

Beyond 2020 Vision

A Publication of Morialta Uniting Church

October 2024

Morialta Uniting Church—follow us on Facebook or check out our website at www.morialtauca.org.au

Welcome to our October edition

Colin Cargill, Editor and Helena Begg, Publisher

Our lead article comes from Father Richard Rohr who writes about the three ‘goodnesses’ that come from forgiveness – an awesome coming together of power, both human and divine.

We feature a eulogy for the late Alison Lockett, plus a history of the paraments, which are constant reminders of Alison’s many contributions to MUC.

We provide an update on our November market, with more information about the stalls, and a mix of articles covering the life of MUC, the UCA, the wider church and the community are also included.

The **deadline for the next Vision will be 1st November**. Either drop contributions into the office, or call/email Colin on 0427 122 106 or snout-n-about@bigpond.com

Go well!

Three ‘Goodnesses’

Adapted from an article by Father Richard Rohr who writes of Jesus’ teachings and lived example of forgiveness.

Among the most powerful of human experiences is to give or to receive forgiveness. In fact, two-thirds of the teaching of Jesus is directly or indirectly about this mystery of forgiveness: God’s breaking of God’s own rules. That’s not surprising, because forgiveness is probably the only human action that reveals three ‘goodnesses’ simultaneously! When we forgive, we choose the goodness of others over their faults, we experience God’s goodness flowing through ourselves, and we also experience our own goodness in a way that surprises us. That is an awesome coming together of power, both human and divine.



Eventually, I believe, we will all forgive one another because we have been forgiven, but let’s do it now and not wait until later. Let’s ask for the grace to let go of those grudges and hurts to which we cling. How else will we ever be free?

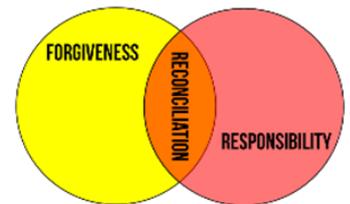
If we don’t “get” forgiveness, we’re missing the whole mystery. We are still living in a world of meritocracy, of quid-pro-quo thinking, of performance and behaviour that earns an award.

Forgiveness is the great thawing of all logic, reason, and worthiness. It is a melting into the mystery of God as unearned love, unmerited grace, the humility and powerlessness of a Divine Lover.

Without radical and rule-breaking forgiveness – received and given – there will be no reconstruction of anything. It alone

breaks down our worldview of trying to buy and sell grace. Grace is certainly the one gift that must always be free, perfectly free, in order for it to work. Without forgiveness, there will be no future. We have hurt one another in too many historically documented and remembered ways. The only way out of the present justified hatreds of the world is grace.

An eagerness and readiness to love is the ultimate freedom and future. When we’ve been included in the spaciousness of divine love, there is just no room for human punishment, vengeance, rash judgment, or calls for retribution. We certainly see none of this small-mindedness in the Risen Christ after his own rejection, betrayal, and cruel death; we don’t see it even from his inner circle, or in the whole New Testament. I really cannot imagine a larger and more spacious way to live. Jesus’s death and resurrection event was a game changer for history.



The Crucified and Risen Christ uses the mistakes of the past to create a positive future, a future of redemption instead of retribution. He does not eliminate or punish mistakes. He uses them for transformative purposes.

People formed by such love are indestructible. Forgiveness might just be the very best description of what God’s goodness engenders in humanity.

About the author: Rohr is the founder of ‘the Center for Action and Contemplation’ which follows the Christian contemplative tradition. Rohr emphasizes “alternative orthodoxy”, a term the Franciscan tradition has applied to itself, referring to a focus on “orthopraxy” – a belief that lifestyle and practice are much more important than mere verbal orthodoxy.

We Just Love to Sing!

Adelaide Male Voice Choir 2.00pm Sunday 13th October at Morialta UC

Invite your friends and enjoy around 1.5 hours of musical fun followed by afternoon tea.

Tickets \$25 available at the door, from the office (8331 9344) or book online at <https://www.trybooking.com/CVYYZ>





Merry Magill Market update

The market will be held on Saturday 16th November from 9am to 12 noon. That's only about six weeks away, so we need to get ourselves organised. This is always our biggest fundraiser for the year and involves a lot of work beforehand and on the day.

Below is a list of stall coordinators and information about what donations they are looking for. Please talk to them if you have questions or would like to help on their stalls. I am happy to help with general questions about the market, and please tell me if I have forgotten anything!

(Helena 0422 383 842)

Cakes, biscuits and preserves

We are combining the Cake Stall with Gourmet Goodies this year and all goods need to be pre-packaged, securely sealed and labelled with ingredients please. Labels will be available from the office. Please deliver your goods on the Friday morning if possible.

We will be happy to have small or large cakes, slices, biscuits, gingerbread, shortbread, jams and pickles donated.

Contact **Joan M (0427 605 589)** or **Margaret C (0419 891 312)** if you have questions, need help, or would like to help with the stall.

Christmas Gifts and Crafts

We will be selling jewellery as well as home-made crafts and gifts. If you have questions about what items can be sold, please talk to **Carole (0407 320 856)**.

Plants

If you plan to plant seedlings to sell you need to do so ASAP. There are pots of various sizes in the courtyard next to the hot water service and potting mix can be supplied on request. Excess garden plants that could be dug up and repotted for sale are also welcome. This should also be done ASAP. If you have questions talk to **Chris (0407 719 870)**, and he would be happy to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer to help on the day.

Books, DVDs and jigsaw puzzles

Books and DVDS wanted in good condition but no textbooks, encyclopedias or magazines and only newish cookbooks please. NO VIDEOS (Savers may take them). Contact **Miranda (0432 933 761)** if you have questions, or would like to help.

Larger women's clothing

Mary T (0409 697 078) will be selling more of the large clothing that she has been given, but we do not wish to receive donations of other clothing. If you are willing to help Mary with the clothes, please contact her.

Morning Tea

Lesley (0438 224 367) is running the morning tea and is looking for volunteers for the kitchen and serving.

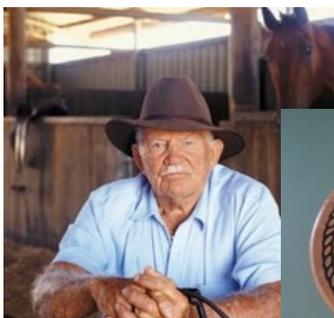
Raffle

If you would like to offer something as a raffle prize or are willing to sell tickets on the day, please talk to **Judith (0403 654 495)**

Sausage Sizzle

Craig (0458 598 616) is running the sausage sizzle and is looking for some helpers on the day please.

Please note that we will NOT be having a bric-a-brac stall this year.



Friendship Group

From Margaret Whibley and Arlene Lomman

At our last meeting we visited the R.M. Williams Prospect Museum and clothes and boots store. Unfortunately, due to many apologies, only 9 people attended.

What a wonderful museum and video presentation. We saw beautifully designed leather footwear, accessories, handbags and hand-plaited belts, as well as lovely shirts, dresses, skirts and jeans. All of this wonderful work has a reputation for excellence.

The museum visit was followed by an enjoyable lunch at the Blair Athol Vili's Cafe.

The next meeting will be held on October 17th in the church hall at 10.00am. After a brief meeting, Arlene and Rhonda will give out Christmas wreaths (yes, it is nearly THAT time again) and help you to decorate them. It should be a fun time for all.

Everyone is welcome to come along.



Alison June Lockett (1949 – 2024)

Adapted from the family eulogy

Alison did not wish for a eulogy – giving a blow-by-blow description of her life. She preferred us to focus on the person rather than the achievements.

However, Alison’s life and personality incorporated so many diverse elements, it is difficult to summarise who she was succinctly. She often referred to herself as a Jill of all trades and mistress of none, but that is a major ‘under-valuing’ of who she was.

Alison had a sharp intellect and a rich, fertile imagination. She was a wife, mother and home maker and contributed enormously to her community, of which she was proud. She was a professional singer and an able administrator with a wicked sense of humour, who thought deeply about important matters. She was fun to be around.

Alison graduated from Adelaide University with a science degree and she loved the logic and intellectual organisational processes of science. However, while teaching science at Seymour College, Alison met and married David, an impoverished music student. They then moved to Armadale where she tried her hand at tutoring students at New England University.

It was a marriage that worked and included lots of fun and laughter and produced 2 beautiful children (Miriam and Cameron) and 3 grandchildren. Alison’s commitment to family was complete, both within the home and out in the community. In 1986 she wrote a musical about the trials of early European inhabitants that was performed by children at Stradbroke Primary. It was called ‘The Smithson Settlers.’

Alison had always been recognised for her mature singing voice and after taking singing lessons she joined State Opera and was a member for many years. She loved the footlights and the smell of grease paint, performing in around 30 operas.

Her singing teacher was also a fine artist and ran summer schools, one of which Alison attended. Over the years she developed a free, imaginative and personal artistic style. Many of us have an ‘Alison Lockett’ hanging on our walls to enjoy and treasure daily.

Alison also took to writing short stories, some containing naughty wit with astute and often merciless observations of human nature.

From birth Alison had a continuous association with the church. She and David were part of the Newton UC, which joined with 3 other churches to form Morialta UC. She served on the Council of Elders for many years, was very involved in the Community Outreach Program and was one of the organisers of Coffee Corner, which became Lunch on Chapel. She was a planner – developing programs and menus; an organiser – developing menus and coordinating volunteer rosters, cooking and making everyone (clients and volunteers) feel comfortable and valued. Alison conducted the choir and singing group and gathered a team together to design and sew paraments for the ‘new’ Morialta UC (see the article overleaf).

Alison also wrote and performed in melodramas that were staged at MUC. Some of us remember and look back with trepidation at how Alison survived as the bride riding from her wedding on the handlebars of a bike held by the groom and best man. The Lord must have been watching!

While serving on Church Council Alison led devotions on many occasions and later she gathered these together into a publication. They contain profound thoughts and ideas pertaining to her faith.

In later years Alison and David made their home at St Peter’s Cathedral, where they were moved by the depth, dignity and sincerity of the worship.

Alison’s warmth, wit, loyalty, generosity and creativity have touched and enriched the lives of many of us.

Vale Alison June Lockett.



Some of the many characters of Alison

Three buildings...

A Reformed Christian was stranded on a deserted island for a long time. When finally rescued by a passing steamer, the crew asked “If you’ve been here alone why are there three

buildings on the island?” The first was his home, he told them. The second was his church, which, he mentioned, he loved and was an enthusiastic member thereof. When they asked about the third building on the island, he said with a grimace “Oh, that’s the church I used to go to.”



The Paraments

The late Alison Lockett was instrumental in the concept, design and making of the paraments that adorn the front of our church. As a tribute to Alison's incredible contributions to the life of the Morialta Community, this is the story behind these magnificent pieces of art.

In February 1994, the Elders' Council established a Task Group, headed by Alison Lockett, with the brief to 'enhance and integrate' the sanctuary area of the Church.

As part of this process, four sets of drapes were designed and made in the liturgical colours of purple, white, green and red. Each set is made up of a fall for both pulpit and lectern, a frontal for the communion table and two ministerial stoles.

Over 25 members of the congregation were involved in this undertaking, including concept development, design, cutting, stitching, hand-working, appliqué, storage and presentation. The project was completed in October 1994.

In October 2005, the Morialta Church Council enthusiastically agreed to the design and construction of a new set of paraments in Advent blue. These were dedicated on Sunday 28 November 2005 in celebration of the Church's 150th Anniversary.

The Designs

The word 'Morialta' derives from the aboriginal Kurna word 'Moriatta,' meaning 'ever-flowing', and was originally used to name the Morialta Falls. Our parish adopted this name in December 1990.

In the Gospel of John we read the words of Jesus as he talks to the woman of Samaria:

"But those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give them will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." – NRSV

Thus, the imagery inherent in the word 'Morialta' is intertwined with the fundamental Christian belief that in Christ we have the well-spring of life, the living water. This then became the starting point in developing designs that reflected both the character of our Church, and the truths of our faith.

In general, the pulpit carries a traditional symbol, the lectern uses imagery reflecting our 'Australian-ness', and the stoles reflect the theme of running, living water. All designs respond to aspects of the liturgical season or the context in which they are used.

The paraments at Morialta are therefore uniquely ours in design and symbolism.

Green represents new life and hope, and is used on the 'ordinary' Sundays of the liturgical year.

All designs in this set use Creation symbols.

Purple represents penitence and humility. It is used during Lent, but can also be used in Advent. While quite different and distinctive in feel, both are seasons of hope and anticipation.

Red represents fire and blood. It is used on Palm Sunday and at Pentecost, as well as on the high occasions of the Church.

Blue represents hope. Advent is the start of the Church year, a season of beginning and new creation. It is a time of anticipation and watchfulness.

White represents joy and purity of soul. It is used on Christmas Day, Easter Day and baptismal days, and so we here celebrate new life.

Paraments used for 'Ordinary' Sundays (the current season)

Green represents new life and hope, and is used on the 'ordinary' Sundays of the liturgical year. All designs in this set use creation symbols.



The Pulpit: The traditional dove of peace speaks of God's covenant of love.

The Communion Table: A stylised waterfall flows around the (Gum) Tree of Life. This strongly links into the imagery inherent in the word 'Morialta'.

The Lectern: Here are the elements of our communion sacrament. The bread and wine are represented by wheat and grapes, both of which have figured strongly in South Australia's agricultural and economic base.

The Stoles: This uses the stylised water elements of the Communion Table design.

Living a good life...

I asked a Roman Catholic padre one day what he would do if it was proved to him that there was no God. He replied that it would make no difference to his work at all. He would continue comforting the sick and bereaved, and giving the dying reassurance that there was one who loved them and that their living had not been in vain.

Donald Hankey, Student in Arms 1916

Multifaith week of climate action

From *Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC)*

During the week from the 14th to the 24th of September, more than 150 places of worship around Australia, including MUC, hung banners calling for action on climate change and renewable energy as part of a week of action by Faith Communities. Cathedrals in Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Newcastle and Perth also hung banners as part of the week organised by ARRCC.

Faith communities everywhere called on the leaders of both major parties to:

- Put an end to new coal and gas projects
- Outline their plan to move away from coal and gas towards clean energy, and provide a date by which they will phase them out completely
- Remove public money out of those industries
- Provide serious financial assistance to our neighbours in the Pacific to keep their heads above water.
- Support a proposed global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty to phase out fossil fuels
- Make a massive historic investment in clean energy that will create jobs in the process

- Love our nearest neighbours by getting behind their calls for a fossil fuel free Pacific
- Fully respect First Nations peoples' rights to protect Country starting by amending the Native Title Act to remove flaws that favour mining interests over Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' rights and provide capacity for Traditional Owners to enact free, prior and informed consent with capacity to refuse mining. Also to remove power to compulsorily acquire native title lands and extinguish native title rights.
- Replace fossil fuels with renewable energy.

Why are we doing this? As people of conscience from many different faith and spiritual traditions, we know this is wrong, and that it's time to take action. We need our elected leaders to agree that this is bigger than politics - and that it's urgent. This is a chance to unite for what we love.

Members of MUC joined the launch at Pilgrim UC on 17th September.



Church Council News – end of September Please Read!

- First, we are delighted to announce that Rev. Dr. Jonathan Barker, well known to many of us, will begin a 6-month contract as our 0.5 time Supply Minister on Sunday 3 November! Peter Trudinger's last Sunday as Supply Minister will be 13 October, and we are very grateful indeed for his leadership over recent weeks.
- We have nothing to report from the Joint Nominating Committee regarding a permanent placement, but work continues on the search.
- Market planning is underway – for a 'mini' market, this time, to fit our capabilities!
- Budget season is upon us; teams will be asked to prepare their submissions very soon.

- We continue to work on implementing an interim restructure of how we manage the church's activities – please consider helping if we tap you on the shoulder!
- Please reserve the date of the next Congregation Meeting – Sunday 1 December – when we will consider the budget for 2025 and a myriad of other important items!
- We are delighted that we can support our friends from AKWAK (Aussies Knitting for War-Affected Kids) with space in the Kooka Rooms and shed, and several prolific knitters! The group packed and sent off a large truck-load of goods last week destined for Syria – more information in next month's edition of Vision.

For more information on any of these items, please ask any member of Council: Margaret Cargill, Rhonda Amber, Carole Lyons, Chris Ayles, Helena Begg or John Secombe.

Guess who came to lunch!

Many thanks to Colin and Margaret, Ray and Margaret, Susanne, Rhonda, Lesley and Judith, who all hosted lunch for surprise guests on Sunday 22nd September. Special thanks to Judith for coordinating the event again this year.

From what we hear everyone went home well fed and enjoyed the company!



News from Kimba

Brett Francis, Chairperson, Kimba UC

Our church enjoyed sharing the service with you today (8 September). Massive congratulations to whoever put the words and music together for God of Gumtree and of Quandong. It was a favourite of ours, but after our musician retired, we could never get the words and music to match. Imagine our excitement when the first words popped up! There were a few excited people here and kudos to Rhonda and Eunice. It was sung with much gusto in Kimba!

Thank you for the welcome, it just makes a service when you are watching on. Frontier Services is close to our heart, with



Pastor Gary recently retiring from them. A team of people came out and did some work after the run of dry years (17, 18, 19.) It meant a lot to many who were feeling pretty down.

I have been searching for a way to keep your church in the loop with the season at Kimba. Hopefully a few photos and some video before harvest in November!

We do hope that your search for ministry goes well soon. Maybe we could stream back to you on occasion! I have seen how they do it at funerals.

Until then know that your investment in virtual church is valued highly in our congregation.

Blessings.

Bringing rural life to the city

Contributed by Brett Francis Chairperson Kimba UC



Like many rural congregations, Kimba U.C. found ourselves without a minister.

We had used the Virtual church concept in the Covid years to continue to worship at home. We found the offering from

Morialta Uniting Church to fit nicely with the way we like to worship. Our numbers had shrunk from 40 to 20 and our ability to employ a minister had also diminished to a part time role.

We have three members who put their hands up to bring a service to us and we are grateful to them for that.

This left one week open so we thought why not stream a service in the church.

We began just using the sermon from Morialta and playing our own hymns but quickly found that our musicians would appreciate a week off too, though often we will do our own prayers. We would email the folk at Morialta when we were going to stream their service and they began to welcome us by name, which gave us a bit of a kick.

Suddenly we were not on our own! We will not agree on everything but we do agree on the style of worship and the contextual interpretation of the scriptures.

We have long said that our aim is to provide a service every week. Then earlier this year we talked about joining forces as Morialta were in a period of supply ministry and we had no recognised ministry agent.

A delegation travelled over and experienced a glimpse of country life and we got to know a little more about city congregations. We found that many had rural roots and found

country life interesting and most of us have family or other links with the city. We also found that the sunsets, the tracks and windmills were attractions to others. We had something to offer.

Could we share a minister? It would be tricky as our town is a 5.5-hour drive from Adelaide. Maybe, it would require the right person. All of sudden we had options.

Fran and I visited the Morialta UC for a service and we got to see in the magic room where the different camera feeds are brought together to stream a service. On the drive home I remarked that it was bit like watching a football game on TV and then seeing a game in real life.

Shortly after we received a call that a person was looking at our profile. We had the conversation, found lots of middle ground and welcomed Pastor Gary Ferguson to our church in a part time role in July.

We are still streaming a service from Morialta about once a month, but now our people are freed up to do more work in the community.

In recognition of the value of virtual church we are trying to find a way to send snapshots of our lives back to Morialta. I believe Pastor Gary has participated in at least one service at Morialta.

Looking forward we would like to be able to stream our service to them, or other churches that might like to join. We could use a phone on a tripod to start but I am sure the Audio-Visual team from Morialta would be able to provide some ideas.

We really believe in the streaming of services as a way forward in this time of shrinking ministry numbers.

As with most good ideas it all started with a generous offer from Morialta UC to post their service online. We thank the team who each week put together the stream, and the congregation for continuing to fund the initiative.

Religion

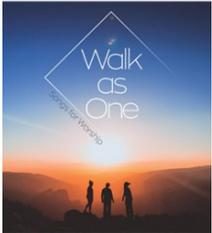
“The task of religion is not to turn us into proper believers; it is to deepen the personal within us, to embrace the power of life, to expand our consciousness, in order that we might see things that eyes do not normally see.”

Bishop John Shelby Spong

Where are you from?

Adapted from an article by Rev Paul Turley in the Wimala Presbytery Newsletter

The most important question we will need to answer in the next few years of the Uniting Church in South Australia is: Where are you from? There are two possible answers, but only one gives us a future. Before we attempt an answer, let's first remember where we are now.



The Uniting Church in 2024 is beyond the end of Christendom – that era when the world turned on the Church's influence and power. And whatever period you pick, the institutional church's place at the heart of Western Culture has been unravelling for a very long time.

In twentieth-century Australia our unravelling was masked with busy Sunday Schools, dances, sports and youth clubs. When we began to be the Uniting Church 47 years ago, we could ignore our numerical and cultural decline for a few decades. We can no longer do that.

The Church is, of course, so much more than any institutional expression. The worldwide, mystical body of Christ, that ever-evolving glowing-like-light mystery, is beyond our explaining and our controlling. The Church as the body of Christ is ours not to engineer; it is ours to enjoy.

The church always needs institutional expression, and we will see and are seeing the end of much that has been familiar to us in this institutional expression of the Church.

So, to our question and our crucial answer. If each of us answers, 'I am from [insert name of congregation] Uniting Church,' we are doomed.

If, however, each of us answers, 'I am from the Uniting Church; the particular local expression of which I am currently a part is [insert name of congregation], we can have some hope.

The Uniting Church is roughly half the size we were twenty years ago and many more of our congregations are going to close in the near future.

If we are members of only one congregation and that congregation goes – Church has gone. If, however, we are members of the worldwide body of Christ, congregations can

close, transform, open, amalgamate, and move sites as seems good to us and the Holy Spirit, and we are Church still.

Does thinking of ourselves as members of something larger than a local congregation make losing a particular local Church less painful? Probably not – for some whose understanding of Church is so local – to a particular piece of property – it is this expression of Church or it is nothing. So, there will be sadness and bitterness.

But change is happening ... and in life the choice is never 'to change' or 'not to change' only to choose how we respond to the change.

Change is happening in the particular institutional expression of the Church that we call the Wimala Presbytery. Ten years from now, how the Uniting Church looks and operates in our part of the Synod will be very different. Some of our congregations will be working far more closely with neighbouring or like-minded congregations; some will have joined together in something like the old parish model; some will have amalgamated; some will be in partnership with other community groups, sharing the management of their properties as community resources; some will have closed.



How we each answer the question, 'Where are you from?' will determine how we respond to change.

We have the same choice as the two brick layers. When asked what he was doing, one replied, 'I'm laying bricks.' The other replied, 'I'm building a cathedral.'

The Path to God

"All religions are a path to arrive at God. They are like different languages to arrive there. But God is God for all."
– Pope Francis

Christian Unity

"When I say 'Christian unity,' I do not mean that Christians should all just agree or even ignore our differences in doctrine and tradition. Instead, what I mean by 'Christian unity' is that when we centre our shared identity in Christ we can generate trust and build relationships that bear real fruit within the church to address challenges in the world."
– Adam Russell Taylor President of Sojourners

Toward Net Zero Emissions by 2040

At its annual meeting in June 2022, the Synod of South Australia adopted the Synod Climate Action Plan with an aim to become a net zero emissions church by 2040.



All congregations are being asked to develop plans to reduce carbon emissions by 5% annually to reach net zero emissions by 2040.

Five UC congregations have measured their emissions over the past 12 months in terms of travel and use of building (power usage and maintenance).

Issues MUC will need to consider for reducing emissions

- Conduct a building audit to identify issues;
- Do economic analysis of our solar panels and consider battery storage and review annually;
- Conduct a transport audit of members' travel;
- Encourage members to join Trees for Life or support greening programs;
- Find an easy-to-use carbon calculator and pick a reputable supplier of certified carbon offsets.
- Purchase offsets annually – an offset may cost from \$4.40 to \$40/ton CO₂/annum

What do people need?

By Benjamin Zephaniah

People need people,
To walk to
To talk to
To cry and rely on,
People will always need people.
To love and to miss
To hug and to kiss,
It's useful to have other people.
To whom to moan
If you're all alone,
It's so hard to share
When no one is there.
There's not much to do
When there's no one but you.
People will always need people.

To please
To tease
To put you at ease,
People will always need people.
To make life appealing
And give life some meaning,
It's useful to have other people.
If you need a change
To whom will you turn.
If you need a lesson
From whom will you learn.
If you need to play
You'll know why I say
People will always need people.

As girlfriends
As boyfriends
From Bombay
To Ostend,
People will always need people-
To have friendly fights with
And share tasty bites with,
It's useful to have other people.
People live in families
Gangs, posses and packs,
Its seems we need company
Before we relax,
So stop making enemies
And let's face the facts,
People will always need people,
Yes
People will always need people

Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah (1958 -)
Benjamin Zephaniah is a performer, musician, actor, and one of the UK's best-known poets. Born in Handsworth, Birmingham, Benjamin began writing and performing at the age of 11, and had his first collection of poetry published when he was 22. He has written more than 30 books for adults and children and is known all over the world for his powerful writing and performances.

Not all free food is created equal!

By the editor

When I was a student at St Andrews College at the University of Sydney, a group of us often attended one of the nearby churches for the Sunday evening service. The choices were the Anglican church (St Barnabas) on Parramatta Road, Broadway, the Newtown Methodist church and Mission, the Newtown Baptist, and the Church of Christ in Marrickville - all within walking distance. We were not so interested in the theology but more in the standard of supper and the songs.

I recently came across an article in *Sojourners* by Jenna Barnett, who obviously was of similar mind to us students, when she declared that she often missed church when growing up but rarely missed quarterly potluck Sundays. As Jesus modelled through his ministry and miracles, free food is an essential motivator.

However as Jenna points out, not all free food is created equal and she goes on to rank American church potluck staples – the good, the bad, and the divisive.

Low on her list is an aluminium container labelled “lemonade,” especially if it's beside the dispenser of “coffee,” aka “coffee-flavoured water.” The deacons thought two packets of Country Time lemonade mix could multiply for the masses, but it is a diluted miracle, at best.

Next on her list is stone soup (take an empty pot, throw in some stones, and stir with passion, adding carrots, potatoes, and more until the soup is big enough to feed the whole town). Next is a mix of potatoes and cheese known as ‘funeral potatoes’. You would think you can't go wrong with a hot intermingling of potatoes and cheese – even if you sprinkle it with cornflakes and call it a casserole labelled ‘party potatoes’.

Being American, grape jelly meatballs is high on the list. One can only assume this dish was the accidental creation of someone preparing for a church potluck. Having added chilli sauce instead of ketchup (tomato sauce), the chef added grape jelly to make it palatable.

Finally there is bread – and given how much Jesus loved bread (eating it, multiplying it, sharing it, transubstantiating into it), it is a sure winner. Pop one of those omnipresent devilled eggs between the two halves of your biscuit to achieve potluck perfection.

Thinking back to my student days home-made sausage rolls served up by the Baptists, the beautiful array of cakes from the ladies at the Church of Christ, the packs of biscuits the Methodists sent us home with, and a glass of red wine on winter nights from St Barnabas, were favourites,

So why not send us your favourite and your least favourite dish that you have encountered at church Potluck Suppers and we will prepare “An Australian list of fine and not so fine foods for potluck occasions”.

Keeping the peace that comes with having a safe place to belong

Adapted from an article by Elijah Buol OAM CEO, Act for Peace

September 21st was International Day of Peace, a day when we pay tribute to the more than 120 million people displaced by conflict, bravely searching for a safe place to call home.

Having been born and raised amidst conflict, I have lived by the grace of those who possess hope, kindness, compassion and humanity. These qualities define who I am today and drive my vision for Act for Peace every day.

Your gifts truly are acts of peace in the world – they help families who are displaced to regain and retain the peace which comes from having a safe place to belong.

“Peace not only is the absence of conflict, but also requires a positive, dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged, and conflicts are solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation.” ~ UN General Assembly's Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace.

