



The United Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

# Journey

October 2016



## *Whatever happened to the Sabbath?*

DISABILITY, FAITH  
AND INCLUSIVITY

IVEN HEWETT:  
STRENGTH FOR GOD AND GOLD



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### Interim redress procedure

The Uniting Church in Queensland's interim redress procedure is now available for survivors of past child sexual abuse that occurred in Uniting Church affiliated institutions or entities.

The Uniting Church encourages survivors to seek assistance in determining the outcomes that best suit their needs and to access the interim redress materials at [ucaqlld.com.au/interim-redress](http://ucaqlld.com.au/interim-redress).

To make a claim or for more information phone 1800 874 995 or email [UCredress@changeutures.org.au](mailto:UCredress@changeutures.org.au).

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QUEENSLAND SYNOD

# Editor's note

This edition we're unveiling some new sections which we hope bring a fresh dimension to the magazine: "Humans of UCA", a look at the wide spectrum of people that make up the church, and "Whatever happened to", a trip down memory lane to examine faith-themed concepts that may have been given heavy focus in the past but have since been forgotten or transformed for the 21st century.

In our inaugural "Whatever happened to" (page 6), Dianne Jensen investigates the Sabbath, its historical basis and how 21st century communities are responding to the challenges of keeping Sunday holy in a world where the temptations of entertainment, sport and commercial services are ubiquitous. I eagerly await letters on your own experiences with the Sabbath and future topics we should put under the spotlight.

Our first Human of UCA is retired Chinchilla pastor Iven Hewett and his achievements in powerlifting at age 70 and contributions to the life of the church are an inspiration to everyone. In a refreshingly down-to-earth conversation (page 14) we discuss faith, fitness and what tips he has for others looking to improve their health and wellbeing.

We're on the lookout for Uniting Church Queenslanders for future iterations of "Humans of UCA" so please send us your suggestions. We often hear stories of the enriching benefits of diversity and multiculturalism to faith and community but I believe it is important to ensure that celebrating diversity includes the achievements and contributions of say, heterosexual, Caucasian males as much as anyone else: our main criteria is Uniting Church people with an interesting history so regardless of their cultural or ethnic background, we'd love to hear who you think we should interview next.

Finally, there are many things we tend to normalise during attendance at church—say frequently bowing our heads which prevents lip-readers from following or the width of an entrance which may not accommodate someone in a wheelchair—but with disability impacting around one in five Australians, it is worth reflecting whether your church is an inviting place or hostile terrain for those who already may struggle with marginalisation.

Sue Hutchinson's absorbing look at disability and faith (page 10) is a frank reminder that church inclusivity must extend to all of God's creatures including those with an intellectual or physical disability

**Ben Rogers**  
Cross-platform editor

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# Journey



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Cover: The St Andrew's Presbyterian Fellowship Association group photograph taken on the steps of St Andrew's, circa 1952. Photo: St Andrew's Uniting Church

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Closing date for editorial and advertising for November *Journey* is Monday 17 October. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 6 November.



# Standing in solidarity for safe ministry

## Monday Midday Prayer

*Loving God,  
We pray that vulnerable people will be safe in our communities and able to encounter your love for them in Christ  
Amen*

**October, the month the jacarandas come out, when students see the signs and start studying for exams, when storms roll across the land.**

It's the month when we start planning for the end of the year and look forward to what we will focus on in the new year.

The Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will be finishing its public hearings by the end of November. It will report to the federal government next year.

Last month the Uniting Church in Queensland launched an interim redress procedure so that survivors of child sexual abuse in our care can be heard and we can respond in good faith.

I was heartened to hear that both the Queensland government and the federal government have finally made some indication that they will respond positively to the Commission's call for a national redress scheme for those survivors who suffered abuse while in an institution's care.

The Synod has also been implementing our Safe Ministry with Children program across the church. This is so that this kind of abuse will not happen again in our life; that we will be communities where vulnerable people are safe and are able to encounter God's love for them in Jesus Christ.

Implementing such programs in congregational life is challenging. They create greater demands on already over-committed people. It is a space for others to step in and support and help those people who are running programs for children and young people.

Across the church we need to deal with reactions such as "It couldn't happen here!" and "This Safe Ministry with Children stuff is too much bureaucracy".

The sober truth is that it has happened in our churches, in our Sunday schools, in our youth groups, in our schools and agencies, and we need to order our lives and shape our ministries to prevent abuse.

The Royal Commission website presents some stories of survivors in a way that helped me understand and appreciate more fully what some people have been through, and how it has affected their lives. These stories are not for the faint-hearted. They are confronting. Yet they need to be heard.

As I heard them, I found a stronger commitment, a deeper reason, a greater desire to be part of a church that does what it can for survivors and does all it can to order its life so that people are safe.

Jesus in his ministry identified himself with children, with those who had no power, no standing in his society. He asks that we stand in such solidarity also.

**Rev David Baker**  
Moderator, Queensland Synod

For more information about the Royal Commission's stories of survivors visit [childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/your-stories](http://childabuseroyalcommission.gov.au/share-your-story/your-stories)

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(L—R) Paul Simpson from Pittwater Uniting Church, New South Wales, and Mike Wardrop, intergenerational discipleship developer, South Australian Synod.  
Photo: Dianne Jensen

# Ready, set, jump!

It will take a leap of faith for our churches to grow. That’s the message from the inaugural Uniting Leaders conference held at the end of August at Newlife Uniting Church, Robina. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

**Lay and ordained leaders across the generations were encouraged to step up and out into new models of leadership at the three-day Uniting Leaders conference (UL16) on the Gold Coast, an initiative of the South Australian and Queensland Synods and Newlife Uniting Church.**

Guest speaker Karen Wilson, executive minister of Riverview Church in Perth, used the analogy of parachute jumping to illustrate the importance of venturing beyond the enclaves of traditional ministry.

“For our churches to grow it’s going to take faith-filled leaders, strong and bold and courageous leaders who hold to the truth, who step into places others won’t go,” she said.

“We are never meant to do ministry alone, we are meant to do it in God’s spirit.”

A panel on Gen Y leaders discussed the challenge of participatory leadership, doing ministry “with” and not “for” young people.

One panel member asked, “Are we focused on getting young people into our services or on getting them into mission?”

She added, “The church is not going to be saved by young people, it’s going to be saved by Jesus.”

Rev Kynan Brookes, senior minister at Hope Valley Uniting Church in South Australia, spoke about perseverance.

“Staying the course is one of the greatest challenges to the leadership role. Perseverance is knowing how to climb the mountain again and again,” he said.

“Learn how to stay encouraged ... ‘Christ is thy mentor’ means more than reading scripture, [it’s] knowing Jesus in a deep way and allowing him to speak into the context and to read your heart.”

The conference was coordinated by a network of Uniting Church evangelical leaders (EL250), including Rev Nigel Rogers, CEO/general secretary of the South Australian Synod.

Nigel believes that there are good reasons why leadership is on the Uniting Church’s agenda.

“We are used to talking about ‘the leader’ as someone who has to be all things to all people as opposed to leadership being a collaborative responsibility. We talk about every member ministry in the Uniting Church, so this is about finding new expressions, talking about leadership rather than the leader,” said Nigel.

“When we get the leadership responsibilities right it allows us to say, ‘You’ve got a place, you’ve got a path to serve in the life of the church,’ and it creates a deeper understanding of leadership.”

*If you are interested in this story, you might also enjoy the Church Unchained podcast episode on simple church. Visit [soundcloud.com/uniting-church-queensland](http://soundcloud.com/uniting-church-queensland)*

“  
Staying the course is one of the greatest challenges to the leadership role. Perseverance is knowing how to climb the mountain again and again

**Rev Kynan Brookes**



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# Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy

Sunday-best clothes, church, roast lunches and lazy afternoons are Sunday memories for many older Christians. **Dianne Jensen** explores whatever happened to the Sabbath.

**For most Australians, the measured pace of Sunday has given way to the frenetic demand for unlimited access to entertainment, sport and commercial services. We are willing participants, giving way to the insidious tug to constantly check our mobile devices in case the world has moved on without us.**

“

In our 24/7 society, where many essential services must operate around the clock we value the spirit or principle of the Sabbath, not the letter of the day

**Rev Paul Clark**

And yet, like the images of lost childhood, the concept of the Sabbath still evokes a sense of longing for peace and renewal. In our secular world, the move to reclaim the Sabbath has become countercultural—a bold assertion that we were made for more than relentless consumption.

## Radical roots

A regular day of rest is a Judaic legacy, one of the commandments delivered by Moses to the Israelites after their escape from Egypt. The Sabbath (which Jews celebrate on Saturday, along with groups like Seventh-Day Adventists) was a statement of identity and a sign of a new covenant with God.

Jesus ran afoul of the strict legal code of Sabbath observance by gathering grain and healing people, declaring that “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath”. (NIV Mark 2:27)

Sunday became a universal day of rest when the Roman emperor Constantine I introduced regulations against Sunday labour in 321 but it was the Scottish and English Reformers such as John Knox who introduced the idea that Christians were bound to a specific code. This “Sabbatarianism” is enshrined in the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) and holds that not only is work forbidden on Sunday but also “works, words, and thoughts” about “worldly employments and recreations”.

John Wesley was uncompromising in his polemic “A Word to a Sabbath-breaker”. But along with his denunciation of those who imagined that morning worship might reasonably be followed by an afternoon at the pub, Wesley reminded his followers that the Sabbath is a day of grace, made for mankind. He wrote, “For thy own sake He demands a part of thy time to be restored to Him that gave thee all.”

In other words, the Sabbath is good for us.

## You can't do that on Sunday!

At 94, Lionel Rackley's early memories centre on his local Methodist church. A long-time member of St Andrew's Uniting Church in Brisbane, Lionel now attends Redcliffe Uniting Church's “Heart and Soul” Thursday service.

“We spent the Sabbath pretty much at church. The morning service used to be at 11 o'clock and in the afternoon it was Sunday School and often we went to night service as well. The Order of Knights were strong at our church and we were all involved in the Sunday School in some way or another.”

Lionel's conventional life was interrupted by the second World War, when he joined the air force and flew with the Royal Air Force on bombing raids over Germany. On his return, Lionel struggled with restrictions which had once seemed normal.

“I got home and I'd spent several years bombing people and killing people on Saturdays and Sundays and any other day that anybody said. I was home this Sunday afternoon ... so I said to my mother, I'll mow the side lawn for dad, it'll save him a bit of time. She didn't say anything and I got the mower out. When Dad came home I copped a verbal lacing for mowing the lawn on Sunday. To me, if it's good enough to kill people on Sunday, [then] I'm not doing any harm mowing the lawn, but he didn't see it that way.”

Not surprisingly, the post-war generation started to wonder why they couldn't play sport, go to the shops, and watch films on Sundays. Restrictions were gradually whittled away, although Sunday trading remains a fraught area between small and big business and workers.

## Not just another day

Pastor Donna Muston ministers in Biloela, a regional town where church commitments have always been balanced against the realities of life on the land. It's even harder now, she says.

“In many regional communities, where shift work and the recent innovation of fly-in fly-out or drive-in drive-out is as much a part of the rhythm of life as seasons are for the farming community, it becomes challenging in terms of





which day you nominate as the Sabbath day for rest and worship. As there are numerous shift rosters to consider, any day of the week might be considered a Sabbath day.”

Traditional Sunday worship endures in spite of the pressures of work and distance, says Donna, although there is an acceptance that worship may have a different shape.

### One in the Lord

Sunday remains a special day in Pacific Islander church communities. Rev Lu Senituli, minister at Beenleigh Region Uniting Church and member of the Assembly’s Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Reference Group points out that shops and businesses in his boyhood home of Tonga are still closed on Sundays.

That reverence is shared by most Pacific Island nations and is an enduring element of the cultural traditions of these church communities in Australia, he adds.

“The issue of addressing the Sabbath in Australia is quite complex because it’s not only about how other cultures have kept the Sabbath but it’s the matrix of culture and tradition, of dislocation, and the migrant experience of learning to sing the Lord’s song in a foreign place.”

And although congregations often have services throughout the week, Sunday remains the pinnacle of worship, Lu says.

“This a holy day, a day in which they are to stop from all their works and be present to God and on that day, you’ll notice everyone is in their most immaculate attire, for there is a deep respect for God and the holiness of the sacred space.”

### Staying in touch

Rev Paul Clark, minister at Redcliffe Uniting Church, is well aware of the competing claims on young families. Even so, he reckons the Sabbath concept is worth reclaiming.

“In our 24/7 society, where many essential services must operate around the clock we value the spirit or principle of the Sabbath, not the letter of the day. That is, to experience abundant life we need to build rest into our week, whatever day it takes place,” says Paul.

“The challenge for many families who have to work on weekends, have sport on Sundays and are simply busy all week such that Sunday is the only sleep-in or space, is that worship is seen as an interruption or competition to scarce family or rest time. Many families do want to get to church but only manage it once a month. I say, even if you can only get there once a month, make that a priority.”

Paul suggests that churches can support families by remaining connected with the less-frequent attenders.

“If you can make it easy for families to stay connected through Facebook, an app, emails,

online sermons, even sporadic visiting, this helps heaps! For many, online church is becoming as real and important to them as actual church,” says Paul.

### Reclaiming the Sabbath

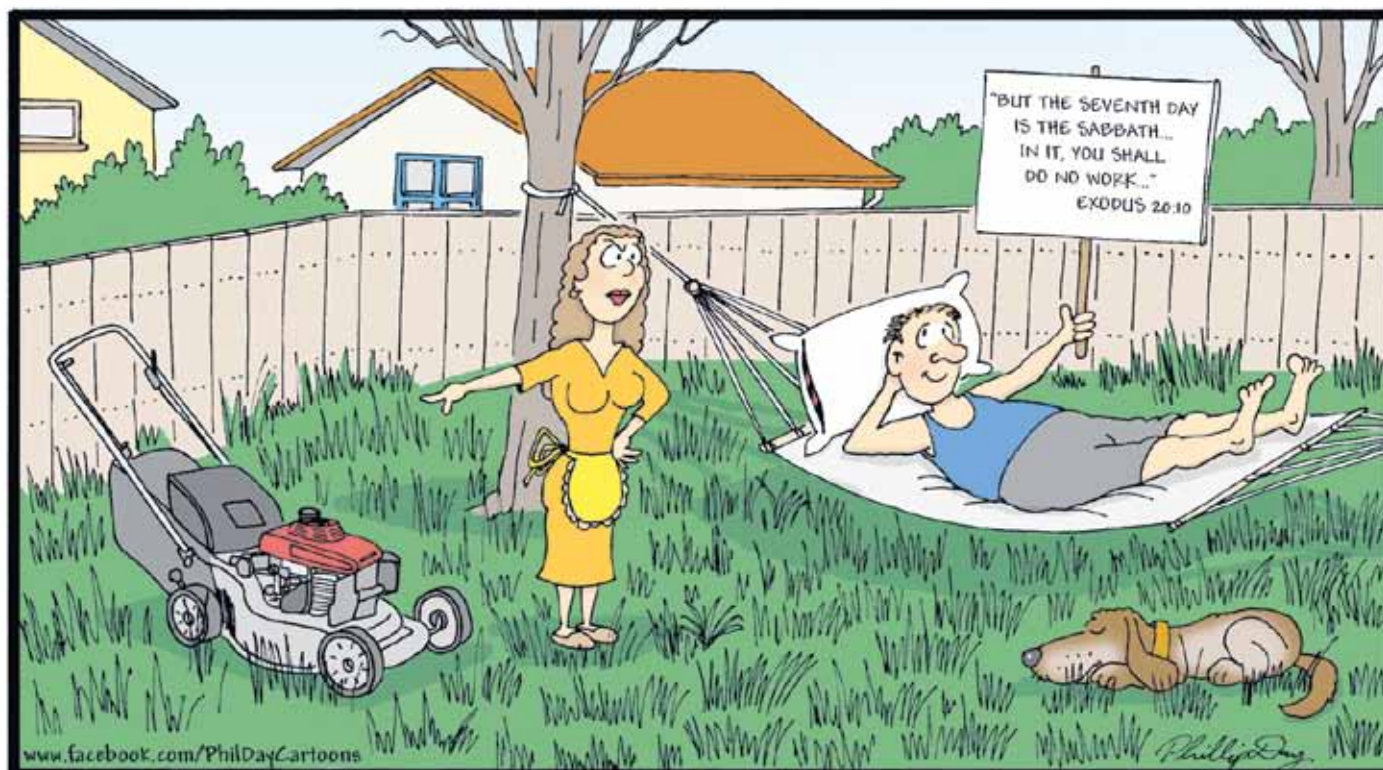
Moderator Rev David Baker believes that Australia has fallen into the 24/7 commercial carousel by default.

“The most important social justice tool is that people have work, but at the same time we cannot let it run our lives, we must manage the beast somehow. But things turn and so I think that’s why we hear the voices on the edges talking about Sabbath again,” says David.

“The question to me is, how does society hear the other narrative or get some weight against what seems like the tsunami—the unbridled need for the economy to be operating and for everyone to be available 24/7? Where is the power that mitigates that today?”

Reclaiming the Sabbath means that we must reclaim our sense of “holy”, he suggests.

“‘Holy’ has in the west meant not doing anything fun and yet ‘holy’ should be about that deep sense of shalom, peace, of joy—the sense of peace that comes from a life that’s ordered, a life that is not subject to pressure but has managed the pressures so that life is paced. ‘Holy’ is like ‘whole’, it’s about integrity, the capacity to enjoy and appreciate.”



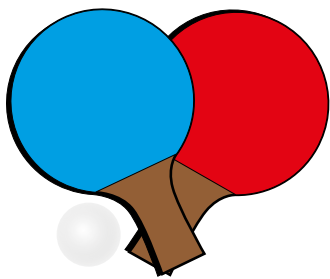




14 year old Isaak is picking up the paddle to raise funds for victims of human trafficking and exploitation.  
Photo: Adrian Rowse

# Ping pong power against injustice

It may be a perennial party favourite but ping pong is at the heart of a nation-wide campaign to help end the exploitation and trafficking of young people throughout South East Asia. **Ben Rogers** reports on the Ping Pong-A-Thon and one Uniting Church teenager picking up the paddle to make a difference.



**The 2015  
Ping Pong-  
A-thon  
had 1500  
participants  
raising over  
\$200 000**

**In 2011, a group of Aussies endured a marathon 24 hour ping pong session to raise funds for Thai organisations helping victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation. The final donation totalled \$10 000 and they decided to make the concept an annual event under the moniker, Ping Pong-A-Thon.**

Since then, the campaign has raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for multiple organisations in South East Asia to bring hope to victims of exploitation and human trafficking, with the 2015 event getting 1500 participants across the nation to raise over \$200 000.

Running throughout October, individuals or teams can host their own ping pong event or participate at a number of venues throughout Queensland, and then get sponsorship from friends and family for a minimum of three hours of playing time.

For Brisbane teen Isaak, this will be his second year involved after a chance encounter with some participants at the Surrender conference in 2015 introduced him to the "Pong" as it's informally known.

"Mum took me to the conference in Melbourne last year," Isaak says. "I saw a ping pong table so I thought I would go play; I was there a lot over the three days and the guys spoke with me about what it was all about and I just thought it was something I needed to do."

And while the Pong is open to everyone, the event has traditionally been aimed at engaging males, who play a major part in the problem of sexual exploitation. For 14 year old Isaak, the fundraiser's emphasis on capturing the attention of men and boys was certainly a factor in getting involved.

"This was something for the guys," Isaak explains on why he chose this particular cause. "It was something that made a difference to stopping people trafficking, particularly sex trafficking which is just not right."

The tangible difference of last year's fundraising efforts to the lives of South East Asians has included dozens of Thai teenagers from red-light districts transitioning into alternative employment and receiving health services; educational workshops being hosted in Cambodia to teach locals about issues of sexual abuse; and two motorcycles were purchased and are being used to rescue exploited children in Laos.

For those considering picking up the paddle this year to help end trafficking and exploitation, Isaak has a simple message which should already be familiar to those who wear a certain sportswear giant's clothing: "Just do it!"

For more information on the Ping Pong-A-Thon or to register visit [pingpongathon.com](http://pingpongathon.com)





Jean Pyle chatting to a parent while families wait for children at dance classes  
Photo: Supplied

# Fostering family fun at Stanthorpe

Sometimes little acts of hospitality go a long way to strengthening the community.

**Ashley Thompson** talks to Granite Belt Uniting Church minister Rev Kaye Ronalds and Stanthorpe Uniting Church member Jean Pyle about their efforts to reach out to young families.

**Since Easter last year, the Stanthorpe congregation has been providing weekly hospitality to the parents and siblings of young dancers using their church hall, with funding assistance for outdoor seating and shade provided by Redcliffe Uniting Church's Neil James Grant Bequest.**

Organised by four core volunteers, Rev Kaye Ronalds explains, "There are always people on the site and families coming and going and children hanging around, and we decided that that was really a mission opportunity."

With offerings of tea, coffee, Milo and biscuits, Kaye says they try to keep it simple so the focus is not on the food but on fostering relationships and building a family atmosphere.

"What we've noticed is that people are talking to us because they're getting to know us," says Kaye who moved to Stanthorpe in late 2014 after completing her term as moderator.

"One mother was talking about her experience of pregnancy loss, so we were just listening to her story and supporting her as she was talking about that very deeply moving part of her life.

"Another mum was telling us last year about her father that had died after a period of time in hospital and so it's also an opportunity as we've built the relationship to check in and see how they're going."

Volunteer Jean Pyle says the congregation also uses their "dance class hospitality" outreach as an opportunity to raise awareness of their family church service held once a month.

"We've taken a softly-softly approach to start with," says Jean. "We felt that relationships were most important and then hopefully we'll go further as time progresses."

While this subtle approach has not yet seen families walking through the church doors on a Sunday morning, Kaye says it's all about "making the church open and accessible" to families who have "gotten out of the habit" of attending Sunday services.

"Because the church is open the children move about the church and are feeling comfortable with that space so that it doesn't seem very strange," she says.

For Kaye it's another point of connection with the community as some of the children are also in her Religious Instruction class at the local school. "They say to me 'Oh see you tomorrow afternoon Mrs Ronalds', so there's that kind of cross-over if you like."

Jean was reminded that small is beautiful and it doesn't take much to reach out when, "last year the mums clubbed together and paid for all our tickets to go to the end of the year ballet concert.

"To me that says we really appreciate what you're doing."

*How does your church connect congregation and community?  
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There are always people on the site and families coming and going and children hanging around, and we decided that that was really a mission opportunity

**Rev Kaye Ronalds**

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# From exclusion to embrace: disability, faith and inclusivity

Most Australians will either experience disability themselves or have direct contact with someone who has, but are churches equipped to be an inclusive environment for everyone? Sue Hutchinson examines disability, faith and what churches can do to be welcoming to all.

“Whether or not we are capable of seeing a profoundly disabled [person] as a human being depends very much on how we understand our own being as humans”  
**Dr Hans Reinders**

**According to the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, around one in five people in Australia have a disability and six per cent have severe or profound disability. About 12 per cent of the population provide informal care to an older person or someone with disability or a long-term condition. The data demonstrates disability really is everyone's business.**

The likelihood of living with disability increases greatly with age. As one participant with significant disability attending the recent Exclusion and Embrace conference in Melbourne laughingly stated, “Stay alive long enough and you too will experience disability!”

Dr Hans Reinders, professor of Ethics and Mental Disability at the Free University of Amsterdam, notes in his book *Receiving the Gift of Friendship*, “Given the current role models that dominate our contemporary culture ... we desperately need countercultural experiences that expose the myth of humans as forever youthful, ideally attractive, aggressively mobile, and physically and mentally strong.”

## **Challenging perceptions**

Bill Gaventa, director of the Summer Institute on Theology and Disability and the Collaborative on Faith and Disability based in Texas, says that disability challenges us to profoundly reflect to gain “deeper understanding not of disability, but of who we all are”.

The question of what meaningful life is has significance for how we view people with disability. This is particularly relevant for people with profound intellectual disability who, by their very disability, are seen as unable to do the valued things others do like think, reason and contribute. Perhaps this is one reason why society values their lives so little.

But what is it that makes us really human? Often we value ourselves and others only for what we can do, the

roles we fulfil and the relationships we are in; however, as Christians there is something profound and important missing here.

“There is absolutely nothing important about my being if it were not for the love of God,” writes Dr Reinders. “Whether or not we are capable of seeing a profoundly disabled [person] as a human being depends very much on how we understand our own being as humans.”

The doctrine of “Imago Dei” says that we are created in the divine image, and Dr Reinders points out “it must surely mean that I am created in God's love, since love is what defines the God in whom Christians believe.”

Bill Gaventa addressed the Exclusion and Embrace conference on the topic, “God created the world, and it is good; disability is part of God's creation, and it is good.”

Illness, impairment and disability are simply part of the human condition. To think otherwise denies people's full humanity.

## **Towards an inclusive society**

Many of us remember when people with disability were hidden from our sight, in large institutions or even at home. For years now, integration in society has been the big aim and people with disability now live in our communities. But do they have a sense of belonging?

Unless we use deliberate strategies to make sure people with disability are truly included, far too often it does not happen and tragically they remain isolated, even though surrounded by many other people.

For those with a significant intellectual disability, life can be structured around only two types of relationships: with family if they are lucky and with people who are paid to support them.

They often lack genuine friendships and people who freely choose to spend time with them. In other words,





(L—R) Uncle John Baxter, Mary Henley-Collopy and Meredith Allen attended the Exclusion and Embrace conference in Melbourne.  
Photo: Sue Hutchinson

they are located “in” the community, but they are certainly not “of” the community.

### An “open church” open to all?

There is no question that churches can be important communities for people with disability—they are, after all, made up of people and there are wonderful possibilities for relationships and opportunities for belonging.

But there does seem to be a pronounced gap between the numbers of people with disability in the general population and in Australian churches. The 2011 National Church Life Survey indicated that under eight per cent of people attending Christian churches around Australia identified as having a disability and more than 18 per cent had a disabled family member.

Generally churches would express an openness to people with disability coming along but too often they don’t come, so what is behind the disconnect?

People with disability have often had unfortunate experiences of church with some attendees feeling unwelcome or excluded, or that they’ve been treated as children. They may not have even been able to follow the service due to vision or hearing impairment.

Karenne Hills is a mother of two sons with disability, and in the past she was completely marginalised within her church community and felt entirely unsupported.

For both her and her family there are important factors when seeking a new church community.

“I’m longing for a church family where I can just be accepted, to be different, that I can contribute wherever I can and have some really deep conversations,” says Karenne.

For the needs of her children, she is looking for a place where they are welcome and plugged into social activities and can build a network of friends.

### Seek and you shall find answers

Every person with disability is different and the best way to find out what would be helpful to enhancing their experience of church is simply to ask.

Dr Damian Palmer is a sessional lecturer at United Theological College in Sydney. He and his wife have two children, one of whom, Bethany, is a teenager with profound intellectual disability.

“There’s no wrong question, I may say there are some wrong statements but I can’t imagine there’s a wrong question,” says Damian.

“I’m always ready to answer someone’s question about Bethany, or life with Bethany, or what that means or why does she do this, or why that.”

He recommends families share with congregations what is behind a person’s unusual behaviour. For example Bethany likes to touch people on the backside because she loves the patterns on the fabric. Damien explained the behaviour and now people cope with this and even talk to her about the fabric because they understand.

Without deliberate thought and planning on the part of faith communities, visible and unintended barriers can be there, sending a message of exclusion.

To combat this, audit tools are available to help assess your church facilities and practices, from the obvious like physical access to the less obvious like everyone standing for prayer and blocking the view of someone using a wheelchair.

Meredith Allen is highly regarded across the world in the field of augmentative and alternative communication and has lived with obvious physical disability since a young age. She doesn’t have functional speech and a communication program on her tablet gives her a voice.

Meredith attends a Uniting Church in Melbourne, recently renovated to make it fully accessible, and has a powerful message for other congregations: “The church has to adapt—we either grow and develop, or we die.”

To purchase the Accessible Church Manual from CBM visit [cbm.org.au/luke14/order](http://cbm.org.au/luke14/order)

To view the Presbyterian Church USA’s online guide Congregational Audit of Disability Accessibility & Inclusion visit [pcusa.org/resource/congregational-audit-disability-accessibility-incl/](http://pcusa.org/resource/congregational-audit-disability-accessibility-incl/)

## What **not** to say about someone’s disability ... **ever!**

**Do not say** “It’s God’s will” or “It’s all part of God’s plan”.

**Never imply** that disability is punishment for sin.

**Do not** relate the disability to faith, such as “a test of faith”, or due to a lack of faith or insincere prayer.

**Do not** say that you will pray for healing, unless specifically asked to.

**Do not** say that God made the person special by giving them the disability.

# Letters from Longreach



Hope was on the horizon when winter rains brought smiles back to the faces of western Queenslanders. Ashley Thompson checks in with Longreach Uniting Church minister Rev Jenny Coombes.

**Although 80 per cent of Queensland remains drought declared, the Longreach community has had their spirits lifted by the wettest winter on record.**

“  
The big thing  
that comes  
through from  
all our graziers  
is the sense  
that they know  
that others in  
Australia are  
thinking about  
them and  
that they are  
not alone

**Rev Jenny Coombes**

“Since the rain has come, morale has lifted enormously,” says Rev Jenny Coombes. “The graziers know they have a long road ahead but there’s just that feeling that this is the beginning of the end of the drought.”

In the two and a half years Jenny has been placed in Longreach, her congregation has helped distribute over \$200 000 to struggling farmers primarily through gift cards.

“The big thing that comes through from all our farmers is the sense that they know that others in Australia are thinking about them and that they are not alone,” she says.

Overwhelmed with support from churches of all denominations along the east coast of Australia, Jenny has been a grateful intermediary of cash donations, prayers and notes of encouragement.

While there is good intention behind the donation of physical goods such as hay bales, she says that at times these gifts have caused more harm than good where weeds and mould are found—and also feeds into the misconception that “the only people that are being affected by the drought are the people on the land.”

“It affects the whole community so whatever people do it needs to be based on helping everyone,” she says speaking

of the businesses, community groups and jobs affected. “It’s a real domino effect.”

Moreover, visiting Longreach and supporting its tourism may be one of the most valuable gifts non-locals can give as it’s one of the industries currently keeping rural Queensland afloat.

“The outback itself is amazing: the size of it, the openness, the vastness ... people in the city don’t realise how many stars there are and just how big the sky is,” says Jenny.

On the recipient end, Longreach congregation has received numerous thank you cards and letters from farming families eager to thank those who have donated.

“Congratulations on the wonderful work you are doing to help individuals and businesses during the drought,” wrote in one recipient. “Please pass on our gratitude to the donors and fundraisers!” penned another.

The one that stands out to Jenny most was a card accompanied by a couple’s five-month-old son’s hand print which read “I got the [gift] card on my birthday and it just put a smile on my face”.

“And then I walked around the house the whole day with a smile on my face,” says Jenny.

*How does your church connect congregation and community?  
Email [journey@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:journey@ucaqld.com.au)*

*Donate to drought-affected graziers on [wqda.org.au](http://wqda.org.au) or email Jenny at [longreachuca@gmail.com](mailto:longreachuca@gmail.com)*





# Let's talk youth and sin

From nude selfie sharing to hard drugs, there's an abundance of dangerous temptations for today's youth. **Rev Tom Kerr** grapples with sin and guiding our young people with a Christ-like love.

**You've seen the news headlines about violence at out of control house parties, teen nude photo sites and the Ice epidemic. Youth, sin and theology. I think we'd better go there.**

The wages of sin? It's still some kind of "death". Sin can cause damage, pain, grief, addiction, loss, confusion, guilt: anything that robs a person of life in all its fullness. We'd better warn our young people, if we care enough. Sin damage can be done to yourself, your future self, to others, to creation and to your relationship with God.

It's time for "the Talk". Whatever phrases you use to approach the topic—sin, salvation, repentance, penance, restitution, mercy, personal responsibility, etc.—we need to go there. Exploring this practical theology could save young people a lot of future grief.

Prevention is better than cure and cure is better than collapse. But we must also remember collapse can be put back on its feet. Jesus offers forgiveness, grace, salvation and fresh starts. Tackling the subject of sin with our youth, demands courage and compassion. To go there, we must be motivated and guided by a Christ-like love.

And what does Christ-like love look like when it comes to having a talk about sin?

Often it will be kind but to change things, it might need strong directions and clear expectations of behaviour. It might also require better options: when one demon is driven out, seven more come to fill the vacancy, unless it's filled up by the Holy Spirit first.

Ask God to empower them and you do your bit too. Give young people a noble cause to engage in, give them a younger person they have to be a role model for, or a mission. Believe in them!

Sometimes it will involve us adults getting a wakeup call like a slap in the face. Why do you think it is that the kids aren't alright? Some adults are making a lot of money out of the things damaging young lives. We're responsible if we see things happening in our society that put young people at risk and we do nothing to stop it.

Here's some theology around youth, sin and adult responsibility for us to consider: the sins of the father and mother are visited upon the children. Jesus says, "If anyone causes one of these little ones to sin, it would be better that a millstone be tied around their necks and they be thrown in to the depths of the sea."

**Rev Tom Kerr**

*Rev Tom Kerr is the Assembly's National Faith Development Consultant for Youth and Young Adults and has had the privilege of serving young people in many different contexts.*

“

Give young people a noble cause to engage in, give them a younger person they have to be a role model for, or a mission



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# Iven Hewett:

## “fit for purpose

I've always believed in a holistic approach to life. Not necessarily in this order but number one, you look after your body. Number two, you look after your mind and number three, you look after your spirit

*Journey* talks with Iven about his faith, his lifelong journey with maintaining fitness and what advice he has for others keen to stay active and healthy.

**While some people entering retirement may be keen to embark on a leisurely cruise or simply put their feet up, Iven Hewett is still going strong. Literally. The 70-year-old retired Chinchilla Uniting Church pastor recently won gold at the Australian National Powerlifting Championships, competing in the 83 kilogram weight division for men aged 70 to 80 years.**

### **Journey: What's your faith background?**

**Iven:** I grew up in a Christian family—we attended the Methodist church in Jandowae. I embraced the Christian faith strongly at the age of 25, and that's when I felt my first call to ministry. I kept on saying “no” right through to the age of 57—I'm a bit of a Jonah, really. But I have to admit the last 14 years in ministry have been probably the most fulfilling years of my life.

### **What do you love about the Uniting Church?**

The concern with social issues is one of the biggest things. These are expressions of Christ's love in the world.

For example, going right back to when I was 30, I took on the role of doing day camp in the Jandowae Uniting Church. Every year we touched the lives of hundreds of young people. I was leader of that for about 17 years with the valuable help of other folk who volunteered to come in as leaders, assistant leaders, cooks and that sort of thing.

I thoroughly enjoyed that 12 years as community pastor in Chinchilla and got involved in social groups there as well. But one of the things I got involved with while a minister in Chinchilla was the “Coal 4 Breakfast” [protest movement], which was a group of farmers who were protesting against the acquisition of prime agricultural land for opening up coal mines. I came on board with that particular issue, visited many farmers in the region and took photographs and put a PowerPoint together and presented a proposal at Synod at Alexandra Headland; we got that proposal through.

### **Who is someone you look up to?**

My wife Vallerie has always been a great support, I have to acknowledge that because without her I wouldn't have achieved what I've achieved, that's for sure.





(Left) Iven prepares for competition at the Australian National Powerlifting Championships.  
(Right) Vallerie and Iven Hewett celebrate his gold medal.  
Photos: Peter Hewett

**I can do all things because of Christ who strengthens me. (NIV Philippians 4:13)**

I was influenced by Rev Ivan Alcorn right at the start; Rev Evan Stenlake was a home missionary when I was a young fellow in Jandaowe, there were a number of other home missionaries who would have had an influence on my life and my thinking. Many ministers within the Methodist Church and then the Uniting Church had a tremendous impact on my life in a very positive way, the Rev Ron Watson giving the final push for me to go into full-time ministry. Someone I look up to would be Australian sprinter Peter Norman.

**What led you to take up powerlifting as a sport?**

When I was 16 I used to be a middle distant runner—1500 metres was my pet distance—I had a good time of three minutes and 58 seconds for 1500 metres on a grass track which wasn't too bad.

I used weight lifting to strengthen my body for running and when I retired from running at the age of about 26 or 27, I continued with weight lifting right through my life—exercising three or four nights a week.

On the whole I've probably exercised with weights 85 per cent of my life actually and when my young grandson had his 17th birthday (I was 69 at the time), I challenged him to a bench press and so, he being a competitive young fellow said, "Right-o grandad, bring it on ..." and I cleaned him up. That's two years ago. We've been competing ever since but he's yet to beat me.

The weights I was lifting were comparable to a championship level in weight lifting and I thought, I'll have a go at this and so I entered the competition in Brisbane. I won that one for my weight division and age division. The team there

asked me if I'd like to go to the Australian National Powerlifting Championships with them.

I did that, and on 5 August this year took out the gold medal in the 83 weight category—that's Masters IV which is a 70 to 80 year-old group.

**How does your faith link to your health and fitness regime?**

I've always believed in a holistic approach to life. Not necessarily in this order but look after your body, look after your mind and look after your spirit. So I link the three together continually right through my life. The benefits of that are I'm still enjoying good health, still enjoying my Christian journey and I still do a bit of reading and research from time to time.

I have been aware of God's presence in my life, aware of what Christ has done. That's the most important thing in my psyche. So from there, we endeavour to look after ourselves the best way we can and there are issues that sometimes we face that we find very difficult to overcome. I've gone through that as well—we've had sadness, we've had hard times to deal with, basically all the little knocks and blows that come along in life. We've met them head-on, sometimes went under but climbed out again. But through all that I've been aware of God's presence in my life. I've never said, "Why me, God?"—you know, it's more like "Why not me?"

Life is a challenge, it's a journey, you're never there yet. It's not a destination, so we continue to journey until the day we die. Embracing the Christian faith when I was fairly young helped me in every aspect of dealing with life's issues.

**What advice do you have for other Christians who may not be as fit and healthy as they'd like to be?**

I was talking to a well-known lady at the Uniting Church recently; she would be in her eighties and she has a personal trainer (PT), believe it or not. She goes to the gym regularly with a PT—she has been successful in improving her health immensely so now she's enjoying her latter years much more.

We have to be conscious of our health at all times and aware of what we're eating, aware if we're exercising or not exercising and aware of our well-being all the time. My advice is to find a gym, find a PT instructor and set out your program properly. The main thing is to do it properly. It costs a few dollars, but it's a few dollars well worth spending.

We have to be very careful with our eating habits—we have to monitor it all the time, I believe, and get proper advice. You can get into a bad eating habit and that becomes a norm in your life and that's when you're in trouble. It's having a good diet and moderation in all things. If you have some fatty foods or that sort of thing be aware of that and say, "Right-o, I've got to make up for that" by discipline in exercise or making sure we don't eat too much of that sort of thing.



Read more at The Scoop for our online-exclusive interview with Iven on his future plans and what he thought of Australia's performance at the recent Rio Olympics. Visit [journeyonline.com.au/scoop/expanded-iven-hewett](http://journeyonline.com.au/scoop/expanded-iven-hewett)



# Mental health awareness ideas for October

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, one in five Australians aged 16 to 85 live with some form of mental health issue. *Journey* looks at five ways you can raise awareness and dialogue around mental health issues in October to coincide with Queensland Mental Health Week (9–15 October).

1

## Organise an art exhibition

Scott Guyatt recently wrote in *The Scoop* about the potential benefits to community and God if every church embraces the full diversity of the arts. Why not organise a mental health-themed art exhibition at your church or a partnering gallery and invite local artists to contribute their work?

2

## Get soxy to raise funds

On 7 October Odd Socks Day encourages people to put on a pair of odd socks and get together for a fundraising sports match or trivia night to raise money for Grow, Australia's leading mutual help program for people with mental illness.

Visit [oddsocksday.org.au](http://oddsocksday.org.au)

3

## Put on your best walking shoes and see Brisbane

The annual Walk for Awareness on 9 October encourages people (and pets!) of all ages and fitness levels to get sponsorship for an eight kilometre walk around Brisbane's winding river, including a stroll across the iconic Story Bridge. Donations contribute to charities working on the front line tackling mental health issues.

4

## Let's talk when the going gets tough!

Ask "RUOkay?" That's an important question for every day of the year. Too many people, particularly men, "tough it out", keep their feelings to themselves and struggle in silence. Open dialogue helps break the stigma of mental illness in the community. Use the 365 Day resources from RUOK.

[ruok.org.au/365-day-resources](http://ruok.org.au/365-day-resources)

5

## Have a movie night

There are plenty of thought-provoking films which explore mental health issues—say *Rain Man*, *Silver Linings Play Book* or *Jack of the Red Hearts* (reviewed this month on *The Scoop*)—so why not gather friends and family, get the popcorn cooking and then have a post-screening discussion on the issues raised.

Given the 31st Synod's resolution about the annual Mental Health Day of Prayer for recovery and understanding, congregations are urged to participate in this important activity on 11 October. Prayer resources for congregations are available at [ucaqld.com.au/calledtocare](http://ucaqld.com.au/calledtocare)

For more information on Queensland Mental Health Week visit [qldmentalhealthweek.org.au](http://qldmentalhealthweek.org.au)

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Enrique Irazoqui (centre) stars in Pasolini's *The Gospel According to Matthew*.  
Photo: Eureka Entertainment Ltd

# The gospel according to Pasolini

**Since his violent death—shrouded in the kind of controversy that plagued his working life—history has yet to produce a cultural figure quite like Pier Paolo Pasolini.**

Known in his native Italy for his reputation as a Marxist, gay atheist, Pasolini stretched the definition of a multi-hyphenate to its limit when it came to his professional endeavours: he was (in)famous for his work as a poet, novelist, director, cultural theorist, journalist and philosopher.

There may have been many Pasolinis to decipher and debate, explore and engage with but his work as a filmmaker produced a fair number of classics that continue to shock and challenge audiences today: *Arabian Nights*, *Salo*, *Mamma Roma*, *Porcile* and *Oedipus Rex* to name a few.

*The Gospel According to Matthew* encapsulates how Pasolini seamlessly fused the poetic and the political with a sublime cinematic artistry all his own, but also how he was able to thoughtfully engage with Christianity in innovative and insightful ways despite his rejection of the faith.

Although the film provoked a fiercely critical response from religious institutions during its initial release in the mid-sixties, critics and audiences have gone on to praise it as one of the most important films exploring Christianity; in 2014, the Vatican even declared it the “best work about Jesus in the history of the cinema”.

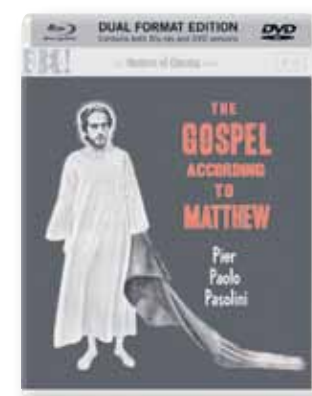
What did Pasolini capture in his Gospel that seems to have alluded so many Christian filmmakers tackling the subject?

For one, he reconceptualised the figure of Jesus through the lens of his own Marxist preoccupations so we are presented with a Christ strong on rhetoric and an unmistakable defender of the poor and oppressed. Jesus’ sermons and his anger at society is key for Pasolini and he places more importance on verbal exchanges (nearly all the dialogue was taken straight from the Bible) than presenting say, the surrealism of miracles or the intense violence of the crucifixion.

The film’s extraordinary power is also testament to Pasolini’s mastery over the cinematic medium. Drawing inspiration not only from the visual traditions of Italian neorealism but also centuries of Christian art, the stark black and white photography of southern Italian landscapes (filling in for the Middle East) is mixed with evocative imagery reminiscent of early Renaissance paintings. Aurally too, Pasolini uses an eclectic mix of music from Bach to blues, Mozart to a Congolese choir.

Matthew’s Gospel may be timeless but Pasolini has imprinted upon it a cinematic vision all his own. Stripped of Hollywood artifice and speculative dialogue, this portrait of Jesus returns us to the sheer beauty of his teachings and the raw power they hold to guide us in our quest for social justice. While Pasolini never embraced Christianity, the film is a major testament to how Christ’s story can embrace even the most non-religious of minds to inspire everyone.

**Ben Rogers**



## *The Gospel According to Matthew*

Director: Pier Paolo Pasolini  
Starring: Enrique Irazoqui, Margherita Caruso, Marcello Morante

1964, Unrated

Available on UK region Bluray and DVD from Amazon UK or Eureka Video’s Masters of Cinema





## The Scoop

Journeyonline.com.au/scoop

### Film review: *Jack of the Red Hearts*

From *Rain Man* to *The Story of Luke*, film history is dotted with characters on the autism spectrum, but does *Jack of the Red Hearts*, recently available on DVD, bring fresh insight into the disorder? **Ashley Thompson** reviews.

### What if every church ...

**Scott Guyatt** continues his exclusive column for *The Scoop* by examining how churches could embrace the full spectrum of arts (for instance drawing, poetry, sculpture, theatre or photography) beyond the usual engagement with music, and what positive impact could this gesture have for our churches, our communities and our connection with Jesus?

### Church Unchained podcast

Join **Mardi Lumsden** and **Scott Guyatt** for the latest instalments of the Church Unchained podcast which tackle our often incorrect perceptions of homelessness, what church looks like beyond the church building and the non-violent activism that is seeing church leaders hold prayer vigils in politicians' offices in support of asylum seekers.

[ucaqld.com.au/unchained](http://ucaqld.com.au/unchained)

## To the editor

I was shown a copy of the August edition of *Journey*. My attention was immediately aroused by the cover image for the very good reason that Creation Ministries International has just produced an article in our latest issue of *Creation* magazine that focused on the cartoonification of Noah's Ark.

It was sad to see the perpetuation of that cartoonized image on the front of a Christian publication, further promoting the idea that the flood, and with it the whole of the history in Genesis, is some sort of myth or fable.

It is especially sad when one realises how much of the credibility of the New Testament rests on that foundation. The Lord Jesus and the Apostle Paul made it clear that they took Genesis as history, basing major doctrines on those truths. The cover would have been more meaningful if it had depicted a true representation of the Ark tossed about on the broiling waves.

**Margaret Wieland**  
Eight Mile Plains

Your article last month, "Trinity sharpens future focus" presents briefly a positive vision for the future and the Trinity website expands on the vision. I hope it comes to fruition, despite the financial constraints.

I invite the church to pray for Lynne Gibson, Rev Mel Perkins, Rev Dr Wendi Sargeant, Dr Aaron Ghiloni and Dr Jason LeCureux, five of the teaching staff of Trinity College Queensland. Each of them is finishing up at the college. Two other staff have also left recently, John Coles on retirement, and Neil Thorpe to a new placement, and they have not been replaced. Pray too for Alice Foo who has faithfully served in an administrative role for many years and recently left.

This is the biggest turnover of staff in the history of the college, in almost forty years since the Uniting Church was inaugurated. My prayer is that God will lead them to new places of service where their particular gifts will be well exercised. Also, please pray for the ongoing work of the college including the current staff and students.

**Rev Neil Sims**  
Dalby

In the September edition of *Journey* there is an article titled "Stranger Danger". I found the content of the article was very good, well written and practical, however I thought the title "Stranger Danger" was very misleading. I am living with the effects of having been abused by church members.

No doubt my reaction is coloured by these experiences but from my point of view, the article said nothing about "Stranger Danger". I do believe it is good to welcome new people to our churches, I have no complaint about the content of the article, but only with the title.

**Anonymous**  
South Burnett

Christians have rarely cordially agreed for long periods of time. One can go back to Paul, James and Peter at Jerusalem and Antioch, to Martin Luther and the Pope. Even Charles Wesley found that he and his brother John disagreed so much with Anglican orthodoxy that it led to the rise of Methodism of which we in the Uniting Church are the heirs.

So difference can be productive and is vital when it comes to adaptability. Adaptability is needed in this turbulent social era when Christianity is under attack from sources such as secularism and the devastating effect of people losing their trust and commitment to institutions.

Adaptability is what "progressivism" is all about. So I welcome *Journey's* venture (August edition and responding letters in the September edition) in bringing to our attention the different paths that we follow. They highlight current contrasts within our denomination about our understanding of what underlies the Gospel. So let's openly share our different views on the way forward.

In seeking to further the Kingdom of God in today's needy world, may we then with Charles Wesley confidently declare:

"He bids us build each other up;  
And, gathered into one,  
To our high calling's glorious hope  
We hand in hand go on."

**Rodney Eivers**  
Acacia Ridge Uniting Church

*All letters must directly address articles and letters from the previous month's edition of Journey and be accompanied by the writer's name and the name of their congregation or suburb of residence. Opinions expressed are only indicative of the individual writer, not their entire congregation. Letters are published at the discretion of the editor, but do not necessarily represent the views of the editor or that of official Uniting Church policy. Letters may be edited for clarity or space, at the discretion of the editor. Letters should be no longer than 150 words. Full submission guidelines for letters to the editor can be found at [journeyonline.com.au/submit](http://journeyonline.com.au/submit)*



## Anti-Poverty Week

Anti-Poverty Week (16–22 October) encourages all Australians to take part in an activity that highlights or overcomes issues of poverty and hardship in this country or internationally, with the campaign coinciding with the United Nations' Anti-Poverty Day on 17 October.

In Australia alone poverty and severe hardship affect more than a million people, and the 2015 iteration saw more than 600 organisations around the country participate in over 400 activities.

From hosting your own lecture, debate or conference on poverty to writing a letter to a newspaper or magazine highlighting the issue, there are a number of different ways to get involved, many of which can be found on the Anti-Poverty website.

Wesley Mission Queensland will host a five kilometre community walk on 16 October as part of Anti-Poverty Week. Participants will commence at 11 am from the QUT Gardens Point campus, continue over the Goodwill Bridge, through Southbank Parklands to the Kurilpa Bridge and return. The first 200 walkers to register on the day will receive a Walk Against Poverty cap.

For more information or to register your event visit [antipovertyweek.org.au](http://antipovertyweek.org.au)

For more information on Wesley Mission Queensland's Walk Against Poverty visit [wmq.org.au](http://wmq.org.au) or call 1800 448 448

## Blue Knot Day

Blue Knot Day—24 October—is a national awareness day to support the five million Australian adult survivors of childhood trauma and abuse, with this year's theme "Together we lead the way to survivor recovery" building on the campaign's overarching theme "Recovery is possible".

The campaign's titular iconography symbolises the complexity of childhood trauma, with the colour representing a clear blue sky providing the space for new possibilities.

There are a number of ways you can participate on the day, from hosting a special service or moment of silence to purchasing pins and bracelets for friends and family, and donations over \$2 to the Blue Knot Foundation are tax deductible.

For more information visit [blueknot.org.au](http://blueknot.org.au)

## National Carers Week

With carers representing 12 per cent of the population, National Carers Week (16–22 October) is a great way to recognise and celebrate the contribution unpaid carers make to Australia. According to Deloitte Access Economics the estimated replacement value of unpaid care provided in 2015 was \$60.3 billion, with approximately 1.9 billion hours of unpaid care provided.

You can get involved in the celebrations by hosting a morning or afternoon tea, a fundraising event or a workshop to educate others on the vital role carers play in the community. The Carers Week website is also encouraging people to offer a digital thank you pledge with the goal of reaching 2.8 million pledges to match the number of unpaid carers in Australia.

For more information or to make a thank you pledge visit [carersweek.com.au](http://carersweek.com.au)

## Trinity Unchained event postponed

Trinity College Queensland's Unchained event "Too much too young? with Melinda Tankard Reist" has been postponed until further notice.

Monies paid on registration will be refunded in full. For further information please contact Kathleen Darolles on (07) 3377 9958 or by email [ask@trinity.qld.edu.au](mailto:ask@trinity.qld.edu.au) in early October.

Trinity apologises for any inconvenience this may cause.

## ARPA Awards 2016

The Uniting Church was well represented as award winners during the 2016 Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) awards night on 3 September.

*Journey* received three awards for its work in 2015 under former editor Rohan Salmond, including gold for best profile, silver for best magazine design and bronze for best theological article. Ashley Thompson received the 2016 ARPA Ramon Williams scholarship.

Sister publication *Crosslight* from the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod won silver for best website design and *New Times* from the South Australian Synod won silver for best original photography.

The prestigious Gutenberg Award—the highest recognition of ARPA—went to Graeme Cole, public affairs manager for Wesley Mission, New South Wales.

"Christian journalists must never lose their ability to be brave, to be storytellers and to be the bridge between the church and the world. We are communicators but we are also translators. Our job is one of translation of building bridges across cultural divide," said Graeme during his acceptance speech.

Current editor Ben Rogers, writer Ashley Thompson, former editor Rohan Salmond and editor-in-chief Mardi Lumsden were at ARPA awards night to represent *Journey*.  
**Photo:** Supplied



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