let them vanish like smoke when the wind drives it away;

P: **as the wax melts at the fire, so let the wicked perish at the presence of God.**

L: Awesome is God in his sanctuary, the God of Israel;

P: **he gives power and strength to his people.**

Blessed be God!

Hymn: The day you gave us, Lord, is ended TIS 458



"I Have Heard About Your Faith" - Hui-Wen HSAIO

Prayers of Thanksgiving

O Lord, we thankfully acknowledge your sovereignty over the heavens and the earth.

We thank you for the many limited sovereignties and powers that you have created, from the eminence of national governments to the solitary exercise of the individual conscience, from the creativity of our specialized knowledge, from science and from experience, to the long authority of the connection to country and the care of country by First Nations people in this land.

As we come together to worship you, enrich our awareness of the many authorities and sovereignties that you empower.

We thank you for showing us your way in Jesus, that we may respect the limitations of our own authority and recognise the significant authority of others, each in their own sphere.

We also thank you this night for all your churches in Melbourne, all worshipping you, each in their own way, but united in following you. We thank you that we can recognise each other as your followers.

We thank you for the relative peace that we enjoy, despite the ongoing tensions and injustices that are inherent in our colonial establishment.

We thank you for the fruitfulness of the earth which feeds us, despite our frequent carelessness for its bounty.

We thank you for your promises that have come to us through Jesus, that even now you are leading us to fullness of life.

We offer these prayers in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
Amen.

Hymn: Now thank we all our God TIS 106

Introduction to the World Day of Prayer for Christian Unity text from Minnesota and a Reading of its opening call

Sisters and brothers, we gather here in the name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

By the waters of baptism, we have become members of the Body of Christ, yet our sins have caused pain and trauma to each other.

We have failed to do good.

We have not sought justice in the face of grave oppression, nor heeded God's command to care for the widow and orphan (Is 1:17).

As we gather, let us reflect on our actions and inactions and learn to do good and seek justice.

Prayers of Confession

God of all, our hearts and bodies are thankful for this opportunity to come before you to confess our sins of injustice and divisiveness.

Together we come before you, a holy family, united in the beautiful diversity of your creation: some of us are Indigenous peoples, some of us are descendants of convicts, some of us are descendants of those who convicted them, some of us are migrants, some of us are refugees, but all of us are part of the one Body of Christ.

Help us to embrace unity with each other, and remind us that we are of one family gathered by your Holy Spirit, in the midst of your creation.

Yet, Lord, we must also acknowledge that we have not respected all the sovereignties that you empower. Today we latecomers to Australia confess that we have not listened to Aboriginal voices about care for this land of Australia. We second peoples have been slow to acknowledge the dispossession and marginalization of Aboriginal nations and peoples in our history. We have preferred to remain ignorant of the frontier wars of the past.

Lord, we ask forgiveness for what is past. Make us ready to do what is needful for restoration and integrity in our own life and in our national life.

Declaration of Forgiveness

The Apostle Paul said, 'If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. All this is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation.' (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)

Let us hear the gracious words of Jesus:

‘Your sins are forgiven’.

Thanks be to God!

Amen.

Reading of the ‘Statement from the Heart’

STATEMENT FROM THE HEART

We, gathered at the 2017 National Constitutional Convention, coming from all points of the southern sky, make this statement from the heart.

Our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander tribes were the first sovereign Nations of the Australian continent and its adjacent islands, and possessed it under our own laws and customs. This our ancestors did, according to the reckoning of our culture, from the Creation, according to the common law from ‘time immemorial’, and according to science more than 60,000 years ago.

This sovereignty is a spiritual notion: the ancestral tie between the land, or ‘mother nature’, and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples who were born therefrom, remain attached thereto, and must one day return thither to be united with our ancestors. This link is the basis of the ownership of the soil, or better, of sovereignty. It has never been ceded or extinguished, and co-exists with the sovereignty of the Crown.

How could it be otherwise? That peoples possessed a land for sixty millennia and this sacred link disappears from world history in merely the last two hundred years?

With substantive constitutional change and structural reform, we believe this ancient sovereignty can shine through as a fuller expression of Australia’s nationhood.

Proportionally, we are the most incarcerated people on the planet. We are not an innately criminal people. Our children are alienated from their families at unprecedented rates. This cannot be because we have no love for them. And our youth languish in detention in obscene numbers. They should be our hope for the future.

These dimensions of our crisis tell plainly the structural nature of our problem. This is *the torment of our powerlessness*.

We seek constitutional reforms to empower our people and take a *rightful place* in our own country. When we have power over our destiny our children will flourish. They will walk in two worlds and their culture will be a gift to their country.

We call for the establishment of a First Nations Voice enshrined in the Constitution.

Makarrata is the culmination of our agenda: *the coming together after a struggle*. It captures our aspirations for a fair and truthful relationship with the people of Australia and a better future for our children based on justice and self-determination.

We seek a Makarrata Commission to supervise a process of agreement-making between governments and First Nations and truth-telling about our history.

In 1967 we were counted, in 2017 we seek to be heard. We invite you to walk with us in a movement of the Australian people for a better future.

Musical reflection

Mozart Andante

Bible Readings (from the New Revised Standard Version)

Isaiah 1:16-17

Ephesians 2:13-22

Matthew 25:31-40

Anthem: Where wide sky rolls down TIS 188

Sermon - Reverend Uncle Canon Glenn Loughrey

Prayer

Hymn: Community of Christ TIS 473

Offering

Notices

Hymn of the band: This little light of mine

Prayers of Intercession

Lord's Prayer (in our own heart language)

Hymn: God of freedom, God of justice TIS 657

Words of Mission

Blessing

Presbytery Meeting Update

The first weekday meeting of the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra for 2023 was held by Zoom on the evening of Wednesday, 19th April with 70 participants. Two topics were introduced and discussed by small groups of 4. The first topic, presented by Rev. Cyrus Kung, was Act 2, which is a project born of the conviction that now is a critical time for the Uniting Church to consider afresh the ordering of its life. It has 4 phases over 12 months – Explore, Discern, Recommend, and Implement. In response to the question “What do you see as life-giving in your Presbytery”, my small group identified mental health projects, diverse sexuality and the Melbourne CBD Justice Network, whose members are Wesley Church, St. Michaels, Mark the Evangelist North Melbourne and St. Andrews Richmond.

The second topic, introduced by Wesley’s own Robyn Whitaker, was *Reflections on the Resurrection*. She mentioned that Jesus’ resurrected body exhibited both continuity (he speaks, eats, and has physical form such as scars of his wounds) and discontinuity (some do not recognise him, and he walks through walls). Robyn gave us a provocative quote from an early Christian text, namely the Gospel of Thomas:- “Every woman who will make herself male will enter the kingdom of heaven”. Robyn asked us to imagine our own future resurrected self – what do you look like, how old are you, has anything changed physically and psychologically? Rev Dr Margaret Mayman (St Michaels Uniting Church Melbourne), a member of my small group, envisaged herself as compost. She also commented that her staunch Baptist grandmother, aged in her 90s, doesn’t want to go to heaven because it means a boring existence sitting in clouds endlessly singing hymns!

The second in-person meeting of the Presbytery of Yarra Yarra for 2023 was held on the morning of Saturday, 27th May at Ringwood Uniting Church. It started with a presentation and discussion on the Synod Disability Action Plan 2023-2026, led by Deacon Andy Calder. Copies of a booklet with this title were distributed, as were copies of a booklet entitled *A Guide to Improving Safety in Pastoral Care with LGBTQA+ People*. These are available from the Synod.

The Ministry Formation Committee presented three candidates for the ordained Ministry of the Word. Two were members of the Tongan Canterbury Congregation, namely Erika Schaumkel and George Walter (a Tongan despite this name), while the third was Youjin Song, from the South Korean Catholic Church and a member of the Kew Korean Congregation. Each candidate addressed the meeting, and George Walter's presentation included a poem that he had written. All three were approved for submission to this year's Synod Selection Conference.

Committee reports had been distributed prior to the meeting. The Standing Committee reported that Anne Williamson had been appointed Office Secretary, to lighten the load of Geoffrey Grinton as Synod secretary as well as Presbytery Minister Administration. There was also a recommendation to withdraw recognition of the Yarra Junction Congregation, which had been associating with the local Anglican Congregation but which now could not maintain even an appearance of a UCA Congregation due to deaths and movement of members interstate.

The subject for the usual *Pilgrimage Stories* was Glen O'Brien, well known to Wesley Church members, who is currently a lecturer at the Salvation Army's College of Divinity. Glen commented that there is currently a serious lack of clergy in the Salvation Army, and it relies instead on "Auxiliary Lieutenants" (the equivalent of UCA lay pastors).

Ray Dawson
Presbytery representative for Wesley Church Melbourne

Reflections on Wesley from our Young Members

Jonas' reflections

At the children's section there is an assortment of fun activities that you can do each week depending on what is happening on the Christian Calendar. Rev. Rachel recently explained the importance of Pentecost and how the Holy Spirit visited the disciples. After this talk with the children, we broke off from the congregation to the children's section.

We do lots of fun activities in the children's section - sometimes we do worksheets, sometimes you work with play-doh, at all times the activities would relate to the children's talk and sermon. Working with the children's and family's coordinator is great because you get to talk a bit more about the bible readings. We even got to create a prayer to read out to the congregation. The activities changing each week make it less boring.

The children also get to play a part in the service where we have done the Bible readings or sing in the children's choir. My sister and I once played our musical instruments during the Christmas festivities, which was memorable because we've never been able to do that in public before. Luckily there is a children's choir that gets all the children involved.

The Wesley congregation is a really nice Church community. There are a variety of age groups and everyone knows each other. I love the food after the service, mainly the cookies. Many people chat to you after the service and really take the time to show they care and want to get to know you. They also congratulate you for doing well in your contribution to the service.



Madison's reflections

For the past year or so, the Wesley Church has given us (the children) the opportunity to present the Bible Readings during the Sunday morning services. Once a month, one of the children reads aloud one (or multiple) bible passages for the congregation to listen to.

My favourite part of the church service for the longest time has been

listening to the bible readings and the sermon by Rev. Rachel following. I've always found an interest in people's interpretation of the bible, with all of its hidden meanings. Having the extra time to stop and think about these readings has given me much of a chance to really understand the meaning of each individual passage and develop my own interpretations of them.

Doing the bible readings has also, in a way, brought us (the children) closer to the church. By participating in the bible readings, we have also gotten to find out about how the church works behind the scenes and experience first-hand how hard Rev. Rachel and the volunteers work to make the services run smoothly every Sunday. While reading the passage isn't nearly as hard as what Rev. Rachel and the volunteers do in preparation for the service every week, being able to help out with the readings is something that I know all of the children in the congregation would gladly do.



Recently, Rev. Rachel has also started running smaller get-togethers before the church with the teenagers within the congregation. In the past, there haven't been any sessions focused at the teenagers within the congregation. Once I reached a certain age, participating in the children's activities almost gets old because of how the activities are naturally aimed at a younger audience. While these activities once were the highlight of my church experience, I soon found myself choosing to listen to the service over participating in the activities. This evidently led me, and many other young peoples to drift away from said activities.

The idea of these sessions was brought up in a conversation with Rev. Rachel and she quickly decided to put into action. So far, they have been a great experience and helped me and others to get to know more people within the church community. While these sessions are only just starting off, I'm excited to see what they hold in the future.

HISTORY

IS

CALLING