

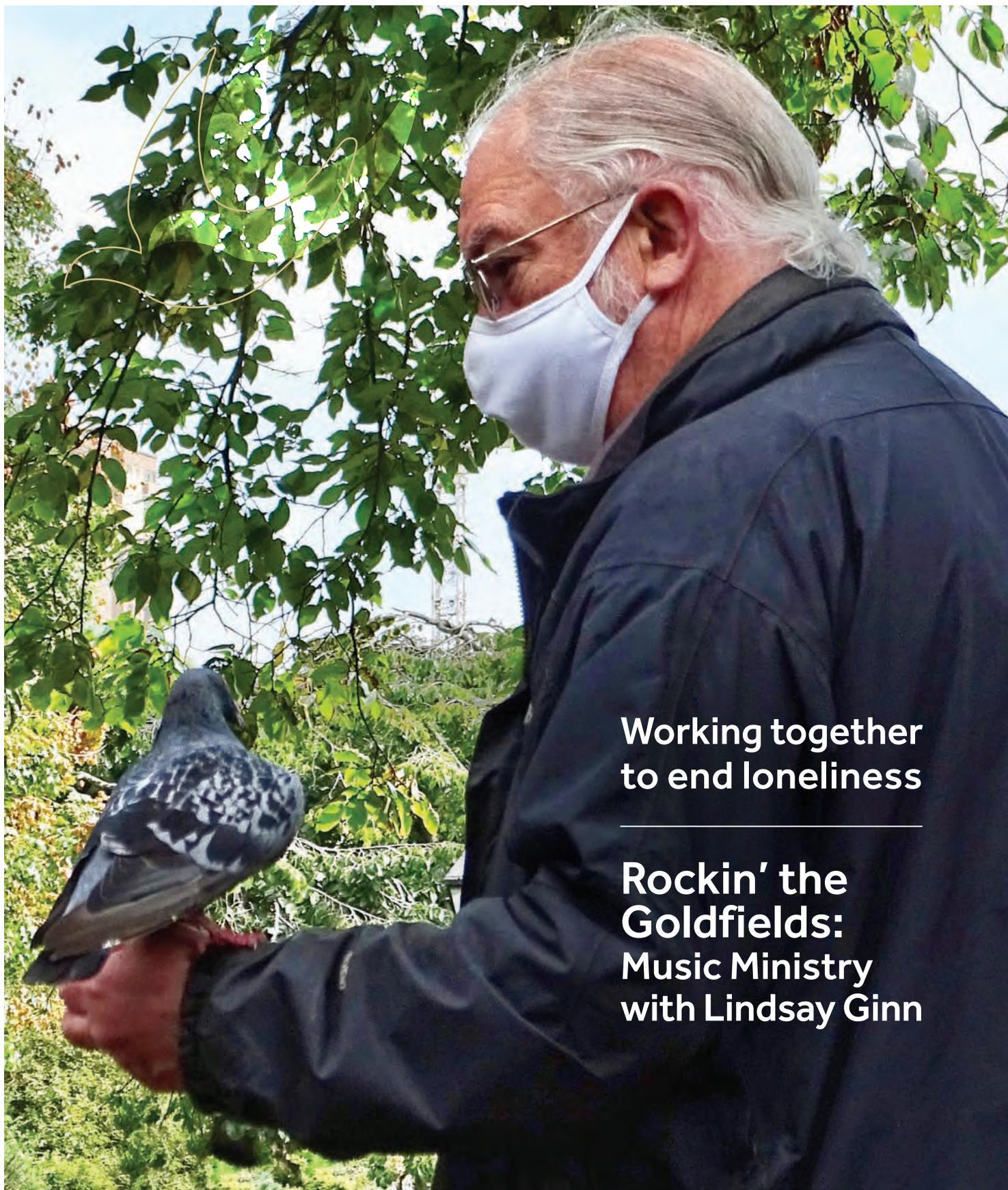


Uniting Church in Australia  
Western Australia

Issue 71  
March 2021

# Revive

a fresh perspective on faith, church and life



**Working together  
to end loneliness**

**Rockin' the  
Goldfields:  
Music Ministry  
with Lindsay Ginn**

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*Revive* is published quarterly for the Uniting Church WA.

The Uniting Church WA acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters on which we live and work. *Revive* is produced at the Uniting Church Centre, which sits on the lands of the Wadjuk Nyungar people. We pay our respect to their Elders past, present and emerging. We acknowledge the Nyungar people as the sovereign First Peoples of this place.

Opinions expressed in *Revive* do not necessarily reflect those of the editor, or the policies of the Uniting Church.

*Revive* welcomes contributors. Contact the editor in the first instance at [revive@wa.uca.org.au](mailto:revive@wa.uca.org.au).

The contribution deadline for the June 2021 edition is Friday 16 April.

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Visit  
**Revive**  
Magazine  
online



[revivemagazine.org.au](http://revivemagazine.org.au)

Printed at Scott Print  
Uniting Church in Australia, Western Australia  
GPO Box M952, Perth WA 6843



# Is it the journey or the destination?

As a child growing up in India, I was fascinated with trains because India's railway network is one of the most intricate and extensive in the world, covering more than 120 000 kilometres of track, predominantly on what is commonly known as 'broad gauge' of 5 feet 6 inches. It has a long history, with the first service commencing in 1853.

Two great positives from the British colonial era have been the railways and the use of the English language. Each, in its own way, has become the 'glue' uniting one of the most populous, religious and culturally diverse nations on God's Earth.

In 2010, I asked my husband, Philip, to join me on a nostalgic five-day train trip from Delhi to our home state of Kerala on the Indian Express. It was a truly fascinating experience as the journey unfolded. Some were comfortably ensconced in First Class; others in Second Class; the vast majority in Third Class, with its resultant diversity of humanity and loud cacophony of languages.

Even in the midst of the crowd and noises one could be lonely. One

could be deep in the thoughts of our tomorrows, enjoy the ride, read a book or admire the amazing creation. I was trying to find how many different states we covered and watch the landscape.

Along the way, people joined the train as others left; some travelling relatively short journeys, whilst others were there for the whole distance. I found myself reflecting on the journey being a microcosm of life in community, like our life in the church.

Recently, I came across a painting of a young girl sitting on a suitcase at a railway station waiting for her ride. This painting, for some reason reminds me of our journey.

As Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, I have been drawn back again and again to *The Basis of Union*, the Uniting Church's founding document, seeking to understand what it is that holds us together in this union.

God has not left us in our earthly pilgrimage to an angel's guidance: "The Lord will guide you always" (Isaiah 58:11). There is a promise: "And surely I am always with you, to the very end" (Matthew 28:20).

As I understand, on all the debates leading up to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977, there were



Susy Thomas (centre), Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, and Melanie Kiely (left), CEO of Good Sammy Enterprises (GSE), present David Bui with a Santos Scholarship, at GSE's International Day of People with Disability Celebration in December last year.

lots of conflicting views as to the best way forward. Along the way to union, some elected to get off the train.

Through lots of struggle we arrived at a point where we found sufficient in common to hold us together. We call it *The Basis of Union*, but like any founding document, it was only intended as the starting point for what has been a long and exciting journey thus far.

We are all on the train together, regardless of which compartment we might find ourselves in. The train is not designed to suddenly head off on a narrow-gauge branch line, it is intended to arrive at its destination complete, at the same time, with everyone still on board.

My prayer is that we understand who we are as a church; and whose we are as we continue to journey together into this very different, but challenging, 2021.

**Susy Thomas**  
Moderator, Uniting Church WA

## Moderator's Diary

### March

- 7 March Preaching at Cannington Uniting Church
- 8 March Joint Synod Standing Committee/Presbytery Standing Committee at Maylands Mt Lawley Uniting Church
- 19 March Mandorla Art Award opening
- 21 March Preaching at GKI Uniting Church, followed by Methodist Ladies' College (MLC) Sunday
- 22 March YouthCARE Annual General Meeting
- 23 March St Stephen's School Carramar Thanksgiving service
- 26 March Breaking of the Ties service for Rev Nalin Perera at Wesley College

### April

- 14 April Preaching at Mt Pleasant Uniting Church
- 18 April Preaching at Merredin Uniting Church
- 20 April Moderator's Ministers' Retreat at Trinity Residential College
- 29 April – 3 May President's Conference in South Australia

### May

- 23 May Uniting Church Together in Worship at Rixon Theatre, Penrhos College



**In January this year, Perth and the South West of WA went into a snap five-day lockdown, and huge bushfires raged just north of Perth.**

Watching news updates during that week was stressful to say the least.

Once again, when rumours of the lockdown started to be felt around the city, panic buying was rife. The news cycle moves so fast that by the time you read this it'll most likely be wildly out-of-date.

I recently started reading *Any Ordinary Day*, by journalist, Leigh Sales (reviewed on pg 26). In it, she writes about the anxiety and stress that reading and watching the news can play in a crisis.

Studies have shown that people who watched live updates of the September 11 terror attacks in New York were experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), even if they weren't personally affected by it. It's a timely reminder to stay informed while trying not to burnout on information overload – unless you are in a situation where you are directly affected and need regular updates for safety.

With all this in mind, we still have a full edition for you – much of which was prepared before the lockdown.

Pastor Lindsay Ginn, Bush Chaplain for Frontier Services, shares with us his passion for music ministry with kids in the Goldfields (pg 10). Since this article was written, Lindsay has been providing pastoral care to bushfire affected congregations and dealing with flash flooding in his hometown of Kalgoorlie. It's certainly busy times around our state.

Ministry Candidate, Reuben Edmonds has shared a reflection on his time in Melbourne (pg 30), which was meant to be an exciting beginning to studying interstate, but turned into a long-term lockdown away from home. Since then, he has entered, and come out of, yet another lockdown back in Perth.

Our feature on loneliness (pg 16) includes information for how you can get involved in the national Ending Loneliness Together initiative, and comes at a time when many people have been disconnected from loved ones interstate or overseas for extended periods of time.

And we have some good news too! Like Rev Sione Lea'aetoa's ordination as a Minister of the Word, and the launch of a new app designed to help people share their faith, plus more.

If you'd like to contribute to the next edition, get in touch at [revive@wa.uca.org.au](mailto:revive@wa.uca.org.au) by Friday 16 April.

**Heather Dowling, Editor**

# 5 minutes with...

## Rev Sione Lea'aetoa



Rev Sione Lea'aetoa

**Rev Sione Lea'aetoa was ordained as a Minister of the Word on Sunday 31 January at All Saints Floreat Uniting Church. He has begun a placement at St Andrew's Uniting Church, East Perth. Read more on page 9.**

**He takes 5 minutes to share a bit about himself with *Revive*.**

### What are you passionate about?

One of the things that I am really passionate about is reading and studying the Bible. The Bible fascinates me because it is the grand story of God's salvation plan for humanity that began in Genesis and was fulfilled in Christ. As a Christian, this story of God's love is the foundation of my faith and the hope for all humanity.

### Who inspires you?

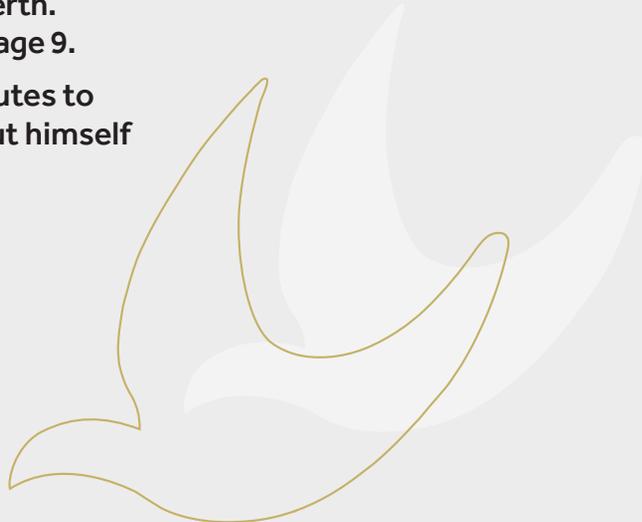
I don't have a particular person in mind. However, I am inspired by the story of many unknown missionaries, ministers, pastors and leaders who faithfully continue to serve the Lord in the midst of challenging situations such as decreasing congregations, isolation, imprisonment, persecution and others. These stories inspire and help me to remain faithful to the Lord and keep persevering when challenges arise.

### Tell us some good news that's happening in your world

Firstly, I am happy that the journey and the calling to be ordained as a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church WA has been completed and realised. Now the new journey in ordained ministry has begun with St Andrew's Uniting Church in East Perth. Secondly, I'm grateful that my family are all safe and well in the midst of the pandemic, and I thank God for God's providence and protection.

### What is something interesting about you that not many people know?

Two interesting things about me that many people may not know are that my great, great grandfather from my paternal side was German; it may explain why my girls' hair is a little bit blonde. Secondly, I think many people would not associate me with playing video games, but I used to love (my wife would say I was addicted) playing medieval strategy computer games.



# New life in the bay

Bay Life Op Shop, out of Busselton Uniting Church, has opened in a new, revamped premises. The new shop stands on the site of the old Match Factory, which burnt down in an electrical fire in March 2019.



Linda Stephenson, Manager of the Bay Life Op Shop.

Having operated from a temporary site since then, and closing during COVID-19 restrictions, those involved are excited to be back in operation. With help from Uniting Church Insurance Services and Uniting Church WA General Manager (Property), Richard Patterson, as well as their hardworking Church Council and Minister, Rev Andy Broadbent, Busselton Uniting Church were able to receive the funds they needed to replace the burnt down building.

"It became apparent after we did a fair bit of research that the most economic and sensible option was to go with a modular building, manufactured offsite and brought to site," said Yvonne Robinson, Chair of the Bay Life Op Shop.

"So, Fleetwood were given the contract to do that and they have been exceptional. They've worked with us to come up with a building that meets all of our needs. We've ended up with more floor space and a more modern well-designed building."

Since the fire, a review was held and the committee decided to cease operations of a low-cost food centre which was no longer viable.

The Bay Life Op Shop will, however, operate alongside the Bay Life Café, a community café run by volunteers providing hot and cold meals for a suggested donation, accommodating 20 to 30 people each day. The café can also help



with emergency hampers and frozen meals, as well as providing a welcoming space for friendship.

"It's much, much more than a café," said Yvonne. "It works really well; we've built strong relationships with people we've been able to assist."

The review also highlighted a new opportunity which will provide life-changing support to people experiencing financial struggles. The congregation will be starting up a Christians Against Poverty (CAP) financial counselling service, thanks to a grant from the Uniting Church WA Council for Mission.

"With the café really getting alongside people who need an extra hand, it became apparent that it's the same people on the same treadmill all the time who never can break out of the cycle that they're in," said Yvonne.



"It felt like we were never offering people anything that could really change their future."

Busselton Uniting Church will employ a CAP co-ordinator who will receive referrals and, with a small team of volunteers, support and encourage people to reach their goals. Budgeting and negotiating with lenders will be done through the CAP office in the Eastern States.

The Bay Life Op Shop, at Busselton Uniting Church, is open Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm. The Bay Life Café is open Tuesday and Thursday, 9.00am to 1.00pm, and Christians Against Poverty will be operating two days a week.

For more information visit [busseltonuniting.org](http://busseltonuniting.org) or follow the Busselton Uniting Church Facebook page.

Find out more about Christians Against Poverty at [capaust.org](http://capaust.org).

# Leeming Uniting Church awards **Good Sammy scholarships**

## Mary Riley

Over 30 years, Leeming Uniting Church has used various venues for worship places such as a school, the recreation centre, another church building and a family centre. Now, we meet for worship at the Bull Creek Leeming Scout Hall, where we have a great relationship with the Scouts.

Farrington House, at 66 Farrington Road Leeming, is our permanent centre for small groups, prayer, community use and private hire. There are three Good Sammy collection bins at Farrington House.

In November 2019, Uniting Church WA congregations received invitations to attend Good Sammy's celebration of International Day of People with Disability at their warehouse in Canning Vale. We decided to attend because we are connected with Good Sammy and our community through the recycling collection at Farrington House, and we're located nearby.

We were inspired by what we learned about Good Sammy Enterprises as an organisation and agency of the Uniting Church WA, and the people who work there. As the scholarships were presented, we learnt even more about the philosophy of mentoring people to reach goals in personal and career development.

That inspiration led us to joining a scholarship program with Good Sammy. In 2020, we committed to five scholarships of \$1 000 each. Three are highlighted here.

The initial letters of Leeming Uniting Church, L U C, are also the initial letters of the words of our motto: Love, Understanding, Compassion.

God has been so faithful to Leeming Uniting Church and we wanted to share Jesus' love. We hope to continue this support of the career and personal development of people at Good Sammy as they participate in the workforce here and in our community.

Congratulations to everyone at Good Sammy Enterprises. We are inspired to be connected with this Uniting Church WA agency.



## Alex Posa

Alex is in the process of pursuing a career as a swimming instructor. He has always had a passion for swimming and has competed in a number of triathlons.

Alex is currently supported by his Good Sammy mentors in his goal of getting a job and has participated in a number of work placements. He will use the scholarship to pay for his Cert II in Sport and Recreation as well as a two-day Pool Lifeguard Course.



## Aleta Williams

Aleta is supported by Good Sammy in her goal to gain paid work. Although Aleta has participated in numerous volunteer roles, her passion lies in administration. Aleta will use the scholarship to fund a Business Administration course at TAFE to enhance and develop her skills to gain employment in her chosen field.



## Karen Price

Karen has worked at Good Sammy Enterprises for the last seven years. She has previously completed Certificate II in Retail with support from Good Sammy and is now keen to do Certificate III in Retail. This will give Karen more opportunity to develop the skills necessary to move into an award wage position.

Karen also has the support of a Good Sammy's mentor to help develop confidence and independence.





Members of Dongara Uniting Church celebrated 136 years of their church building in December last year.

## Remembering Past Saints at anniversary celebration

### Jill Clements

**On 13 December, Dongara Uniting Church celebrated 136 years of the church building.**

The Methodist congregation of the 1880s had acted to construct the church on land that was donated in the town centre. The building has been maintained, renovated and repaired at regular intervals in that 136 years, however, the basic structure remains intact, and is a cool and welcoming space in which we gather to worship and celebrate.

During the service, we had a time of Remembrance of Our Past Saints – people who have relocated to other towns, or who have died, in the past 10 years. Those present were invited to speak a few words of remembrance for any of these Saints who had inspired or

connected with them in a particular way of grace and faith.

We then each placed flowers or a sprig of rosemary alongside tealight candles in a tray filled with beach sand, as a gesture of remembrance. It was quite a moving experience for some of us. Good laughs too, as we recalled some of the identifying characteristics of these Saints.

At the same service, we celebrated the new main doors and sheltering porch which had recently been installed on the church hall. Fresh lawn had been laid also, to cover bare ground near the hall. These were dedicated as part of the sacred space we use each week in worship and fellowship. We prayed there will continue to be a life and witness to God and Christ as the buildings are occupied regularly.

The event finished with a fine morning tea, of course. We take any opportunity to share a meal together, celebrating further the current gifts of congregation members.

There is also a new milestone for our congregation.

On Sunday 7 March, Rev Erica (Ric) Payne will be commissioned into Dongara Uniting Church as an Honorary Minister from another denomination. This time of joy and celebration will be led by Rev Dr David Ferguson, Presbytery Officer, and Bob Hunt, Presbytery Chair, who will travel from Perth.

Ric comes from the Anglican Church of the Perth Diocese, and for many years served as Priest at Morawa. Now living in Dongara with her husband, Ric desires to be formally acknowledged in Ministry with the Dongara Uniting Church.



# Rev Sione celebrates ordination

Hours before Perth and the South West went into its second lockdown, the Presbytery of WA ordained Rev Sione Lea'aetua as a Minister of the Word at All Saint's Floreat Uniting Church. Sione has begun a placement at St Andrew's Uniting Church, in East Perth.

Members of the Uniting Church Presbytery of WA lay hands on Sione Lea'aetua as he was ordained as a Minister of the Word in January.

Bob Hunt, Chair of the Presbytery of WA, led the service and Rev Steve Francis, Ex-Moderator of the Uniting Church WA delivered the Preaching of the Word.

Sione began formation for ordination in February 2018, after already completing a Bachelor of Ministry. During his candidature, he also completed a Master of Theology, with a focus on the theology and polity of the Uniting Church.

During formation, he completed supervised field education placements in Applecross, Wagin and Nedlands Uniting Churches, as well as a year of Clinical Pastoral Education studies at Royal Perth Hospital.

Sione said his time in formation has helped him to grow in his understanding of the theology, polity, ethos and diversity of the

Uniting Church. It has also helped him to develop practical skills and to grow in confidence in ministry.

"The Candidates for the Ministries Committee have been impressed by his maturity – personally spiritually and theologically – and also by his sense of call and passion to share the gospel," said Rev Bev Fabb, Convener of the Candidates for the Ministries Commission.

During the Service of Ordination, Sione received a Bible as a sign of the authority given to him to proclaim in Word and deed the presence of Christ in the world, a stole as a sign of the joyful obedience he owes to Christ, and his Certificate of Ordination.

Members of the Presbytery of WA then gave their COVID-19 friendly greetings via 'elbow bumps'.

Sione responded to his ordination reflecting on two things: God's

faithfulness, and the love and support of his friends and family during his formation.

"I can see God's faithfulness in every area of my life," Sione said.

"I remember when we were still back in Sydney in 2010, me and my wife were praying and seeking God's direction for our family, and we felt strongly to come to Perth. I never had any idea that I would end up being a minister, but God had other plans.

"I'm thankful to God for the calling and the privilege to participate in [God's] mission. It's not my mission, it's God's mission and for me to have the opportunity to participate in it, this mission of reconciliation in the world, it's a great honour and privilege."

Watch the service online at [youtube.com/watch?v=XYKY6zwc6tY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=XYKY6zwc6tY)



# Rockin' the Goldfields: Music Ministry with Lindsay Ginn

**Heather Dowling**

Pastor Lindsay Ginn has been working as a Uniting Church WA Bush Chaplain in the Remote Area Ministry, Goldfields Patrol for just over a year and has already made some big waves. Frontier Services, a Uniting Church Assembly agency supporting people in Australia's rural and remote areas, funds the role, which sees Bush Chaplains travelling to remote areas providing a friendly ear, pastoral care and referral to other service providers if needed.

Originally from Bundaberg Queensland, and having spent time in Mount Isa, Lindsay was working as an instrumental music teacher at a school in Kalgoorlie when he was asked to help out the local Uniting Church while their musician, Jenny, was on leave. From there, Lindsay became a regular at church, eventually landing the Bush Chaplain role.

"I had moved to Kalgoorlie about two years before, and was working in a local Catholic High School," he said.

"I got asked if I would relieve Jenny for three weeks over Christmas as she had not had a break from playing for a long time.

"They were such a wonderful group of people and made me feel so welcome that I ended up staying there."

Lindsay's role sees him travel massive distances each week. His patrol covers from Kalgoorlie up to Leonora, Laverton and Menzies, including Coolgardie and all the way down to Esperance. He said he drives up to 1 200 kms each week to visit communities in the region.

"It's a good thing I really enjoy the driving," he said. "I love the countryside; I don't think I'll ever get tired of driving through it.

"The other day I was heading to Laverton and it had just been raining a little bit. There were some puddles on the highway and the kangaroos had come out to drink from the puddles on the road. You can't begin to imagine how dry it is out there really; it's very, very dry."

When Lindsay took up the role in January 2020, he was encouraged to use his personal strengths to connect with people in the area.

"When I first started, I didn't really have much of an idea of what to do. But one of the great things with the role of a Bush Chaplain is that we can work in our strengths and gifts. My gift is music, and someone said to me 'use music to reach into the communities'. So that's what I've been doing.

"Music in small country schools is basically nonexistent. I started approaching principals of the schools and saying, 'this is what I'm doing, would you be interested in having music at your school?' And there was a resounding 'yes!'

"A little place like Menzies for example, has only about 20 kids at the school. They actually had brand new musical instruments in boxes packed away in a room that had been sitting there for over two years, and they never had anyone to teach. So those instruments are now out and getting used.

"I go in and teach singing, drums, guitar, keyboard, ukulele and

other percussion instruments. The classroom teacher comes in, everyone joins in and we have a noisy, but good time.

"It's a way to get to know people in the community. If I can get to know the teachers in the school, the principals and students, then I can start to get to know the parents and the families.

**"When I first started, I didn't really have much of an idea of what to do. But one of the great things with the role of a Bush Chaplain is that we can work in our strengths and gifts. My gift is music, and someone said to me 'use music to reach into the communities'. So that's what I've been doing."**

"I see the role that I'm doing as a long-term goal. It's not something you can just get up and establish in one year, it's an ongoing goal and in time I want to become a trusted person within those communities.

"Music is something that people connect with. Sure, some students prefer sports and other things, but most students enjoy learning an instrument."

Lindsay's passion for music began at a young age, when his parents sat him down for organ lessons at the age of seven. At 13 he was playing in his first band with Youth for Christ, and in 1987 he spent a year performing across Australia with The Travellers, a Youth for Christ band that invited young people to travel and perform around the country.

He has also spent time travelling Queensland performing harmony yodelling with his cousin, and in a family band with his then wife and their three sons.



Students from CAPS Kurrawong Primary School enjoying music lessons provided by Frontier Services Bush Chaplain, Pastor Lindsay Ginn.



## Profile

Lindsay said one of his hopes is to pass on that passion for music and the joy it brings him with the kids that he teaches.

"I've always been very passionate about music, I know that it's made a huge difference in my life," he said.

"I don't know where I'd be if my parents had not taken a chance and given me my first music lesson. I've just held onto music ever since then. It's brought such joy into my life, it's the thing that drives me – that and my relationship with God.

"I'm hoping that as I start working more with these students it will become like that for them too – something they'll have all throughout their lives. I see myself as giving them a gift that they can take and develop and then do whatever they want to with it."

Lindsay's music and faith journeys have been intertwined throughout his life, having a strong passion for both from an early age.

"I became a Christian when I was seven years old and I have always had a heart for serving God," he said. "From a very early age I've always prayed: 'I will do anything you want me to do, go anywhere you

want me to go, at any time you want me to do it'. That's been my desire, just to do what God would have me to do.

"It's my relationship with the Lord that has taken me through some pretty tough times. As I travel, often I could be playing CDs or music in the car, but often I'll just use the time to talk with the Lord, which is awesome.

**"For someone who is struggling and at risk of suicidal behaviour, being able to play the basics of a musical instrument gives them a way to express their thoughts and feelings. Being able to do that can greatly help their emotions and lift them out of a very dark place."**

"I've been able to express my faith a lot in my music as well I've written a lot of songs over the years. Music and my faith in God are the rocks of my life."

In 2020, Lindsay also took part in a two-day suicide intervention course with Living Works, which has sparked a new interest in combining music with suicide prevention. Later this year, he will be undertaking further study to become a trainer with Living Works, hoping to deliver the course among teachers and principals in the schools he visits, as well as church congregations and other community groups.

Once again, he is keen to share his gift of music to support people.

"A lot of people don't know much about suicide and how to recognise the symptoms of it and what to say to someone who might be thinking about it. It's a huge issue and it's just getting bigger and bigger," he said.

"It's something that I feel very passionate about. Combined with the music it will work very well together.

"For someone who is struggling and at risk of suicidal behaviour, being able to play the basics of a musical





instrument gives them a way to express their thoughts and feelings. Being able to do that can greatly help their emotions and lift them out of a very dark place.

"One person I know suffered greatly during their childhood and teenage years, to the point of being suicidal. It was music, and being able to strum some chords of the guitar, that enabled them to express their thoughts through song writing. These songs often became prayers to the Lord and were a tremendous source of strength and encouragement to them."

As well as helping people express themselves and their emotions, Lindsay said studying music has several advantages, including giving kids more options in life.

"It's scientifically proven that being able to play music has so many benefits and advantages in helping people with their maths, with English, with all other areas of life," he said. "I heard a university professor say that music and the arts should really be at the centre of the curriculum, not on the edge, because it's so beneficial.

"It is a journey and it takes a little while for a student to develop that talent and really get a hold of it. It teaches you discipline because you have to practice and helps with

organisation. When a musician plays different rhythms and uses different timing, when they play and create different melodies and chords, it's like fireworks going off in their brain. Each area of the brain is stimulated and the benefits are incredible.

"The students come away from a music lesson with smiles on their faces. I had the principal at Laverton tell me one girl came back from music with a smile on her face. She then said, 'this girl doesn't smile'. She wanted to have more music. She wanted to stay, but of course she couldn't.

"It is a vital worthwhile thing that schools can implement, if given the opportunity. They're hungry for music and most of the schools around here don't have any music at all."

In the Goldfields region, most schools are small and isolated, and many of the activities which are often taken for granted in the city are not feasible to run – like school excursions for example. Many also don't have the funds or the resources to run their own music programs.

"The small schools just don't have access to a lot of the things that schools in the city have. For example, just to go on a school trip,

that's an enormous thing to arrange for a school like Menzies.

"With the music, we'll be able to arrange performances for them, concerts for them to put on for the towns that they live in, and also things like the eisteddfod, which they have never been to before. That will give them an opportunity to perform and get known a little bit."

Having only been in the position for just over a year, Lindsay has made a huge number of connections with families living across the massive region, and still has plenty of ideas for projects to come.

"It's been such a tremendous year, a huge learning curve," he said. "I really feel as though I'm only just getting started in many ways.

"It's a tremendous thing to be able to do and I'm just so thankful that I've been given the opportunity to do it."

Find out more about the role of Frontier Services Bush Chaplains and how you can support them at [frontierservices.org/how-we-help/bush-chaplaincy](https://frontierservices.org/how-we-help/bush-chaplaincy)

*If you or anyone you know needs help, call Lifeline on 131114 or Kids Helpline on 1800 551 800.*



# Sand, surf and ice-cream

**Young people from Trinity North Uniting Church and the remote Mowanjum Aboriginal Community, just outside of Derby in the Kimberley WA, spent an evening sharing stories over ice-cream in the January school holidays.**

The teenagers from Mowanjum were in Perth for a trip organised by the Boab Network, operating out of the Creative Living Centre at All Saints Floreat Uniting Church. The trip is part of their School Holiday Program, which engaged kids in fun activities when fewer activities are available in their area.

The Boab Network was formed by volunteers in 2007 after a call for help from Mowanjum Uniting Church because of a youth suicide crisis in the community. The network has since been organising the School Holiday Program to engage the young people in positive activities during school holidays, and have since expanded their programs due to its success.

At Trinity North Uniting Church, CREW is an informal program for high schoolers, encouraging them to build friendships and grow spiritually. CREW stands for Christians Ready Equipped and Willing.

“CREW have a genuine heart for service and actively seek opportunities to pay it forward in the wider community,” said Amanda Daly, a leader of CREW.

As part of their commitment to paying it forward, CREW raised \$425 for the Boab Network School Holiday Camp through fundraising morning teas at church.

“CREW heard about the BOAB network when we had a guest speaker come to the church to share stories from the Mowanjum community,” said Amanda.

“Hearing that suicide was high in the community, but had been reduced since the BOAB network were present was encouraging. We often find ourselves discussing mental health issues in wanting to be accepted and fitting in, so this fact spoke to the heart of the group and they were keen to reach out.

“We also heard about the camp as an initiative to encourage school attendance and that sometimes

local groups come in to serve meals to the campers and we thought this was something we would like to get involved in."

The young people from CREW met the young people from Mowanjum at the Ern Halliday Campsite before taking a sunset beach walk to Hillarys Boat Harbour for ice-cream. Any nerves felt soon subsided when the teenagers realised that though their lives may be vastly different, they still have so much in common.

"The walk was a great idea," said Amanda. "Sometimes it is difficult for adolescents to initiate conversation and although excited, CREW were a little anxious, in fear of not being able to find a common ground with the kids and establish a connection.

"Very quickly they were surprised and thrilled to realise how similar they were. Most of the kids had phones and when one of the Boab girls started recording a TikTok and one of the CREW jumped in and danced beside her, they soon figured out a universal language in dance, movement and music."

Tess Daly, a 15-year-old CREW member, said she has made lasting connections as a result of the evening.

"It was really fun," she said. "I was anxious, but excited to meet the Mowanjum kids. It turned out to be so much better than I expected.

**"Very quickly they were surprised and thrilled to realise how similar they were. Most of the kids had phones and when one of the Boab girls started recording a TikTok and one of the CREW jumped in and danced beside her, they soon figured out a universal language in dance, movement and music."**

"I love that they know the same TikTok dances as me and that they have Snapchat, so we can keep

in touch. I've spoken with them since they have gone back to their community and seen some photos of the rest of their family, which is awesome."

Sarah Castelijns, aged 14 and also a CREW member, mentioned how despite being briefed on the Mowanjum kids living a different life to them, she also feels they "are just the same as us."

The young people from Mowanjum returned home in time to settle in and start a new year at school. During their week-long stay in Perth they enjoyed all sorts of activities including visiting Scitech, playing basketball with the Joondalup Wolves, Kayaking on the Canning River, riding the Fremantle Tourist Wheel, and a visit to Optus Stadium – thanks to sponsors such as the Matilda Bay Rotary Club, the Hon Minister for Sport, and Transperth.

Find out more about the Boab Network and the work they do at [boabnetwork.org](http://boabnetwork.org)



Teenagers from the remote Mowanjum Community spent an evening with teenagers from Trinity North Uniting Church during the January school holidays.

# Working together to end loneliness

## Heather Dowling

**While it is true that recent COVID times have led to people feeling more lonely, loneliness was prevalent in our communities even before the pandemic put people around the world into lockdown – or kept us from travelling to see loved ones interstate.**

**It has been reported that loneliness can have similar health effects on the body as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day. Which is part of the reason UnitingCare Australia have recently joined the Ending Loneliness Together initiative. Ending Loneliness Together includes a range of community groups and organisations who recognise the huge impact loneliness plays in people’s lives across the country, and who are working together on this issue.**

Dr Michelle Lim is a clinical psychologist, senior lecturer at Swinburne University and the Chair of Ending Loneliness Together. She said while there is a connection between social isolation and loneliness, they are two different issues.

“Loneliness is what we would typically say is a subjective construct,” she said. “Feeling like you’re alone, feeling like you have no friends, that no one has your back, no one understands you.

“As opposed to social isolation where you have fewer people that you know. You might live in a more rural area, perhaps you’re less connected to others because you don’t have work. There’s a degree of social isolation that all of us hold as well.

“They are related in that the fewer people you know increases your vulnerability to feeling lonely, however it can occur independently as well.

“Lots of people who are highly integrated within social institutions very much say they feel lonely – so still feeling subjectively lonely despite being at work, university, with many friends, in vocational training.

“I guess one of the things we are trying to tease out is, how do we augment social care to not just reduce social isolation, but also to reduce loneliness? Because just because you reduce social isolation doesn’t automatically mean you reduce loneliness.”

## Loneliness has no barriers

Often, we only think of elderly people experiencing loneliness, which can be true, but the whole truth is that anyone can experience it any time – though usually during a time of transition or challenge. There are age groups that are more vulnerable to feeling lonely however, including young people aged 18 to 25 and older people aged over 75.

“When you think about those groups, they are faced with more social challenges – for different reasons,” Michelle said.

Michelle said for older people, issues such as poor health, physical challenges, or their partner or friends dying can create more feelings of loneliness.



Younger people can be challenged by starting their first job, making new friends outside of school or study, developing a sense of social identity or emerging mental illness.

Spikes in loneliness can also be found in middle age.

"If there's one thing we can say about loneliness, it's that at some point our vulnerability will increase," Michelle said.

"I think it's more about how we manage it, and to ensure that we are always managing it, as opposed to thinking, 'okay I feel lonely, something is weird with me, something is wrong with me'.

"When we have that sort of mentality and stigma, the problem gets worse. You don't seek the right help, you put barriers up for yourself and you're not managing it as well.

"We know from the literature that when you feel lonely, you're more

likely to feel depressed. Then in six months down the line you're more likely to feel socially anxious; six months down the line you're more likely to be paranoid.

"So, loneliness actually acts as a feeder to future problems, but yet we tend to keep on ignoring our loneliness.

**"Loneliness is a normal feeling to have and if we don't respond to it, it becomes distressing. Our brains process loneliness as a social stressor, and when we are stressed we have poorer health outcomes more generally."**

"Loneliness has been associated with poorer cardiovascular health, lower ability to fight off infections, increased incidence of breast cancer in women – a multitude of

physical health problems because it's all related to stress.

"The reason why it's so harmful for humans in general is because the way we are built is that we're not meant to feel alone; we're meant to function in groups and to have others to rely on.

"Overall, humans need to feel like we have a meaningful social connection with someone, and that someone has got their back. When we don't feel that way, we are more stressed generally and therefore have poorer health outcomes, albeit physical or mental."

### Reducing stigma

At some point in our lives, we will all be touched by loneliness. Despite this, the stigma around it can cause more issues for people experiencing it. To work towards reducing loneliness in our communities,

we need to be talking about the issue more so that stigma can be reduced.

“Even when you say the word ‘loneliness’ now, people don’t like to say, ‘oh I’m lonely,’” Michelle said. “They’re reluctant to say that even though it’s a normal feeling to have.

“Then it becomes a cycle because a lonely person doesn’t want to reach out – they’re trying to protect themselves from being rejected.

“They send signals to other people suggesting they’re not willing to connect, even though they’re desperate to connect. And other people then just respond accordingly.

“One of the biggest things that is missing in the Australian context is that we don’t have a good community awareness campaign to actually destigmatise loneliness.

“It’s always been seen as something that is wrong with the person, and that is something we need to rectify immediately. We need government to invest in a national campaign that can tie into health outcomes.”

### A place for churches

Claerwen Little, National Director of UnitingCare Australia, said churches

have a huge role to play in this space. In fact, the Ending Loneliness Together initiative began out of a Uniting Church congregation friendship group in NSW.

However, it’s not just the worship community or friendship and social groups which are tackling loneliness – any community service that is building meaningful connections and trust with people who may be socially isolated is helping those affected.

“All our services deal with people who are lonely in one way or another,” she said.

**“For us, the link between the prevalence of loneliness and poverty is a really important factor in being involved.**

“In communities where there’s a high incidence of poverty and unemployment, we often find many more people who are feeling lonely.

“If you’re experiencing homelessness, or if you’re a single parent on a single parent benefit, it’s really hard to get out to meet other people and engage with other people.

“It’s really hard for children whose families are living in poverty to have

the same opportunities – the ability to go on excursions, or sporting activities or other extracurricular activities – if they don’t have the money to spend.

“There are many people in difficult circumstances who also experience loneliness as a result of compounding factors and complexities in their lives.”

There are certainly many Uniting Church WA congregations that are delivering services which help alleviate loneliness – as well as our agencies: Juniper, Good Sammy Enterprises and Uniting WA. This is not to mention the benefits of belonging to a community group – such as a church.

“Our church, through its work and through our congregations does have an incredibly important role to play in addressing loneliness in our community,” said Claerwen. “Often churches are the only ones that are able to engage people, either through their services or local networks.

“At the end of the day, as humans we all need to connect with other humans. We need friendship. We need circles of support. We need friends and it’s often difficult for people who are isolated by other challenges in their lives.

“Some of our emergency relief programs in our community, the community hubs, but also the family centres, they all provide that really strong sense of connection for people.”

### Creating change

The Ending Loneliness Together White Paper makes three key recommendations to address loneliness: invest and be informed by Australian-based research; develop and deliver system-wide frameworks; and connect and empower people to take action.

Part of that empowerment to take action is to first be informed and understand the issue.





"There's a huge scope but I think one of the things is to get providers to understand how to identify if people are lonely because it can be quite difficult and nuanced and it might not necessarily mean that someone is socially isolated, but they are lonely," Michelle Lim said.

"We need to understand and correct those misconceptions before actually taking action. If we don't have the right information, we can sometimes do more harm than good."

Michelle said it is important to keep up-to-date with the latest evidence from trusted sources.

"It's important to equip yourself with that knowledge before proceeding to make a difference, because when you do take action with that knowledge, you'll make a much more sustainable impact as opposed to potentially causing harm without realising."

Claerwen said there is a lot that churches can do to address this

issue – firstly by reading the White Paper and joining the coalition.

"It's important that we understand what it means to be lonely and to be able to see the signs of loneliness and then respond. It's about policy responses and the role of government, but it's also about the role of each of us," said Claerwen.

"There are some things the congregation can do, and if you have a capacity to do friendship groups or groups for people, reach out to the community. From a congregation perspective there are many, many ways in which you can address loneliness.

"In our service footprint, we do address loneliness in so many different ways around our service network.

"As a church, people can sign up, educate themselves on what loneliness is and how to identify the factors of loneliness and then find ways to reach out and address it in the community."

For immediate support for yourself or someone you know, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14.

Find out more and read the Ending Loneliness White Paper at [endingloneliness.com.au](https://endingloneliness.com.au)

Find out more about UnitingCare Australia at [unitingcare.org.au](https://unitingcare.org.au)

Find links to Uniting Church WA caring agencies – Good Sammy Enterprises, Juniper and Uniting WA – at [unitingchurchwa.org.au/our-family/caring-agencies](https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/our-family/caring-agencies)

Many Uniting Church WA congregations also run community services. Find a Uniting Church WA congregation in your area at [unitingchurchwa.org.au/local-church/find-a-church](https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/local-church/find-a-church)



# Remembering Stolen Generations ON SORRY DAY

Sorry Day is held each year on 26 May to remember and acknowledge the Stolen Generations.

Dr Alison Atkinson-Phillips is a member of the Bringing Them Home Committee, supported by the Uniting Church WA. She is also the author of *Survivor Memorials: Remembering trauma and loss in contemporary Australia*, and worked as Media and Communications Manager at the Uniting Church Centre from 2005 to 2012. She reflects on what Sorry Day means to her.

The Christian year is punctuated by special days when we are asked to pause and reflect on where we are in life, and on our relationship with God.

Secular life, too, has some of those moments, and for me, as a Wadjella living on Wadjuk Nyungar boodjar, one of the most important of those is Sorry Day, 26 May. It is a day to tell the truth about the past and present impacts that settler-colonialism has had on the first peoples of this land. It is a day to listen to their stories, and to re-commit to working with them for justice.

Sorry Day has been held at Wellington Square in East Perth since 2005, and when I was working at the Uniting Church Centre, it was really easy to pop down to take photos of the events, and to take advantage of the sausage sizzle (or some years kangaroo stew) for my lunchbreak.

But that site wasn't chosen for my convenience – its significance for Aboriginal people dates back before colonisation, when it was part of a wetland chain that ran through the area we now think of as Perth. The significance of this system is commemorated in Toogar Morrison's 'Illa Kuri' artwork in East Perth.

In the 19th century, many of these wetland areas were drained for development, and Wellington

Square became a recreation area, and continued to be used by Wadjuk people in its changed form.

From the 1920s to the 1950s, Wellington Square was incorporated into the 'prohibited area', which banned Aboriginal people from central Perth, and it is probably as a combination of these two histories that many services for Aboriginal people are located nearby in East Perth.

In 2006, Bringing Them Home WA got permission from the City of Perth to install the original Sorry Pole – literally a simple metal pole stuck in the earth on the edge of the square. From that year onwards, a smoking ceremony and walking around the Sorry Pole were incorporated into the ritual of Sorry Day.

This ceremony will mean different things to different people; for me it is a way of acknowledging the pain and suffering of the Stolen Generations in particular, and remembering those who have passed during the year.

**The surroundings of East Perth remind me both about the individual tragedy of lives lost and families torn apart, and also about the layering of colonial violence on the earth, on culture, on people.**

Sorry Day, 26 May, will be both different and the same this year. It will be the same, because so many of the 54 recommendations of the 1997 *Bringing Them Home* report remain unfulfilled. It will be the same because the need for truth and justice and reconciliation remains as strong as it was 24 years ago.

What will be different, is that we will see the dedication of a formal memorial space, something Stolen Generations survivors and their families have long been advocating for. In fact, it was conversations about the need for



Artist's concept drawing of a ceremony in the new Wellington Square space. Image courtesy of Sandra Hill and Stuart Green.

a memorial that started me off thinking about survivor memorials, and ultimately led me to start the research that led me out of working for the Uniting Church and into life as a public historian.

What makes this memorial different from almost every other survivor memorial in Australia, is that it will be created by a Stolen Generations survivor herself, artist Sandra Hill. She has taken on the difficult task of creating a space where survivors can publicly mourn their loss, and where the truth of the past can be acknowledged. We all owe her a great debt.

Sometimes people talk about memorials as 'healing', but there is a real danger when we use that word; we have an image of a wound closing.

The problem is that an act of genocide is not like a paper cut. Separating children from their families and culture has lasting impacts, and it is naïve (at best) to think that a memorial can repair that damage. It is even more important to remember that when the people of Perth recently voted in a Mayor whose policies on removing homeless people from the CBD aren't all that different from the 'prohibited area' policies of last century.

The 'tag line' of Bringing Them Home WA is 'Western Australians for truth, healing, justice and reconciliation'. For myself, on 26 May I will re-commit myself to working for truth and justice. I leave it to my Aboriginal sisters and brothers to decide what healing and reconciliation looks like for them.

## Time for some deep conversations

Rev Ken Devereux, Convener, End-of-Life Care Task Group

Sometimes it's easier to talk about a difficult topic by being part of a group of friends talking about the subject. This brings in a variety of other people's experiences. Having a chance to tune in to other people's feelings and reactions without directly having to give your own views can help you shape your own thoughts.

Once the conversation is proceeding in a respectful manner you can choose your moment to reveal your personal views, experiences or concerns.

This is the hope of the Synod's End-of-life Care Task Group which has prepared a booklet with case studies and discussion prompts about the big questions that relate to our own end of life hopes, planning and preferences, or to

those relating to another for whom one has some responsibility. These are sensitive and private matters. Often left until too late.

"Inherently, as a society, we do not like to talk about death... [Yet it] is inevitable and if we want to increase the likelihood of dying a 'good death' – patients, families, carers and health professionals – we should all talk about death," was one of the conclusions of the WA Parliament's Joint Select Committee on End of Life Choices in its 2018 Report *My Life, My Choice*.

The Synod Task Group believes this is an issue the Uniting Church can address, both within the church and more widely. The fears, anxieties and dislocating social consequences that COVID-19 has thrown up provide further impetus to this timely resource and discussion.



A simple but wide-ranging educational resource has been prepared to help people better understand death and dying. There is also opportunity to explore Christian faith perspectives. This can raise understandings about Advance Health Directives, Enduring Power of Guardianship as well as the possibilities and practices of voluntary assisted dying which will come into effect in WA mid-year.

A discussion kit will be available soon. Enquiries can be made through your minister or the Synod office if you would like to obtain a copy, and bring together a local group to lift the lid on these important matters. Having prior consideration to the possibilities can make it so much easier to handle decisions if and when critical moments arise.

## New app a Godsend



A new, free app designed to support and encourage people to share their faith in an informal way will be launched on Saturday 27 March at a national online event.

The Godsend app was originally due to be launched in Australia last year at the Pioneer Ministry Gathering, but due to COVID-19, the event was cancelled and the launch postponed.

Godsend was originally developed in the UK by Fresh Expressions, but has been refreshed with Australian content for an Australian audience,

driven by the Uniting Church WA Thrive Committee working with other churches around Australia.

Rev Greg Ross, Chair of the Thrive Committee, said the app is a great on-the-go resource for people wanting to learn more about Fresh Expressions and how to share their faith.

"The app is a way in which we can enable people to learn about sharing their faith and relooking at what church is," Greg said. "That it's not just Sunday – church is where you are with the people, who you are as you endeavour to follow Jesus.

"We've got stories from all over Australia," said Greg. "And the beauty of it is, that as time moves on, we can add more little two minute videos and drop some out as it grows and changes, as times change.

"It's a living tool."

"It's guiding people for how they can share their faith; how they can recognise mission; how they can listen to God in their communities; how they can find a place to love and serve people; how they can find a way to share faith.

A UK version of the app is currently available to download in app stores, however from the launch date, any version of the app in the southern hemisphere will be updated with the Australian content. Developers are also working on making the app accessible for those with vision impairments in the future.

The official launch will be an online event held on Saturday 27 March, including a launch session plus four further training sessions on how to use the app. Cost to attend is \$12.

Register for the launch at [stickytickets.com.au/aouop/fx\\_godsend\\_au\\_launch.aspx](https://stickytickets.com.au/aouop/fx_godsend_au_launch.aspx) or for more information email Rev Greg Ross at [revgregross@internode.on.net](mailto:revgregross@internode.on.net).



## Bushfires in lockdown: Support for those affected

In January 2021, bushfires just north of Perth were burning out of control, with 86 homes lost. It is currently too early to tell exactly where support will be needed, but the Uniting Church WA Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Working Group is already working to help those affected.

"The Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Working Group is providing peer support to congregations in the disaster affected areas," said Rev David Jackson, Convenor of the Disaster Relief and Community Recovery Working Group.

"Pastor Lindsay Ginn, Frontier Services Bush Chaplain, is currently rostered on our monthly Duty Officer Roster and he is providing excellent pastoral care and support to the congregational representatives in the affected fire zones.

"We are also partnering with the Council of Churches WA and the Department of Fire and Emergency Services (DFES) through the WA Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network to provide chaplaincy services to DFES."

The working group is meeting regularly to consider their response, which David said will most certainly involve keeping in close contact with affected congregations to support them as they minister to their local communities.

Susy Thomas, Moderator of the Uniting Church WA, issued a pastoral statement to the church, acknowledging that many people may be feeling uncertainty, anxiety or perhaps fear, as the fires burned while the city was in lockdown due to a positive case of COVID-19 in the community.

"It can be very frustrating when faced with situations over which we have no control. A sense of powerlessness can be debilitating," she wrote.

"Yet despite this, throughout Scripture the ancients taught of hope in the midst of disappointment, defeat, exile and persecution, even death. Constantly the People of God were urged to never give up, to never lose hope."

She continued with a prayer.

"We pray for those who have lost their homes or properties. We are

deeply conscious of the loss of stock and wildlife, as well as our beautiful native vegetation.

"Especially at this time, O God, do we pray for firefighters, all emergency service personnel, police, volunteers, medical staff, government officials and all those on the frontline of pandemic prevention. Grant all strength, wisdom and clear decision-making.

"We pray also for the vulnerable in our community, especially the elderly and those in aged care, separated from loved ones.

"We pray for our young people, particularly those experiencing the interruption to the start of their new school life adventure."

Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, National Disaster Recovery Officer of the Uniting Church in Australia, and Dr Deidre Palmer, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, have also offered their prayers for those affected in WA.

Donate to the Uniting WA Perth Bushfire Appeal at [unitingwa.org.au/get-involved/donate](https://unitingwa.org.au/get-involved/donate) or call 1300 663 298.

## Nuclear weapons banned as historic UN treaty becomes international law

The 2017 United Nations (UN) Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons became international law on Friday 22 January, with its 'entry into force' now official. The Uniting Church WA actively advocates for a nuclear-free future through the Social Justice Commission and supports the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN).

Eighty-six states have signed the treaty and 51 countries have now ratified it.

"Entry-into-force cements the illegality of nuclear weapons in international law," said Dr Tilman Ruff AO, co-founder of ICAN.

The treaty seeks to do to nuclear weapons what previous international treaties have done to chemical and biological weapons – ban their use on humanitarian grounds.

"This change will influence the behaviour of states, even those which don't join the treaty, interrupt the flow of funds to nuclear arms producers, stimulate debate and increase pressure on treaty hold-outs."

Anti-nuclear campaigners celebrated across the globe, including in Fremantle WA, as the international community takes a huge step toward the elimination of all nuclear weapons.

But Australia has not signed or ratified the Treaty, despite committing to pursue nuclear disarmament under the 1970 nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

"The Morrison government claims to be in favour of disarmament, but refuses to support this treaty," said Gem Romuld, the Director of ICAN Australia.

"It's high time the Australian government followed New Zealand and most other countries in our



photo credit: Heather Jones

region and got on the right side of history."

Eighty-eight Federal MPs and Senators from across the political spectrum support Australia joining the treaty, and the Federal Opposition has committed to sign and ratify in government.

"The international community is demanding an end to nuclear weapons, which pose an unacceptable danger to every single one of us every day that they stand ready to be launched."

Despite some reductions in recent years there are still over 13 400 nuclear weapons across the globe, controlled by nine nations.

## 16th Assembly goes online

The Uniting Church's triennial Assembly meeting will take place online for the first time, due to continuing risk factors around the COVID-19 pandemic.

Members of the Assembly Standing Committee (ASC) made the historic decision at an extraordinary meeting on Saturday 30 January 2021.

"Putting the safety and wellbeing of members of the 16th Assembly first was the key driver in this decision," said Assembly General Secretary, Colleen Geyer.

"ASC members believed that a face-to-face meeting simply could not be planned with sufficient certainty."

"Despite a drop in community transmissions, the emergence of new, more contagious strains of the virus in Australia is concerning. There are also many other risks to consider that are out of our control.

"So less than six months out from the triennial meeting, we are putting the safety of Assembly members and staff first."

A shortened 16th Assembly will take place online from 17 to 18 July 2021 with a view to reconvening the Assembly meeting in 2022 when a face-to-face meeting is possible.

The 16th Assembly meeting was originally scheduled to take place at the Queensland Synod's Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast from 15 to 19 July 2021.

Colleen Geyer reassured Uniting Church members that the 16th Assembly meeting would still be a high point in the life of the Uniting Church.

"We will still be incorporating program elements that showcase the breadth of our achievement as a church deeply engaged



in transforming lives and the communities we live in," she said.

"Most of us are a lot more familiar with video conferencing than we were at the start of the pandemic, to the point that a number of synods have moved their meetings online."

"As a pilgrim people on the way we will be resilient and make the best of the current circumstances.

"Please keep us in your prayers as we work through the remaining planning and preparations," said Colleen.

More details on the 16th Assembly meeting arrangements will be published on the Assembly website as they become available at [uniting.church/news](http://uniting.church/news)



Last year, *Revive* online published a story from Rockingham Uniting Church about an amazing fundraising effort they held for the Uniting Church in Australia's National Disaster Relief Fund, supporting people affected by bushfires. Rev Norm and his wife Freda Hogg made Sugar Easter Eggs and sold them at their local shopping centre, raising an impressive \$10 000.

Read the article at [revivemagazine.org.au/2020/04/28/easter-egg-treats-raise-much-needed-funds-for-bushfire-relief](http://revivemagazine.org.au/2020/04/28/easter-egg-treats-raise-much-needed-funds-for-bushfire-relief)

This year, Norm and Freda have shared their process with you, so you can make your own Easter treats!

Norm and Freda said the Easter eggs are easy to make, but it's a very time consuming as each process must dry before continuing to the next stage.

Have you got a favourite recipe? Send it in to [revive@wa.uca.org.au](mailto:revive@wa.uca.org.au) or mail them to *Revive* magazine, GPO Box M952, Perth, 6843.

# Sugar Easter Eggs

## Ingredients

- 1kg castor sugar
- Food colouring
- Royal icing
- You will also need an Easter egg mould, available from craft or baking supply stores.

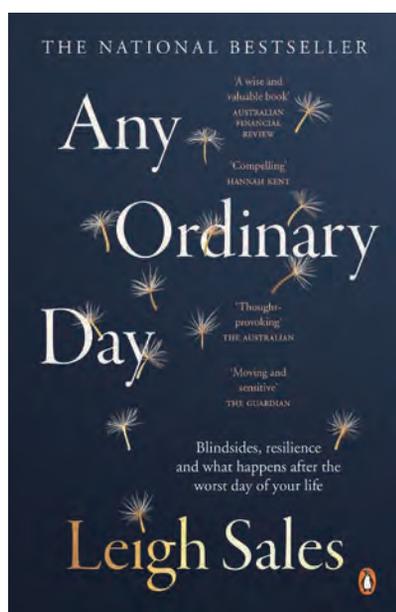
## Method

- Mix a few drops of the food colouring with a small glass of water to your desired colour.
- Put the castor sugar in a bowl and add 3tbs of the coloured water. Mix well, either by hand or with an electric mixer. If the colour is not mixed enough the egg will turn out patchy.
- Press the sugar mix into the egg mould very firmly to avoid any cracks, and level it off with a flat straight blade.
- Put a piece of baking paper onto the mould before turning over onto a flat board or tray.
- Leave the eggs to dry for several hours (they will take longer to dry on a humid day).
- When they are dry enough to hold, very carefully scrape out the moist centre and leave to completely dry overnight. The sugar you scrape out can be stored airtight to be used to make smaller eggs.
- When the sugar is completely dry, fill with chocolates and other sweets. Join two halves together with the Royal icing, pipe around the join, then decorate any way you like... the sky is the limit!



# Any Ordinary Day

by Leigh Sales,  
Penguin Group Australia, 2018



## Maggie Johns

***Any Ordinary Day*, written by ABC's 7.30 news and current affairs host, Leigh Sales, explores blindsides, resilience and what happens after the 'worst' day of your life.**

Sales gives an honest account of what Juliet Darling, Stuart Diver, Louisa Hope, Walter Mikac, Hannah Richell, James Scott and Michael Spence went through and tries to

honour their experiences and the lives of those who were loved and lost.

In *Any Ordinary Day*, Sales explores with in-depth interviews and extensive research the effect of life-changing events and the strength, hope and humour which assisted ordinary people, on ordinary days, to navigate their way through an extraordinary event.

She asks the questions we're often too afraid to ask, but we all think about.

Some of those interviewed are people of faith and they share how their faith played a role in working through the event. Whether they're people of faith or not, it's the resilience and optimism of human nature, as well as those around them, that shines through.

I was gifted *Any Ordinary Day* from a wise colleague, whilst grieving the death of a friend in an accident. I felt fearful of my inadequate attempts to support the family. This book helped me to realise the unimaginable pain they're experiencing and that my mistakes can't really make it worse. Sadly, I also can't make it better.

Walter Mikac, who lost his wife, Nanette and two daughters, Alannah and Madeline in the 1996

Port Arthur shooting, says in the book, "There's nothing anyone could say, no matter how badly it came out, that could be as bad as what's already happened to you.

So it's much better for people to just let you know that they're there to help, if you need it. For people to show that they're still there is the most important thing."

I binge read *Any Ordinary Day*, I cried and even had an occasional chuckle, but I also felt courage to try to continue to be there for my friend, no matter how inept I was.

Sales, in the final paragraph of the book says, "All I can tell you is that life is richer, kinder and safer than the news would have you believe. People are more decent. The things you think you wouldn't be able to survive, you probably can. You will be okay. There's really only one lesson to take from all of this and that is to be grateful for the ordinary days and to savour every last moment of them. They're not so ordinary, really. Hindsight makes them quite magical."

Whether you're a loved one, friend or an ordinary person, on an ordinary day dealing with an extraordinary event, I pray that you'll be blessed, as I was, by reading *Any Ordinary Day* and that you'll try to be a blessing to others as a result.

## What Can Love Hope For?

Questions for Faith Seeking Understanding

by William Loader, Cascade Books, 2020

**John van den Berg**

**This recently published book was written by William (Bill) Loader, a well-known and respected New Testament scholar. The book is subtitled ‘Questions for Faith Seeking Understanding’, hoping to address how the New Testament should be interpreted.**

The book is dedicated to people “who love their faith and want to take it seriously and engage their minds to embrace it.” It comprises of three major sections about faith, hope and love, looking at it from the perspective of love, with Jesus being the main focus throughout.

Faith – what can love believe?  
 Hope – what can love hope for?  
 Love – what can love do?

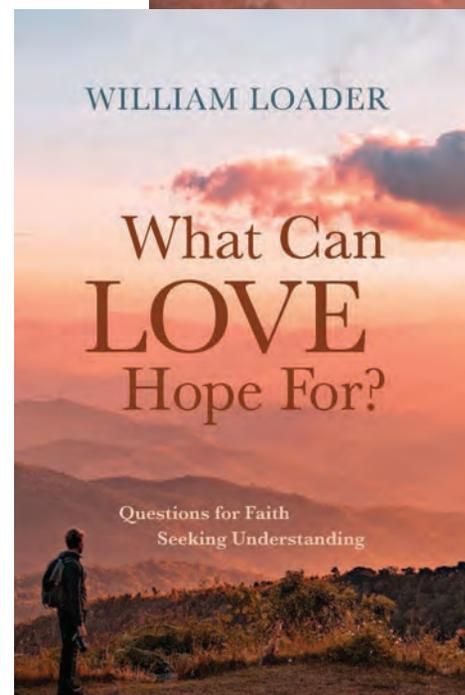
At the end of the book is an afterword, which gives the reader a look into William’s journey of faith and scholarship with a link to an earlier published book called “Dear Kim, this is what I believe: explaining the Christian faith today” ([wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/DearKim.htm](http://wwwstaff.murdoch.edu.au/~loader/DearKim.htm)).

This book gives an extensive answer regarding William’s faith, what he believes and what he questions, and could be read as a companion to the book under review, especially as it appears that he does not give too much away regarding his own faith in the book, but concentrates on the subjects mentioned.

William obviously knows the subject material, which is presented clearly with references to books written by himself previously, and other books he has drawn material from at the end of the book, rather than bothering the reader with footnotes and references within the main text, except for references to Bible verses.

Although many commentaries have been written about both the Old and New Testament of the Bible, William manages to keep things interesting – even faith-challenging at times – by showing how various sections of the New Testament should be seen and are often misinterpreted.

He provides new insights, backgrounds and perspectives, which could provide footnotes in



both the various New Testament books in one’s own Bible(s) and in commentaries, referring to this book’s subjects and explanations.

This book is written in an easy to read and understandable form, and it would be a good and worthwhile addition to one’s personal library or bookshelf. The book is full of questions, which are addressed and answered clearly and extensively, but in line with the subtitle of the book – Questions for Faith Seeking Understanding – an open mind is sometimes called for.

# Lent

## A time of rediscovery

Rev David de Kock, General Secretary of the Uniting Church WA

The Christian 40-day season of Lent began back in mid-February. It is a time of reflection and preparation for Easter, which this year is in early April. It is a time for us to focus and prepare for Good Friday and the realisation that it was our sin that crucified Jesus.

There is a story in the Bible about a boy named David, who God chose to be King. God chose him not because he was an amazing bloke, but simply because the Lord saw in him "one after my own heart".

David was not perfect – his sin of adultery with Bathsheba was despicable – but his outright respect for and awe of God brought him immediately to confession. David's recognition of his sin did bring him back to God's light.

We too have this privilege: to go to the Cross of Jesus with confession on our lips and repentance in our hearts to find that we have been forgiven and that we can walk joyfully through this life and the next. For God so loves us that Christ died for us.

Some time ago, a big tree fell down in our garden, smashing the wall and blocking our neighbour's driveway. It happened during a night in which there was no wind or rain or any other weather-related reasons.

We discovered afterwards that the tree was rotten at a fork in the trunk where water had gathered over the years. We had to do something quite quickly, so I asked a friend to come along with his chainsaw to cut the tree into manageable proportions. We had the fence repaired, and removed other suspect branches on the tree and all the mess from our neighbour's garden.

It struck me afterwards that this was a parable of what often happens in our lives. On the outside we are strong and bold, but where we break out from the main stem we create potential for the rot to set in. No-one notices it until one day part of us collapses, breaking things as it falls and blocking the way for others.

And then, we need to clean-up the mess.

**We can seldom clean it up on our own; we depend on others and often that adds to complications. And we need to check the rest of our life to make sure that there is no rotteness likely to create future problems.**

After the tree was cut up and neatly stacked in our neighbour's yard, it took over a week for the contractors to remove the debris. Our neighbour visited me daily asking when it was to be moved, the leaves were drying and creating a real mess in his garden. Our problem had implicated his life also.

I am not a forester or gardener of much skill, but I believe that the situation could have been prevented. First, by ensuring that rotten water was not collecting in the fork of the trunk. Second, a

regular check could have foreseen the problem. Third, I should have heeded the warning by a previous neighbour who had wanted to remove the offending part some years earlier.

In life, we also have these options.

Tall straight trees do not have this kind of problem – it happens when branches head out on their own mission from the main trunk of the tree.

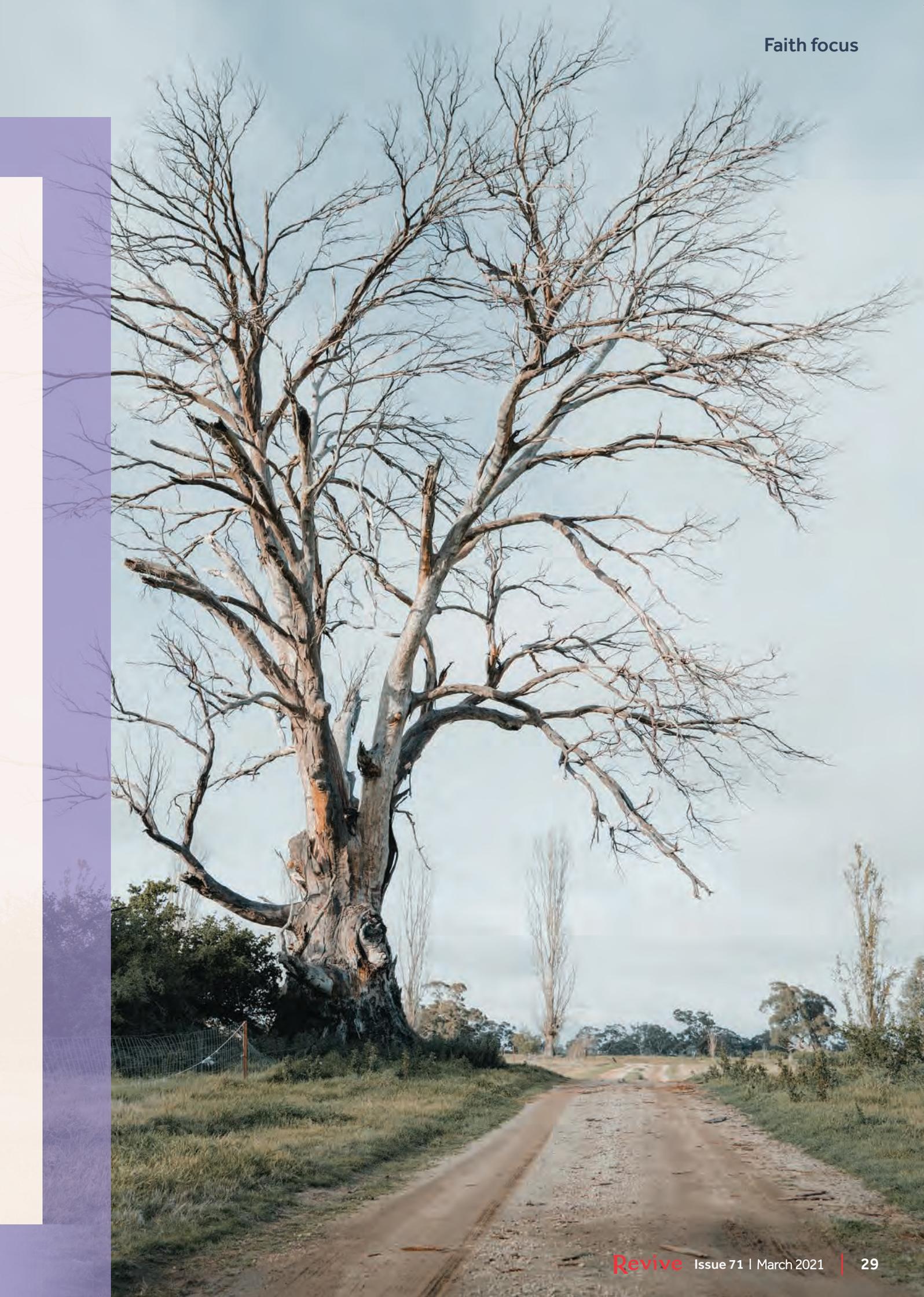
Where our lives divert from God, we are often in danger of the rot setting in. We need to conduct regular check-ups on our lives. We should also heed the counsel of others. If I had listened to my former neighbour, the problem would not have arisen.

Our lives are often not right and in the busyness of life, we seldom stop to fix them up.

Every machinist knows that you cannot work a machine forever – the settings change, wear and tear takes its toll. You have to stop periodically to service the machine or it will produce bad output.

It is no different in our lives.

Jesus came to us, died for us so that we could reset our lives. We too easily find ourselves in the dark, and that's the point of Lent. It's not about being sombre and gloomy, but about rediscovering our source of being.



# Uni life in lockdown



## Reuben Edmonds

**In February 2020, I travelled to Melbourne to begin my studies as part of candidating through the Uniting Church WA to become a Minister of the Word.**

My studies and ministry formation took place at Pilgrim Theological College and I lived – and worked as the chapel verger – at Queen’s College, University of Melbourne. At the time there were a few articles about a new virus and some travel restrictions to a province in China, but it seemed far away.

By the end of February my studies were full steam ahead. I was attending ministry studies, theology classes and enjoying the new social life of Queen’s. I began attending church at Brunswick Uniting Church and I ran the first chapel service at Queen’s in mid-March. Everything seemed normal and was going well – but that was all about to change.

It was not long before all of us went into lockdown in some form or another. In Melbourne, like many places, people were asked to stay home where possible and some businesses were closed. The university was shut and my studies moved online. The gates of Queen’s were shut, all visitors banned, and chapel services were cancelled.

Fear quickly took hold as we did not know what was going to happen and how bad it would get.

By mid-May some of the restrictions were beginning to lift. Unfortunately, most churches remained closed, so my winter placement was cancelled and I remained in Melbourne.

I was able to enjoy my birthday with friends, lunches at the pub, and a short trip to the Mornington Peninsula. Life was beginning to return to normal and it became fun being able to eat out and catch-up with others.

This trend continued for WA and many friends and family still there transitioned back to life as usual. However, COVID-19 was still spreading in Melbourne and my life was about to change drastically.

By the end of June, cases had begun to rapidly rise, and lockdowns were put in place. Initially it was just local lockdowns, but as the infections per day got higher and higher the state government imposed incredibly strict restrictions.

Everything ground to a halt, businesses were closed, masks were mandatory, and people remained at home. We could no longer visit friends and we could not travel further than 5km.

**A sense of hopelessness began to creep in as the spread seemed unstoppable.**

Thankfully, the restrictions began to work – but very slowly. It became clear that these restrictions were going to be the new normal for at least a few months.

A trip to the supermarket became the highlight of the week as it was something normal. I enjoyed walking around the park and seeing people enjoying the sunshine.

Nevertheless, the reminders were always there. Every time I saw a person wearing a mask it was a reminder that they could be a hazard. What if they had the virus? Instead of loving my neighbours it was easy to become suspicious and frightened of them.

But I considered myself incredibly lucky. I was able to continue my studies and formation, albeit online, and I was staying at Queen’s with over 100 other students. While we had to wear masks when we left our rooms, we could still sit outside together, talk to each other, go for a walk together and eat in the dining hall together. This strong community pushed back the feelings of loneliness and isolation that I know many Victorians faced.

I also continued to attend worship at Star Street Uniting Church, in Victoria Park, via Zoom for most of the year and received many calls of support from family and friends in WA.

Eventually, after months of lockdown, the restrictions began to ease again, and we began to enjoy the little things. I remember the first weekend when we could meet in the park in a group of five for as long as you wanted. It felt so old-fashioned



to see the park full of picnics and yet it was so wonderful.

Soon after, I could travel up to 25km and visit friends for dinner. These little things brought so much joy and made me realise just how used to being in a low mood I had become.

In early November, I was granted my G2G pass and was able to fly back to WA. After two weeks of quarantine, it was wonderful to be reunited with family and friends.

After returning home, I began my internship at Royal Perth Hospital as a Wellbeing Chaplain. Returning to worship at Star Street was emotional. Not only was I returning

to my home church, but it was the first time I had worshipped inside a church since March.

It was not the best time to be travelling and Melbourne was a challenging place to be for most of the year. However, I am grateful for the support of family, friends, and my church who kept in contact and provided pastoral support.

I am grateful for Queen's College and Pilgrim Theological College which provided a safe home and enabled me to continue my studies while in lockdown. Most importantly I am grateful to God for being a constant presence and comfort during these difficult times.



Rueben Edmons travelled to Melbourne for his ministry studies, getting stuck in Melbourne's extended COVID-19 lockdown.

# Easter Blessings

# 2021

Share Easter with us  
Visit our website for services:  
<https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/easter>



Uniting Church in Australia  
Western Australia

## EDUCATION WITH Uniting Church Schools

Our seven independent schools provide education for over 8,000 students from Pre Kindergarten\* to Year 12. They offer a variety of learning environments, from some of the oldest and best-known independent schools in WA to the more recently established colleges in new suburbs on the edge of the Perth metropolitan area. While these schools respect the faith diversity of all students, the story, values and practices of the Christian faith are expressed with integrity in order to nurture young lives for sound learning, faith, compassion and responsible service.



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Baldivis WA 6171  
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**Wesley College**  
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South Perth WA 6151  
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\* Not all schools offer Pre Kindergarten.