

UNITING WORLD'S

# 7 DAYS OF SOLIDARITY

A CELEBRATION OF OUR GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS



**UnitingWorld**  
connecting communities for life

DAY

1

MONDAY

# LOOKING FOR LIVING WATER

## PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN BALI (GKBP)

In a remote part of the Balinese Highlands, a traditional healer is alone in the forest. He's revered by the people of his village who respect him for his wisdom and connection to the spiritual realm. During his time of meditation, he hears a voice: "Look for living water."



He becomes one of the first and most influential Christians in Bali.

"This man is my grandfather," **Dr Debora Murthy** says. "He came into contact with some of the first missionaries to Bali who had a Bible translated into Bahasa (Indonesian language). They showed him the words of Jesus: 'I am the living water.' They were the words my grandfather had been looking for all his life. He became a Christian and so did many in his village."

Less than 2% of the Balinese population are Christian, but they punch well above their weight. In a population of 4 million people, the Maha Bhoga Marga (MBM) Foundation uses UnitingWorld funding to reach about 150,000 people each year with livelihood projects (e.g. pigs, goats,

access to markets) and health messaging, as well as disaster responses and support for sustainable tourism.

Debora, a medical doctor by profession, is employed as UnitingWorld's Southeast Asia Regional Office Coordinator, which includes the work of MBM in Bali.

"I love waking up every morning in my role as the Coordinator," says Debora. "The whole team is working together to help people see that they are made in the image of God and have so much potential to grow."

Debora particularly loves raising up new leaders who understand leadership is about servanthood rather than power. The Southeast Asia region is known for its strongly patriarchal and authoritarian culture, and leaders can be dismissive of the voices of women and children.

"We're incredibly proud that we have been able to use Scripture teaching to change the mindset of leaders about power and how it can be used," Debora says. "The powerful are becoming committed to protecting the powerless. We see Jesus quietly take people aside in the Bible to listen and to heal, and that has become our model too."

Debora describes the relationship between churches in her region, and the Uniting Church in Australia through UnitingWorld, as quite unique.

"You are always patient, willing to listen and work with us to help us find a way to grow," she says. "Not all organisations have this approach. We value it so much and we learn by example how to grow the capacity of our leaders."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE PROTESTANT CHRISTIAN CHURCH IN BALI (GKPB)

12,000 MEMBERS / 61 PASTORS / 72 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- GKPB works to free people from poverty regardless of their faith, a transformational gospel in a majority Hindu context.
- They help people live sustainably with tourism and to understand their rights.
- They responded to COVID-19 by opening up their facilities as quarantine centres and sharing health messaging and seedlings to grow food.
- UnitingWorld supports their livelihood projects and helped with communications for COVID response.



## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

For the ongoing COVID-19 response in communities struggling economically after the collapse of tourism.

### 2. WELLBEING

For the development of better health infrastructure, especially in remote and rural areas.

### 3. SOLIDARITY

For the leadership of the Church as they encourage congregations who have been unable to meet physically for some time.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

Think of someone who is from a minority group in your community – the colour of their skin, their faith, their mother-tongue. Reach out to let them know that you value their difference and welcome them into your life.

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# GO INTO ALL THE WORLD...

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF TUVALU (EKT)

From the air, Tuvalu is a bold ribbon of green against an ocean hungry for land.



Changing climate and rising seas demand more and more of these island people, their gardens and water-table poisoned by salt. Tuvalu is both beautiful and fraught.

"There are so many changes to our island," says **Malisi Tupou**, who works with the Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu as General Secretary for the Women's Fellowship. "It's not just more storms and fish that are harder to catch. It's the mothers without work and the kids out late. It's families that are falling apart and not enough food."

Malisi's job is to bring life to souls and hands. In a place where the loss of land and livelihoods due to climate change creates despair, domestic violence and a feeling of being abandoned by God,

she teaches from the Bible to bring new hope. She also trains women to be gardeners, to sew masks as protection against COVID-19 and to nurture their-families.

"Our people have always had strong faith, and that's what we need to keep drawing on," Malisi says. "We have to call people back to the Bible so that men keep caring for their families and children know they are worthwhile and loved."

The Congregational Christian Church of Tuvalu is seeding purpose and hope back into their communities.

In a nation where upward of 90% of people identify as Christians, the language of the Bible is a powerful voice that convicts and galvanises people for change.

**'Go into all the world and tell the good news.'**  
That's what I'm here to do.

Throughout the Pacific, leaders of churches are discovering new ways to share light from the Scriptures that directly call people to tackle the impact of the changing climate, disasters, globalisation and domestic violence. They teach and preach God's care for creation, the equality of men and women, and the dignity of children.

"I love this work because it's my calling to be there for the other women," Malisi says. "I'm a minister's wife and a primary teacher, and I love the part in Matthew where it says, 'Go into all the world and tell the good news.' That's what I'm here to do."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF TUVALU (EKT)

9,715 MEMBERS / 29 PASTORS / 13 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- EKT is internationally vocal against the ravages of climate change, and help communities prepare for and mitigate disasters.
- They are an influential church, serving people through schools and health services.
- They use Biblical teaching to help people respond to the changing climate and better understand child protection.
- UnitingWorld supports work promoting livelihoods and leadership opportunities for women, and developing good practices in child protection and disability inclusion.





## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

Give thanks for the work of the Women's Fellowships and their leaders.

### 2. WELLBEING

For families in Tuvalu, especially those with teenagers who are caught between 'modern culture' and their traditional island ways of life.

### 3. SOLIDARITY

For the leaders and populations of high-polluting western countries like Australia, who contribute significantly to the global warming that disproportionately impacts our island neighbours.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

Have a look in your recycling bin and count all the single-use plastics in there. Pick one or two changes you can make to cut back on them ([www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/tips-reduce-plastic](http://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/tips-reduce-plastic)). The blue waters of Tuvalu will thank you.

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# LOVE IS PATIENT, LOVE IS KIND...

## THE METHODIST CHURCH IN FIJI (MCIF)

A week before Christmas 2020, Tropical Cyclone Yasa made landfall in Fiji.



A monstrous category five storm, Tropical Cyclone (TC) Yasa devoured crops, tore houses apart and left thousands homeless; the reconstruction bill ran into the billions. Many Fijians say it was the worst cyclone they've ever experienced.

"TC Yasa was the first time people really believed they'd been empowered to help themselves in the aftermath of a disaster, and it was the work of the Church that made it happen," says **Noa Tokavou**, who leads disaster preparation and response work for the Methodist Church in Fiji. "My role was to help people prepare and also to give them the ability to decide for themselves how resources like clothing, food, water should be distributed among the most vulnerable."

The Methodist Church in Fiji is the largest church in Fiji, with presence in even the most remote islands – a powerful voice for change in a culture where most people identify as Christian. "We have been using teaching resources that our Pacific theologians developed with the help of UnitingWorld to preach and teach about the big issues for our culture: where God can be found in disaster, how to look after creation, gender equality and child protection," Noa says. "We have chaplains who are providing counselling to the survivors of disaster, and practical training in disaster risk assessment. People are responding really well; they no longer feel ignored or helpless."

Noa has a long history of involvement in the Pacific community, but has a special heart for remote, isolated parts of his country, where human trafficking still

devastates lives and families lack the resources they need to stay healthy or send their children to school.

"My motivation is the words of Paul in Corinthians that describe what God's love is like," he says. "It's very practical – about being patient, kind, truthful – and I try to live this out among the most vulnerable people in our communities."

The Methodist Church in Fiji regards the Uniting Church in Australia as a 'big brother' and is incredibly grateful for the prayer, support and resourcing we offer.

"Our church is run financially by the giving of our people, who pay a levy to become a member," Noa says. "Many of our districts are really lacking in financial resources, and we're grateful not just for the funds you provide, but for the support and many offers of prayer we receive."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE METHODIST CHURCH IN FIJI (MCIF)

212,860 MEMBERS / 430 PASTORS / 2,860 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- MCIF serves the community through schools, colleges and hospitals across the country.
- They help communities to assess climate risk, advocate for sound climate policies, provide trauma counselling in times of disaster and support people to build back better.
- They support communities in the informal settlements to educate children.
- UnitingWorld supports their program to teach the equality of men and women and end domestic violence, as well as supporting their climate resilience and child protection work.



## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

Give thanks for the support of Australian and other Pacific partners who are assisting Fiji with disaster preparation and best practice climate change response.

### 2. WELLBEING

Pray that Australia and other wealthy nations will act ambitiously to curb their emissions, and work in partnership with Pacific nations to build resilience to the impacts of climate change (such as extreme weather events, land erosion and salt water in the drinking table due to sea level rise).

### 3. SOLIDARITY

Pray for the COVID-19 response, particularly in outlying areas where health messaging is still not well recieved and people are vulnerable to conspiracy theories embedded in religious ideology.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

Your voice as a citizen is vital if Australia is to do our bit to fight climate change. Visit the Climate Council ([www.climatecouncil.org.au](http://www.climatecouncil.org.au)), learn about how you can advocate for action that will save not just Fiji but our own incredible bushlands, reefs and wildlife.

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DAY

4

THURSDAY

# LIFE – AND LIFE IN ABUNDANCE!

## CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA (CNI)

India's communities are full of colour and character, a photographer and storyteller's dream. They're also far more ingenious and resilient than many imagine.



"There was an early view that those of us with an education or resources knew so much more than those we were working

with and could teach them 'how to be better'," says **Prita Samantaroy**, the Development Officer for the Diocese of Amritsar in the Church of North India. "That's not how it happens. These communities are a powerhouse of knowledge and skills, and we're just there as facilitators and supporters."

Prita would know. She works among Dalit ('untouchable') communities to unearth the wisdom, resilience and strength within; overseeing projects that provide education, access to knowledge about political and social rights, water and sanitation.

"There is so much inequality in my country, and change comes not from one thing but many," she says. "It's gradual but because I've been with the Diocese for some years now, I do see a transformation. I see it in the young women, daughters of domestic workers and labourers, who've not just achieved well at school because of their involvement in our hostel, or are healthier because of the nutritious food, but who are now determined to take a leadership role or sing in a choir. That's life in abundance. It's not just surviving. It's real life, and it's what we're striving for."

The Church of North India faces massive challenges of inequality and discrimination, and while Prita says her team dreams of changing the world, they begin by addressing the causes of poverty and the structures that keep people oppressed.

"The pandemic has taught us, once again, that we have to be flexible and innovative - so much progress has been lost," Prita says. "But the partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia, through UnitingWorld, has helped us to move forward on the big picture issues like gender justice and safeguarding for our children, and these are the structures that have to change for real progress to happen. We're grateful for that."

The Church of North India has a rich history with the Uniting Church in Australia, and Prita highlights how much we have to learn from one another on shared issues like climate change and the treatment of indigenous peoples.

"It's good for us to share our stories, our struggles and to be partners in prayer," says Prita. "We believe very much in the power of solidarity."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE CHURCH OF NORTH INDIA (CNI)

1,500,000 MEMBERS / 2,000 PASTORS / 4,500 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- CNI Diocese of Amritsar strives to break down barriers of caste, class and gender to overcome economic inequality and exploitation of nature.
- During the pandemic, they provided emergency rations during lockdown, helped families access school resources remotely and nurtured faith through broadcasts, rooftop services and Facebook.
- UnitingWorld supports projects in communities that have traditionally faced discrimination and often don't have access to clean water, education or their political and social rights. The projects emphasise girls' education and promotes inclusion for women and people with disability.





## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

Pray that church members will share the vision of the church to be compassionate to those who are different to themselves, and find ways to actively share resources.

### 2. WELLBEING

Pray for partners in other countries, especially Australia, that they might embrace the idea of solidarity and share stories, struggles and inspiration with the Church in India.

### 3. SOLIDARITY

Pray for lasting, intelligent solutions to entrenched problems of inequality, and courage for the church to embrace and implement them.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

The Diocese of Amrtisar has embraced technology wholeheartedly during the course of the Pandemic. Visit their Facebook page to see and share examples of their creative online worship! [www.facebook.com/doacni1234](https://www.facebook.com/doacni1234)

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# GOODNESS AND MERCY – ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE

## UNITED CHURCH IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA (UCPNG)

In the River District of one of our nearest neighbours, Papua New Guinea, a father and son are graduating together from high school. They're a five day walk from the nearest proper township, but today they're the centre of the universe.



"This school was closed twenty-five years ago," says **Bena Seta**, Manager of Programs and Community Services with the United

Church in Papua New Guinea. "The father was just a boy at the time and forced to give up his education, so he never learned to read and write. A few years ago, the church began to raise money to get the school re-opened and helped supply the teaching staff. Both father and son were able to attend school together; the boy can now go on to university and his father has the education he always wanted."

The story is one of Bena's favourites. After years working with the United Nations on water projects, he acknowledged the grace of God in his own life and felt called to serve the church.

"I felt that call all through my body, in my bones, and I said yes I'm ready to serve," Bena recalls. "It was no ordinary voice speaking to me, it was something much deeper."

Today Bena has a passion not just for providing people like this father and son with life-changing education, but for raising up new leaders in the church and teaching the Bible.

"When you value people, you do all the good you can for them," Bena says. "There is so much life-giving work to do among my people and I'm always encouraged by a verse I learnt as a child: "The Lord is my shepherd – I shall not want... surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life."

Bena oversees work that includes collaborating with six other mainline churches not only to deliver health and education services, but to embed gender equality into the fabric of life and empower Christians to hold the government accountable for corruption and Papua New Guinea's welfare. This project represents UnitingWorld's biggest global collaboration.

"We value the partnership with Uniting Church people through UnitingWorld because you teach us by example the values and virtues we want to create in our leaders," Bena says. "As Melanesians, the relationship is very important to us – when we see what you believe in and how you live, it motivates and inspires us."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE UNITED CHURCH IN PAPUA NEW GUINEA (UCPNG)

600,000 MEMBERS / 400 PASTORS / 2,600 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- UCPNG runs schools, a teachers' training college, a theological college for the formation of its pastors, and a lay leaders' training institute as well as Bible schools in each region of the country. Equipping people for mission is a big priority.
- They run several health services for communities in remote parts of PNG.
- UnitingWorld supports UCPNG's clean water and sanitation projects, as well as supporting a seven-church denomination national collaboration in disaster preparation, gender equality, poverty alleviation and leadership projects throughout the country.



## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

Please pray for an increase in vaccination rates, especially among people living in remote areas. Scepticism about the vaccine is very widespread and education messages travel slowly.

### 2. WELLBEING

For the next generation of leaders within the church. Leadership is an influential part of Papua New Guinea's culture, and training is critical for future directions.

### 3. SOLIDARITY

For those who implement the water and sanitation programs in communities – that they will continue to find ways to communicate important health information and save lives.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

What could you achieve if the Christian denominations in your area decided to work together? Gather some friends from your church to visit another local church in your area over a few Sundays. See if you can get people interested in a little project to bless your community.



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# I AM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

## THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE (MCIZ)

When Tariro thinks back on her call to the life of the church in her community, she remembers a child born with albinism and a mother who was excluded.



"She was my friend and she and her child suffered a lot," **Tariro Washaya** remembers. "I was 24.

The experience made me determined to work to see others included and accepted."

Tariro's family have been deeply committed members of the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe for generations. Today, she is delighted to be working as the Programs Manager for the church's development agency MEDRA.

"I'm the first of five children, and my own parents were struggling to provide for us all, but they always encouraged us that education is the foundation of everything," Tariro says.

"Now I work with a really committed team and we don't just address one issue – we support people who need water or a chance to earn a living, and we also tackle issues of social justice, human trafficking and inclusion of people with disability."

Tariro remembers being drawn to the church's vision of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, ushering people into a richer, deeper form of life. She enjoys her work most when she's able to mentor other leaders, multiplying the impact of the work.

"There is a young man, Wellington, in one of our communities who had not much education, living with his grandmother," Tariro says. "He discovered a real passion for helping his community and has trained in some of our livelihood projects (goat and chicken rearing).

The change in him is just incredible. He wants to take on a real leadership role in his community and help others to take on new ideas. I feel so motivated when I think about how far he's come."

The Uniting Church in Australia, through UnitingWorld, has been partnering with the Methodist Church in Zimbabwe for many years and helped some communities transition to projects that now run independently in the care of local people like Wellington.

"What I've realised in our partnership with UnitingWorld is how much you value the relationship with us – you're not walking ahead of us but beside, always listening and providing support," Tariro says. "I hope you will continue to pray for us as we help our communities stand up strong."

*Celebrate with us*

## THE METHODIST CHURCH IN ZIMBABWE (MCIZ)

112,529 MEMBERS / 165 PASTORS / 1,541 CONGREGATIONS

### LOVE IN ACTION

- MCIZ is active in education with primary and secondary schools and community centres used for work among women, youth and non-church groups.
- Through their development agency MEDRA, they foster livelihood opportunities, clean water and sanitation, disaster response and education.
- They provide leadership and social cohesion, modelling care for the vulnerable and good citizenship in the context of social unrest and ineffective government.
- UnitingWorld supports the church to develop leadership and institutional capacity, helping them fight people trafficking, protect children and vulnerable groups, as well as promoting gender equality and disaster readiness.



## PRAY FOR THEIR CHALLENGES

### 1. LEADERSHIP

MEDRA longs to be more visible and to be able to grow in capacity to assist others. The gap between the need and the ability to respond is significant, and financial support plus leadership mentoring is critical.

### 2. WELLBEING

The changing climate continues to make growing enough food really challenging. Please pray for a global effort to respond alongside local advances in drought resistant crops.

### 3. SOLIDARITY

Pray for guidance among the leaders about where to invest their limited resources and how best to support congregations to take up their own local challenges.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

Think about your home and your church property. How welcome do you think people with disability feel in your community? Are there access ramps or strategies to help vision and hearing-impaired people? Can you suggest changes that could be made?

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# WE ARE THE SALT OF THE EARTH

## THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA (UCA)

“This is the story of a God who adores each and every one of us and invites us into radical community, coming among us in person, weeping our tears and calling us to compassion not just for ourselves, but for others and the earth itself.”



Rev Sally Douglas loved going to church as a child, left it in frustration and then returned with more passion than ever. Today she ministers in Melbourne’s inner-city Richmond and is a lecturer at Pilgrim Theological College, with several books to her name and a diverse flock to nurture.

“There’s a really significant opportunity for the church in Australia today to speak meaning into people’s lives,” Sally says. “I love that I get to engage with the deepest questions of meaning and purpose with people and help them answer the question, ‘where is God in all this?’”

It’s a question the Australian church has struggled to answer in recent years.

Membership is in decline as people no longer regard churchgoing as a social networking opportunity or moral safety net. In the absence of a larger ethical or spiritual framework, people turn to other narratives that encourage them to find their identity in work, possessions and status.

“I think people in our culture are actually starving for meaning, and we have this opportunity to get back to the early image of church as salt or a mustard seed – quietly working in people’s lives,” Sally says. “Our congregation is a place where all different types of people are building a community – refugees, people from the LGBTQI community, local families. Part of that is providing people a way to give back to others and feel they have something to contribute.”

Richmond Uniting is committed to looking outward, and supports local, national and international ministry. They pray regularly for partners in Papua New Guinea and throughout the Pacific, and have collaborated with local churches to run a Food Centre staffed by volunteers.

“We love the image of being living water, and so have committed to give and pray for water projects through UnitingWorld as well as support the development of leadership opportunities for women in the Pacific,” Sally says. “I’m inspired by the hymn in Colossians in which all people and all of creation are reconciled and caught up in the life of God... ultimately, that’s our goal.”

*Celebrate with us*

## THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA (UCA)

350,000 MEMBERS / 1,500 PASTORS / 1,600 CONGREGATIONS  
(1.4 MILLION AUSTRALIANS CLAIM TO BE UNITING CHURCH AFFILIATED)

### LOVE IN ACTION

- The UCA witnesses to God’s love through worshipping congregations, and leadership in Australia’s social and political landscape.
- We are vocal advocates for justice on First People’s rights, environmental responsibility, multiculturalism and inclusion for people who are often silenced - including LGBTQI communities, people with disabilities and people seeking asylum.
- The UnitingCare network is one of the nation’s largest community services providers, fighting for the dignity of Australia’s most vulnerable people.
- UnitingWorld connects the Uniting Church in Australia with global partners as they strive toward lives of hope and God-given dignity.



## ACTION FOR THE DAY

If your congregation vanished overnight, what would non-members, local or far afield, miss most? Think of an action you can take to strengthen your faith community in how you bless those around you. Or call others to join you in a new initiative if you feel inspired.



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UNITINGWORLD'S  
**7** DAYS OF  
SOLIDARITY

Seven Days of Solidarity is your chance to learn more about the work of God's people around the world, and to play your part in action, prayer and giving.

Please visit [www.sevendaysofsolidarity.com.au](http://www.sevendaysofsolidarity.com.au) to watch our videos and learn more. Make a gift to stand in solidarity with our global neighbours and our shared work in building God's kingdom.



UnitingWorld is the international aid and partnerships agency of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA). We connect the people of the UCA in missional collaboration with churches overseas to address the causes and consequences of poverty, violence and injustice.



**UnitingWorld**  
connecting communities for life