

# WITNESS



Uniting Church in Australia  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

The Journal of the Lay Preachers' Association, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Volume 36 - Number 1

March 2016

Put these dates  
in your diary now

The 2015 Annual Conference will be held at  
**THE CENTRE FOR THEOLOGY AND MINISTRY**  
29 College Crescent, Parkville  
**FRIDAY 15th April, SATURDAY, 16th April, 2016**

**OPENING WORSHIP 7 pm April 15** – led by Rev Joan Fisher,  
Rev. Margaret Blair, Preacher and installation of new President by Moderator Dan Wootton

## SPEAKERS

- **Rev Joan Fisher** – Retired UCA minister and recent Ecumenical Accompaniment program in Palestine and Israel participant considering *'The Holy Land – ancient stones & living stones.'*
- **Rev Dr Avril Hannah Jones** - Currently minister at Williamstown UCA, Avril will speak on *'Using your passions in worship'*.
- **Cheryl Lawrie** - Accredited Youth Worker with Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
- **Jill Ruzbacky** – Social Justice Officer with Synod Justice and International Mission unit.

**WHO MAY ATTEND?** Lay Preachers, Candidates, other Worship Leaders, and interested people.

## COST

\$28, to be paid in cash or cheque on the day;  
includes lunch and refreshments

## VENUE

The Centre for Theology and Ministry is in College Crescent, Parkville, across from the gate to the Melbourne Cemetery.

## PARKING

There is metered street parking nearby.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the Lay Preachers' Association of Victoria and Tasmania will follow the conference programme, from 3 to 4pm.

All Lay Preachers may vote; others are welcome to attend the meeting. The agenda includes the election of the Association's office-bearers for 2016. Nominations may be submitted only by Lay Preachers, on the form provided.

Has it been 2 years since you received your last Continuing Education certificate? Don't forget to get your Continuing Education forms to LouAnne prior to the conference. Updated forms are available on the CTM website <http://ctm.uca.edu.au/lay-ministries/documents/> or contact your Presbytery representative.

## PROGRAM

### Friday April 15

7:00 pm Conference opening worship  
8:15 pm Session 1 - Rev Joan Fisher

### Saturday, April 16

9:00 am Registration  
9:30 am Morning worship & welcome  
9:45 am Session 2 - Rev Dr Avril Hannah-Jones  
11:00 am Morning tea  
11:30 am Session 3 - Cheryl Lawrie  
12:45 pm Lunch  
1:15 pm Session 4 - Jill Ruzbacky  
2:30 pm Break  
3:00 pm Annual General Meeting  
4:00 pm Closing

## REGISTRATIONS (see page 3)

to the Secretary **before** Thursday 7 April 2016

Secretary, Synod LP Assoc  
c/- 3 Chifley Street  
Wodonga Vic 3690

or email to [lpasecretary@victas.uca.org.au](mailto:lpasecretary@victas.uca.org.au)

Preaching is finally more more than art or science. It is alchemy, in which tin becomes gold and yard rocks become diamonds under the influence of the Holy Spirit. It is a process of transformation for both preacher and congregation alike, as the ordinary details of their ordinary lives are translated into extraordinary elements of God's ongoing creation.

Barbara Brown Taylor - The Preaching Life - From Editor's Clip Sheets - Used by permission.

# Reports

## From the President

This is my last message as President, as LouAnne Stabb is being installed as President on Friday, 15 April at the Annual Conference. Please join us for this celebration, and to hear the Rev Joan Fisher speak about 'The Holy Land – ancient stones & living stones.'

The two years of my Presidency have passed quickly and, during that time, the Committee of Management has addressed some major issues. There is still much to do. We must address the fallout from the Royal Commission into Child Abuse. Then there will be the findings of the MSR and how we, as Lay Preachers, address the future of worship and the Church. There is also the ongoing issue of empty pulpits that our Travelling Lay Preacher Convenor attempts to fill. We need more Lay Preachers who are willing to travel around the suburbs and into the country to meet the needs of many congregations.

I am concerned that so few Lay Preachers have sought to have their learning recognised by the Association by applying for Continuing Education certificates. Continuing Education is not a legal requirement, but it is an expectation of every Active Lay Preacher. Just how much background study and development is really being done by those who are filling the gaps on preaching plans? Our initial training was not a pill that provided life-time immunity against further study. Being a Lay Preacher is an ongoing development and an ever-expanding area of study. There is always more depth to investigate in scripture, in new books, new issues and concerns – along with honing our skills in the conduct or worship. In this time of Lent it is a good time to think about our commitment to the ministry of Lay Preaching.

To all of you who answer God's call to further enrich the spiritual life of our people, may there be the fullness of God's grace and empowerment of the Spirit as you move forward into 2016.

*Alastair Davison*

## Presbytery Committees

### Gippsland

With the changing needs of the church, many worship services in Gippsland are led by members of the congregations. It is a strength of the Uniting Church that lay and ordained people work together to do what needs to be done. After experience in leading worship, some folks feel called to train for the accountable ministry of Lay Preacher.

We are thankful for the leadership and encouragement of Rev Dr Des Parker as he completes fourteen months as PM M&E (Supply). He has supported Lay Preachers in training and provided opportunities for continuing education in different parts of our large Presbytery. Gatherings of Lay Preachers are being planned in Mission Areas this year, to discuss our sense of call, code of ethics, training and ongoing education.

We are thankful for our Lay Preachers and want to encourage them in their ministry. For those concerned about continuing education; I would ask them if they had read any helpful books lately, was there a visiting speaker or CD that had been helpful to their ministry, would they like to write something about what they have learned for their minister to read, or have their minister review one of their services, or come LPA or Presbytery training day..?

Page 2

When we think of what we do, most of us are well on the way to fulfilling our continuing education commitments.

It is a privilege to lead worship and speak of the love of Jesus. While we would like to do more, we are glad to do what we can...

*Peter Morris*

### North East Victoria

Lay Preachers in North East Victoria have recently been saddened by the sudden death of Maureen Halden of Nathalia on January 23. Maureen, who was accredited in 1960, has been honoured with her fifty-year certificate. She was much loved by her local congregation where her ministry was greatly appreciated. Maureen had been in ill health for several months.

We are delighted that another person has begun the process to become a Candidate for Lay Preacher, to join those currently in varying stages of their candidacy.

The recent Lay Preachers Committee meeting discussed our mentoring of recently Recognised Lay Preachers. The Presbytery Lay Preachers' Day will be held on Saturday April 30.

Our greatest joy is that LouAnne Stabb of Emmanuel, Wodonga West, will be installed as President of the Lay Preachers' Association on April 15.

*Joan McRae*

### Western Victoria

Advent and Christmas is a busy time for LPs as we support the ordained ministers trying to cope with a plethora of extra services. It is a blessing to be involved in special events especially when the wider community is also present enabling us to spread the message of God's love further than usual.

January can be a welcome respite with fewer meetings and fewer services as some small country congregations close because so many members are away, thus reducing the load on everyone.

Henty Region, in the south west of our Presbytery, is busy organising a weekend with Rev Gwen Masters looking into Celtic Spirituality. This will be held in Hamilton on April 8 – 10. It is open to anyone interested from across the Synod with billets being offered.

A second learning weekend in August with Rev Dr Ji Zhang is also being planned for LP's and any other interested folk, also in Hamilton. Watch Crosslight for more details.

*Elaine Edwards*

### Port Phillip East

Position Vacant

### Port Phillip West

Rob is overseas.

### Loddon Mallee

Loddon Mallee Lay Preachers welcome the appointment of Rev Kate Fraser to the role of Presbytery Minister, Mission and Education. Preliminary plans are underway for a series of local training days at which Lay Preachers and Worship Leaders might become familiar with material and resources that may make their roles more efficient and their communication more effective.

*Robert Lees*

### Tasmania

Rev Denise Savage, Presbytery Minister - Leadership Formation, has arrived in Tasmania and has started work so is now the

contact person for all Lay Preachers in the Presbytery. Tasmania has three new Lay Preachers in Training and three Lay Preachers awaiting results for the 'Who is Jesus' Course and the issuing of the certificate of completion of studies from CTM so they can progress to Commissioning Services. Those completing the course have done so through the face to face system of courses here in Tasmania and so have taken about 5 years to complete their studies.

Tasmanian Lay Preachers Studies have moved to distance education. We have six trainees who need to use this new system. One has notified us of difficulties due to not having computer access and another person who 'tried out' the course with 'Who is Jesus' and is not going ahead at this stage due to the new system. We await developments so look forward to feedback from the students using the new system.

The "Lay Preachers Checklist 2015" has been sent out and we await the return of the forms.

The Presbytery has organized a lot of Continuing Education opportunities for Lay Preachers during this year. If people take advantage of every opportunity, they will have far more continuing education points in one year than the 10 necessary for a Continuing Education Certificate.

Heather Cowled

**Yarra Yarra**

We had a successful AGM last year and filled all positions in the LP Committee, which met for the first time in 2016 with 3 new members. The Committee met last weekend and updated the LP Roll. The number of LPs (including 9 candidates) is 93 – but we would love to know how many can be classed as active. The Committee approved a retirement certificate that will be handed out at a suitable service of recognition as we discover those who are not preaching anymore. We have four LPs who are to receive long service certificates this year – two 25 year certificates, a 40 year and a 50 year.

The final LPA meeting last year was attended by approximately 20 people (including some members of the local congregation). Alastair spoke on the Symbolism of the Gospel of John. Our first meeting this year is later this month with a session on The Torah – a Way of Life: exploring scripture with the Jews to be presented by Julie and Ian Robinson.

We thank God that we have a dedicated core of preachers who are willing to travel and to conduct several services a month.

Hayley Rose

**Synod of Victoria and Tasmania  
Lay Preachers' Association Annual Conference 15 – 16 April, 2016  
Registration Form**

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

PHONE ..... EMAIL .....

**Conference Costs Per Person** \$ 28 Refreshments and lunch included in registration

**Payment** – please pay at the conference on Saturday. Cheques (Synod of VicTas Lay Preachers' Association) or correct money, as change not necessarily available

**Special Dietary Requirements** .....

**Nominations Form LPA Annual General Meeting, 2016**  
[Please use a separate form for each person you nominate]

We nominate NAME.....

ADDRESS.....

PHONE ..... EMAIL .....

for the position of:

- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Editor of Witness
- Member of National Lay Preachers' Committee (one vacancy)

**Signed** ..... nominator ..... secondar

**Print Name** ..... nominator ..... secondar

Please return registration and nomination forms to the Secretary, before Thursday, 7 April, 2016

Sec. Synod LP Assoc  
c/- 3 Chifley Street  
Wodonga VIC 3690  
lpasecretary@victas.uca.org.au

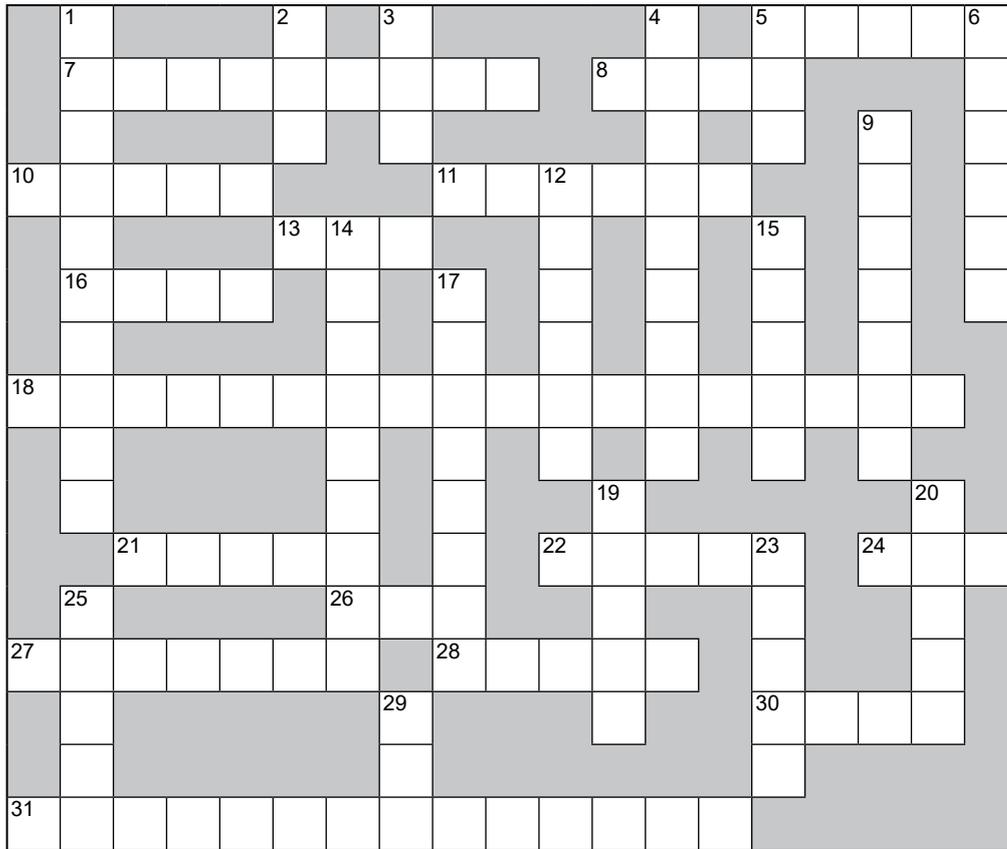
or email to:

# Easter Evening - Emmaus Road - Crossword and Wordsearch

Luke 24:13 - 49

Both these puzzles have been created using the above reading from Luke. The New Revised Standard Version was used to create these puzzles. Using a different version could produce different answers.

## Crossword



### Down

1. Holy writings(10)
2. Referring to a male. (3)
3. Belonging to him. (3)
4. The city the pair returned to. (9)
5. . . . he took it and \_\_\_\_ in their presence. (3)
6. Disbeliefs (6)
9. Anointed one. (7)
12. Powerful (6)
14. Observers (9)
15. It was the \_\_\_\_ day since Jesus died. (5)
17. 'Men of God' (8)
19. The first people to see the empty tomb. (5)
20. Apparition (5)
23. Told (5)
25. Living (5)
29. At this time (3)

### Across

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Inquired (5)</li> <li>7. Nailed to a cross (9)</li> <li>8. Jesus said "Look at my hands and my ____". (4)</li> <li>10. First disciple Jesus appeared to. (5)</li> <li>11. The name of the village they were walking to. (6)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>13. How many were walking? (3)</li> <li>16. Grave (4)</li> <li>18. The act that Jesus did that made them realize who he was. (8,2,3,5)</li> <li>21. The main character of this story. (5)</li> <li>22. Name of early leader and lawgiver. (5)</li> <li>24. A query about reason for something. (3)</li> <li>26. To chew and swallow food. (3)</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>27. The name of one person who was walking. (7)</li> <li>28. How far (miles) was the village from the city? (5)</li> <li>30. . . . their eyes were ____ from recognizing him. (4)</li> <li>31. The greeting Jesus gave to his gathered followers. (5,2,4,3)</li> </ol> |
|--|---|---|

## Word Search

The answers to the crossword puzzle are the list words for the wordsearch. All the words, except one, from the crossword are hidden here in straight lines. They can be found in any direction. Some letters will be left over after you have found all the words. Write down these letters from left to right and top to bottom to find the answer to this puzzle.

Have fun.

*Lectionary reading for Easter Evening Years ABC  
- Luke 24:13-49  
© J Brooks 2001*

U	O	Y	H	T	I	W	E	B	E	C	A	E	P
E	S	B	T	S	M	J	R	S	S	R	T	E	A
K	A	K	W	O	I	E	I	E	N	U	E	G	T
O	P	T	O	H	G	R	R	S	V	C	S	E	O
P	O	R	N	G	H	U	S	S	F	I	E	E	W
S	E	S	O	M	T	S	D	E	T	F	L	O	J
B	L	H	M	P	Y	A	O	N	V	I	M	A	H
M	C	E	I	B	H	L	U	T	D	E	K	S	A
O	R	R	S	M	W	E	B	I	N	D	N	I	E
T	C	T	P	E	K	M	T	W	D	R	I	H	T
S	S	U	A	M	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	A	D

This puzzle may be copied for personal, or church use, but not to be reproduced for financial gain. Jay has so far created 280 lectionary based crossword, word search and word fit puzzles. Contact her if you can make use of them.

Answers on back page

# The Word Speaks!

## The Bible in Worship in an Inclusive Church

### Part Two

#### “Up Close and Personal”: Being addressed by the Word

*The Bible story is a symbolic narrative... It offers meaning on varying levels and enriches our lives in countless ways. The meaning of each story will change at different times in our lives; insights will vary, depending on our needs and experiences at the moment.*

John Westerhoff, *A Pilgrim People*, Minneapolis: Seabury Press, 1984.

The Uniting Church affirms that Christ addresses people across time, space and culture. God's Story invites our participation not only in the future but also in the present. A key theological question about our understanding of children relates to their identity.

There is a classical view that a child is primarily a 'person in the making'. (See C. Traina in Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2001). This is more or less the view of significant theologians in history: when children were not invisible, they were valued but not seen as people in the same way as were adults. Both theologically and liturgically, in scholarly thinking, children are often something of an afterthought. Theologians through the ages have struggled to make sense of “the child” in relation to their systematic expositions.

In contrast, Christian educators have for the past century given considerable attention to the nature of childhood. [There is also an evident gender difference across these two groups of scholars.] How do people of different ages and stages engage with the Bible, and what are the ways in which children explore and experience faith? Due to the rise of Christian schooling, there is a growing body of research about how children and young people make sense of the Bible. However there seems to be a communication 'gap' between liturgists and educators regarding children and the Bible.

There is a similar 'gap' in relation to people with intellectual disabilities and for people for whom English is a second language. Again, the intent is not to put these groups together, but to highlight similar problems when it comes to liturgy; in particular how the Bible is communicated in a diverse and inclusive community.

In his book, *Faith Shaping*, Stephen Jones described the importance of nearness and directness in the faith development of young people. (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1980.) Nearness was about being 'up close' to expressions of faith. (Consider what children see or hear or touch or taste during most Sunday worship.) Directness was about being personally addressed by what was taking place. The message or sacrament or activity is perceived as directed at me personally. These are helpful insights into engaging a diverse community with the Bible.

In a well-functioning family, many kinds of communication at various 'levels' take place among the members during the course of a day. At numerous times, communication is *near* and *direct* for every member. In the sense that we are all addressed by the Living Word through the Scriptures, it is entirely appropriate, and in fact vital, for people of varying ages, cultures and abilities to encounter the Word that is for them.

In a community whose members have different first languages, the use of simpler or plainer English texts can be a helpful way not only to help individuals encounter the word; in fact it helps the whole community hear differently.

*“Holding the Bible high above her head, she said with a big smile: “Yes, of course there are many books which I could read. But there is only one book which reads me!”*

*Hans-Ruedi Weber, Experiments with Bible Study, Geneva: WCC, 1981.*

Rather than see the above as two alternatives, we can affirm both that people grow into understanding of the Bible over time, and that the Bible speaks to them here and now. This suggests that the Bible be allowed to speak with more than one 'voice' over time.

#### Paraphrases and Versions

Given that the NRSV is the recommended version for use in worship, how might we, alongside this, allow the Bible to come alive for all people?

Many worship leaders, from time to time, use paraphrases such as Eugene Peterson's *The Message* or Nathan Nettleton's Australian-flavoured versions at [www.laughingbird.net](http://www.laughingbird.net). These don't claim to be translations, even though the author has worked from the original text in creating the paraphrase. Paraphrases can add freshness and vibrancy and strike a contemporary chord. A paraphrase can also be read alongside a translation; for example, reading a paraphrase early in the service and a translation prior to the preaching of the Word. Paraphrases are also helpful when rendering a text as a prayer or meditation. The Psalms in particular lend themselves well to being versified as paraphrases with communal responses, which was in fact their original design.

“Story Bibles” go a step further in imagining details as they may have occurred. Ralph Milton's *Lectionary Story Bible* series (Woodlake Books) is an excellent, all-age resource. *Stories Seldom Told* by Lois Miriam Wilson (Northstone, 1997) retells Bible stories from the perspective of the seemingly minor characters, particularly women. Walter Wangerin renders the Bible as a novel in *The Book of God* (Zondervan, 1996). None of these are intended to replace the use of translations, however these and other such resources provide narrative material that can be woven into a service of worship alongside biblical texts. Curriculum resources such as *SeasonsFusion* ([seasonsfusion.com](http://seasonsfusion.com)) and *Spill the Beans* ([spillbeans.org.uk](http://spillbeans.org.uk)) often provide narrative re-tellings or choral readings.

*The Dramatised Bible* (Collins, 1990) draws from three translations to present the whole Bible in script form with narration and characters. I have used it on many occasions to help a group portray a passage of Scripture.

Reading from different translations can help us to find new meaning in texts. My bookshelf includes the *Jerusalem Bible*, the *New English Bible*, the *Revised English Bible*, Elizabeth Edwards'

recent *The Gospels for Hearers* (Dianggellia Press, 2013), and the *Christian Community Bible* from the Philippines. Not only can varied translations aid in the preparation of worship, but the use of a different version from time to time brings fresh language to familiar verses and helps us receive a Word that we hadn't heard before.

There are a number of "Children's Bibles" available. However when seeking a lower reading level for a group setting I use and recommend the *Contemporary English Version* or CEV (Nelson) from the American Bible Society for its scholarship and approach to translation. The CEV is used in a number of church school settings. This is also suitable when a 'plain language' version is helpful in settings with multiple language groups. The CEV is also a helpful starting point when seeking to dramatise a text.

*Stories are fundamentally oral and communal in nature. They are meant to be told, dramatised, sung, danced, and expressed through visual*

*arts... In an oral culture..., learning involves all the senses and the imagination as well. In an oral culture truth is poetic, and storytelling is understood as the doorway into the realm of the sacred... The biblical story becomes a sacred story that is to be imagined and participated in, not studied objectively...*

John Westerhoff, *A Pilgrim People*, Seabury Press, Minneapolis, 1984.

Finally, when we open the Bible in worship, we hope to encounter the Living Word through its words. May we put heart and soul, creativity and imagination, skill and craft into allowing God's Story to envelop and shape our lives.

Craig Mitchell

On behalf of the Worship Working Group, Uniting Church in Australia, National Assembly [craigm@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:craigm@nat.uca.org.au)

## Puzzle Answers

### Crossword

#### Across

5. Asked  
7. Crucified  
8. Feet  
10. Simon  
11. Emmaus  
13. Two  
16. Tomb  
18. Breaking of the bread  
21. Jesus  
22. Moses

24. Why  
26. Eat  
27. Cleopas  
28. Seven  
30. Kept  
31. Peace be with you

#### Down

1. Scriptures  
2. Him  
3. His  
4. Jerusalem  
5. Ate  
6. Doubts  
9. Messiah  
12. Mighty  
14. Witnesses  
15. Third  
17. Prophets  
19. Women  
20. Ghost  
23. Spoke  
25. Alive  
29. Now

### Word search

U	O	Y	H	T	I	W	E	B	E	C	A	E	P
E	S	B	T	S	M	J	R	S	S	R	T	E	A
K	A	K	W	O	I	E	I	E	N	U	E	G	T
O	P	T	O	H	G	R	S	V	C	S	E	O	
P	O	R	N	G	H	U	S	S	F	I	E	E	W
S	E	S	O	M	T	S	D	E	T	F	L	O	J
B	L	H	M	P	Y	A	O	N	V	I	M	A	H
M	C	E	I	B	H	L	U	T	D	E	K	S	A
O	R	R	S	M	W	E	B	I	N	D	N	I	E
T	C	T	P	E	K	M	T	W	D	R	I	H	T
S	S	U	A	M	M	E	S	S	I	A	H	A	D

The letters left over say "breaking of the bread" which was the only crossword word that could not be found in the wordsearch.

## The Lay Preachers' Association of The Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

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#### Representatives to the National Lay Preachers' Committee

Alastair Davison & Rob Coulson  
Joan McRae - (co-opted secretary)

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Editor by Mid May 2015