

UNITINGWORLD

UPDATE
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*One body,
many members*

Reverend James Bhagwan shares
a powerful message from the Pacific



UnitingWorld
connecting communities for life

Pictured: General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Rev. James Bhagwan, shared a generous and inspiring sermon for the inaugural UnitingWorld Sunday.

Photo by Jason Chute / Lumen Films Fiji

UnitingWorld Sunday sets sail!



Glenbrook Uniting Church in NSW and Chermiside Kedron Community Church in QLD were some of the communities who hosted a UnitingWorld Sunday service on 7 May.

“As Christians, we are called . . . to voyage in the way of Christ. To tread lightly on the earth and to sail gently on the seas. We are called to act justly, to be compassionate and to live humbly with our God.”

As part of the inaugural **UnitingWorld Sunday** event, which launched on 7 May, we asked our long-time friend and partner in Fiji, Reverend James Bhagwan, if he would prepare a sermon on what it means for us to be part of the global body of Christ.

As General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches, Rev James is passionate about ecumenism and working together to see justice in our world.

From the deck of the traditional voyaging canoe, the *Uto ni Yalo*, he shared a video

message on 1 Corinthians 12:14-26 ‘one body, many members’ and what the passage means for people in the Pacific.

“As members of the global family of God, the global household of God, we are reminded that we are our sisters’ and brothers’ keepers,” he says.

“In this time of climate crisis, as creation is groaning, as our sisters and brothers continue to cry out for justice: economic justice, political justice, social justice, justice for creation . . . We are called to act.”

During his sermon he also extended a generous acknowledgement of the missionaries who travelled across the Pacific islands, and the importance of the continuing partnerships we hold at UnitingWorld.

In addition to the sermon, a full liturgy, information booklet and worship playlist has also been created to help churches host a UnitingWorld Sunday service and learn more about what we do in partnership with the global church.

“The worship resources made it easy to adapt to our congregation,” said Rev Ellie Elia, minister of Glenbrook Uniting Church in NSW. “The recorded sermon by Rev James Bhagwan was beautiful and powerfully portrayed how we as a local congregation in the Uniting Church in Australia, are a valued part of the ‘crew’ on Christ’s Pacific canoe, through the work of UnitingWorld.

“It was a gift to celebrate and support our global neighbours,” said Rev Ellie.

“The liturgy that was prepared for us was really well done,” said Dr Sue Fairley at Chermiside Kedron Uniting Church in QLD. “It’s so exciting to hear about the work of UnitingWorld and to celebrate that this is part of who the Uniting Church is.”

To watch Rev James’s full sermon, see the full range of resources and order them for your church, please visit the website at www.unitingworld.org.au/sunday

UnitingWorld welcomes Rev Dr Apwee Ting!

We’re excited to welcome Rev Dr Apwee Ting as our new International Partnerships Manager.

In the role, Apwee will nurture connections between the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) and partner churches overseas, as well as facilitate theological and missional dialogue within the partnership networks. His deep familiarity with the rich cultural diversity of the UCA and passion for building relationships across cultural divides will be an invaluable asset.

For the last seven years, Apwee has worked for the Uniting Church Assembly, firstly as the National Director of Multi/Cross-cultural Ministry and then as a valued founding member of the Assembly Resourcing Unit (ARU).

In his work with the ARU, Apwee’s support for National Conferences, his wise counsel regarding relationships with partner churches overseas and the respect he has earned within the diaspora communities of the UCA have been an asset to the national work of the Church.



Apwee’s role with the ARU was formally closed and he was inducted into his new role with UnitingWorld at a ceremony at Pitt Street Uniting Church in Sydney on 4 May 2023.

We look forward to this exciting new chapter!

Inspiring a new generation of mission-minded people

At UnitingWorld, we know that young people in Uniting Churches and UCA schools are incredibly passionate about injustice. We also know how important it is for young people to develop a deeper understanding of mission and how we can do it effectively and responsibly.

UnitingWorld Donor Relations Manager, Mardi Lumsden, has the privilege of sharing our work with young people in schools and Uniting Church gatherings.

One of Mardi's outreach activities is a simulation game exploring the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It places groups of young people into a scenario where they imagine they are in a community in India, Tuvalu or Papua New Guinea; facing different challenges including floods, COVID, and well-intentioned churches sending second-hand goods. The participants explore what is most important for their community's survival.

Mardi runs this activity each year as part of the Senior Religion Curriculum at Moreton Bay College in Queensland at the invitation of the College Chaplain, Rev Peter Lockhart.

"The engagement by UnitingWorld in the simulation with Year 12 students is an excellent opportunity to build a sense of global citizenship as students are encouraged to think about the

UN development goals and look at the world through a completely different lens," Rev Peter said.

Mardi also ran the activity with 80 campers and 20 leaders at the Moreton Rivers Presbytery youth camp, Easter Madness, in Queensland in April.

Camp Director and Presbytery Youth and Young Adult Minister, Rev Fa Matangi, said it was a great experience that linked well to the camp theme of 'Redefine'.

"We love having UnitingWorld come and share what they do with the young people at Easter Madness," she said. "This was important for the campers to know that we are part of something bigger than our local churches, that awesome work is getting done outside their own suburbs."

Having run the activity in many different places, Mardi said it is always enjoyable and inspiring to see how people respond.

"I've run this activity with people from the age of 8 to 88 and each group is different. They always bring their own experiences to the activity and ask different questions," she said.

"I love seeing lightbulb moments when people realise the world isn't on a level playing field when it comes to injustice or poverty, and that there are sustainable ways the church can help."



By inspiring a new generation of mission-minded people, we think we can help young people gain a greater sense of purpose and meaning in their lives as they continue our shared journey, changing lives in partnership with the global church.

Contact us if you are interested in running a UnitingWorld activity with your group, or inviting a UnitingWorld speaker to your church. Phone 1800 998 122 or email info@unitingworld.org.au

COMMUNITY GARDENS TO FIGHT THE FOOD CRISIS IN MALUKU



Rev. Jeny Mahupale and her team praying over the latest plot of land planted as a part of the community kitchen garden initiative.

In response to a growing food crisis in Maluku, our church partners are mobilising all the resources at their disposal to improve food security and tackle poverty.

We've been supporting the Protestant Church of Maluku (GPM) and their development agency to expand their

initiative of planting community kitchen gardens to address growing poverty and food insecurity.

Three new community kitchen gardens have been planted in 2023, using the land of local congregations and individuals in the church.

"That the church is driving this is also an encouragement for the people," says Rev Jeny Mahupale, who has made her own family land available for the project.

"We're still in an early trial with different vegetables like spinach but the results are good so far with fruits like rambutan and pineapple."

The General Secretary of the GPM Synod, Pastor S. Sapulette, describes the initiative as a "planting movement" and hopes Rev Jeny and the church's leadership will inspire others to join.

"This is a movement that was born from reflecting on the struggles of our congregations and the reality we face together as a nation," said Pastor Sapulette.

He hopes that more congregations can be empowered and trained by Rev Jeny and her team to make their land available for economically productive crops to help tackle the food crisis.

PLEASE PRAY for the work of our partners in the Protestant Church of Maluku and for an end to the food crisis there. THANK YOU for enabling us to support our partners to expand this project through your donations.

Together we can end poverty

That's the message of our End of Financial Year appeal this year. We're blessed to be a part of a powerful network of people and organisations working together to make sustainable progress to end poverty in our world. We want to highlight these connections, show you where you fit in and why each of us has a vital role to play.

Last year we were able to impact the lives of more than 201,600 people together through sustainable community development. But whether we help one person, one family or a whole community to lift themselves out of poverty, it all makes a difference to affirm and restore the fundamental dignity of all people.



Komang and Desak with their three children and two nephews. Our partners in Bali helped them start a chicken-breeding business that means they can now afford to send their children to school. Read the full story at www.unitingworld.org.au/endpoverty

You can help us make a bigger impact!

Thanks to our partnership with the Australian Government, all gifts to this appeal will be combined with Australian Aid funding to reach more people.

As a valued partner of the Australian Government, we can receive funding each year to carry out poverty alleviation, gender equality and climate change projects overseas. We must contribute \$1 for every \$5 we receive from the government. Your donation will allow us to extend our programs and reach more people!

Please visit www.unitingworld.org.au/endpoverty to find out more and donate.

MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL DIRECTOR

One body, many members

"There is nothing more devastating than opening your eyes in the dark, and everything you had around you as home has been destroyed."

I'm writing from Tonga, and Rev Dr Tevita Havea has just described the first few days after the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai volcano erupted last year.

As well as the darkness of the event, he also described the outpouring of support from a network of partners that included UnitingWorld and the Australian Government.



FREE WESLEYAN CHURCH OF TONGA

2. RECONNECT – WE WORKED WITH PARTNERS TO PROVIDE

- 8 BOATS, ENGINE, FISHING EQUIPMENT, SAFETY KITS ETC.
- 8 GENERATORS
- 80 WHEELBARROWS
- 8 PACKAGES OF CONSTRUCTION TOOLS
- 8 PACKAGES OF GARDEN TOOLS
- 16-DRUMS OF PETROL ETC.

Sureka snapped this photo from the presentation by our partners about recovery efforts.

I'm here for a meeting of the Pacific Church Partnership Advisory Network, which joins leaders from across our Pacific region to reflect on shared challenges and build greater cooperation to address them.

The meeting heard reports of how church agencies like UnitingWorld and governments worked together on recovery efforts and continue to support them as they rebuild homes and livelihoods.

It's in moments like these that I can glimpse the 'big picture' of how so many different people and organisations are working together to end poverty and injustice in our world. It's a constant source of hope and encouragement.

Rev James Bhagwan's powerful sermon for our first **UnitingWorld Sunday** is a way that you too can see the people and mission that you're connected to through our partnerships. As Rev James reminds us, we're bonded by relationships that go way back to the first missionaries that sailed through these islands to speak about Jesus and his promise of abundant life for all.

You are part of that legacy, and it continues to be cherished throughout these beautiful Pacific islands, as well as through the life-changing partnerships between our churches.



Sureka with Rev Viniana Ravetali, UnitingWorld Board Member representing Pacific Diaspora at the PCPAN meeting

As we approach the end of the financial year, we have another chance to make a bigger impact in the fight against poverty and injustice by working together.

Yes, the need is huge. The challenges facing our world are complicated and deep-rooted. But when I think about our journey and where we've come from, I remember that we have deep roots too. And when I think of all the people sharing our vision and acting as 'one body' to create positive and sustainable change, I remember how powerful we can be.

Please visit www.unitingworld.org.au/endpoverty to donate.

In hope,

Dr Sureka Goringe
National Director
UnitingWorld

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UnitingWorld is an agency of the Uniting Church in Australia.

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