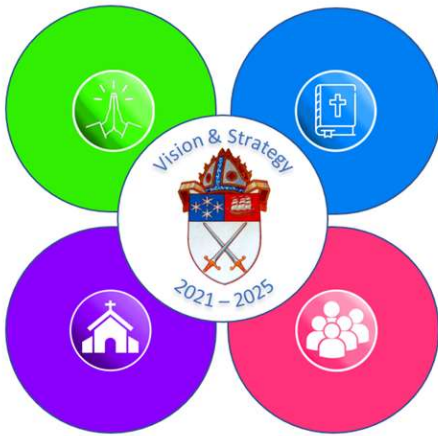


VISION AND STRATEGY



Our Vision

Being the people God is calling us to be through fulfilling the two great Commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbour (anyone we encounter who is in need) as ourselves.

Introduction to Strategy 3

Growing in love for, and encouragement of, one another (within our churches and diocese)

By Bishop Ian Coutts

We have so far attempted two Strategies in our Diocesan Vision and Strategy:

- 1) *Deepening and growing our prayerfulness,*
- 2) *Learning more about Christ in order to become more like Christ.*



Now we are about to embark on another extraordinary and important strategy, namely *Growing in love for and encouragement of one another (within our churches and diocese).*

Why this particular Strategy?

First and foremost it is because we believe in a Triune God who is love and who, in the relationship of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, define a quality of love that is so powerful we properly refer to God as One, or wholly united. Second, it is because we believe Jesus Christ came to demonstrate God's love to us, as the New Testament demonstrates. Furthermore, he invited his disciples to follow this example of his love, and indeed commanded them to love one another. Jesus is recorded as praying in John 17 that not just his present disciples but also his future followers would be 'completely one, so that the world may know that (God the Father) had sent (him) and loves them.'

Continued overleaf

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Four Strategies,
One Vision

Your Love is
Better Than
Life Part 1

The Alpha
Marriage Course
and so much more

Introduction to Strategy 3 continued

*Growing in love for, and encouragement of, one another
(within our churches and diocese)*

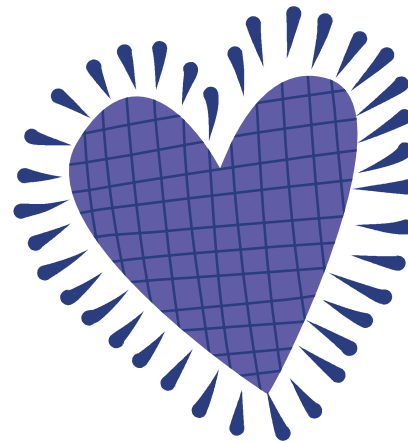
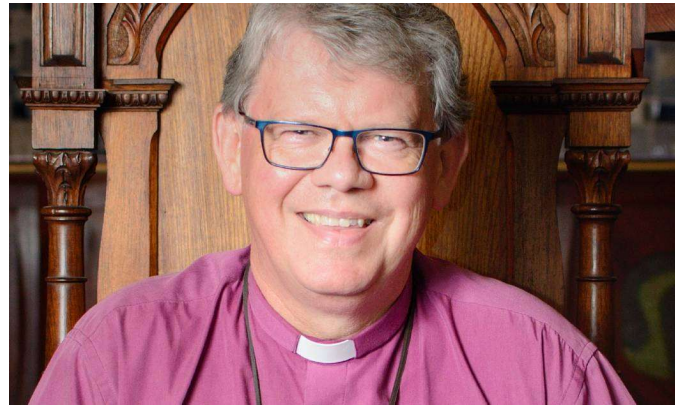


By Bishop Ian Coutts

As human beings, and especially as Christians, we are called to be the image of this amazing loving God.

The writer to the Ephesians (most likely St. Paul in prison) puts it like this: 'I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.' It is the significance of this love for fellow Christians that inspired Paul to write the amazing poem on love in 1 Corinthians 13. Whilst this passage is so often used at weddings, its actual intended audience was the Corinthian church and the quality of love Christians should have for one another. It was once famously said: "See how much these Christians love one another." This kind of Godly love breaks down barriers between people, welcomes and affirms one another, reaches out to help and support, brings joy and friendship that the Bible describes as like brother and sister and family relationships at their absolute best.

If you have been able to work on Strategies 1 and 2 I believe they will help you enormously with Strategy 3 and if you have not had the chance to do so it is not too late. All the material is still on our Diocesan website for you. Strangely, although Christians talk much about God being a God of love, there has not been as much exploration of this significant theological and ecclesiological theme in Christian literature as you might suppose. Consequently, there is not quite as much material to help us, although the New Testament is a rather important exception.



However, we have found some materials for individuals and groups and these are introduced in this Newsletter and we hope to find more. I am also intending to write a Lent course for next year specifically for this Strategy. Our final Strategy for the present Vision and Strategy, which we will likely reach next year is *Being Salt and Light in the World*. I can guarantee there is a direct relationship between this occurring and our first growing in love and encouragement for one another.



Four Strategies, One Vision

Our vision - ***Being God's Church in God's World through fulfilling the two great Commandments: to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and our neighbour (anyone we encounter who is in need) as ourselves*** - is broken down into the four strategies outlined opposite.

Every parish, Anglican Community and organisation in our diocese can tackle each of the strategies in the way that best suits them. As you can see from this and previous editions of the Vision and Strategy newsletters, there is a great variety of ways in which we are fulfilling God's two great commandments. It is inspiring and encouraging to read about these and hopefully we are learning from each other.

Its important to remember that as we move onto a new strategy we don't leave a previous strategy behind. Instead we aim to build on each strategy. Our deeper prayer lives and our learning more about Christ will lead us to love one another and be salt and light in our communities. And as we do this, we continue to pray and 'Learn Christ'.

Although we are now introducing the third Strategy - ***Growing in love for, and encouragement of, one another*** - we will continue to report on what's happening with regard to the first two strategies. To make it easier to see which strategies are being discussed we use the strategy colour codes in the headings of our articles: green for 'Deeper Prayer, blue for 'Learn Christ, purple for 'Love one Another' and pink for 'Being Salt and Light'.

We are also trying to capture stories of how these strategies are working in your parish or Anglican Community or organisation. What are you engaging with at the moment? What would you like to do next? Please do get in touch and let us know what you are up to via bishop@bunbury.org.au

The Four Strategies

Deepening and Growing our prayerfulness as individuals, groups and churches

Learning more about Jesus Christ in order to become more like Christ

Growing in love for, and encouragement of, one another (within our churches and diocese)

Being salt and light in the places and among the people God has placed us (in our communities)



Your Love is Better than Life Part 1

Living Water Anglican Church, Oyster Harbour

Did you know that Living Waters Church in Oyster Harbour have their own You Tube channel? One of the items you can find there is a group of four testimonies from church members, called, 'Your Love is Better than Life'. You can watch these testimonies via You Tube or read the first two here. We will include the second set of testimonies in next month's newsletter. Do you have a story to share? Please send it to us via bishop@bunbury.org.au

Psalm 63

"You God are my God. Earnestly I seek you. I thirst for you. My whole being longs for you in a dry and parched land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you".

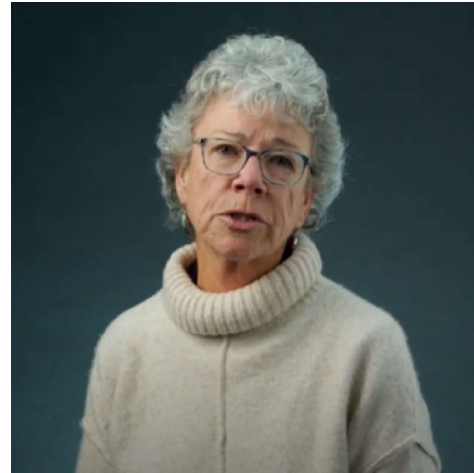
Anne

My life spun out of control two years ago when my husband Wilf was killed in a paragliding accident. I'm no stranger to grief and I know there are lots of people in this congregation who have lost loved ones as well.

Losing a loved one that you have spent 32 years with is quite different to other forms of grief and I was stunned by that – the way it impacted on my balance. I didn't feel whole anymore. I didn't know how to go on in life. It's moments like those that you really cry out to God because you are out of control, you've got nowhere to go.

When you've got a gaping wound in your heart, you really press into God, seeking his face earnestly. In doing that, he reveals himself to you. You are much more in tune with his love because you've got nowhere else to go.

I feel that he was revealing himself to me through all sorts of ways: through the people that were around me, people who expressed their shared sorrow and then their love. I really felt that behind every generous gesture was a gesture that had been inspired by God. Grief is a process so there are days and weeks when life is a bit of a slog but more and more I am more at peace with myself and my singleness and I know that God loves me with an everlasting love and I thank and praise him.



Anne, supplied

Malcolm

"Your loving kindness is better than life". Those are words we used to sing in scripture chorus days back in the seventies. There I was in my twenties singing that one and thinking that was wonderful. Over the years now, fifty years later, I'm realising more and more the depth of what that actually means.

Back then I was about to go into the army, conscripted into national service, thinking that was the end of my life, going to fight the Vietnam War. But God's faithfulness was there right in the middle of that. I came across to Perth while I was training and met Yvonne.

We've been married for fifty years this year so that was a wonderful bit of loving kindness from the Lord right back then.

It's interesting over the years when you have tough stages of life those words stand out even more.

Eight years ago I was retired and had to finish up at a school. I had no idea about the future and then I was asked would I come across to Albany to help out a school which was struggling a bit. We had no idea where Albany was. We had to look it up on a map. That was our journey. It has been an incredible journey over here these last eight years.

God has blessed us in ways we never thought possible. From looking after our grandson Braden – what a blessing that has been – to the school and a whole range of things that have happened. It has been great. God's loving kindness has been better than life...**Continued overleaf**

Your Love is Better than Life Part 1 continued

Living Water Anglican Church, Oyster
Harbour



Malcolm, supplied

We've had another complete shake up of our life and we realise that God wants us to go back to New South Wales – the very opposite of what I was thinking. It has been confirmed that we need to go back. We've been provided with a place for when we go back. So here we are at my age again saying, "Thy loving kindness is better than life".

The Alpha Marriage Course

By Rev Cathie Broome

Donnybrook and Harvey Parishes



Rev Cathie Broome, supplied

In 2022 we had three weddings within the parish. Two of the couples chose to do the Alpha marriage preparation course with me, one couple via Zoom and one couple in person. Each week they watched the DVD and completed the work book. We would meet and discuss what they had learnt. It covered great learning skills such as:

- how to communicate effectively

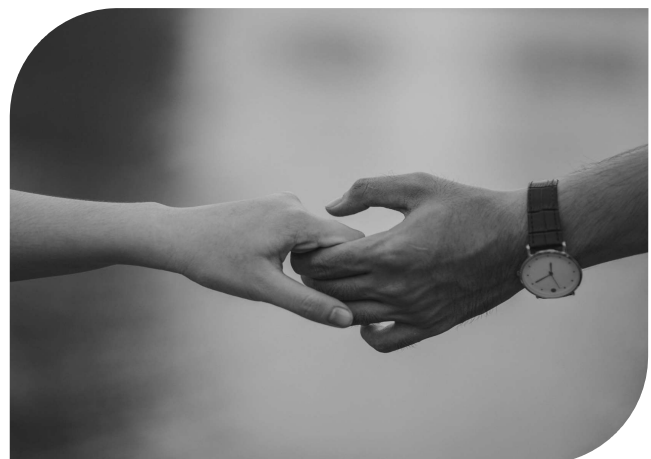
- how to resolve conflict
- how to meet each other's emotional needs
- how to build a friendship
- how to develop our sexual relationship
- how to determine roles.

We also spoke about becoming aware of the differences between us, and in particular:

- different expectations
- their upbringing
- cultural differences.

Giving time to support couples in marriage preparation is a great way to demonstrate love. You don't have to be ordained to run the marriage course. To find out more about the Alpha Marriage course, go to:

<https://alpha.org/the-marriage-course/>



Mother's Union Shares Ways to Love One Another

by Verity Murray, Assistant to the Vision and Strategy

What is Mother's Union?

Mother's Union is a worldwide Anglican Organisation which was begun in 1876, specifically for women to encourage and support one another. Its founder was Mary Sumner, a young vicar's wife, living in the village of Old Alresford in the south of England.



As she looked at her first born child, amazed at the enormous responsibility of nurturing a human life, and conscious of her own inadequacies, Mary dreamed of a union of mothers coming together regularly for encouragement, support and education. In 1876 Mary gathered together a group of mothers to help one another and realise more fully their responsibilities as wives and mothers. The women were also helped to understand the significance of the sacrament of baptism and the teaching of the faith to their children. In 1885 at the invitation of the Bishop, Mary spoke to a large gathering in Portsmouth and from this Mothers' Union grew to be a diocesan organisation within the Diocese of Winchester. The society quickly spread throughout England and as women migrated it was established overseas.

The Mary Sumner Prayer, written by the founder of Mother's Union is all about living out the command to 'love one another' and is a prayer we could all use today...

The Mary Sumner Prayer 1876

All this day, O Lord,
let me touch as many lives as possible for
thee;
and every life I touch,
do thou by thy spirit quicken,
whether through the word I speak,
the prayer I breathe, or the life I live. Amen
The Mary Sumner Prayer 1876

Mother's Union in Bunbury Diocese

By 1892 Mothers' Union had reached Australia. *In Bunbury Anglican Diocese we currently have seven MU branches in Mandurah, Bunbury, Busselton, Albany, Boyup Brook, Carey Park and Katanning, led by Diocesan MU president Wendy Mabey.* Our MU members are continually living out our mandate to 'love one another' as this is the very essence of their mission.

The Mother's Union representatives in Albany, Bunbury and Busselton, have been in touch to let us know some of the various ways that they demonstrate their love for others both within and outside Mother's Union. You can read their reports on the next page. You do not have to be a member of Mother's Union to put into practice any of these ways of loving one another. Maybe there is something here that you would like to try in your parish or organisation?

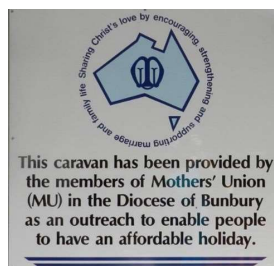
Many thanks to Rev Karen Cave (Albany), Diane Hill (Bunbury), and Lesley Hooper (Busselton) for their contributions to this article. You can find out more information about MU in the Diocese of Bunbury, and the MU caravan here:

www.muaustralia.org.au/diocese-of-bunbury.html

Did you Know . . . ?

Our Bunbury Diocese Mother's Union have a caravan operational at the Anglican Campsite in Busselton.

The caravan is regularly booked and enjoyed by many at a very reasonable rental.



Mother's Union Shares Ways to Love One Another continued

MU Albany

Here at Albany, MU have a programme developed in line with our Diocesan Vision and Strategic plan - "Transformation - by learning more about Christ to become more like him and growing in love for one another".

Each Month at our meeting we follow the study *Encounters with Jesus* in the Gospel of John and have selected speakers to talk about the way they show love in community.

Rev Karen Cave, St John's Albany

MU Busselton:

Here is a list of things that our branch felt was showing our love for one another:

- Visiting by Mother's Union members to other members, parishioners & community members who are ill, recovering from operations, or any adversity.
- Prayers for the same people (noted above).
- Gifting of Joy Boxes for members and community members (as above). The feedback we have received many times is very positive from the recipients.
- Some of our MU members are involved as part of the parish, in Cliff's Kitchen and the Op Shop. Being a presence to the public in need.
- When a parishioner was needing meals for her family, (after a major operation and subsequent chemotherapy) a roster was instigated by MU and parishioners also volunteered. Later while she was still not well enough to drive her husband to a hospital in Bunbury for his treatment, another roster was made up of MU members and parishioners.
- Many of our members have over many years knitted, crocheted or sewn garments or articles for people in need.
- Our members attend Baptism services to support the parents and relatives of the child. Any younger family members who attend are given a bookmark with a scripture verse.
- The parents are given a personal Baptism card for their child, and for the next five years a

MU Busselton continued:

...personal Baptism Anniversary Card is made and sent to the child to remember the day of their Baptism.

Lesley Hooper, St Mary's Busselton



MU Bunbury

This current year we have continued to make knitted and crochet blankets - the last couple of months have been dedicated to making smaller knee rugs to be donated to Wheelchair Kids, an organisation which provides children with wheelchairs, and little knee rugs for their comfort. These rugs are made by a number of different members, some knit squares which are sewn together and then crocheted around and some are totally crocheted.

Our ladies continue to make the Joy Boxes, which are given to those who are sick, downhearted or in need of some joy in their lives. This has been an ongoing project for many years, and members contribute funds and items for the boxes which are put together and beautifully presented with great thought and care.

We have continued with our Prayer Partners, an important part of our outreach. Each member has a prayer partner — and a card is sent for birthdays, Christmas, Easter, if a member is sick or suffer a bereavement, or if you just wish to send them a card to say they are thought of — the notation being "From your MU Prayer Partner". At our Christmas lunch we disclose who our prayer partners have been for the year, and a new/different partner is allocated early each year.

At one meeting, we had a small bring and buy stall. Items such as plants cakes, scarves, and any other items member thought other members may like, were sold for a very small donation. An enjoyable morning...**Continued overleaf**

Mother's Union Shares Ways to Love One Another...continued

MU Bunbury...

We have had a guest speaker where possible, and morning tea is provided by different members each month. The fellowship during this time is lovely. Some of our members then continue on after the meeting and morning tea and have lunch together. We are a close-knit group of wonderful ladies, who welcome anyone who would like to join us to share our eucharist, morning tea, short meeting and fellowship. We meet the first Thursday of each month at the Cathedral at 9.30am. Our morning tea and meeting follows the eucharist in the new Cathedral Hall.

Diane Hill, St Boniface Cathedral, Bunbury

What is a Joy Box?



By Verity Murray

St Nicholas' Church, Australind Parish

You might have noticed that the Mother's Union report mentions giving joy boxes as one of their activities. But what is a joy box?

Put simply, a joy box is a gift of love from one person or group of people to another who is in need of love, support or encouragement. Maybe someone you know is recovering from an operation? Or has just had a baby? Or suffered the loss of a loved one?

There are many reasons for giving a joy box. The aim is to show love in a tangible way – from an individual or a group, like Mother's Union, or a church study group or from the whole church family.

What goes into a joy box?

That all depends on who the recipient will be! The contents will vary slightly if the recipient is a child or an adult, a male or a female. The gifts should not be expensive but little treats that might brighten someone's day – such as a bar of chocolate, a magazine to read, a box of specialist tea bags, or a gift voucher for a coffee shop. Other appropriate gifts may be a small toy for a child, a key ring, book mark or a good quality pen. If you know the recipient well then the gifts can be especially chosen for that person's interests. Each gift should be individually wrapped to maintain an element of surprise.

Messages of Love and Encouragement

A handwritten card expressing your love for the receiver could be enclosed, as well as Bible verses attached to each gift. You may also like to attach instructions to open one gift per day, to make the joy last longer.

Rev Carol Reid introduced the concept of Joy Boxes to the women's Connect Group at St Nicholas' Church in Australind. The Connect Group have now taken on this ministry and work together to put together joy boxes for those in their church family who are having a challenging time or who are welcoming a new baby. Each person who has received a joy box has reported how loved it made them feel.

Marian Eaton from St Nic's received a joy box when she was having treatment for cancer. She says:

"Last year while I was undergoing chemotherapy a smiling Barbara presented me with a beautiful "Basket of Joy", which had come from the congregation of St Nic's. I was astonished as I only knew a few of the folk and here were all of these lovely, beautifully wrapped gifts, each with an inspirational and encouraging bible saying attached to it.

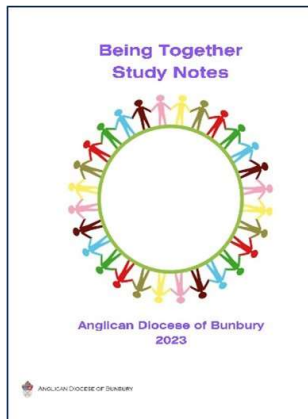
I decided to open a gift on each of the 'not so good days'. Each time I immediately felt loved, encouraged, thankful and at peace. I suspect that there was also a sprinkling of the Holy Spirit in each package.

A year later, I have wonderful memories of the basket and of the joy it gave me. I am sure that it was the best medicine. Thank you to all involved."

Marian Eaton, St Nicholas', Australind

Diocesan Resources for 'Love One Another'

Being Together



This diocesan-made resource, called Being Together, is available now for use by individuals or small groups in our parishes and organisations.

It is a 7-week study series based on the 'Being Together Code of Conduct', produced by the Anglican Church in Australia General Synod.

The code of conduct is a description of expectations of each other in our Anglican Church community and our commitment to 'Safe Church'. It is important to understand these expectations and think through how to live them out.

These studies consider what the Bible teaches about living together in community – how we relate, communicate, deal with differences and respond to conflict. Some of us will find it easier than others to do this, depending on our own experiences so far in our lives – but this is an area where we can all learn and grow. The studies can be done in small groups or privately at home and can be downloaded from the diocesan website via the 'Vision and Strategy' tab, under Strategy 3. If you would like a printed copy please email the diocesan office at: office@bunbury.org.au



Being Together

Expectations of behaviour in our church community

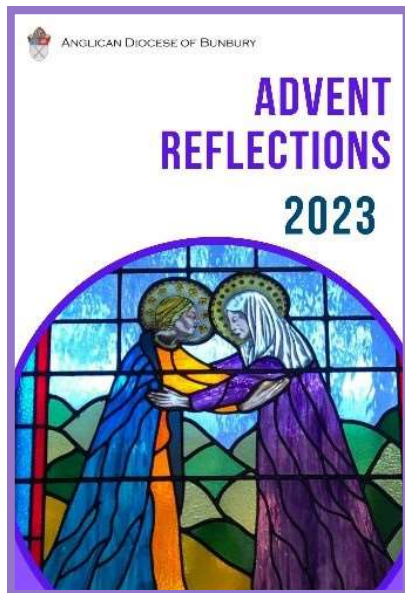
Jesus told us to love one another as he loves us. As Christians we know our life together is strengthened when our behaviour is consistent with our faith.

However, our experience of being together can be difficult, particularly when there are differences. So, it is important to be clear about how we will behave towards each other.

 Being a community	 Relating to each other	 Communicating with each other	 Acknowledging difference	 Responding to conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We will value the wellbeing and safety of others, particularly children and other vulnerable people.✓ We will encourage each other to participate in the life of the church.✓ We will consider the impact of our behaviour on others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We will guard the safety of all, especially children and other vulnerable people.✓ We will treat each other with respect and dignity, irrespective of ability, gender, sexuality, race, age or contribution to the church.✓ We will act with integrity and honesty in our interactions with each other.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We will communicate respectfully with others, and not in a way that threatens, belittles or humiliates.✓ We will speak with integrity and honesty, and refrain from speculation and gossip.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We will respect those who are different from us and not isolate or ridicule them.✓ We will listen to and seek to understand the beliefs, opinions and practices of others, even when we do not share their views.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ We will accept responsibility for our part in a conflict.✓ We will be willing to play our part in resolving a conflict.

ANGELICAN CHURCH OF AUSTRALIA 

Diocesan Resources for 'Love One Another' continued



Advent Reflections 2023

This year's Diocesan Advent Reflections will follow the same format used in 2022 and will be co-ordinated by Rev Vicki Webb. A reflection will be provided for Christ the King Sunday and each week of Advent. Each reflection will be written by a different member of our Diocese (clergy or lay person) and will include a passage of scripture, a short reflection and a related piece of art. The resources will be available by the beginning of November via the Diocesan website or Diocesan office.

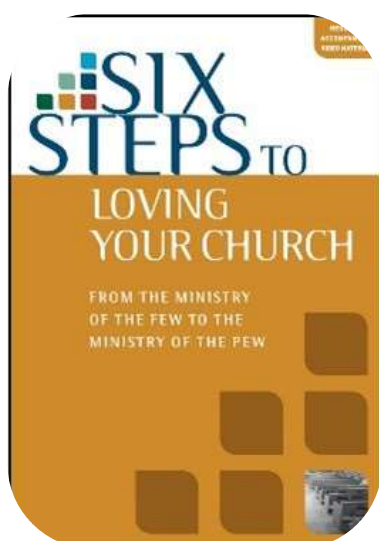


Bible Study for Lent 2024

A six week bible study series on the topic of 'Love One Another' written by Bishop Ian Coutts will be available for 2024.

Recommend Resources for 'Love One Another'

6 Steps to Loving Your Church: Resource for Small Groups



This six-session program is about how to love your church. It's about the mindset we take with us as we go to church each week, and how that mindset is expressed in a multitude of ways, big and small. In particular, it's about the part that we all play as God's people in loving, serving and building each other up, Sunday by Sunday. We all have a ministry—the ministry of the pew.

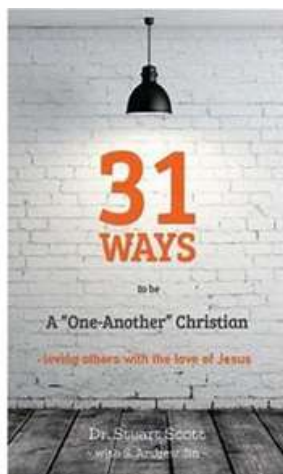
Each session contains a mix of discussion, Bible study, video input and prayer, along with simple exercises to help you put the ideas into practice on Sunday. To run the course you will need a copy of the workbook for each person and a copy of this course DVD. Both can be purchased from Matthias Media.com.au or Amazon. You can also buy the workbook as a printable download and purchase and watch the videos via the Vimeo platform.

Recommend Resources for 'Love One Another' Continued

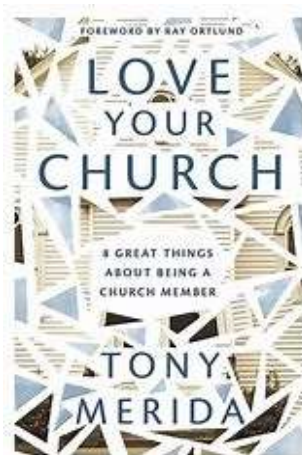
The books highlighted below are all available from Koorong. Which one appeals to you? Why not choose one and see what inspiration it will give you for our 'Love One Another' strategy?



"Belong" by Barnabas Piper is a fairly short book (111 pages) and is written for anyone who belongs, or is considering belonging, to a local church. In the foreword to the book, Ray Ortlund says, "Belonging is an adjustment for every one of us. Jesus is not out to save isolated individuals scattered here and there. He is creating and gathering a new community in which everyone deeply belongs, both to him and to one another. And when we finally belong – really belong – to a group of people whom we respect and enjoy, it feel so good. We've come home." Barnabas Piper understands from personal experience both how hard and how glorious belonging can be. His experience is deep and his conclusions are honest. Discussion questions for individuals and small groups are included at the back of the book.



"31 Ways to be a 'One Another' Christian" by Dr Stuart Scott is an extremely practical book. Each of the 31 chapters considers a verse in the New Testament which includes the phrase 'one another' – such as 'love one another with mutual affection' and 'outdo one another in showing honour' (Romans 12 v 10 and 10b). Each chapter is typically 2 or 3 pages long, starting with a Bible verse, an explanation, illustration and application questions and suggestions. This easy format makes it an ideal book for individuals, families or small groups. In his introduction to the book, Dr Stuart Scott says, "God intends you to be consciously and carefully loving him and other people. As you work on loving other believers by obeying the 'one another' commands, you are, in fact, also growing in your love for God. . . you will find that you are not only being built up in your faith, but you will have the wonderful effect of building up others in their faith, too!"



"Love your church: 8 Great Things about Being a Church Member", Tony Merida explores eight great privileges of being part of a church. You'll see why your local church is an exciting place, and why its worthy of your time, talents and commitment. Whether you're a new member or a long-timer – and whether you're feeling great or feeling weary – this book will awaken your love for your church and show you how to put that love into action. The book is dedicated to "faithful church members around the world – the unsung heroes who continue to bless the church and advance Jesus' mission". The book includes a discussion guide for small groups.