



The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

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# Journey

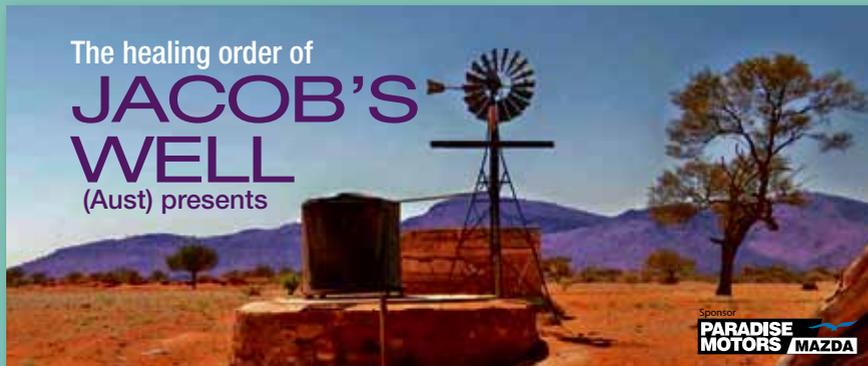
## VALUES, VISION AND YOUR VOTE

June 2016 • [journeyonline.com.au](http://journeyonline.com.au)

Julie McCrossin  
finds home

32nd Synod

BAL



## 'Christ the Healer' A DIFFERENT WAY TO PRAY!

Event Leader OJW - UK



**Mrs Angela Mann**

Elder of Presteigne Well, Trustee of The OJW UK, leader of 'In His Footsteps' courses and a founding member since 1998.

**Where:** St. Andrew's Uniting Church  
Cnr Creek and Ann St, Brisbane city

**When:** 1-3 July

**Time:** Friday 7.30-9.30 pm Christ the Healer in the Cross and The Kingdom  
Saturday 9 am-5 pm Teaching the Cross and Kingdom Walking Pt1 and 2  
Sunday 7 pm Free: Christ the Healer service of worship

- \$20  Christ the Healer in the Cross and The Kingdom
- \$30  Teaching the Cross and Kingdom Walking Pt1 and 2
- \$40  Friday and Saturday Combined
- + **Open invitation** Christ the Healer service of worship

Direct payment to The Order of Jacob's Well Aust. BSB: 105-010 Acct: 120-325-440

Please provide **name, state** and **contact details** to gneral@au-jacobswell.org

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As spaces are limited, early registration is recommended



# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MARTIN LUTHER

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## Ministry Agent

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### Southport Uniting Church



Southport Uniting Church, an inner city church on Queensland's Gold Coast, is inviting applications from those who have heard God's call to serve in this placement.

Southport Uniting Church is now seeking someone to:

- give leadership to a seeker focused Sunday night worship service
- preach monthly on a Sunday morning
- develop some community networks and give leadership to new ministry opportunities.

The ideal candidate for placement will be someone who is:

- a team player with excellent interpersonal and leadership skills
- passionate about growing the Kingdom of God
- able to pastorally care for people on the fringe.

**For more information, including a role description, please contact:**  
Rev Alan Robinson, Presbytery Minister, South Moreton Presbytery on 07 3807 7421 or email [smpresmin@gmail.com](mailto:smpresmin@gmail.com)

Applications to be addressed to: Southport UC JNC  
C/- Secretary of Synod Placements Committee  
Uniting Church in Australia (Qld Synod)  
GPO Box 674  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Or email [placements@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:placements@ucaqld.com.au) clearly identifying Southport Uniting Church in the subject line.

**Applications close 30 June 2016.**

**Position vacant**

## Minister of the Word

**Full-time**

### Beaudesert District Uniting Churches

(Incorporating Beaudesert and Canungra congregations)



Beaudesert District Uniting Churches are inviting applications from those who have heard God's call to serve in this placement.

Beaudesert District Uniting Churches are now seeking someone to:

- lead the church to vibrancy and growth
- be the 'face' of the Uniting Church in Beaudesert, Canungra and surrounding communities
- preach weekly on a Sunday at Beaudesert and Canungra
- oversee our pastoral care and spiritual growth.

The ideal candidate in this placement will be someone who:

- is a team player with excellent interpersonal and leadership skills
- is passionate about growing the Kingdom of God, and
- has a proven track record of growing a church and attracting families.

**For more information, including a role description, please contact:**  
Rev Alan Robinson, Presbytery Minister, South Moreton Presbytery on 07 3807 7421 or email [smpresmin@gmail.com](mailto:smpresmin@gmail.com)

Applications to be addressed to: Beaudesert District UC JNC  
C/- Secretary of Synod Placements Committee  
Uniting Church in Australia (Qld Synod)  
GPO Box 674  
BRISBANE QLD 4001

Or email [placements@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:placements@ucaqld.com.au) clearly identifying Beaudesert District Uniting Churches in the subject line.

**Applications close 30 June 2016.**

# Editor's note

**Come 2 July, Australians will be making the journey to the ballot box to decide who will represent them in Canberra.**

It's easy to be cynical about the process: throughout the community there's a serious trust deficit with our political elite, to the point where cronyism, lies and corruption elicit a shrug and an apathetic remark, "well, that's politics for you".

But regardless of how you feel about the current occupants of Parliament House, critical issues of social justice do not go away and this election still remains a vital opportunity to participate in making a better community for everyone.

Whether confronting choices on the ballot form or, indeed, choices in the church—and our 32nd Synod in Session report covers the choices and outcomes from the event (page 13)—it is imperative we practice proper discernment and urge our leaders to create societies built upon the kind of moral foundations of which Jesus would approve.

To assist your discernment at the ballot, we've assembled an election spread (page 5) covering key matters that may not get a huge amount of mainstream media play, but are definitely worth contemplating before you select a candidate.

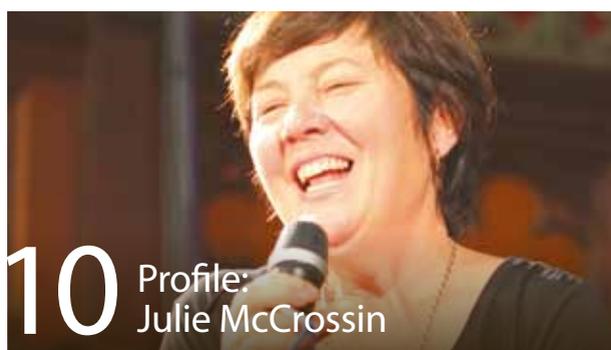
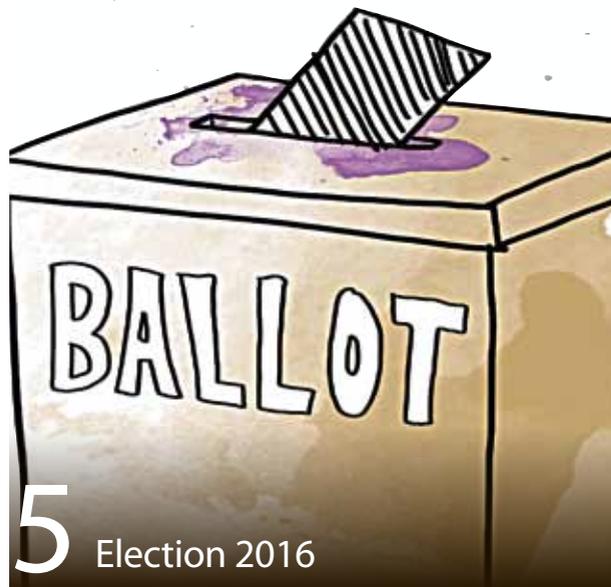
When the dust settles and the victors emerge, remind your politicians of their obligations to the community and all the promises they made to entice votes.

Given the power entrusted to them and the taxpayer-funded wealth bestowed upon them, it is imperative that Australians do not shrug and switch off, but hold politicians to a standard of professional conduct commensurate with their power and pay.

And now for something completely different: please enjoy our feature profile on multihyphenate star Julie McCrossin (page 10) who details her fascinating faith journey from Anglicanism to the Uniting Church.

**Ben Rogers**  
Cross-platform editor

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# Journey

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Closing date for editorial and advertising for July *Journey* is Monday 13 June. The next issue of *Journey* will be available on Sunday 3 July.



# Changing the national conversation

## Monday Midday Prayer

Lord,

*Give us wisdom and hope  
as we discern leadership  
for our country.*

Amen

**As you read this it'll be one month to go. I'm writing this over two weeks before 5 June, on 16 May, and already there's a sense of boredom and "let's get this over with" in terms of the federal election.**

That's sad really, as in the course of human history and even in the world today, to be able to vote for a national government in a free and fair election, where there will be no bloodshed or loss of life, is a remarkable thing. It's a gift from our forebears that we should treasure greatly.

In the weeks leading to 2 July, how about in our conversations with fellow Christians we ask, "If you were to put others and the future first, for whom would you vote?"

Or, a more open question, "If you were to put others and the future first, what are the issues that come to priority?"

Can we change the conversation to others and to the future, and not for us and now? Whistling in the wind, you might say. Well, why not whistle, I say!

Maybe if enough of us whistle, those who dance in front of us on television every night, trying to get our attention, might change their moves.

But they've got to hear us. Speak to your candidates, don't hector them. Call out the best in them, ask them, "What future are you proposing for us all and for this good earth?"

Stack up what they say against the Judeo-Christian tradition. Does it measure up? Maybe it's time that we Christians set an example by saying if we want something we should pay for it; we should, not the next generation.

This edition of *Journey* will help you reflect on your vote at this election. In many ways, the issues raised are not 'big ticket' items on the national budget. But they are 'big ticket' items in terms of human dignity, in terms of people having an opportunity for a meaningful and worthwhile life and in terms of Australia having a story of justice and righteousness. They are 'big ticket' items if you're interested in the values of the Kingdom of God and how they speak to how we order our society.

**Rev David Baker**  
Moderator, Queensland Synod

**IT IS CUSTOMARY TO  
WANT THE BEST.**

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HAS REWARDED YOU WELL,  
MAKE YOUR FINAL JOURNEY  
IN THE STYLE TO WHICH YOU  
HAVE BECOME ACCUSTOMED.

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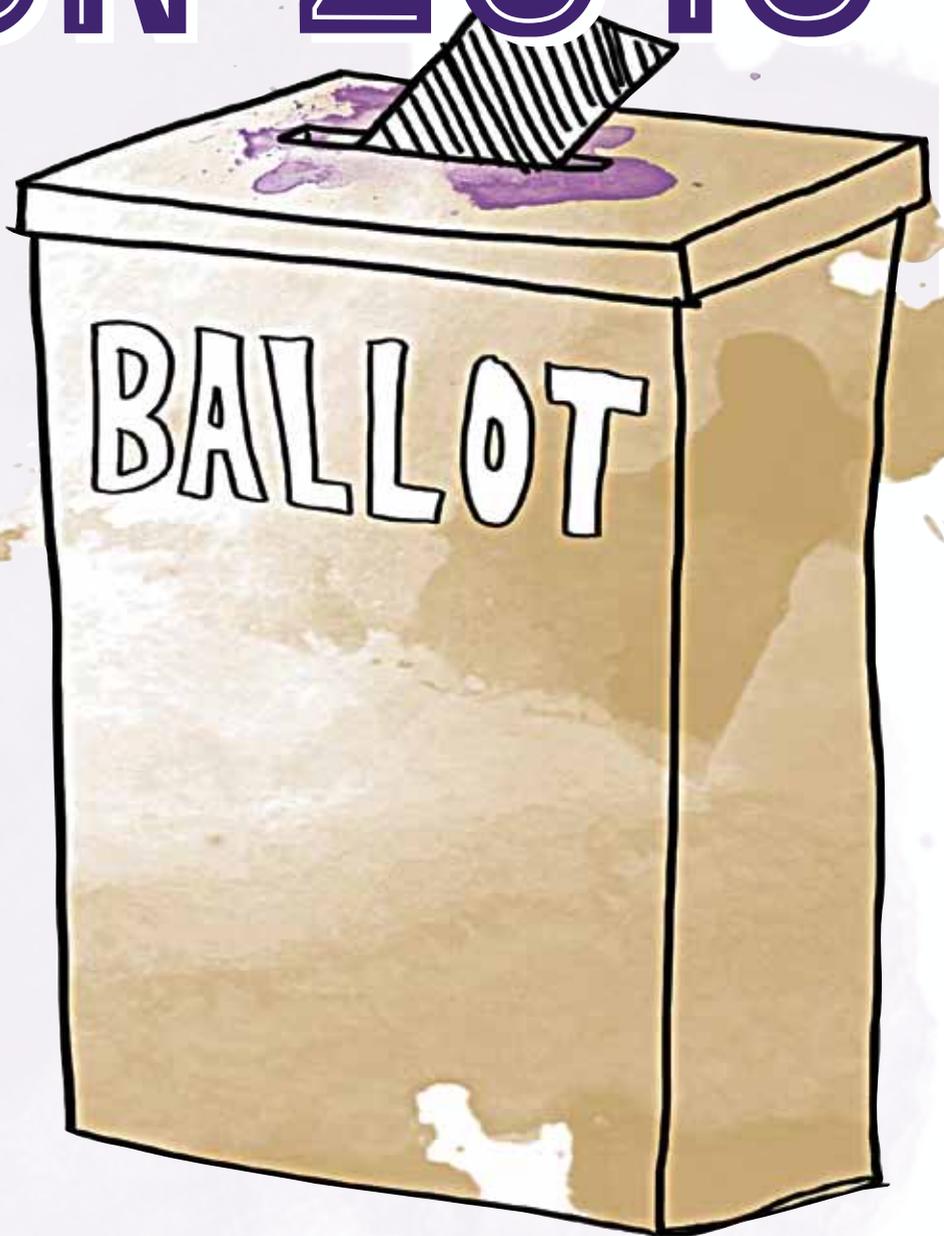
# ELECTION 2016

## Hot-button topics that won't make the front page

How carefully do we think before we exercise our democratic responsibilities by voting? Do we simply vote for the party we have always voted for? It's hard to avoid simply following the agenda laid out by political parties and played out in the media. How can we hold politicians and political parties to account for those equally important policy decisions which might not make the headlines?

UnitingJustice has put together the 2016 federal election resource *A Flourishing Society: your faith, your voice, your vote* to assist Uniting Church members to consider nine issues that go to the heart of the church's commitment to justice and peace, and help us consider how we might be actively engaged in the political process. *Journey* has chosen four hot-button topics from the resource in danger of slipping off the political agenda.

To download the election toolkit *A Flourishing Society: your faith, your voice, your vote* visit [unitingjustice.org.au/election2016](http://unitingjustice.org.au/election2016). For a printed copy email [unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:unitingjustice@nat.uca.org.au) or call 02 8267 4238.



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## Justice for First Peoples

### What's the issue?

The statistics are beyond shocking. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults are 15 times more likely to be imprisoned than non-Indigenous Australians. They make up two per cent of the population over 18 years, but 27 per cent of the total prisoner population and it's getting worse. From 2000-2013 the imprisonment rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander adults increased by 57 per cent while the non-Indigenous rate remained fairly stable. The juvenile detention rate for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people is around 24 times the rate for non-Indigenous youth.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples do not commit more crime than other groups in society but they are treated unfairly in law. Public drunkenness laws, for example, impact much more on people who live outdoors than they do on people who get drunk in the privacy of their own homes.

### What can the federal government do?

The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress suggests the following actions:

- set a "Closing the Gap" goal for incarceration rates and recidivism which could include the development of police protocols and the broader use of Aboriginal police liaison officers
- fund and support justice re-investment to community-driven programs
- reform the Stronger Futures legislation
- fund Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander prison chaplaincy.

### Something to consider:

"Respect for First Peoples is the hallmark of a great nation, and it's now time for us to follow through on our unfinished business. For Christians, Christ's love compels us to be truth tellers and ministers of reconciliation."

The president of the Uniting Church in Australia Stuart McMillan, 22 January 2016.

Find out more: [uaicc.org.au](http://uaicc.org.au)

# ELECTION

## Affordable housing for all

### What's the issue?

On any given night 105 000 people in Australia are homeless. The number of women and children experiencing homelessness is increasing, particularly amongst those attempting to leave situations of domestic violence. And when a person is in need of shelter, there is too often a shortage of safe, secure and affordable accommodation.

Rates of home ownership are in decline. Lower and middle income earners are most affected by increasing house prices with many being locked out of the property market as a result.

### What can the federal government do?

The Social Justice Forum of the Uniting Church NSW and ACT Synod has come up with a number of strategies aimed at improving housing affordability and reducing homelessness. This includes funding directed towards social housing, assistance to people in the private rental market and support and accommodation for people who are homeless.

### Something to consider:

"Research indicates that certain populations are more commonly trapped in the cycle of homelessness than others. For example, 64 per cent of adults who had been homeless in the last ten years cited a disability or a long-term health condition as the cause of their homelessness (ABS *Australian Social Trends 2012: 2*). One quarter of these individuals reported that they suffered from mental illness (ABS *Australian Social Trends 2012: 2*)."

UnitingCare Australia 2012 discussion paper *Homelessness and housing affordability in Australia*.

Find out more: [nswact.uca.org.au/change-the-world/affordable-housing](http://nswact.uca.org.au/change-the-world/affordable-housing)



# 2016



## From poverty to fullness of life

### What's the issue?

Our aid budget is shrinking. Since 2012 successive governments have slashed Australia's aid to its lowest level at 0.22 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in the 2016–2017 budget. This represents a cut from \$5.6 billion in 2012–2013 to \$3.9 billion in 2016–2017.

The Uniting Church's position as resolved at the 14th Assembly in 2015 is for Australia to revive previous budget commitments and to commit to a timetable to allocate 0.7 per cent of GNI to Australia's overseas aid program. This would be in line with our international obligations and commitment under the Millennium Development Goals developed in 2000 and the subsequent Sustainable Development Goals (2015).

### What can the federal government do?

UnitingWorld calls for policies:

- reversing recent cuts and increasing aid to 0.7 per cent of our GNI
- committing to strong and urgent action on climate change, including increasing financial support to developing neighbouring countries
- developing strategies and aid programs that promote reconciliation and peacebuilding.

### Something to consider:

"This drastic reduction in aid will directly affect people and communities around the world who rely on the generosity of countries like Australia to support them as they move out of poverty and work to build healthy, safe and secure communities where all people are able to flourish. The reduction will gravely impact on people who require access to health, education and other vital life-saving services, while also undermining the stability and security of our region."

UnitingWorld, *A Flourishing Society: your faith, your voice, your vote* 2016

Find out more: [unitingworld.org.au](http://unitingworld.org.au)

## Beyond the urban fringe

### What's the issue?

Rural and remote communities, cut off from major commercial and service hubs by distance and climate, are often confronted by a set of issues that can lead to a unique experience of disadvantage. This takes many forms across the spectrum of social, commercial and climatic impediments, and one factor can often work in concert with others to create even greater adversity.

Along with unpredictable and severe weather events precipitated by climate change, communities are struggling with a range of negative impacts from resource development such as "fly-in fly-out" work (FIFO). Lack of access to basic services and support can have devastating results for such communities under pressure, particularly in the area of mental health and wellbeing.

### What can the federal government do?

Frontier Services has identified the need for long-term policies to build resilience and enable communities to withstand the unpredictability of economic circumstances and changing climate, and to capitalise upon the opportunities. This includes infrastructure planning and the provision of social and economic support structures.

### Something to consider:

"The disadvantages impacting rural and regional communities are around the widening difference between city and rural and regional Australia in terms of delivery of services (health, education, etc.), employment opportunities and economic investment. This trinity of issues has seen an exodus from rural and regional Australia, broadly, of young people and families. Also we have seen in Victoria the growth of drug abuse and other dysfunctional behaviour due to the poverty trap that many young people find themselves in. It goes to the nature of who we are as an Australian community; the values we want to believe about ourselves, the society we are wishing to create. The issue of equality of opportunity and access to services that urban Australia takes for granted."

Rev David Baker, moderator of the Queensland Synod

Find out more: [frontierservices.org](http://frontierservices.org)



# Expect the unexpected at Lifeline Bookfest

Nick Hart at the Lifeline sorting facility, Brisbane.  
Photo: Holly Jewell

Lifeline Bookfests attract crowds eager for a bargain on their books but there's a wide array of the weird and wonderful to browse. *Journey* reports.

**While the Australian book industry continues to acclimatise to consumer trends favouring digital publishing, lovers of the printed page know Lifeline Bookfests are the must-attend event to celebrate their passion.**

“  
You'll find a vast array of old vinyl records, we'll have approximately 5000 plus records at this coming event in Brisbane

With a massive volume of books available spanning nearly every genre, the Brisbane and Gold Coast iterations (Brisbane, 25 June–3 July; Gold Coast, 24–26 June) are the state's most prominent second-hand book events but there's so much more to discover than recently discarded best-sellers and old recipe books.

The Brisbane event has increasingly become a terrific place to shop when it comes to vinyl records, CDs and DVDs.

“In terms of music you'll find a vast array of old vinyl records, we'll have approximately 5000 plus records at this coming event in Brisbane,” says Nick Hart, books supervisor for Lifeline Brisbane.

“We're looking at a collection of upwards of 20 000 individual CDs available. All our CDs are just \$2.50 each, so you could walk into the Bookfest and there could be CDs that originally sold for \$24.95 or anywhere up to \$39.95.

“Around 20 000 plus DVDs will also be available for sale. They will range from children's programs through to movies to sports, you name it, it'll be there.”

While the Gold Coast event sticks to books, expect the unexpected while you're browsing.

Hope Murphy, book sorter with the Lifeline team on the Gold Coast, has come across her fair share of surprising donations for this year's event, “I'll mention this tiny little book that's probably the size of your palm. It's valued at \$90 and it's about Rob Roy.”

“We've got a Star Wars comic that was signed by the guy who played Darth Vader in the first three movies in absolutely perfect condition.”

While it's easy to get caught up in talk of the bargains and the dizzying selection of titles on offer, the Bookfests' raison d'être should not be overlooked: all proceeds from sales provide vital funding to Lifeline's 24-hour crisis support line (13 11 14) and other community support services.

In January 2016 alone, the Brisbane summer Bookfest raised over \$1.34 million, and with other events scheduled throughout the year for Bundaberg, Ipswich, Mackay, Rockhampton and the Sunshine Coast, the initiative has proven a winning formula for fundraising efforts.

So when you're perusing the tables later this month, titles and names may be the only thing on your mind but you can be satisfied every dollar you spend is helping save lives across the nation.

For further information on the Lifeline Bookfests visit [uccommunity.org.au/bookfest](http://uccommunity.org.au/bookfest)

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Cynthia Culleton (left), one of the creators of the Wulguru Uniting Church garden, with fellow cancer centre volunteer and congregation member Barbara Coates.  
Photo: Brian Venten

# Cancer support brings hope

An outreach to people affected by cancer has given the congregation at Wulguru Uniting Church in Townsville a new lease of life. **Dianne Jensen** reports.

**When Rev Phillip Hulme came out of retirement a few years ago, the triple-cancer survivor was already thinking about ways of providing holistic support for those affected by the disease. At Wulguru Uniting Church he found a small congregation looking for new ways to connect with their community—and the Holistic Cancer Help Centre (HCHC) was born.**

HCHC is a community support ministry run by church volunteers which opened just over 12 months ago. It offers a range of activities including mindfulness sessions, a creative arts program and a music group, using a low-cost membership model plus a small daily charge.

“They had a spare hall so we set up a committee and renovated it with new carpeting, painting and air conditioning,” says Phillip, who maintains a connection with the centre although he is now based in Bowen. Pastor Bruce McCarthy was appointed in a supply capacity to Wulguru in December 2015.

Phillip is a psychologist and the author of *Cancer Defeated* (2013) whose personal experience has reinforced the value of a holistic approach supporting mental and spiritual wellbeing.

“Cancer is a life challenge, with issues from the disruption to family life to deep existential questions about what a person’s life has been about and what they are going to do,” he says.

“There is a lot of research showing dramatic increases in survival rates for people who are offered group support and help dealing with their fears and their questions.”

The centre attracts up to 20 people from the community each week, and the once dwindling congregation of 15 has effectively doubled.

Brian Venten is chairperson of the church council and the HCHC committee.

“The centre has created significant momentum. Where once our church community was struggling, the congregation is now looking to the future with renewed enthusiasm,” he says.

Renovation of the property has included landscaping of the grounds by volunteers.

“The new gardens facilitate a unique meditative opportunity and we are finding that people are being drawn to the precinct by virtue of the beauty associated with our grounds. We have tried to create a restful space where people feel at peace and at ease, and of course that flows into the whole church community context.”

*The HCHC model is being developed for use in other churches, with plans to provide a support network to share resources. For more information contact Bruce McCarthy on 0434 452 762 or [tsvhchc@gmail.com](mailto:tsvhchc@gmail.com), or Rev Phillip Hulme on 0414 499 879 or [hulme.phillip@gmail.com](mailto:hulme.phillip@gmail.com)*

“

We have tried to create a restful space where people feel at peace and at ease, and of course that flows into the whole church community context

**Brian Venten**

## STUDY OPTIONS ON THE GOLD COAST IN 2016 DIPLOMA OR BACHELOR OF MINISTRY

VISIT [WWW.NEWLIFECOLLEGE.NU/COURSES](http://WWW.NEWLIFECOLLEGE.NU/COURSES)  
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**nu** NEWLIFECOLLEGE



# Julie McCrossin

## Finding acceptance with the Uniting Church

Former ABC broadcaster Julie McCrossin is a familiar voice to the Australian public. **Ashley Thompson** turns the microphone around to find out more about her unsung faith journey.

“  
The church has listed values that when we have disagreements we try to approach it in certain ways and it is about deep, respectful listening and contemplation of the other view

**A self-described “refugee from Sydney Anglicanism”, Julie McCrossin has found a home in South Sydney Uniting Church. Her appearance on ABC TV’s special all-Christian Q&A panel and facilitation of the UnitingWomen conference Q&A discussion in April show her willingness to engage publically with theological issues in a fair and respectful manner.**

Perhaps best known for her role on the comedy quiz show *Good News Week*, Julie has garnered a strong public profile from her work across radio, television and print journalism. However, to pinpoint her to one occupation would be a disservice. At 61, she is an in-demand emcee, comedian, activist and all-round passionate educator and student.

“I have an arts degree, a law degree, two educational qualifications and now I’m studying theology, so I’m crazy for university,” laughs Julie.

“I love the exchange of information and ideas with a group of people who are curious.”

Now self-employed, Julie has been everything from a board member of her alma mater SCEGGS Darlinghurst, to the voice inside your headset on Qantas’ *Radio Q* and an Australian Red Cross ambassador. She is also an elder, treasurer and church council member of South Sydney Uniting Church.

Her involvement in the Christian church has until recently been less-known but always one to which she’ll openly attest, as she does with her advocacy for women’s and gay rights.

“I feel the great core of Christianity for me, at this point in my life, is forgiveness,” says Julie.

“There was an extended period where because of homosexuality I felt unwelcome and I chose not to enter a church and fight for acceptance.

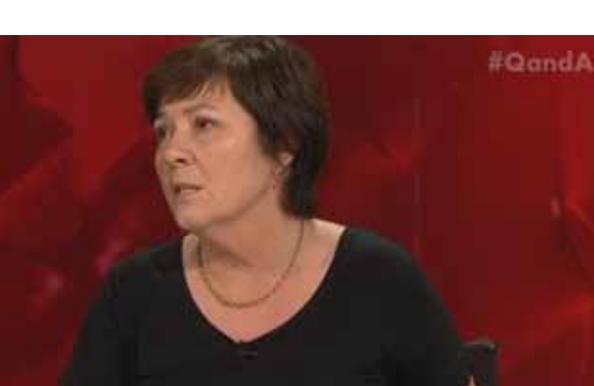
“But I have chosen to forgive in order to not feel bitterness and anger because bitterness and anger diminishes one’s life.”

### Faith formation

Growing up as a middle child in the eastern suburbs of Sydney, Julie had what she describes as a “very Anglican and very positive” upbringing.

It all started when a “local Anglican minister knocked on our door and reached out” to her struggling mother, a British immigrant and WWII veteran.

From there her family became involved in their local Anglican church where Julie attended Sunday school, sang in the church choir and was encouraged to embrace education—an opportunity the women in her family had not previously had.



Julie McCrossin @JulieMcCrossin · Age 30  
Really enjoyed interviewing Senator Penny Wong tonight #UnitingWomen on leadership, public life & privacy of faith



(L-R) Julie McCrossin: with her partner Melissa Gibson and their children Luke and Amelia Woods, with members of Enfield Uniting Church Adelaide at UnitingWomen 2016, on ABC TV's special all-Christian Q&A panel, with Senator Penny Wong, hosting the Q&A panel discussion during UnitingWomen 2016 and tweeting from Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church in Adelaide.  
Photos: Supplied



Julie McCrossin @JulieMcCrossin · May 1  
We've been asked to take a selfie & see the image of God in us. She wears blue glasses! #UnitingWomen

“I loved school. There were some problems at home—my mum is a person that’s had serious physical and mental health issues—and school was a place of nurturing and support,” says Julie.

“I was inculcated very early on to the liturgy, to the King James version of the Bible, to the beautiful classical music-based hymns of the high Anglican tradition,” says Julie. “So Christianity, faith and the words of the Old and the New Testament have always been a supportive framework for my life.”

### Overcoming rejection

According to Julie, it all came crashing down around the age of 13 when she became fearful that she was “sexually attracted to girls”.

Homosexuality at that time was illegal in Australia, an internationally recognised mental illness and considered “against God’s will” by all Christian denominations in the 1960s.

Speaking from “direct personal experience” Julie says, “The Sydney Diocese leads the world against the acceptance of homosexuals. [They say] if you are a homosexual you must be celibate for life to be accepted in the eyes of God and your church.”

Coming out to her parents at 18, Julie’s sexuality was deemed “utterly unacceptable” and sent her into a “very difficult and turbulent time”.

“My mother does accept me now but there is no doubt in the world she would prefer I wasn’t gay. And that’s something I will have to live with for the rest of my life.”

### Respectful listening

It wasn’t until six years ago when she went to visit a friend suffering from cancer—office-bearer Rev Dorothy McRae-McMahon—at South Sydney Uniting Church, that she found her faith home.

“I went to the church to wish her well and I’ve been going ever since,” she says simply.

In 2014, Julie and her partner of over 20 years, Melissa Gibson, were married in New York. Although their marriage is not legally recognised in Australia yet, a blessing ceremony was held for them at South Sydney Uniting Church.

Melissa has two adult children from her previous marriage and Julie is happy to engage in discussion around the concern that children deserve a mother and a father.

“I think there’s a valid, sensitive discussion to be had about that,” says Julie. “The two children in my life have a father and Melissa and I have actively encouraged full engagement with their dad.”

Conversely, Julie says she has also been involved in the LGBT community her whole adult life and “privileged to know couples, both men and women, who are raising children born from fertility services”.

While personally she is happy the children in her life have both a mother and a father, she also cannot deny that these children “have had every opportunity educationally and socially”, and that studies such as the February issue of the National Council on Family Relations’ *Journal of Marriage and Family* have found no difference between children raised by heterosexual parents and children raised by gay and lesbian parents.

“I guess I’m trying to use the values I’ve learned in the Uniting Church,” says Julie. “The church has listed values that when we have disagreements we try to approach it in certain ways and it is about deep, respectful listening and contemplation of the other view.

“So I believe in engagement and I believe in doing unto others as I would have them do unto me. When I was on television with Lyle Shelton [Australian Christian Lobby managing director] I treated him with respect, I put forward my views I hope strongly but not in an abusive or denigrating way and I seek to have the same in return.”

### Lighting the darkness

Often referred to as a comedian, Julie says she actually does not consciously seek to entertain.

“I have a kind of warmth and a humour that bubbles out of me,” she explains.

“It’s definitely helped me cope with some of the challenges of my life and manage the extended period of rejection for my homosexual identity—as well as a sick mum who struggles to not be overwhelmed by darkness.”

Her personal advocacy also identifies strongly with the Pacific women connected to UnitingWorld, who spoke at the UnitingWomen conference in Adelaide of a need for a new theology around women and the equality between men and women.

“Literal, simplistic quoting of biblical text is being used to forbid women having access to opportunities for education and leadership,” Julie explains. “And this is linked to very high levels of domestic violence.

“Women need to have access to education and to opportunities for leadership in order that we can combat this scourge.”

Julie believes education is the key to understanding.

“It’s about meeting people, learning about their ideas and their stories and sharing them in a public way.”

Her interest in being a part of the biennial gathering of Uniting Church women across Australia is clear: “Because all the topics we’re talking about are about making society a more equitable, fair and loving place.”

For more information visit [juliemccrossin.com](http://juliemccrossin.com) and [unitingwomen.org.au](http://unitingwomen.org.au)



# Breaking bad biblical bigotry

Using biblical texts to stereotype women does immense damage to society. **Rev Dr Anita Monro** explores the overt and subtle consequences of sexism.

“

If we are to live out our baptism fully, then surely we will be addressing these [gender] stereotypes in every aspect of our lives individually, as part of the church community, and as part of our wider society

**Mary, mother of Jesus (the virgin) and Mary Magdalene (the alleged prostitute): that's how we remember two of the key leaders of the early Christian movement. That kind of stereotyping of women is identifiable throughout history.**

Whether it's the images of "God's police" and "damned whores" highlighted by Anne Summers in the history of European settlement in Australia, or "the angel in the house" and "the devil's gateway" depictions found in the writings of certain "church fathers" such as Tertullian, women are damned if they do and damned if they don't.

Why does it matter? Because it's that kind of stereotyping that undergirds attitudes towards women now. It's an incredible double-bind.

QUT researcher Sharon Hayes writes about how this kind of stereotyping feeds into domestic violence and sexual assault. She points out that when women occupy public space, they are expected either to acquiesce to the demands of men or else fade into the background. When women raise their voices against such expectations, they are victims of the consequences—from being labelled "feminazis" and "b\*\*ches" to physical violence.

The current public awareness campaign seeking to tackle domestic violence addresses this stereotyping by showing just how damaging it is for women to accept whatever is dished out to them in the name of "love", "boys being boys", and sporting field banter.

The stereotypes are active in much more subtle ways too. Why is it that the Queensland Synod has only ever elected one woman as moderator? Why aren't there more presbytery ministers or chairpersons who are women?

As Christians our identities are found in Christ and our baptism into Christ: "As many of you as were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." (Galatians 3)

If we are to live out our baptism fully, then surely we will be addressing these stereotypes in every aspect of our lives individually, as part of the church community, and as part of our wider society.

Then maybe we will remember Mary, the mother of Jesus, as a strong young woman who bore the son of God (the "theotokos" or God-bearer), and Mary Magdalene as the first witness to the resurrection that she was (John 20).

#### Rev Dr Anita Monro

Anita Monro is Principal of Grace College which sponsors an annual Women's Theology Conference. This year's conference will be held 27 June–1 July with biblical scholar Tina Pippin as guest speaker. For more information visit [gcwtc.net](http://gcwtc.net)

Grace College is a women's residential college at the University of Queensland. It is a joint activity of the Uniting and Presbyterian churches in Queensland. Visit [grace.uq.edu.au](http://grace.uq.edu.au)

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# 32nd Synod United in purpose and passion

Enriching dialogue and diversity reigned at the 32nd Synod meeting (20–24 May) while future directions were confirmed. The *Journey* team was there to cover the event.

**The Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast was packed with hundreds of Uniting Church members from across Queensland. The tea urns were switched on and the blue and orange cards were ready for hoisting. As moderator Rev David Baker remarked, it was the gathering of the tribe: Synod in Session.**

Synod is held every 18 months, and the gathering began with a powerful reminder of who we are and why we journey together. The dramatic opening worship emphasised the multicultural diversity of the Uniting Church with songs from Tongan, Korean and South Sudanese choirs.

continued >



Moderator and moderator-elect Rev David Baker

A Samoan symbolic time of confession known as “sitting under the mat” was performed as a straw mat was placed over Terani Lima, Rev Dennis Corowa and the moderator.

During his sermon David told members, “Being a multicultural church is not so much about cultural diversity as it is about being so close with Christians of other cultures.

“We are all better able to question our cultural assumptions and put them under the light of the gospel. We’re a better church, not simply a more colourful one.”

**Leadership choices**

Members were faced with two considerations concerning the moderator-elect. Beyond the regular choice of nominations, there was an initial proposal to allow optional re-election of a moderator after their first three-year term.

Much discussion ensued and after the decision failed to reach consensus the Synod moved to a formal ballot.

The proposal subsequently passed by a significant margin and current moderator Rev David Baker was eligible to stand alongside other moderator-elect nominees, Rev Lyn Burden and Rev Dr David Mackay-Rankin.

On Sunday members elected David Baker as moderator for a landmark second term, until the 35th Synod in October 2020.

Members also approved the appointment of a new general secretary, Rev Heather den Houting, to replace Robert Packer who will vacate the position on 31 May 2016.

Members of the general secretary selection panel addressed the room on how Heather comprehensively met all facets of the selection criteria.

“Heather has demonstrated a deep passion and love for



General secretary Rev Heather den Houting

this church and knows and loves it well. She appreciates both the polity and theology of the Uniting Church,” noted selection panel member David Baker.

“She has the gifts and graces required for this role,” added Rev Linda Hanson, another member of the selection panel.

In response to the appointment—which will begin 1 June 2016—Heather told members, “When we say the words ‘together on the way’, I want you to know I work best in the together space.”

**UnitingCare Queensland**

The significant industry turbulence engendered by increasing for-profit competitors, technological disruptive services, the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) and changes to government funding models continues to challenge UnitingCare.

“Obviously there is significant change within society itself,” said Craig Barke, chair of the UnitingCare Queensland board. “We are responding to those changes and we are holding on to the mission which has been provided to the organisation with an endeavour to remain financially sustainable over the long-term.”

UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross detailed the organisation’s future plans including the implementation of revised service models, consolidation and leveraging of the investments that have been made in hospitals, strengthening their presence in major regional centres through an integrated range of aged-care services and consolidating sites where possible.

Anne also drew attention to Blue Care’s induction into the Queensland Business Leaders’ Hall of Fame last year in honour of the church’s contribution to Queensland communities.

“This recognises what the Uniting Church has contributed to Queensland communities through Blue Care for over 60 years—many of you here are part of that story.”



### Towards the future

After fervent discussion the 32nd Synod passed by consensus revised priority directions for 2016–2020.

Brought forward by Rev Andrew Gunton on behalf the facilitation team, the original wording of the proposal was amended to reflect the concerns of members. Consensus was not initially reached as numerous members expressed their concerns on the implications of certain phrases and words, lack of qualitative and quantitative data to discern how the church has traveled with priority directions in the past and the absence of words such as “spirituality” and “growth”.

Rev Linda Hanson was among many who spoke passionately for the inclusion of the word “growth”.

“The church is quite comfortable declining, but if we put words like growth in there it makes us accountable for what we are not doing. That’s why we as a Synod don’t want the word ‘growth’ up there because we might actually have to do it,” said Linda.

The full priority directions including points ‘b’, ‘c’, ‘d’ and ‘e’ were also passed by consensus.

The statement passed by consensus read as follows:

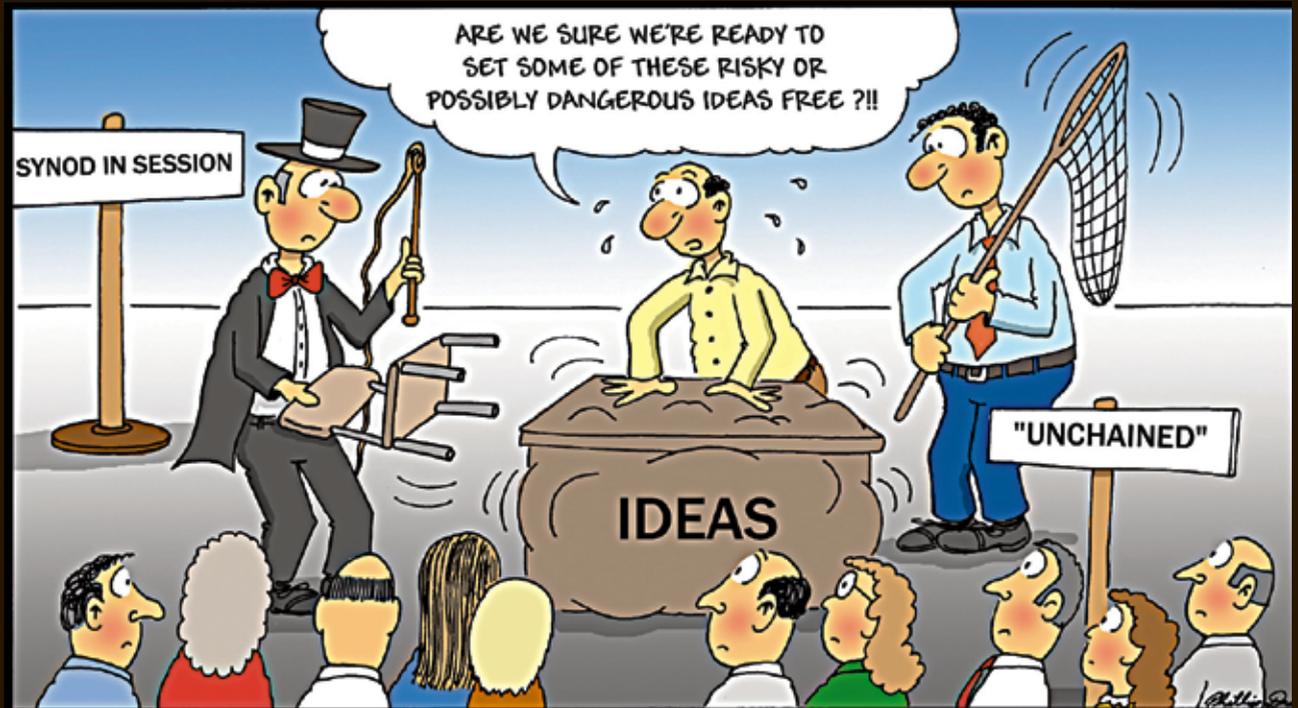
The Synod, as part of its journey of *Together on the way, enriching community*:

a) Adopts as its priority directions for 2016–2020:

- ▶ to be Christ centred, at prayer, and listening
  - ▶ Discipleship
  - ▶ Leadership
  - ▶ Connecting with communities
  - ▶ Youth, children and families
- as the church grows, transitions and innovates.

For in-depth coverage of each day of the 32nd Synod visit [journeyonline.com.au](http://journeyonline.com.au)





# Dangerous ideas cause chain reaction



Unchained presenter Mike Hands asks members to rethink how youth engage with the church. Photo: Holly Jewell

A new forum to explore outside-the-box thinking was a smashing success at Synod. *Journey* reports.

**Hundreds gathered for Unchained, a half-day festival held during Synod in Session to air dangerous ideas about how the Uniting Church might re-imagine itself and its place in the world.**

The event evolved from a suggestion first made by the moderator that the Synod needed a “festival of dangerous ideas” and was developed by working groups into “Unchained”.

For the workshops component, an eclectic mix of topics covering church polity, social justice and theological issues was presented by speakers from across Queensland.

South Moreton Presbytery multicultural officer David Busch and Sharyn Robinson from the Multi-Cross Cultural Reference Group launched their session with some vigorous dancing as they explored the concept that embracing “the other” is more about having fun than being perfect.

“Only half of Australians have grandparents born here,” said David. “To be mono-cultural is to be on the margins.”

The presentation “The Jihad of Jesus” by author Dave Andrews challenged Christians to come together with Muslims to re-claim the concept of “jihad” from extremists.

Dave pointed out that Islam embraces Jesus as an example of non-violent resistance.

“I believe that Muslims and Christians can join together to discover Jesus as a messiah who embodies the spirit of mercy and grace, and we can find that as a common ground in working for the common good,” he said.

Synod research officer David Weddell challenged people attending his session to consider whether we should close our churches on Sundays.

“What are the things we can do to connect people to the message of Jesus but are not necessarily to do with our Sunday service?” asked David.

The event wasn’t all talk. The virtual reality exhibit stimulated members into challenging assumptions of their physical reality by donning a headset and launching into an immersive underwater experience encountering sea creatures lurking in the deep.

As crowds feasted on festival food they were treated to live music and soapbox speakers under a canopy of fairy lights.

The night concluded with a guest performance in the outdoor chapel by slam poet Joel McKerron, who moved audiences with a rousing series of poems summarising the key themes of the event’s discussions.



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# 7 things to do before we turn 40

Having trouble coping with an upcoming four zero birthday? The Uniting Church in Australia will hit the big 40 milestone in 2017 and *Journey* has put together some things to do before we cut the cake.

- 1 Celebrate how far we've come!**  
 We are Australia's first home-grown church, formed with a dangerous, creative mission to journey as pilgrims. Over nearly four decades we have created a network of thriving multicultural churches, empowered women into leadership and ministry, and committed ourselves to be open and inclusive worshipping communities. Our call for a just and compassionate world is undiminished. God is good. Start planning a seriously big birthday party!
- 2 Learn the lessons from our teenage years.**  
 Maybe we thought that we would always hold the high moral ground and that the world would beat a path to our door. Maybe we assumed that the Uniting Church would live forever, because that was God's plan. As we have matured, have we learned that those things might not be true? Can we find new ways to understand ourselves and our part in God's mission?
- 3 Catch up with friends we've lost along the way.**  
 While we were busy getting on with things, some people just slipped away. Why not make a list of members you haven't seen for a while? Sometimes a simple phone call or note will help re-establish contact. Perhaps an invite to that party we talked about?
- 4 Make amends.**  
 We've been through some tough times in the last 39 years. For some, the pain of division and the heartache of disappointment linger. Where and how do we need to be healed? To whom can we reach out?
- 5 Keep the faith.**  
 Ours is the faith once delivered to the saints (Jude 3) but it falls to each generation to interpret that message to the world. As Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, test everything; hold fast what is good. How can we interpret and share our faith afresh in this generation?
- 6 Relinquish power to those who come behind us.**  
 We are only keepers of the resources passed on by our mothers and fathers in faith. Our buildings and wealth belong to the whole church for the service of God. Look for the next generation, and find the courage to let go. Let's not subside into a safe middle age, recalling past glory and clinging to what we have.
- 7 Set new goals and take time to plan for turning 50.**  
 What goals can we set for the next Synod, and then in five and ten years? Life begins at 40!

*The Uniting Church will celebrate its 39th anniversary on 22 June 2016. Watch for updates on the Synod Facebook page.*  
[facebook.com/unitingchurch.queensland](http://facebook.com/unitingchurch.queensland)



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*Wings of Desire*

Director: Wim Wenders

Starring: Bruno Ganz,  
Peter Falk

1987, rated PG

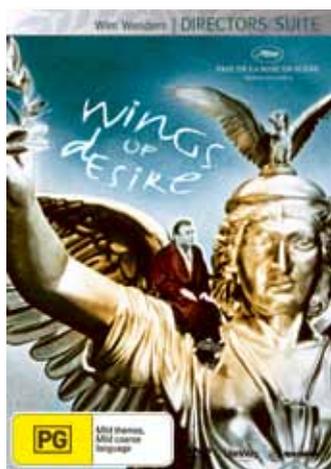
Available on DVD from  
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Bruno Ganz contemplates the angelic life.  
Photo: Madman Entertainment

# Observing the heavenly in humans

**Emerging as one of the key voices from the 70s New German Cinema movement, Wim Wenders is an icon of global arthouse cinema with an enviable track record that includes multiple Academy Award nominations, the coveted Palme d'Or for best film at the Cannes film festival, the Golden Lion at the Venice film festival and lifetime achievement awards at the Berlin and Locarno film festivals.**



While many will be familiar with his four-decade filmography that spans a wide array of genres, tackles both fiction and documentary forms, and has seen him travelling the world from Cuba (*Buena Vista Social Club*) to Japan (*Tokyo-Ga*), Portugal (*Lisbon Story*) to North America (*Paris, Texas*), the subject of Wenders' spirituality is less well-known and rarely covered by the press.

Although highly rare for filmmakers working today, Wenders is a doctor of theology and openly admits that his Christian-inspired spirituality fuels all his artistic endeavours. This powerful sense of the spiritual is perhaps most evident in his 1987 masterpiece, *Wings of Desire* starring Peter Falk and Bruno Ganz.

Exploring weighty topics such as immortality, urban loneliness, existentialism and Germany's war-torn history,

the film follows two angels as they float across the lives of a variety of West Berliners still living in a divided city.

Wenders employs multiple narrative devices built upon binaries: obviously, Berlin as the bifurcated cityscape, but also the split between fiction (as represented by the film-within-the-film) and reality, the heavenly and earthly realms, and the horrors of the Nazi past and the spectre of conflict in the film's present (East German totalitarianism).

The result gives *Wings of Desire* a lingering tension that seems to be tied to the tension many devout religious followers experience as they reconcile the promise of a heavenly afterlife and maximising their own time and purpose on earth. If the film ultimately comes down on the side of celebrating humanity and the precious gift of life in the earthly realm, it also draws a deeply humanistic portrayal of God and his angels as compassionate observers.

Wenders once remarked he wanted to be a priest at a young age but was sidetracked by rock and roll and pinball machines. In *Wings of Desire* we see how the twin influences of faith and pop culture (Australian rocker Nick Cave makes a cameo appearance, references are made to Falk's TV detective series *Columbo* and Raymond Chandler) can shape a master artist: he perfectly synthesises the spiritual with the simpler pleasures of life to conjure a loving portrait of our world and the next.



Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges Commission

## Seeking board members

The Queensland Synod works with 13 schools and five residential colleges spread across Queensland. We invite expressions of interest from people with governance skills and professional qualifications in accounting, law or strategy to fill the available vacancies. Appointees must be a communicant member of a Uniting Church congregation.

To find out more about each school and college visit the website below or contact the Schools Commission Executive Officer, Daniel Pampuch.



e. [daniel.pampuch@ucaqld.com.au](mailto:daniel.pampuch@ucaqld.com.au) | p. 07 3377 9820 | w. [schoolscommission.ucaqld.com.au](http://schoolscommission.ucaqld.com.au)

## Men's health in for a check up

Men's Health Week (13–19 June) is designed to kick start conversations around health and wellbeing issues facing boys and men, with this year's theme "Health Elements" drawing on the need for communities to discuss the elements of life that build health and purpose.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, male suicides are four times the rate of females, and from birth, males suffer more illness, more accidents and die earlier than their female counterparts.

A series of events will be held across Queensland, from men's shed gatherings to workplace information sessions, but communities are encouraged to devise their own way to get involved and register their contributions online.

For more information on events near you, or to register your own event, visit [menshealthweek.org.au](http://menshealthweek.org.au)

## Correction and apology

In our May issue we published a classified advertisement for renting a Caloundra beachside unit with the incorrect price listed as, "from \$300/wk". The correct price is from \$400/wk. We apologise to Ray Herron and any readers who may have been affected by this error.

## Get involved with Refugee Week

To coincide with Refugee Week (19–25 June) UnitingJustice will release an online information booklet—including worship and prayer resources—to raise public awareness on the plight of refugees in Australia, and how the community can provide a safe and welcoming environment for them.

Members of the public are encouraged to host their own events—such as public talks, film screenings, football tournaments and music festivals—that celebrate the diversity refugee communities bring Australia and/or highlight injustices facing refugees and asylum seekers.

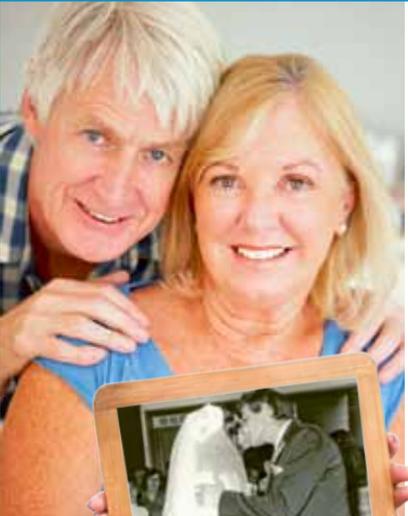
The Refugee Week website contains in-depth guides on planning your event, working ethically with refugees, and how to register it with their public calendar.

A Refugee Week rally will be held in King George Square, Brisbane at 11 am, 18 June. Confirmed speakers include Australian Greens senator Larissa Waters and Dr Richard Kidd.

Developed in partnership with the Refugee Association of Logan, the Logan Art Gallery will host the *Finding Home* exhibition (through to 2 July) featuring artworks by refugees and asylum seekers.

UnitingJustice's information booklet is available at [unitingjustice.org.au/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/information-and-action-resources](http://unitingjustice.org.au/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/information-and-action-resources)

For information on Refugee Week event planning and other facts, visit [refugeeweek.org.au](http://refugeeweek.org.au)



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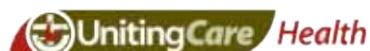
Part of the UnitingCare Health Group, the Wesley Hospital is one of Australia's leading private hospitals, caring for people from a wide range of faith and cultural backgrounds.

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To obtain a position description or further information, contact Julie Mackay-Rankin, Pastoral Care Manager at the Wesley Hospital: [julie.mackay@uhealth.com.au](mailto:julie.mackay@uhealth.com.au)

Applications close on Friday 8 July 2016 and should be addressed to:

The Wesley Hospital JNC C/- Secretary of Synod Placements Committee Uniting Church in Australia, Queensland Synod GPO Box 674 Brisbane QLD 4001



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