



Uniting Tasmania

Issue No. 215 | June 2023



UNITING IN PRAYER

We are excited to be involved in Uniting in Prayer - 26 days of prayer across the whole Uniting Church - which began on May 28.

All who call the Uniting Church home are invited to take part between Pentecost Sunday and the 46th Uniting Church anniversary on June 22.

Uniting in Prayer comes in the middle of the national [Act2 Project](#) which is grappling with the ferment and change we are experiencing as the Uniting Church, like many other Christian communities around the world.

As we seek to discern the outlines of our future life, this is a chance to pause, holding our Church before God and upholding each other in love and prayer.

There are many ways to be involved across this time, from local worship to the national prayer chain. [A video message](#) for Pentecost Sunday is now available from Assembly President Rev Sharon Hollis. There is also a suite of [worship resources](#) that can be used at any time. [Check out these six ways to participate.](#)

As part of Act2, the Presbytery of Tasmania has been linked with the Presbyteries of New England North West and Southern South Australia, and we are invited to hold those two presbyteries in prayer.

As you gather for these days of prayer, may you and your community sense the refreshment and renewal of the Holy Spirit and your connection to others in our community of Christ.

Living costs crisis



Winter brings colder days and longer nights but the light of Christ continues to shine on our hearts.

We all face challenging times with an increased financial strain on our pockets, but for many among us the rising cost of living means people already in challenging situations face even greater hardship every day - with tough choices to make.

Your spirit of generosity will enable us to help people in many areas of their lives and to offer hope.

Uniting senior manager Maidie works on the frontline helping people in crisis.

"What concerns me is the number of people coming to us for the very first time," she says.

"They haven't needed assistance before but now they're getting financially squeezed. They don't have enough money to live on. They're stressed, and they're ashamed and embarrassed to have to ask for help.

"The key issue is people are finding themselves in poverty. They don't have enough money. Their incomes don't cover their living costs, which are going up and up."

High rents can chew up so much money there's little left for power, fuel, education costs and other essentials.

"Often then people don't have enough money for food," Maidie says. "And they become reliant on services like ours to get food.

"And if you have other sorts of challenges like mental health or family violence, for instance, or drug or alcohol issues, everything gets worse when you don't have enough money."

People in crisis are suffering more than ever. Uniting is receiving increased calls for help from right across Tasmania.

To donate to the Winter Share Appeal [click here](#).

Uniting

REFLECTION

BETHLEHEM

From Graham in Bethlehem, a wanderer on the Way. To the saints who are in Tasmania, who are faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.



*O not so little town of Bethlehem,
How noisy do we find you,
Your streets are seldom dark or silent.*

Here in Bethlehem, reality trumps sentiment every time: whether you're waiting for ages in a long line for a superficial crouch and peer into the supposed place of Jesus's birth beneath the Church of the Nativity, or overshadowed by the wall and turrets at the checkpoint.

Here, Banksy paints a parable on the wall and provides The Walled Off Hotel with the worst view in the world.

Here, rubbish piles in the street because the municipality doesn't have the money or the will to clear it.

Here, the cattle grid of the checkpoint processes human beings between two sections of an apartheid divide. For here is contested ground; here is

occupied territory. Here, taxi drivers jostle for tourist income.

Whether you hold with Matthew that Bethlehem was the original home town of the Holy Family or you hold with Luke the journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem for taxation and birth, this city survives by trading on its tradition.

Whether the journey compelled by power was from Nazareth to Bethlehem or from Bethlehem to Egypt and on to Nazareth, it reminds us of this week's 75th Anniversary of the Nakba.

The Nakba or catastrophe which involved the destruction of over 500 Palestinian villages and the forced removal of 700,000 Palestinians. This is still the root cause of a multi-generational refugee disaster that feeds ongoing discontent.

Such things would never happen in Australia, would they?

JUNE
15

God's gift: the changing face of the Uniting Church

Join an online conversation hosted by the Uniting Church Presbytery of Tasmania.

When: 7-9pm, then the third Thursday evening of each month, via Zoom.

Join: from your own device, or with a friend who uses Zoom, or as a local church hub.

Hear: Rev Dev Anandarajan, Synod Intercultural Leadership Development Coordinator, exploring the intercultural identity and ethos of the UCA.



Share: your own stories in small breakout groups with other local church leaders and members around Tasmania, and beyond.

Reflect: and learn more about diverse experiences of the UCA as a multi and inter-cultural church, the challenges and joys, theology and faith. Racism is not God's way: we invest in relationships as expressions of our faith in God and our journey as disciples of Jesus Christ. As the Uniting Church, we invite deeper questions and engage conversations that help shape our understanding of who God is, and what that means as we live that out in faithful communities together.

Who: everyone – ministers and local ministry leaders, members and adherents – interested in conversations about the intercultural identity of the UCA and how we encourage each other with care and respect for the diversity of the Church as God's gifts to each other and to the whole world.

Next month (July 20): hear from Rev Valentina Satvedi Leydon, Launceston Pilgrim UC.

Session input will be recorded for you to Hear again, or if you miss a session.

Budget response



The Uniting Church in Australia has welcomed the clear commitment in the Federal Budget to deliver support to those who are most vulnerable in our community.

Assembly President Rev Sharon Hollis said it was pleasing to see significant investments in the budget for rent assistance, single parenting payments, bulk billing to improve access to GPs, energy price relief and the aged care workforce, while noting some measures fell short.

"We are thankful for the priority given by the Albanese Government to address cost-of-living pressures facing many Australians and a range of measures that will support vulnerable Australians," Rev Hollis said.

Rev Hollis acknowledged the increase to JobSeeker but said an additional \$2.85 a day would not lift people out of poverty.

[Click here](#) to read more.

JUNE 22-24

Act2 is a project of the Uniting Church Assembly, across the whole of the UCA, discerning and shaping the future Uniting Church together: *Grounded in our faith, attentive to the Spirit. fuelled by prayer, discerning together.* Every congregation, Church Council and individuals have been invited to contribute.

A summary of what the Act2 team has been hearing can be [found here](#). Bethany Broadstock, from the Act2 Project Unit, will attend the Presbytery meeting at Longford UC on June 24, and the three consultation conversations below.

Bethany will:

- share some input on the Act2 project and key questions/issues.
- engage in conversation about local perspectives on the key questions/issues.
- seek feedback for the Act2 team on the potential directions and priorities for the Uniting Church into the future.

You are invited to contribute your voice and your views through one of the following Act2 consultations within Tasmania.

June 22, 6:30pm. Zoom conversation with an open invitation for anyone interested in the UCA's future. BYO refreshments. Please [RSVP](#) to UCA Tasmanian Office for the Zoom link.

June 23, 6:30pm. Conversation in Hobart region with an open invitation for anyone interested in the UCA's future. Pizzas, tea and coffee provided. Venue details are still being confirmed. Please [RSVP](#) to UCA Tasmanian Office for catering purposes.

June 24: 6:30pm. Conversation at Devonport UC with an open invitation for anyone interested in the UCA's future. Pizzas, tea and coffee provided. Venue: Devonport UC, 12 Forbes St. Please [RSVP](#) to UCA Tasmanian Office for catering purposes.

More information will be shared in coming weeks with details of the consultations in each space.

June - July UPCOMING

JUNE

06 JUNE, 10AM
**PASTORAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE MEETING**

12 JUNE
**PUBLIC HOLIDAY,
OFFICE CLOSED**

13 JUNE, 11.30AM
**RESOURCE AND
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

23 JUNE, 10AM
**PRESBYTERY STANDING
COMMITTEE**

24 JUNE, 10AM
**PRESBYTERY MEETING,
LONGFORD UC**

JULY

04 JULY, 10AM
**PASTORAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE**

11 JULY, 11.30AM
**RESOURCE AND
DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

27 JULY, 10AM
**PRESBYTERY
STANDING
COMMITTEE**



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