The Westerly

PRESBYTERY OF PORT PHILLIP WEST

PPW & PWV Newsletter No.75 December 2025

Presbytery of Western Victoria

Shine the Light: of Hope, Peace, Joy & Love this Christmas

UCA Queensland Free Resource

It's easy to focus on the darkness...

As we look around at the world, our society, our neighbourhoods, and even our own lives, it can feel as though darkness is everywhere. Our news channels and social media feeds are filled with stories of despair, pain, greed, death, and destruction. At times, it can seem like the darkness is overshadowing and suffocating hope.

But this Advent, while we acknowledge and reflect on the darkness in our world, we will also choose to look for, and look toward, the light. The light that Christ brings, and the light that each of us is called to shine.

This Advent, we invite you to journey with us as we explore the theme: Shine Light this Christmas!

As we prepare for the birth of Jesus, we'll reflect on how God's light transforms lives through hope, peace, joy, and love, and consider the part we play in shining that light into the world around us.

What comes to mind when you hear the word light? What images, thoughts, or feelings does it bring?

Light is essential to life on Earth, though it's easy to overlook its impact. From helping plants grow and giving vision to humans and animals, to influencing our sleep, mood, and health, and powering clean energy - light is woven into everything. Without it, life as we know it couldn't exist.

Light also carries rich symbolic meaning. Around the world, we see people shining their "light" by illuminating ideas and experiences, spreading knowledge, standing up to injustice, revealing hidden beauty, and sharing love and grace with others.

Throughout Advent, our reflections and our bible readings, will focus on God's promise to bring everlasting light to all people through Jesus. As we recognise the darkness in our own lives and the world around us, we'll also celebrate the Light of the World who transforms that darkness with hope, peace, joy, and love.

At Christmas, we celebrate the fulfilment of God's promise. Jesus entered the world not with grandeur or fanfare, but in humility - born among the broken and the overlooked. Like a light breaking through the night, Jesus came to reveal truth, to embody grace, and to share divine love with all people.

As we receive this gift once again, we are invited to reflect on what Christ's light means in our lives and in our world today. You might like to consider these questions: ***What is revealed in our communities, in our hearts? Who might still be living in darkness? In whom, or where, might we be missing the light of Christ?***

So, "Come, let us walk in the light of the Lord."

Let us be people who transform darkness into light,
and who shine the hope, peace, joy, and love of Christ into the world.

Shine the Light

ADVENT 2025 (Overview)

PRAYER

Lectionary released

The 2025–26 Uniting Church lectionary resource has been released by the Assembly. A key resource for preaching and teaching in Year A, the coming year's lectionary continues with a new-look poster format, and includes official Uniting Church dates and links to an **online hub of resources** for preaching, teaching and worship.

DISCOVER THE LECTIONARY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

We acknowledge all First Peoples of the beautiful lands on which we live and celebrate their enduring knowledge and connections to Country. We honour the wisdom of and pay respect to Elders past and present.

From the Editor:

If you missed an edition of The Westerly see Newsletters – Presbytery of Port Phillip West (ucappw.org.au). Rev Linley Liersch Linley.Liersch@ppw.victas.uca.org.au.

Please click links or pictures for hyperlinks. **Next edition submissions 25th November 2025**

International Day of People with Disability

Wednesday December 3, 2025

Faith Community Resource

Uniting Church in Australia SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA | The Uniting Church in Australia QUEENSLAND SYNOD

International Day of People with Disability

International Day of People with Disability – IDPwD- is a United Nations (UN) day observed internationally on 3 December each year. It aims to promote community awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability.

The UN started the International Day of Disabled Persons in 1992. It is held every year to support the rights and well-being of people with disabilities. The day also helps raise awareness about the challenges they face in areas like politics, society, the economy, and culture.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) was adopted in 2006, building on many years of work by the UN to support people with disabilities. It sets out the rights of people with disabilities and encourages governments to take action to protect those rights. The Australian Government is a signatory to the Convention. Governments report to the UN Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities approximately every five years to review their progress in implementing the requirements of the Convention.

The following resource is for congregations and faith communities that wish to include material about this significant day in worship or other services for Sunday, November 30 or Sunday, December 7.

Communities across Australia come together to celebrate the International Day of People with Disability—a day dedicated to promoting inclusion, raising awareness, and honouring the contributions of people with disability. To support this important occasion, a wide range of resources are available to help schools, faith organisations, workplaces, and community groups plan meaningful events and conversations.

Visit the International Day of People with Disability Australia official website **www.idpwd.com.au** and use the available promotional resources and the information kit for community groups to plan an activity or event for your congregation or faith community.

You are invited to register your event on the official IDPWD website and take a meaningful stand for equality, accessibility, and the rights of people with disabilities. By sharing your initiative, you join a global movement!

Shop online for gifts that fight poverty and build hope!

Behind every one of our gifts is a story of change.

A farmer planting a new type of seed, a girl going to school, a mother starting a business, a community restoring their land and livelihood... When you give an *Everything in Common* gift, you're part of the story. You're sharing hope and opportunity with families overcoming poverty, injustice and the impacts of a changing climate.

How does it work?

Choose a gift

Each gift card represents a donation to a life-changing project.

Dedicate it to a loved one

Personalise your card with a special greeting or message.

Change lives!

Send your card and know that it's helping change lives and communities.

SCHOOL BOOKS
$10

CHICKENS
$10

SEEDS
$10

For Church Councils:

FUNDS TO ASSIST YOUR CONGREGATION OR FAITH COMMUNITY REDUCE EMISSIONS

In 2024, a Synod Emissions Reduction Fund was made available by the Synod of Victoria and Tasmania and many congregations applied and were granted funding to assist with their work in reducing their emissions. There is now a further opportunity for congregations and faith communities to apply for another round of funding.

Your congregation or faith community is invited to make an application to this fund, in order to assist your congregation's work towards reaching zero emissions.

Application close: 5 pm February 28th 2026.

Application Forms: https://justact.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/APPLICATION-FOR-FUNDING-FROM-THE-SYNOD-EMISSIONS-REDUCTION-FUND.docx

No application will be funded more than $10 000. We aim to inform congregations and faith communities the outcome of their applications by the end of March 2026.

Please provide: Calculating the amount of emissions saved if the project goes ahead— eg. relevant electricity or gas bills or installer estimates of emission reductions. The name of the suppliers and manufacturers of the main products to be used eg. such as solar panel manufacturer or heat pump manufacturer if known.

Questions about the application can be asked of the SERF Administration Team members:

Jamie Thom	0427 210 787
Heather Baxter	0487 429 748
Tom Spurling	0409 461390

YOU ARE VERY WELCOME….. to join with the **PPW Climate Action Group**.

We are a very friendly, small group of dedicated people who care deeply for God's amazing and wonderful Creation. We want to play our small part in helping reduce the effects of climate change in any way that we can and we focus on the Uniting churches and faith organisations and its individual members as well. We try to offer suggestions and advice to others who want to reduce their carbon footprint and together we are learning and growing. **We would very much welcome you to join with us, and particularly want to invite anyone from Western Victoria's Presbytery to connect with us.** We meet once a month via Zoom, so no need to leave the comfort of your own home to join with us!

Please call Sue Strong on 0437 741077 or Richard Arnold on 0407 796 429 for a chat.

National Council of Churches in Australia

Advent & Christmas Resources 2025

Intergen

Resources are free or by donation they produce resources for an Australian context. I love this Australian Advent Wreath The advent liturgy uses the symbols of native seed pods (Hope), leaves (Peace), flowers (Joy) and bark (Love).

Theology & Culture Conference

Gendered Violence

WHERE: Centre for Theology and Ministry, 29 College Crescent, Parkville, Naarm.

WHEN: 11-13th February

Note this conference is in person only.

COST:
Early bird rate - $220 (full cost $250)
Students - $180

Register here through Humanitix

Retired Minister's Gatherings—Pascoe Vale RSL

Venue: Pascoe Vale RSL, 40 Cumberland Rd Pascoe Vale 3044

Time: 12:00 – till 13:30 Friday 5th December 2025

This is for those of us who are retired or in the process of retiring to have lunch together and share a little of the journey. We gather in an informal way to catch up on how everyone's going and what we're up to. New members welcome.

So if you're interested, can you please let me know your RSVP by email before 5pm Tuesday 2nd December mark@dunn.id.au This is essential for a lunch booking.

UCA Advent & Christmas 2025 Resources

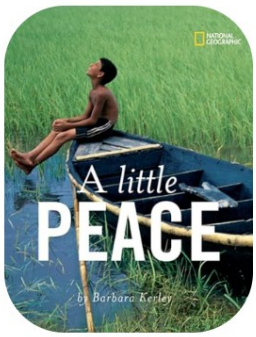
Books for the Advent Table

Hope

Hope is a Spark (2022) by Colin Buchanan (Author), Serena Geddes (Illustrator).

Peace

A Little Peace by Barbara Kerley

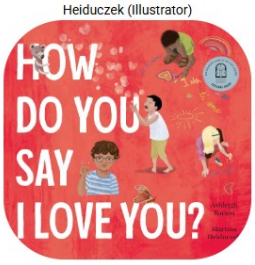


Joy

Ish (2005) by Peter H. Reynolds (Author, Illustrator)

Love

How Do You Say I Love You? (2022) by Ashleigh Barton (Author), Martina Heiduczek (Illustrator)



You Tube Video called

Advent Conspiracy

Is Brilliant!

It challenges the spendthrift world we live in.

aration for Advent 2025 - UCA

STRANDZ

Children & Family Resources

Activity sheets on Advent themes:

Hope, Peace, Joy, Love
& Christmas Day

Crosswords

Color-Ins

Mazes

Crack the Code

Have Fun!

Events

30th November	**Advent Starts**
1st December	**World AIDS Day**
3rd December	**International Day of Persons with Disability** Resources
3rd December 5pm	**Holding the Light** An Ecumenical service Remembering Victims and Survivors of Families Violence @Wesley Uniting Church, Lonsdale St, Melbourne/Naarm and **online**
5th December 12—1:30 pm	**Retired Minister's Gatherings—Pascoe Vale RSL** (Below) **Venue**: Pascoe Vale RSL, 40 Cumberland Rd Pascoe Vale 3044
5th December	**International Human Rights day**
25th December	**Christmas Day**

TOOLKIT

The Christmas Bowl 2025 toolkit booklet, with everything you need to run the Christmas Bowl in your church.

Download