

Fellowship Newslink

December 2023



**Promoting Faith and
Fellowship** across
Congregations and Beyond



Uniting Church WA
Adult Fellowship

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Front cover image: "...You will
find a baby wrapped in cloths
and lying in a manger."
Luke 2:12

Chairperson's Corner

Welcome to the last edition of *Newslink* for 2023.

The WA Committee had a busy time preparing for our Annual Fellowship Day at Bicton Uniting Church, and the visit of our National Chairperson Mrs Margaret Pedler.

The National Chairperson visits each State which has a State Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF) Committee during the 3-year triennium.

Margaret arrived in WA on Wednesday, 18 October with a full schedule of activities awaiting her. Margaret was the guest speaker at the Australian Church Women's service for the 'least coin' and 'mission projects in Australia' offerings on Friday, 20 October.

On Saturday, Margaret attended All Saints Floreat UC where the 2020 *Joan Stott Bursary* recipient, Rev Reuben Edmonds was inducted as the minister. Margaret joined the Maylands/Mt Lawley U.C. on Sunday where a fundraising barbecue was held for Frontier Services following the worship service.

There was the opportunity to meet with Pinjarra Fellowship in Mandurah on Monday, and Noranda Fellowship on Tuesday.

On Wednesday following our pleasant train journey on the Avon Link, we were met at Northam Station by Kay and Bob Lockley who along with other members of our State Committee visited the *Bilya Koort Boodja Centre for Nyoongar Culture and Environmental Knowledge* (BKB Centre). A fascinating venue featuring exhibits such as art and displays, and food prepared from plants utilised for millennia by First Nations people.

Lunch was provided by the Northam and York Fellowships. Margaret had the opportunity to hear Rev. John Dihm share some of his experiences as a Frontier Services Chaplain, and to give two people their '*Certificates of Appreciation*'.



Chairperson's Corner cont'd

John has retired to Northam though does serve as the local Police Chaplain. Gill Muir also shares in this issue some of the activities during Margaret Pedler's visit. Margaret returned to Victoria on Saturday, 28 October.

Our Annual Fellowship Day was held at Bicton. Margaret Pedler was our Guest Speaker at the gathering. We were delighted to have our Moderator Rev Dr Ian Tozer join us bringing greetings from the Synod and presenting the 'Certificates of Appreciation' to the recipients who were present. Thirty-five certificates were prepared. Sadly, very few of the city folk were present to meet our Moderator.

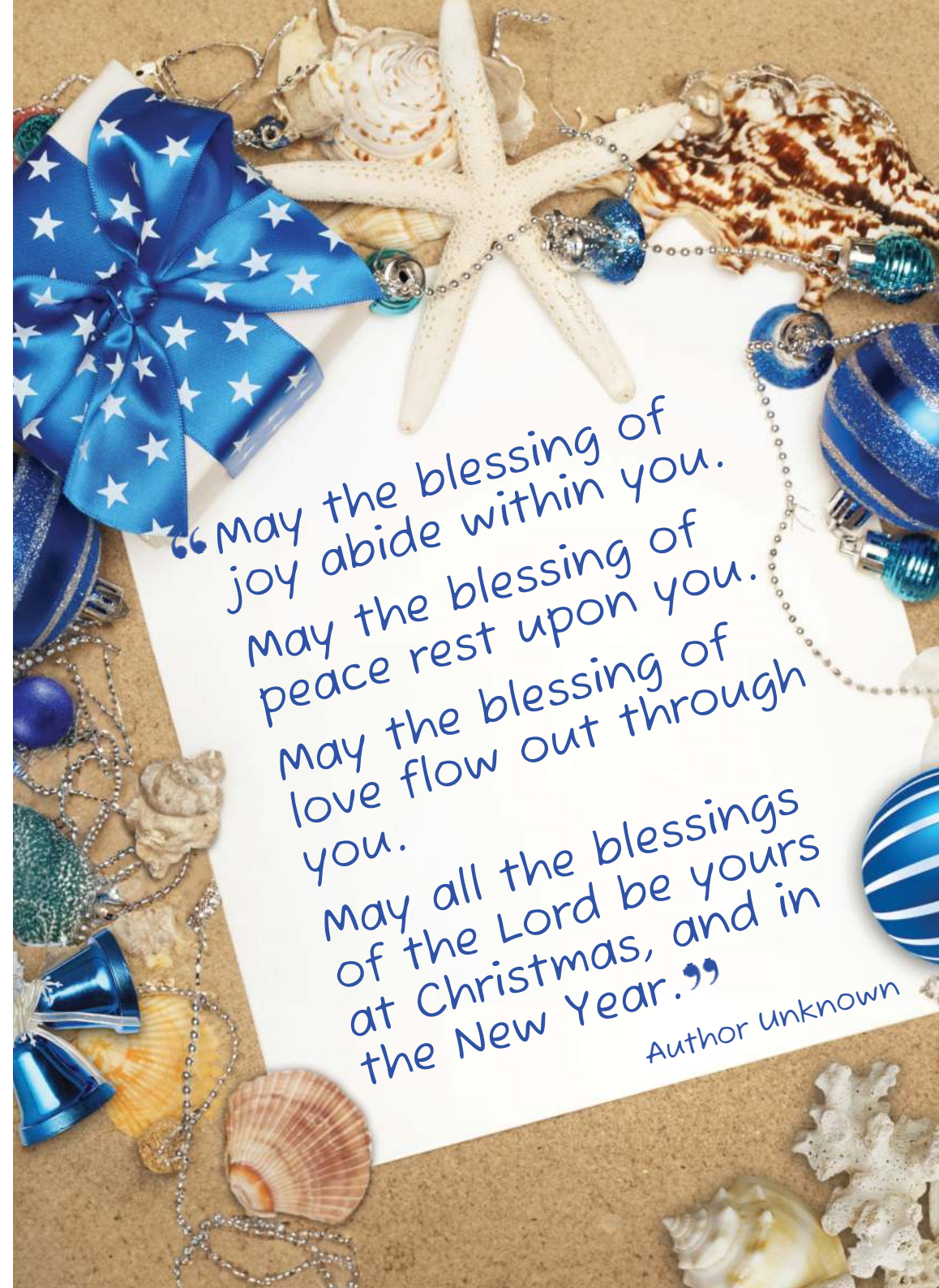
Following lunch, our Annual General Meeting was held and chaired by Ian.

It will soon be time to prepare for Advent and the Christmas season. One of my favourite Christmas hymns was written by Christina Rossetti (*Together in Song: Australian Hymn Book*).

*Love came down at Christmas,
Love all lovely, love divine.
Love was born at Christmas
Star and angel gave the sign.*

May you know the love of Jesus as you celebrate Christmas with family and friends.

Helen McMillan



2023 UCAF Fellowship Day

On 27 October 2023, the UCAF held its Annual Fellowship Day and AGM. We were very fortunate to have the Chairperson of the National Committee, Mrs Margaret Pedler, here for this occasion. Several Committee members graciously welcomed Margaret into their homes and thoroughly enjoyed her company. We made a concerted effort to show Margaret all the wonders of Western Australia, including a trip to Mandurah, where the Pinjarra Community enjoyed a delicious morning tea at 'Mum's Cottage', and lunch at 'Sharky's Fish & Chips' next to the estuary.

The next day was a visit to the Noranda Fellowship to see the work they have been doing in the Community. Wednesday was a visit to Northam, Margaret and Helen McMillan (UCAF WA Chairperson), journeyed by train and enjoyed the wonderful views travelling via the scarp. The Northam Community also invited the very active York Community to join the activities, and we were fortunate to have Rev. John Dihm attend. Recently retired from Frontier Services, John consistently provides wonderful support for our activities and possesses a wealth of fascinating anecdotes to share. Frontier Services are recipients of the proceeds of our sorted stamps after they are sent to the valuers.

Thursday was a rest day, and Margaret was shown the sights of the Swan Valley, most of the regions around Perth, Fremantle, and the Hills. Thanks go to all the people who were involved in the hosting of Margaret, and making the Committee so welcome.

Friday 27 October was Fellowship Day, and the Bicton Uniting Church congregation, a quaint church close to Fremantle, hosted us and they made us feel welcome. Bicton UC is in charge of gathering and organising the stamps, which takes a lot of time but is essential. We were honoured to have our Moderator, Rev Dr Ian Tozer, and General Secretary, Rev Dr Andrew Williams, attend. Following the morning service and a delicious lunch, we had a business meeting under the direction of the Moderator.

During the service, Margaret spoke about the National Committee and their aspirations for the upcoming year. We plan to send two delegates from Perth to the National Conference (January 2024) which will be held in Adelaide. We extend our gratitude to everyone who took part in our Fellowship Day festivities and helped to make the Chairperson's visit very enjoyable.

Gill Muir (many hats)



Photos - top to bottom:

1. June Jones, Bicton UC 'Kitchen-Whizz Extraordinaire'
2. Copious tasty treats as per usual - UCAF Annual Fellowship Day 2023
3. L-R: Bob Lockley and Bev Walker (Northam UC), Chris Winton (York UC), and Margaret Pedler



Season's Greetings

As we enter the season of Advent our focus is on the birth of Christ. Many Christmas cards I receive have images or words about peace, faith, hope and love. At this time our thoughts and prayers are for the people who are not experiencing peace in their countries; Ukraine, Israel and Palestine. The rulers of the world continually struggle to achieve peace.

Other Christmas cards include quotes from the Bible and we never tire of hearing or reading. Some cards contain lines from Christmas carols and they encourage us to burst into song. Christmas would not be a joy or celebration without those wonderful hymns and songs we sing in this short season.

As we look forward to the Advent season we remember those friends and family who connect with us through the receipt of a card, perhaps a letter and through such a simple act you can feel connected with one another. I am reminded of the words on a card which I received -

"May you have the gift of Faith, the blessing of Hope and the peace of His Love at Christmas and always".

Margaret Pedler
Chairperson of the UCAF National Committee.

May you have the

gift of *Faith*

The blessing

of *Hope*

And the peace

of His *Love*

Tree of Life ~ Dare!

DARE - Sometimes craziness is all that is needed.

Remember Noah: imagine building an ark in an area where rain hardly ever falls. People were passing by, asking questions, and Noah kept working on the ark, explaining to people that a great rain would soon come. The situation was unimaginable and, of course, people mocked him, and they thought he was crazy. But it was exactly this craziness that brought about the deliverance of humanity. The rain came, and the ark was the salvation, not only of humans but of the animals as well.

A modern-day Noah is Amir Peretz, an Israeli politician who proposed the missile defence system. This was in the year 2000, when the rockets fired into Israel were very few, causing literally one death per year. This situation could not justify spending huge amounts of money on the system.

Everybody mocked him - the people, the politicians - and he was ridiculed in mass-media photos, slandered, and isolated in politics. What military knowledge can he have if he is a politician? Why should anyone invest in such an expensive system while the offence is low and almost no one dies?

He faced down the sceptics and continued to push for the development of the missile defence system, the well-known Iron Dome. Of course, he looked like a madman in the eyes of the Israelis. But not for long. Now we know something they could not have imagined: the thousands and thousands of rockets that have rained down on Israel since then.

Israel would have been destroyed and thousands of people would have lost their lives if there was no man called Amir Peretz, if he had bowed his head down when he was criticized, and if they had not built the Iron Dome, a modern-day ark for the Jewish people.

The system is designed to intercept and destroy short-range



rockets and artillery shells fired from distances of 4 to 70 kilometres away, whose trajectory would take them to an Israeli-populated area.

Dare to do what God tells you to do. You never know what deliverance the 'ark' you are building will bring to society. Dare to be a Noah, no matter what people think of you.

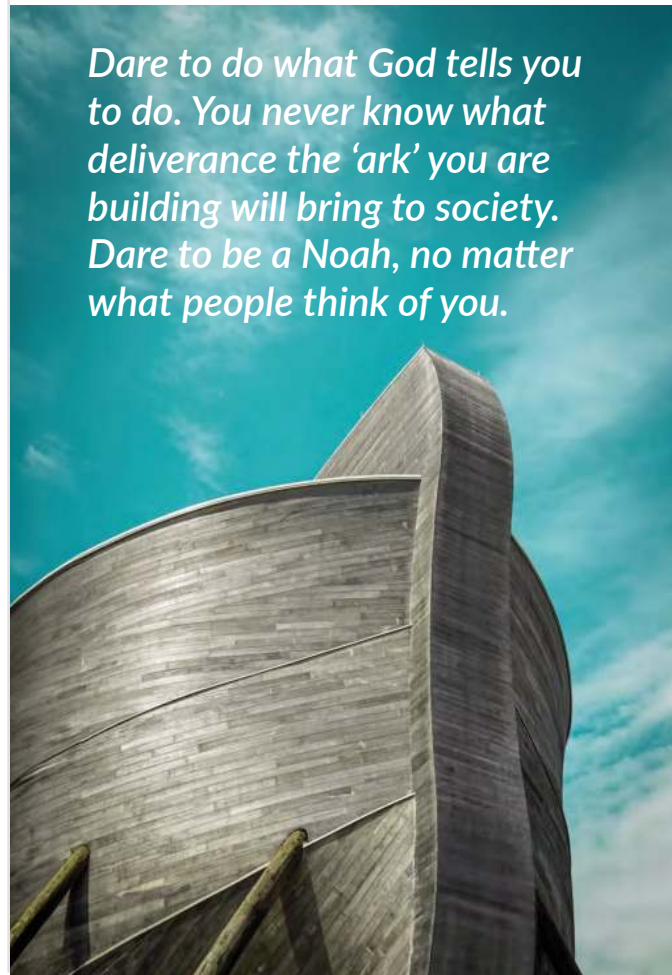
And, as Christmas approaches, do not forget that Noah and his saving ark is an image of Christ and His saving Death.

Jesus dared to leave everything, to be born as a baby, to live on this Earth, to minister and to lose Himself in order to save us all. We rejoice for His birth, but we cannot separate this event from the reason why He came. Birth and death intertwine and bring us the Good News. He dared - and He gives you strength to dare to change the world you live in.

Dare to do what God tells you to do. You never know what deliverance the 'ark' you are building will bring to society. Dare to be a Noah, no matter what people think of you.

May God give you joy, peace and boldness!

Ligia Istrate
Tree of Life Editor



Beating the Festive Blues

The festive season is painted as a magical period full of time spent with loved ones. But, for some people, it can be difficult to navigate. It can intensify pre-existing feelings of loneliness, bring up trauma from difficult Christmas times in childhood, be the first year a person is spending the holiday alone or without a loved one, or come at the end of a difficult year.

Here are six ways to deal with the festive blues:

Get plenty of sleep – Try to go to bed at a specific time each night. Being well-rested can improve your mood and help you feel ready to take on the day.

Learn to say “no” – Overscheduling and not making time for yourself can lead to emotional breakdowns. Learn how to say “no,” and stay firm on your decision.

Be open to new traditions – You may have an image of what you think Christmas should consist of, and this may not be what’s actually happening. Instead of holding on to what the time should have been, allow new traditions to unfold.

Reach out to a neighbour or friend - Just as this time of year may trigger feelings of isolation in yourself, be mindful that many others living on their own are likely on the same page. Why not invite a solo neighbour for Christmas lunch or afternoon tea, or leave a little gift with a card on their doorstep to let them know you’re thinking of them. Even a chat on the street or over the garden fence can make all the difference to someone’s wellbeing – and yours, too.

Be your own Christmas Santa – treat yourself - Christmas is a time for treats, so there’s no better excuse for practising the art of finding and doing what brings you joy. Prepare your favourite food, binge on your favourite TV series, go to a movie, get lost in a good book, take a swim at the beach, or take a walk and indulge in the health perks of reconnecting with nature.

Avoid overeating – Before heading out to social events, fill up on veggies. You can even fill up a small sandwich bag and snack in the car. Festive outings can often lead to overeating, which can affect your mood and overall well-being.



Cervantes Family Festival

You most likely know of Scripture Union, the interdenominational Christian organisation founded in 1867, that now operates in 120 countries. One of Scripture Union's activities in Western Australia is running family festivals, also known as beach or holiday missions, in 8 different locations around WA.

One of these is Cervantes, a small town around 200 kilometres north of Perth. The town primarily supports the local cray fishing industry and visitors to the nearby Pinnacles. Every summer, Cervantes's permanent population of around 500 swells to include tourists enjoying its beautiful beaches, mostly staying at the town's caravan park.

In the second week of January every year, the caravan park is home to the Cervantes Family Festival. This week-long Christian event started in the late 1980s and has been running annually for 35 years.

The festival is run by a team of volunteers from a variety of places including Merredin, Northam, Three Springs, and across Perth. Team members come from more than 20 different churches and range from relative newcomers to some who have attended the festival for over 30 years.

The festival program begins with Sunday worship in a marquee, including music led by a band, followed by getting-to-know-you games. The following days follow a similar format.

In the morning there are beach games, such as 'bury-the-leader', Beach Olympics, or a sandcastle competition. In the afternoon there are group activities for different ages at the caravan park, that may include singing, stories, discussions, and crafts.

In the evening there are activities around the town, such as a fishing competition, sideshow games, and a quiz night. Throughout the festival, a temporary op shop provides second-hand bargains and a space for fellowship.

The festival offers residents and holidaymakers in Cervantes opportunities for a range of activities, relationship building, fundraising, faith discussions, and fun.

The *Cervantes Family Festival* is an example of Christ's church meeting people where they are in the world and sharing the Good News of the kingdom of God.



Beanangiq Kwuurt Institute (BKI) has evolved into the most amazing cultural and community hub in Queens Park. Situated on the site of the old Sister Kate's Children's home in Treasure Road, we have transformed what is often thought of as a dark past, into a place of great joy.

Every Wednesday and Thursday we host art sessions led by our artist-in-residence, Lesley Murray. On these days our budding artists enjoy morning tea, a healthy, sumptuous lunch and afternoon tea as well if they choose to stay on and paint late into the day.

Our artists have enjoyed significant success and have had their work showcased at events like the World Indigenous Tourism Summit, held at Crown Perth, the Riverton Library and the Art Gallery of WA. We are so excited that a growing number of our artists have managed to sell some of their work.

But art is just part of the glue that binds us together. We are a safe place for yarnning, socialising, sharing our problems and getting help when things get too hard. We welcome Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people alike, in the spirit of friendship, guided by the Christian principles we believe in.

We honour our Christian faith with regular Church services conducted at our premises by Rev Katalina Tahaafe-Williams, from Trinity Church. Katalina has tailored these services to suit our congregation, with bible readings selected to evoke discussion and deep reflection.

We are very proud of Katalina's pastoral care of us, but also of our pastoral care of the community, which we demonstrate with the growing range of services we offer. These services include advocacy work with people who are struggling with financial, housing and personal problems. We have helped over 50 people this year with a range of problems.

Some of the successes we are most proud of include finding accommodation for several people struggling in unsuitable



Lesley Murray
our artist-in-residence

temporary accommodation and women's shelters, getting permanent care for a mentally ill homeless person, and negotiating with a raft of service providers to either remove or reduce debts for many individuals who are struggling financially.

Our other services include the provision of food via *SecondBite* (food rescue), baby products, clothes and nappies and women's health products, all free of charge. We also have a partnership with *Givlife Inc*, a worthy charity, which runs a soup kitchen every Tuesday evening at our property.

This year, *Givlife* will be hosting our Christmas event on December 12, from 5.00 pm onwards. Last year our Christmas party fed over 180 people and provided presents to 100 disadvantaged local children. We look forward to this year being a similar success.

What makes us special is the way everyone chips in and helps in whatever capacity they can. Our community may be poor financially, but it is rich in spirit and our members contribute whatever they can, whether it's helping in the vegetable garden, providing transport, bringing in home-baked goods to share or doing heavy lifting and clean-ups.

We rely on people's generosity to keep operating, so all financial help is gratefully appreciated. You can contact our operations manager, Pauline, at 0418-431-085 to make donations.

Our next big event that we are planning for is our **Community Open Day**, to be held on **February 24**, next year. This was generously funded by the City of Canning and we hope it will be another opportunity to showcase our art and to try some Aboriginal food, **so put this date in your calendar.**

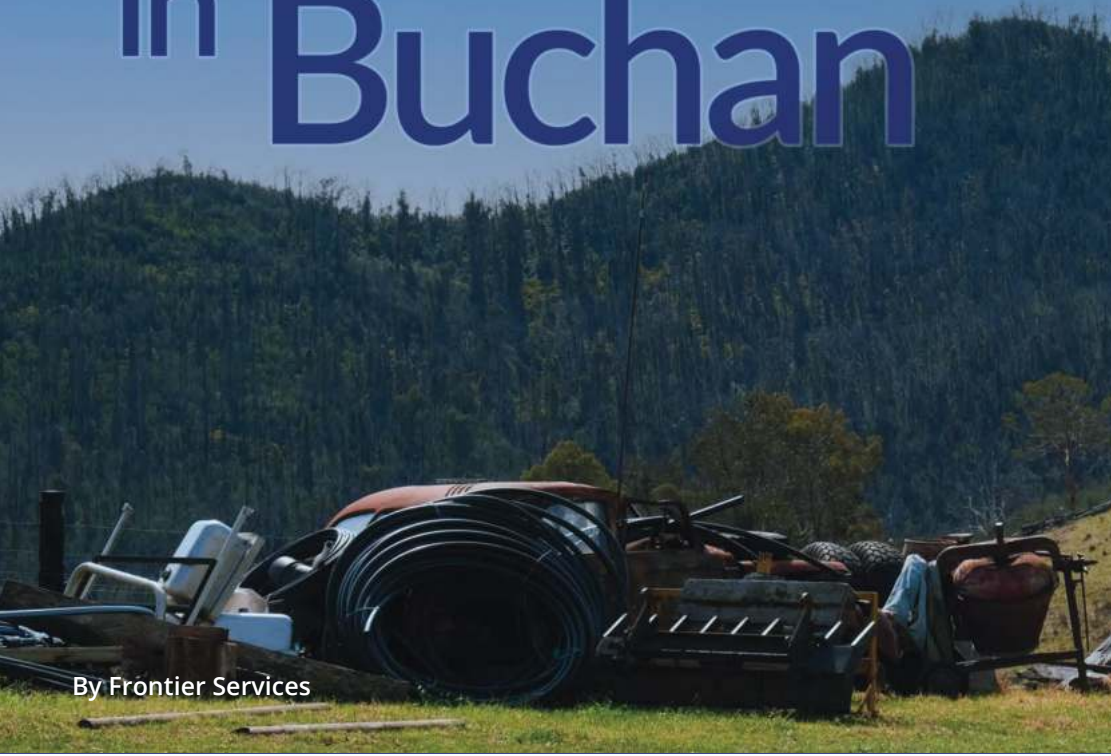
We wish everyone a safe and happy Christmas, and extend our warmest invitation to come and visit us.

Pauline Floate
Operations Manager BKI



Beanangiq Kwuurt Institute

Building resilience in Buchan



By Frontier Services

When Mick gazes over his family's cattle farm today, he is greeted by the same quiet beauty, but a vastly different landscape from his childhood memories.

It has been four years since the devastating Black Summer bushfires, yet the indelible marks remain - blackened trees along the roads, and the once lush hills now stark and bare.

What isn't immediately evident are the emotional scars. You can't see the fear that Mick and the locals faced as the fires raged. Nor can you visualise the loss of returning to an empty plot where home once stood, or the heartbreak of losing a friend you had just spoken to.

More than practical help

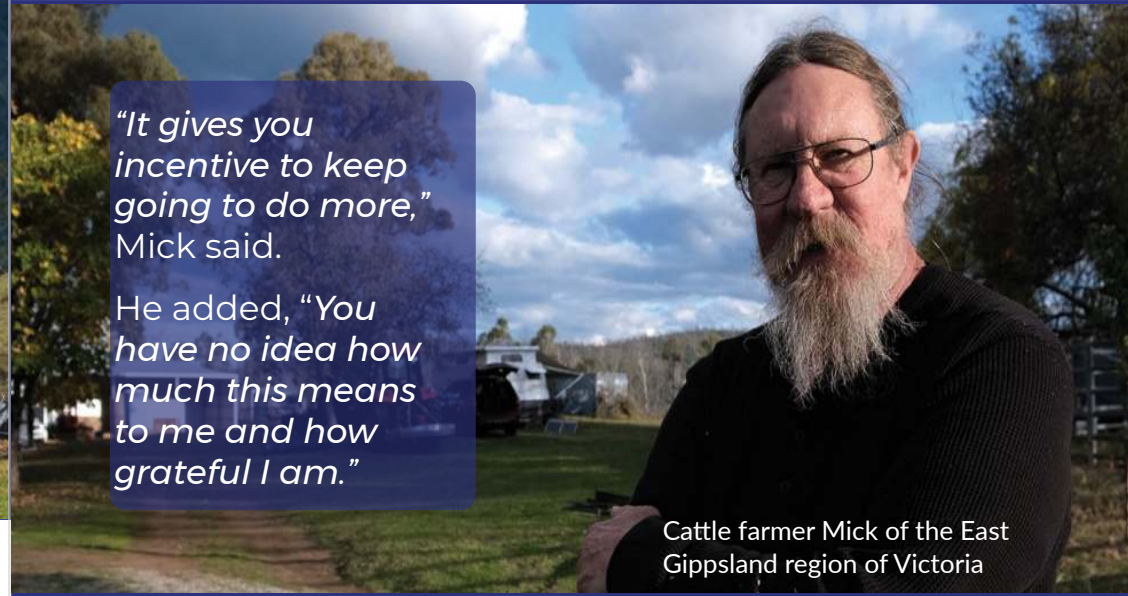
Led by Frontier Services Bushfire Recovery Bush Chaplain Peter

Harvey, a dedicated group of 24 volunteers from various corners of Australia recently embarked on a journey to Buchan in the East Gippsland region of Victoria. Their mission was to provide practical, emotional, and pastoral services, instil renewed hope and lift spirits.

The volunteers rebuilt kilometres of fencing destroyed by the fire and tamed the over-grown grass that had encroached on the once-thriving garden. Their contribution transcended practical help; it was a testament to human companionship. Sometimes it's as simple as knowing help is available, that people care, and that there is hope and strength within ready to be awakened.

"It gives you incentive to keep going to do more," Mick said.

He added, "You have no idea how much this means to me and how grateful I am."



Cattle farmer Mick of the East Gippsland region of Victoria

Preparing for El Niño

Recovery can be a lengthy journey. You can stand by those who are still rebuilding their lives after natural disasters, especially as many brace for the upcoming El Niño season.

How you can help farmers like Mick

Your donation can help build resilience in people of rural and remote Australia. Visit frontierservices.org/donate, or call 1300 787 247.

To learn more about Frontier Services or how to become an *Outback Links* volunteer, go to frontierservices.org.

Uniting WA: Chloe's Story

In June 2022 there were 4,394 children in out-of-home care in WA.

When Chloe was just 13 months old, she was brought into foster care due to concerns that Chloe and her siblings were experiencing neglect, family domestic violence and parental substance abuse.

Chloe stayed in foster care until she was 14 but she started struggling with her carers and running away.

Chloe's care team determined that she would benefit from transitioning into a Uniting WA Family Group Home (FGH), an out-of-home care service that provides care and support for children and young people who have experienced significant trauma.

Uniting operates 6 homes across WA, currently supporting 24 children.

Initially, Chloe was very shy and spent a lot of time in her bedroom but before long, she was enrolled into a new high school. Once she was back at school, Chloe flourished. She excelled in lots of subjects, particularly in drama where she took the lead role in a school play.

"Drama helps me express different feelings in a safe space where I can feel free to express myself too."

However, it wasn't always smooth sailing.

One of the carers that Chloe was close with left the home for another role. This reignited Chloe's fears of abandonment and her mental health took a turn for the worse.

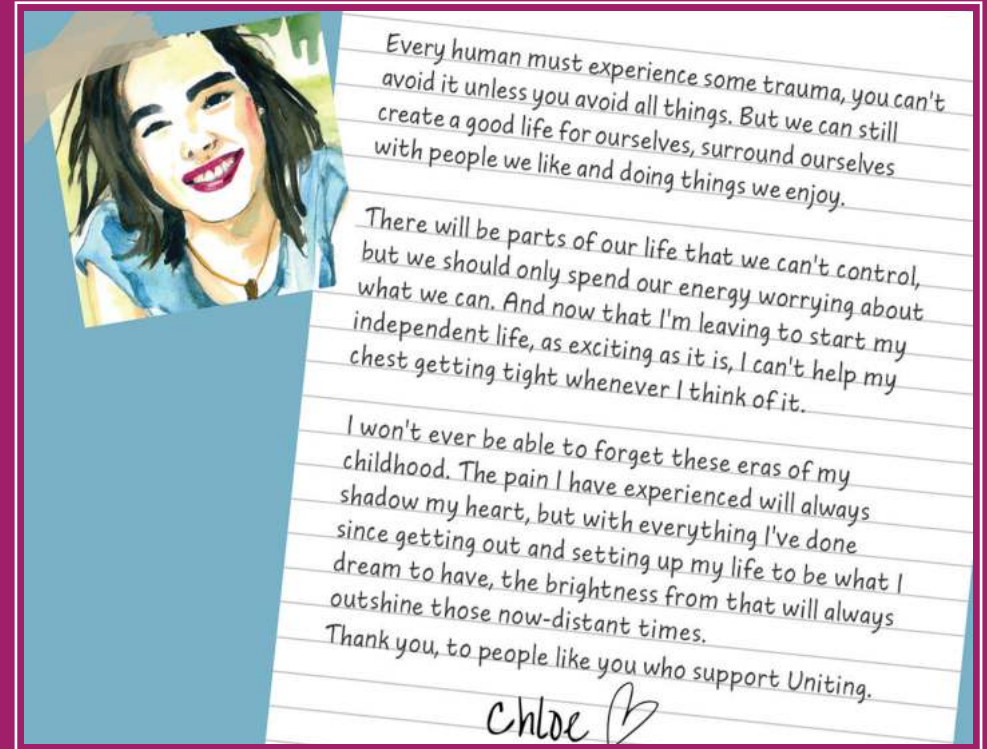
She agreed to go to the hospital for a mental health assessment and was admitted into a mental health unit for two weeks, the isolation making it a difficult time.

Initially, the prospect of departing the FGH at age 18

"Returning home was a feeling I won't forget. I couldn't be happier anywhere else, lying in my own bed, walking in my own house. I might not live here forever, but for now I'm happy to call it my home".

filled Chloe with anxiety. She was supported to apply for a placement with a specialist youth housing service. Chloe successfully transitioned into her new home in January 2023 and is settling well.

The Uniting WA FGH team is beyond proud of Chloe, and they look forward to seeing the bright future she has ahead of her.



At Uniting, we're passionate about supporting more young people like Chloe. These vulnerable children can come to us from the most volatile situations such as family domestic violence or parental drug use. We work hard to build trust, connections and life skills that will enable a young person to thrive.



Your gift this Christmas can help us support more vulnerable children like Chloe. If you'd like to read more of Chloe's story or support Uniting WA, follow the QR code with your phone camera or call us on (08) 9220 1222.

Wesley Chapel, Guildford

Our 140th Anniversary was celebrated on 20 August 2023. This was a jubilant occasion with the church packed with current and past members together with various dignitaries.

Several members presented items during the worship service with a highlight being a magnificent operatic solo by music teacher Lisa Harper-Brown.



A short sermon was given entitled 'Garments of Grace'. "So then, you must clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience."

Following the service the congregation retired to the church hall for a wonderful buffet. The restoration of the hall had been planned so that it was finished in time for this important occasion, and many favourable comments were made regarding its enhanced appearance.

This was a time of blessed remembrance for the past and a dedication to the future as a vibrant Wesley Chapel continues to serve the community. - Arthur Cook

A brief history

The present Chapel was opened on 21 August 1883 and originally had face brick walls and the front gable was surmounted by a bellcote (a small framework for housing bells). The Sunday School room, or hall, was added in 1886 with the further addition of a kitchen and amenities block in 1984.

By 1897 the original chapel was not large enough to house the congregation, so a larger church was built on the adjoining land to the west of the Chapel. That church continued to house the Guildford congregation until it was affected by an earthquake in 1941. It was demolished a few years later due to structural faults. The pulpit, pews and much of the furniture from that larger church were relocated to this chapel where they remain in use today.

To learn more about Wesley Chapel, Guildford - visit their website at guildford.ucwa.au.



Photos - top to bottom: The original chapel and (larger) church. Wesley Chapel today. Arthur Cook supervising, and Jen Whiteford cutting the Celebration Cake.

Tex Mex Cheese Crisps

Ingredients:

- 1¾ cups plain flour
- 1 tsp chili powder
- 1 tsp garlic salt
- 1/2 tsp paprika
- 200g butter chopped
- 1 egg lightly beaten
- 200g cheddar cheese grated **
- Prepared guacamole and diced tomato

Method:

1. Preheat oven to 210°C. Line two baking trays with baking paper.
2. Sift flour, chilli powder, garlic salt, and paprika in a large bowl. Rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips until the mixture resembles fine bread crumbs. Add the egg and cheese and stir the mixture until combined.
3. Turn onto a lightly floured surface and gather together into a ball. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and refrigerate for 20 minutes.
4. Roll the dough on a lightly floured surface to 0.5cm thick. Cut into shapes with (suggested 3cm) star-shaped biscuit cutter and/or simple rectangles.
5. Place on baking tray allowing room to spread.
6. Bake for 12 minutes, or until crisp and golden brown. Leave on the tray for 2 minutes before transferring to a wire rack to cool.
7. Top with guacamole and tomato.

Notes:

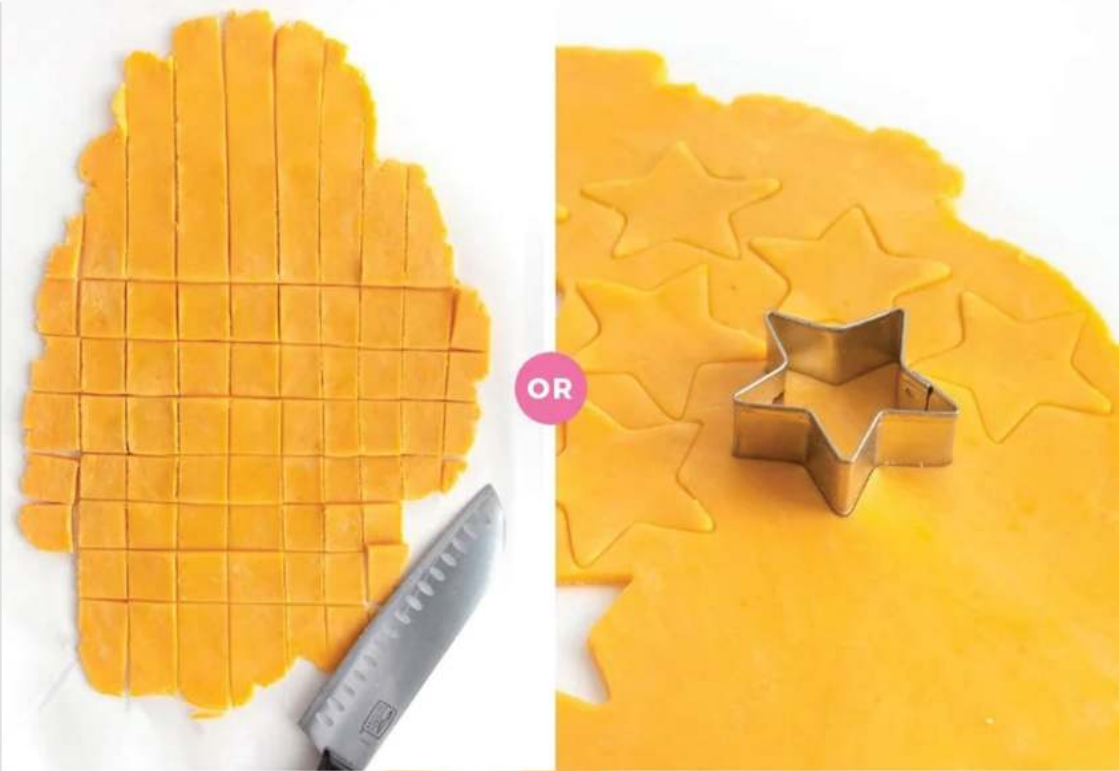
You can mix up the cheese for different flavours, e.g., 140g sharp/tasty cheese and 60g Parmesan. You can either use store bought or home-made (recipe below) guacamole.

Home-made guacamole

- 2 ripe avocados, halved, stones removed, peeled
- 60ml (1/4 cup) fresh lime juice
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 ripe tomato (or grape/cherry tomatoes), finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 small fresh red chilli or jalapeno, deseeded, finely chopped

Place the avocado flesh and lime juice in a medium bowl and use a fork to mash until almost smooth. Add the onion, tomato, garlic, chilli and lime juice and season with salt and pepper. Use a spoon to mix well.

Source: Booragoon Probus Group Cookbook



The Birth of Jesus



- Which prophet said, "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son"?
 - Isaiah
 - Jeremiah
 - Ezekiel
 - Daniel
- What does the name Emmanuel mean?
 - God is for us
 - God is with us
 - God loves us
 - God saves us
- In what month of Elisabeth's pregnancy did the angel appear to Mary?
 - Fourth
 - Fifth
 - Sixth
 - Seventh
- What is the name of the angel who appeared to Mary?
 - Uriel
 - Raphael
 - Michael
 - Gabriel
- Who sang, "My soul glorifies the Lord"?
 - Elisabeth
 - Angels
 - Mary
 - Joseph
- Which Caesar decreed that all the world should take part in the census?
 - Augustus
 - Julius
 - Nero
 - Claudius
- When the angels left the shepherds, what did the shepherds do?
 - Ushered their sheep into the pen
 - Went home
 - Went quickly to Bethlehem
 - Went to tell the news to Herod
- What did Joseph want to do when he discovered Mary was pregnant?
 - Keep it a secret
 - Quietly divorce her
 - Send her back to her parents
 - Have the child given away



Christmas Quiz



- Who told Joseph that Jesus would save his people from their sins?
 - Shepherds
 - Mary
 - Simeon
 - Angel of the Lord
- How long did Jesus remain in Egypt?
 - Until the barley harvest
 - Until the death of Herod
 - Until he was five years old
 - Until the rising of the first full moon of the year
- What sacrifice did Mary and Joseph offer when the days of purification were complete after Jesus' birth?
 - A young lamb and two pigeons
 - A young goat
 - A young lamb
 - Two turtledoves or pigeons
- What is the name of Jesus' cousin, born six months before him?
 - James
 - John
 - Peter
 - Joseph
- What was the sign that the angels gave to the shepherds so that they would recognise Jesus?
 - Found in a stable, lying in a manger
 - Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying among donkeys
 - Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger
 - Found in a stable, with a star shining above it
- What did the shepherds do after they had visited Jesus?
 - Spread the news about Jesus' birth
 - Went home
 - Went back to looking after their sheep
 - Went to buy Jesus presents

Answers: 1a. Isaiah | 2b. God is with us | 3c. Sixth | 4d. Gabriel | 5c. Mary | 6a. Augustus | 7c. Went quickly to Bethlehem | 8b. Quietly divorce her | 9d. Angel of the Lord | 10c. Wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger | 11a. Spread the news about Jesus' birth | 12b. Until the death of Herod | 13d. Two turtledoves or pigeons | 14b. John

Devotions: The Shepherds

"And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2:8-21

What must they have thought? Standing in the darkness, the shepherds watched for wild animals sneaking up on errant sheep. Suddenly an angel appeared and the whole scene was bathed in light. It is little wonder that they were overwhelmed with fear. The familiarity of the words in Christmas readings has made the scene seem natural and almost unremarkable but this experience of the supernatural would have been terrifying, as well as incomprehensible, to a group of simple shepherds. Why were the shepherds chosen to receive the news of the Saviour's birth? Surely the audience at the birth of the Messiah should have included royalty, priests, or the well-connected people of the day. Instead, these shepherds, considered untrustworthy, and ceremonially unclean because of their rural way of life and of very lowly social status, were entrusted with the most significant news of all time.

The angel's words: *'I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all people'* encapsulate the availability of salvation for all. The shepherds were the lowest echelon of society but God told them the wonderful news first, clearly communicating to contemporary poor, homeless, unemployed and the outcasts of this world that social status does not matter. God sent his breaking news to the humblest, just as it comes to those who are humble enough to hear it today.

Sometimes, when we have been brought to our knees by unwelcome circumstances in life, we are desperately listening to God, unlike the times when life is comfortable and we are too busy to hear Him. If we receive this message with joy, as the shepherds did, our immediate problems may not disappear but our hearts will be changed forever, from despair to hope and from rejection to acceptance, by a loving Father.

UCAF WA Committee Invitation

We invite membership on the Adult Fellowship Committee to those in the Uniting Church who think that fostering and creating opportunities for fellowship is an important part of the development and life of our Church.

What we do:

- Hold an annual Planning Day to focus on specific issues.
- When invited, visit congregations, both urban and rural, to encourage groups.
- Organise the UCAF WA Annual Fellowship Day.
- Acknowledge our 80-year-olds at the Annual Fellowship Day.
- Send a special greeting card to our 90-year-old people on their special day.
- Process applications for the UCAF *Joan Stott Bursary* (2 awarded each year).
- Regularly interact with the other Australian UCAF Committees.
- Maintain a membership of the UCAF National Committee.
- Connect with the World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women Groups.
- Have a member of the WA Committee who represents the UC Mission Fellowship.
- Have a representative on the National Council of Women WA and the Australian Church Women.
- Produce and distribute the triannual newsletter "*Fellowship Newslink*".

UCAF WA is a member of the Synod, giving general members an opportunity to express their opinions on the Church's activities.

New Members:

When a member's situation changes or they must retire due to the Synod 10-year Rule, replacements are constantly needed. If you would like to join our committee or if you have any questions, please contact Helen McMillan or Bob Nicholls by the details listed below.

Additionally, if you know any suitable individuals who might be interested in joining, please contact us. Our work is both engaging and enjoyable.

We meet at **10:00 am, Noranda Uniting Church** on the **third Friday** of each month. We will be resuming our meetings in 2024 on Friday, 16 February.

All Welcome!

Chairperson:

Helen McMillan

P: (08) 9279 3051

E: norandaunitingchurch@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer:

Bob Nicholls

P: (08) 9255 2567

M: 0419-927-638

E: wraxall@iinet.net.au

UCAF Registration

We invite congregations and groups to register with us so that copies of *Newslink* and other mailings can be personally addressed to you.

All congregations receive one unaddressed copy of *Newslink* in the Synod mailout. All registered groups receive an addressed copy/copies of *Newslink*.

Registration Details:

Group Name _____

Contact Person for Group _____

(or) Individual's name _____

Postal Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone _____

Donations

We would appreciate **donations** to assist with the running expenses. This assists us in covering the cost of the Certificates of Appreciation for 80-year-olds, Greeting Cards for 90-year-olds, and general administration.



Want Newslink mailed to your address?

For \$8.00 per year, Newslink can be sent directly to you.

Recipients Name _____

Congregation _____

Postal address _____

No. of copies _____ Postage \$8.00

Donation \$ _____ Total \$ _____

Payment details of the Treasurer, for registration:

Internet Banking BSB 036-001

Acc No: 92-1850

Reference: 'Name of group or individual'

Celebrating the Milestones of Our Seniors

We offer you the opportunity to recognise the contribution your seniors have made, celebrate with them and show appreciation when they reach their important milestones.

Eighty-Year-Olds: at the UCAF Annual Fellowship Day 2023, Certificates of Appreciation will be presented to octogenarians nominated by their church or fellowship group. All who reach their 80th year during 2023, or missed out previously are eligible.

Ninety-Year-Olds: Our Committee will send a specially designed greeting card to any person celebrating their 90th birthday, and who has been nominated by their group or congregation. The greeting card is sent out as applications are received. Please refer to the application form below.

One Hundred-Year-Olds: The Synod looks after these. A letter to the Moderator requesting a greeting to those turning one hundred years of age will be responded to.

Application form for greeting cards: 90-year-olds

Send to: Kay Lockley, 20 Roediger Drive, Northam WA 6401

Email: kaylockl@bigpond.net.au | **Phone:** (08) 9622 1152

Please Print

Name of Congregation _____

Date of Birth _____

Name of 90-year-old _____

If there is more than one recipient, please attach a separate sheet. **Check spelling and details, please!**

Where is the card to be sent? Please (✓) tick

Congregation (if arranging a presentation)

Nominator (person who is personally delivering the card and/or arranging a special time for a presentation.

The 90-year-old nominated person

Please provide the following:

Contact person

Name: _____ Phone No _____

The postal address to send the card:

Name: _____

Address _____

Dates to note

The final News & Notes for 2023 will be on Monday, 11 December 2023 and will return on Monday, 15 January 2024.

The Uniting Church Centre will be closed from Friday, 22 December 2023 and reopening on Tuesday, 2 January 2024.

