



Uniting Church in Australia
Western Australia

Issue 84
August 2025

Revive

a fresh perspective on faith, church and life



**WA takes a step forward
on the long way home
for Stolen Generations.**

**A joyous and colourful
celebration**

Rev Judy Sanderson

**Amazing Grace! The Black
Pearl English Academy
opens in Papua.**

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Moderator

From the Moderator

With time, even cataclysmic revolutions become commonplace, and we no longer notice what once amazed us.

I first had a smartphone with email and internet in 2007. Things I no longer give any thought – computers at home and work, GPS, using my phone through the car sound system, watching services and events ‘online’ – are ordinary part of life. That’s in less than 20 years!

Changes in the world, the church and for all of us keep coming.

During the recent 48th Uniting Church in Australia anniversary, I thought about the inauguration service at the Perth Entertainment Centre, which is now long gone, as a member of a congregation that worshipped in a church building sold decades ago. In June 1977, with thousands of others attending, I was inspired by the celebration. Some who had been working towards union for years were so profoundly thankful to God that the day had come. I felt confident that a rich future lay ahead. I was about to begin training for ministry (in 1978). Later in this issue, I reflect on changes in ministry over these 48 years.

To live in this world is to live with and through changes.

Circumstances affect individuals and individuals may change things for others. This confronted me recently. After a medical ‘episode’ and the strongest advice to retire to reduce the risk of a sudden ‘end’, I gave notice to the June Synod Standing Committee meeting that I needed to step down as Moderator a year early. I will conclude at the end of September.

I had medical checks before allowing my name to go forward as a nominee for Moderator. I thought I had been wise by offering to be part-time. Regrettably, significant heart problems emerged about eight months after my election. I had an emergency pacemaker insertion two weeks before Synod in 2023. (When I collapsed on the night of my installation, I thought mine might be the shortest term of any WA Moderator.) My heart is not what it used to be. I am thankful to have served in this role, and it is time to make way for someone better able to offer the ministry required.

We do not know exactly what the future of the Uniting Church will be. However, reminiscence is not a

sufficient response. Remembering needs to have a different character for followers of Jesus Christ.

Robert Schnase’s *Remember the Future* is a clever book title. It makes me think. We tend to speak of remembering only about the past. In faith, we are also called to keep in mind always that our God always goes ahead of us and gives us the Spirit in order that we may not lose the way. We travel in company as pilgrim people and God accompanies us as we go. The Uniting Church is called to be a community which embraces change, we are called to be a people on the Way.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer
Moderator, Uniting Church WA



Being with Jesus in Ministry

Welcome to the August edition of Revive magazine! With each publication there is such a wide variety of stories to share from our Uniting Church WA community and beyond.

In this edition we have featured some stories that highlight aspects of our Intercultural and multicultural church. As the Uniting Church in Australia celebrates the 40th anniversary of our multicultural church declaration, it seemed like a great opportunity to share these with you. Rev Judy Sanderson has written a reflection on the significance of this declaration, and the value in celebrating these milestones as we look ahead to continue the vision together as an intercultural church.

Recently I was delighted for the opportunity to travel to Port Hedland to be a part of the opening ceremonies and celebrations for the Hedland Fijian Uniting Church. This was a wonderful weaving of cultural and church tradition. You can read more about the official opening and related festivities in this edition.

At this time of year the Uniting Church WA is preparing for the Annual Synod meeting. Our Moderator Rev Dr Ian Tozer will be concluding his term soon after the upcoming Synod in September this year. Ian has shared an article reflecting on Ordained ministry in congregations across the Uniting Church in Western Australia from Union until the present day, and looking ahead to what the future might hold.

Another feature story comes from members of the Bringing Them Home WA committee, shining light on the recent announcement by the State Government to introduce a Stolen Generations Redress scheme, what it means for survivors and their families, and how the Uniting Church community can continue to support first nations justice.

Our cover image is of the Stolen Generations Memorial at Moort-ak Waardiny, Wellington Square in East Perth. This stunning memorial is designed by Wadandi elder and artist Sandra Hill and was installed in late 2021. Sorry Day commemorations in Perth take place adjacent to this memorial every year.

Finally, a shout out to the inspiring Red Dove Experience Café in Bunbury – it's always inspiring to hear about the church and community working together!

I hope you enjoy the variety of stories from across our congregations, schools and agencies. Thanks to all who contributed!

Happy reading!

Grace and peace,

Wendy Hendry, Editor



5 minutes with... John Berger

As the Executive Officer: Caring Agencies for the Uniting Church WA, John seeks to act as a link between the agencies and the broader Uniting Church in the WA Synod. John is also a graduate Social Worker and has worked in social welfare services for over 40 years.



John Berger

John has been a member of the Uniting Church for 30+ years and is a current member of the Assembly Standing Committee, the WA Synod Standing Committee, Chair of the UnitingCare WA Forum and his local worshipping community is South Perth UC. John has recently retired from Social Work and is now looking forward to more family time and pursuing his recreational interests (cycling).

What led you to become involved in the Uniting Church?

I have been a Christian all my life, having been connected to church life in one form or another. Over 30 years ago I became a member of the Uniting Church being attracted to its progressive mission and values including its commitment to First Nations people and the role of women in the church. Since joining the Terang Uniting Church Victoria, I have remained an active member of a congregation ever since.

What does 'serving others' mean to you in a practical sense?

I enjoy my current role as it focuses on building connections and relationships across the Uniting Church. I feel I'm serving the church by ensuring there are strong connections between the life of the church and agencies. This can mean many things from representing the church at Agency functions; promoting the work of the agencies at Synod and Presbytery meetings; speaking at churches and chairing the UnitingCare WA Forum. But most of all I just enjoy sharing the

many stories I hear of lives being transformed through the work of the agencies!

Can you share something that has surprised or inspired you lately?

When I announced my retirement publicly, I was pleasantly surprised by the various messages of appreciation from people that I worked with over the years. There were messages from people I barely knew and yet they would share what impact that I had on them and their career choices. It's a reminder of the impact we all can have on those around us and how God works through our everyday encounters. I have felt truly blessed by the opportunities I have been given through my work and I hope to continue to be a faithful servant.

What hobby or interest brings you the most joy?

I have always enjoyed cycling and like to get out weekly with my local pastor and do a lap around the Swan/Canning River. More recently, I have become interested in mountain bike touring. I completed

the Munda Biddi trail (1000km) last year and enjoyed being immersed in the quiet of the bush in WA – we are so lucky to have such a trail. For my next adventure, I plan on cycling from the top to the bottom, through the middle of Tasmania towards end of the year. Again, I look forward to the opportunity to immerse myself into the local landscape and this time spend time with my adult son who is joining me.

What's one thing you couldn't live without?

My daily meditation and bible reading is a great way to start the day and keep myself grounded. Talking of 'grounds' I also enjoy a flat white coffee – I have recently invested in my own espresso machine so that I can have a 'café' quality coffee each day!

What's your favourite quote or expression?

I have always believed in the power of committed people and therefore have always found the statement by Margaret Mead inspiring – *"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*



Red Dove Experience Cafe at Bunbury Uniting

Rev Greg Ross

Last year, Thrive Mission Committee approved the most recent Mission Plan for Bunbury St Augustine Uniting Church. The Mission Plan is grounded on our Mission Statement 'To be the Church that welcomes and inspires all people so that they are empowered to use their talents to serve God's Mission.' The work of each of our four ministry areas have two areas to focus on in the coming three years. One of these is developing a sustainable Mission Enterprise.

In early 2024 I had discussions with one of the young professional women in our church who with her husband runs an Allied Health practice that seeks to enable people of all abilities to live to their full potential. Their company offered very basic home skills training that included food preparation and

resulted in them running a small 'cafe experiment' for their staff once a week. They were looking for a next step for their clients and so we trialed the staff bringing some clients in to provide afternoon tea once a week to our community craft group. This was an amazing success for the clients, for the community craft group and for our church.

Praying, puzzling and conversations continued as I had met Rev Ruth-Mary Bond from South Australia on a number of occasions and was aware of her 'Experience Cafe' that has been running successfully in Adelaide for well over a decade. This program provides 'Cafe Training' in a real cafe setting for young people, for migrants, for differently abled

people, for people retuning to the workforce or seeking to gain skills for employment. Participants leave or graduate with certificates of competency in areas of hospitality such as Food Handling, Barista Training, Front of House, Wait Staff Training and Kitchen Hands etc. I contacted Ruth-Mary and she sent us all the materials for setting up an Experience Cafe. We read through and talked long and hard, and with Church Council approval decided to work towards trialling our Bunbury 'Experience Cafe' in 2025.

This required: re-registration of our church kitchen to allow us to sell food, purchase of some new equipment, ensuring all our kitchen volunteers had completed Level One Food Handling Certification and clearing one day a week in the bookings for our buildings. All of this was done, and we had a very soft launch of the Red Dove Experience Cafe in February with the Official Opening on 7 May with a ribbon cutting by the staff and clients and a special cake to celebrate.

A day at the Red Dove Experience Cafe (our registered name) begins with one of the church members or staff purchasing food requirements on the way into the church and

then at 9.00am, the Allied Health staff, clients and church volunteers arrive. Tables are set with bright cloths, flowers, menu's, napkin holders and food preparation of fresh sandwiches, muffins, biscuits, slice etc begins in the kitchen. Of course, our large coffee machine, dishwasher, hot water, oven, milk shake maker and toasters are all prepped and turned on and the cash register/Eftpos is brought out too.

A local musician arrives to play live music, and the doors open at 11.30am with quite a number turning up early for take aways. It's the sounds of friendly welcomes, 'hello and how are you?', and 'please find a table', and 'are you meeting someone?' etc and the place fills the hall and into the church space until 1.30pm when the clean up and put away happens.

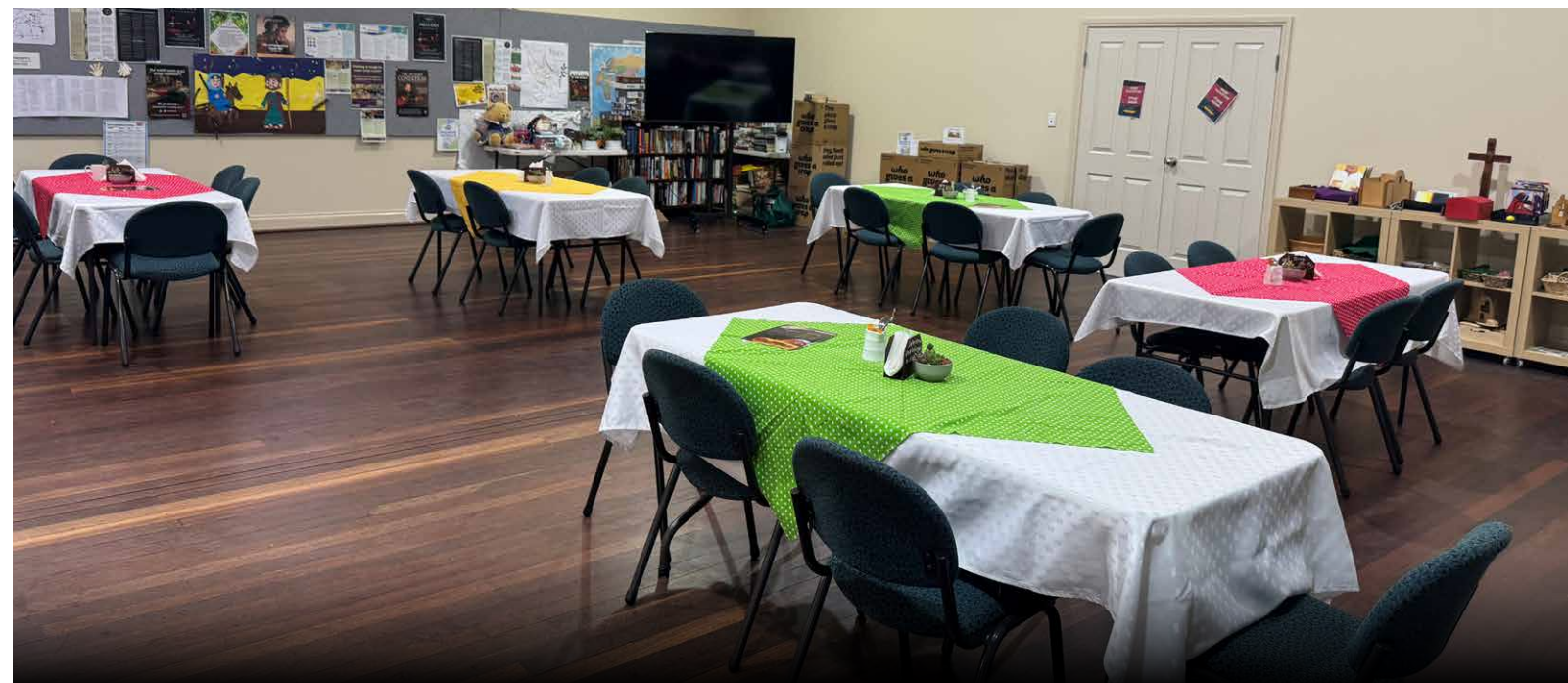
Some members of the community are now weekly attenders, people take time to write their prayers and hang them on our prayer tree, deep and meaningful conversations are happening and lots of fun and laughter too. Some people have reconnected with former students and colleagues, others are volunteering, others have made prepaid vouchers available to ensure everyone can eat

without embarrassment. Groups of young people of all abilities and their families and carers make this their meeting place too. As one attender commented recently,

"this is the church really serving the community".

A few months ago ABC South West Radio's Stan Shaw came to do a quick interview and stayed chatting with people for over an hour. He presented a wonderful on air segment in his breakfast program. The story was picked up by the South West Times newspaper who sent a reporter and photographer who featured us on their front page. Then the Bunbury Herald also shared the story. We've also done interviews on the local community radio. In July our local state member Minister Don Punch attended to offer his support.

In all of this we are witnessing people being welcomed, inspired and empowered to play their part in the Mission of God. Lives are being changed. People are encountering God in each other. The Good News of people living the inclusive way of Jesus is spreading and for this we are so very thankful.





Amazing Grace! The Black Pearl English Academy opens in Papua

Rev Brian Thorpe delivers the UCWA Moderator's message at the opening.

Lee-Anne Burnett

The Black Pearl Network (BPN) grew out of an exposure trip to West Papua organised by the Uniting Church WA (UCWA) in 2008. Members of the All Saint's Floreat Uniting Church Mission and Outreach team went along to see what was happening in this land so close to our northern borders. Over many years the BPN has grown, as interested members of the UCWA have joined us in the work we do in partnership with the Gereja Kristen Injili di Tanah Papua (GKI TP), the Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of Papua.

Every year members of the BPN travel to what are now the six Papuan provinces of Indonesia multiple times to work with the Black Pearl Papua Foundation (BPPF) and GKI TP in partnership on many programmes relating mostly to English language education, health and clean water.

The most recent and arguably the most ambitious of these is the establishment of the Black Pearl English Academy (BPEA) in the central city of Nabire. To date, Papuan students wishing to access international scholarships to study overseas have had to travel to Java or Bali to complete the advanced English studies required. With the opening, later this month of the BPEA, there will now be an educational facility much closer to home and the savings to

both the students and provincial governments will be significant.

As with all BPN projects, the costs of establishing the Academy have been shared with the local people through grants from the Papua Tengah government, donation of land by a local philanthropist and countless hours of donated labour by BPPF staff. Still, large sums were contributed by BPN thanks to our faithful supporters in Perth and Victoria. Without this support the Academy would have been just a great idea left on the drawing board.

The spin-off benefits for the local community of Nabire will be substantial too. The Academy is expected to attract people and investment to Nabire and it is hoped by the local government that the presence of the Academy will

promote Papua Tengah province as a centre for Papuan advanced education. This accords with BPN's aims to assist with community development as long as there is a partnership in which all parties contribute to the outcome.

In late June this year, four BPN members travelled to Papua Tengah for the gala opening of the BPEA. The ceremony was slated for Thursday 26 June at 10.00am.

On the previous Monday, 23 June, our party arrived in Nabire to visit the Academy. The donated land was large and spacious with plenty of room for future expansion and just 50 metres from the seashore. The new white building shone in the sun. There weren't actually any doors or windows installed at this point and upon entering the building, there was no sign of the ceramic tiles meant to conceal the concrete floor, and most rooms did not yet have a ceiling. The concrete floors were littered with building rubble. The opening ceremony was just three days away.

Our Papuan friends were not worried. Twenty teachers and administration staff had gathered in Nabire for the annual Black Pearl English Course (BPEC) Teachers' Conference and we were involved in leading sessions with them on the Protection of Vulnerable People

(based on the UCA Safe Church Program) and various sessions dealing with administration issues for their centres. We also delivered sexual and reproductive health education sessions in line with the Days for Girls program which we promote in the Papuan provinces through the BPEC centres.

By Wednesday (the day before the opening) there was a great deal of excited activity going on with all the teachers working on either building and cleaning up duties at the BPEA site or on the production of food in preparation for the ceremonial meal, scheduled to follow the opening ceremony. The family of Fred Bundah (CEO BPPF) were hosting many of the teachers and their kitchen was operating at full force until 4.00am Thursday morning.

By the time we arrived at the site at 9.00am, there had been a transformation inside the building. Floors were clean and swept, some furnishings were in place including book stands to store donated textbooks and a large wall banner featuring the BPEA logo. Beautifully draped tables had been set up in the teaching areas to accommodate lunch guests and the food smells were amazing! A worker was hard at work hanging the new front door in readiness for the

ceremonial opening and others were racing to install the building's front windows. Two of our teachers were unrecognisable in their work clothes as they laid bricks across the muddy ground to the shade pavilions erected for the ceremony and rows of chairs were awaiting the arrival of the many guests.

The governor of Papua Tengah Province, Mr Meki Nawipa had flown in from Makassar and the GKI TP moderator Rev Andrikus Mofu and Rev Joyce da Costa from the Department of Diaconia had flown from Jayapura to share the celebration with us. Rev Brian Thorpe opened the proceedings with a message from UCWA Moderator Rev Dr Ian Tozer. Gathered supporters were entertained with English language songs from choirs made up of the children of the local BPEC classes and by the BPEC teachers and admin staff themselves. The climax of the celebration arrived with the cutting of the ribbon binding the front doors to the Academy. There was hardly a dry eye on the block.

The opening of this college is the realisation of a dream for so many and we hope it will open many doors for the Papuan people. As the governor said in closing his address, "This place, is amazing grace!"



Teachers laying bricks across the mud on the day of the opening ceremony.

WA Takes a Step Forward on the Long Way Home for Stolen Generations

Stolen Generations Memorial, designed by Wadandi elder and artist Sandra Hill, at Wellington Square, East Perth.

Dr Alison Atkinson-Phillips, Rev Mitchell Garlett and Geoff Bice

On Monday 26 May 2025, representatives of Yokai - Healing our Spirit, were scheduled to meet with Premier Roger Cook.

The meeting was in the afternoon, following the traditional Sorry Day event at Wellington Square, where survivors, their families and friends, and many non-Aboriginal people come together to acknowledge the pain and suffering caused by policies of child removal. The morning was filled with yarning and listening to the stories of Stolen Generations survivors, and silence, to remember those who have passed away since the previous year's gathering. At that meeting, Yokai learnt that a Stolen Generations redress scheme would be announced by the Premier at the Reconciliation Breakfast the next day. The following afternoon, they and other representatives of the Stolen Generations stood alongside

the Premier as he held a press conference, explaining to the rest of Western Australia what he had told them just the day before: that Aboriginal people who had been removed from their parents before July 1972, and who were still alive on the day of the announcement, would each be eligible for a payment of \$85,000.

The announcement comes after more than 28 years of advocacy and activism led by Aboriginal people, and is a very belated response to Recommendations 3 and 14 of *Bringing Them Home: Report of the National Inquiry into the Forced Removal of Aboriginal Children from their Parents*, tabled in Federal Parliament 26 May 1997. For some, this has been the fight of their

lifetime. The Premier recognised that no amount of money would ever be enough (although the same amount 25 years ago would have been better!), but for most Stolen Generations survivors, the money represents concrete recognition of past wrongs, and offers a moment when we as a society and a church can move to the next steps of reparations and righting the wrongs of the past for a better tomorrow.

Yokai: Healing our Spirit is the trading name for the member-led organisation WA Stolen Generations Aboriginal Corporation, founded in 2016, which developed out of and now works in partnership with *Bringing Them Home* WA (BTH WA), founded

in 2001. While Yokai now has a paid CEO and some operational staff, for many years these organisations have operated on the 'smell of an oily rag', with a lot of volunteer effort and a little bit of in-kind support from organisations like the Uniting Church, which provided secretarial support to *Bringing Them Home* WA from 2001 until 2022.

The WA Government's redress commitment is a significant win for Stolen Generations survivors that brings some real-world assistance and meaningful acknowledgement of a lifetime of pain and suffering. It is a hard fought win that should be celebrated. However, it is sadly too late for many who have already passed and has raised many questions over how the remit of the package was decided upon.

Unfortunately, the announcement follows a now familiar pattern of Government action without proper consultation. Yokai is one of only a very small number of organisations in WA that are equipped to support Stolen Generations survivors, and continues to be under-staffed and under-funded. By agreeing to stand alongside the Premier during that announcement, Aboriginal members of Yokai

and BTH WA immediately made themselves visible endorsers of the Government's announcement and were perceived as being involved in the process. Sadly this was far from the case and has led to a deluge of phonecalls from their community, who expected them to be able to answer questions about what was happening. The reality was that the announcement came without much of a follow-up plan.

Most distressing for survivors and families are the limitations around who is eligible. While it is good that living survivors are prioritised, Aboriginal child removal affected almost every family in this state. Only about 4,000 living survivors will receive the compensation, but 50% of Aboriginal people in WA are descended from Stolen Generations. Child removal was only one part of the *Aborigines Protection Act* policies that denied Aboriginal people the ability to own property and build wealth on their own land. \$85,000 is not a big amount of money, but it might be enough to support children or grandchildren of Stolen people to put down a deposit on a home, giving them access to intergenerational wealth, rather than intergenerational poverty.

Noting that Recommendation 4 of the *Bringing Them Home* Report states that, "reparation be made to all who suffered because of forcible removal policies including:

1. - individuals who were forcibly removed as children,
 - family members who suffered as a result of their removal,
2. - communities which, as a result of the forcible removal of children, suffered cultural and community disintegration, and
3. - descendants of those forcibly removed who, as a result, have been deprived of community ties, culture and language, and links with and entitlements to their traditional land."

The aspect of the announcement that has drawn most criticism from Aboriginal people is the cut-off date. 1972 is the date the legislation to allow child removal was repealed in State Parliament, but policy change does not immediately translate to changes on the ground, and many people removed after that date lived alongside those removed beforehand well into the 1980s. The stated reasons for child removal may have been changed but Aboriginal



Rev Mitchell Garlett offering a Welcome to Country at Sorry Day 2025.



Dr Alison Atkinson-Phillips and Rosemary Hudson Miller stand with the Sorry Pole at Wellington Square.

children were still taken to the same places, run by the same people, and treated the same way – denied their families, culture, language and Country. For example, Tony Hansen, co-chair of BTH WA was removed as a toddler in the early 1970s (but before 1972) and sent to Marribank Mission, near Katanning. He did not return to his family until he was 16. While he is one of those removed within the Redress scheme dates, many of his Mission brothers and sisters are not.

The Uniting Church has an uneasy involvement in this story. While we like to remember that our former Moderator and national President, Sir Ron Wilson, was one of the co-authors of *Bringing Them Home* (and a founding member of BTH WA), what is less comfortable is the knowledge of our involvement in child removal policies. This included running sites like the Mogumber Mission and Sister Kate's Home where stolen children were taken.

In 1997 the National Assembly of the Uniting Church apologised for their role in the removal of children, and in 2007, the land at Treasure Road, previously the site of Sister

Kate's Home, was handed over by the WA Synod – partly to a survivor group and partly to the Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress WA, beginning the journey of what is now Beanang Kuuurt Institute – named to mean "new dawn, new heart". This handing back of land is one of the key recommendations of *Bringing Them Home*, but like the apology and the redress payments it is only part of the picture.

Over the past decade, the Uniting Church has also been required to make payments to individuals who were subject to specific abuses during their time in our care, following on from the recommendation of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse. It is important to recognise that these payments to people who suffered in 'care' are very separate from the newly announced Stolen Generations redress scheme, which recognises the social and cultural harms and trauma done by child removal, not the specific abuse experienced while people were in childhood institutions or 'missions'.

Aboriginal people know all too well that Government is not going to make everything right; it's up to us as a church and community to do what we can.

All the writers of this article are members of the *Bringing Them Home* WA Committee, and all of us do this at least partly on behalf of the Uniting Church. Geoff began his involvement as Secretary on behalf of the Social Justice Unit, following on a long tradition going back to Barry Preece in the early 2000s, and now continues that role as a volunteer. Ali re-joined the committee in October last year as Deputy Chair, taking up the baton from Rosemary Hudson Miller who had supported BTH WA in a

range of ways since its inception. Mitchell represents Congress on the committee, and regularly offers Welcome to Country at *Bringing Them Home* WA or Yokai events, a role he is culturally authorised to do despite his relative youth.

However, having three people represent the church on BTH WA Committee is not the answer to 'what can the church do'. While there are many people across the Uniting Church who remain very involved in supporting First Nations justice issues, the need for change is still pressing and the understanding across congregations remains limited. Redress for Stolen Generations survivors is only a small part of dealing with the impacts of colonisation and our Covenanting commitment as a Church calls us to prioritise our shared journey for a better tomorrow for all First Nations people.

What can Uniting Church members do?

- Congregations can support Congress and Beanang Kuuurt Institute (BKI) as part of Covenanting.
- All congregations can develop their own Covenanting Action Plan, using the guide available from unitingchurchwa.org.au/social-justice/first-peoples/
- Individual members and Congregations as communities can educate themselves more about the Stolen Generations – the *Bringing Them Home* report is still available to read online, and the *Healing Foundation* has many resources.
- 94% of the 56 Recommendations of *Bringing Them Home* remain unfulfilled. Write to your local politician and ask them why.
- *Genocide in the Wildflower State*, a documentary produced by Yokai, will soon be available to stream online via SBS On Demand. Please consider making a donation to Yokai or to BKI if your congregation holds their own screening.



Erik and Kate, Uniting WA

We recently caught up with Kate, who has been a dedicated volunteer at Uniting WA's Tranby Engagement Hub (Tranby) for the past four years, to hear what inspired her to get involved and what a typical day looks like supporting people experiencing homelessness.

"When I was at work many years ago, I used to teach at Saint Stephen's School. Our motto there was 'Serve God, serve one another', so I had a lot to do with helping other people in the community. When I retired, I decided that I would like to volunteer somewhere, and Tranby came up.

When you come in as a volunteer, there's other volunteers working with you, which is lovely. And the first people who come through the

door for support are what we call 'rough sleepers'; they are the people who had no home at all last night and were sleeping on the street.

When they come in, we're able to give them a towel for them to have a shower at Tranby's shower and bathroom facilities. We give them some toiletries if we have them. A lot of people ask for socks and underwear and, if they've been donated, we can give those out and anybody who comes can have breakfast. These are things that make those people feel safe and looked after and seen. We know that they've had a really hard night and it's nice for them to be able to sit down and get some support.

There's been more and more people attend Tranby than ever before, and they are coming from all different experiences.

I think there's lots of little things that can make you smile. It's

very nice to say good morning to everybody who arrives. I don't have the skills that the Tranby support workers have to be able to put people in houses and direct them to services, but I can certainly smile at them and say good morning and hope that someone speaking to them has helped to make their day."

Tranby Engagement Hub is based at Uniting WA's Inner City Hub on Aberdeen Street in Perth, just steps from Mclver train station. Tranby is open every single day of the year and Uniting WA are always looking for compassionate, community-minded people to join our volunteer team.

If you're ready to make a real difference in the lives of those doing it tough, we would love to hear from you. Reach out to Erik and Silvia at volunteers@unitingwa.org.au to find out how you can get involved.

The Art of Asking

Having conversations, paying attention, asking questions, being brave.

Rev Craig Bosman

“How can we create a fresh expression of spirituality for the community involving art?” That’s a question Margaret River Uniting Church (MRUC) didn’t ask and yet received a beautiful answer to over Easter.

Earlier this year local artist Nari Jones and local church member Rev Don Dowling had a brief conversation after a Sunday service, setting in motion a remarkable journey for the Margaret River community. Don simply invited Nari to watch a YouTube video documenting a ‘Stations of the Cross’ art exhibition which he had curated at Wesley Uniting Church in Perth in 2015. This propelled Nari to ‘have a go’ at creating her own 14 images of ‘The Way of the Cross.’ As she progressed, posting images of her work online, Rev Craig Bosman asked if she’d be interested in collaborating with MRUC to have a Way of the Cross art exhibition over Easter. To everyone’s delight, she said yes, though in retrospect she feels baffled as to why, admitting that “it’s always safer to keep your hands down, to stay in the comfort zone, to not stick your

neck out.” Notwithstanding a sense of inadequacy and uncertainty, she decided to go for it explaining that in her artistry she has “learned to take leap after leap in the dark through this precious life, which is less of a perfectible quest and more of a singing stream”, referencing this Wendell Berry poem Our Real World:

‘It may be that when we no longer know what to do, we have come to our real work and when we no longer know which way to go, we have begun our real journey. The mind that is not baffled is not employed. The impeded stream is the one that sings.’

This journey speaks of the importance of conversation, paying attention, asking questions, and

being brave. The result? A two-week art exhibition at MRUC, drawing in visitors all the way from Perth while encouraging local community members to have a sticky beak – especially those who wouldn’t normally visit ‘the church’. Don shares that Nari’s work “allowed us an opportunity to enter the Easter experience in a genuine visual and realistic way”, while also creating a “unique occasion to participate in conversations around the meaning of life, the fragility of life, enduring suffering, and reflecting on justice and peace.” Nari gave a talk during the Easter service after which she had a live conversation with Craig.

As if all this weren’t enough, on a weekend two weeks later, Nari created a Labyrinth in the church to mark World Labyrinth Day. On the Saturday local church members and visitors gathered to hear Nari give a talk on the Labyrinth as a

spiritual practice and then walked it together at 1.00pm. Similar events were held throughout the world producing a rolling walk for peace as each group walked at 1.00pm local time with the theme, “Walk as One at 1.” On Sunday, Nari gave another talk followed by Communion being served at the centre of the Labyrinth. Those who attended the service found it to be a deeply moving spiritual experience.

Asking Questions, Being Brave

While these events surprisingly answered the question posed in the introduction, they have led MRUC to keep asking the question going forward. There is a desire to reach out to the community in ways that go beyond ‘business-as-usual’, showing the community that the assumptions they have about church may very well be outdated. Perhaps the church is more open-minded, forward-thinking, dynamic and flexible than commonly imagined?

The deeper question being asked is, “How do we change the narrative around Church?” This is important to ask because the ‘nones and

done’s’ are growing. These groups consist of those who have no religious affiliation (nones) and those who do but are disengaged (done’s). MRUC wants to show them that contrary to popular belief, the church has changed and is now an inclusive, experimental and creative space, and even an ideal space for those who claim to be ‘spiritual but not religious.’

Another example of an event that aligns with this intent is Conversation Church where a person with a different belief system is invited to come share during a Sunday morning service. For example, earlier this year Dr Andrew Jan, a local Christian Daoist, and Paul Tonson, a visiting retired minister from Victoria, had a live conversation during the Sunday service. Next month, Loma Sonam, a local Universalist Buddhist Dharma teacher will be joining us for a live chat. These types of engagements with the community are opportunities for having conversations, paying attention, asking questions and being brave – themes that are at the heart of the MRUC community.

So, what questions are your church asking, and how are those questions being answered?

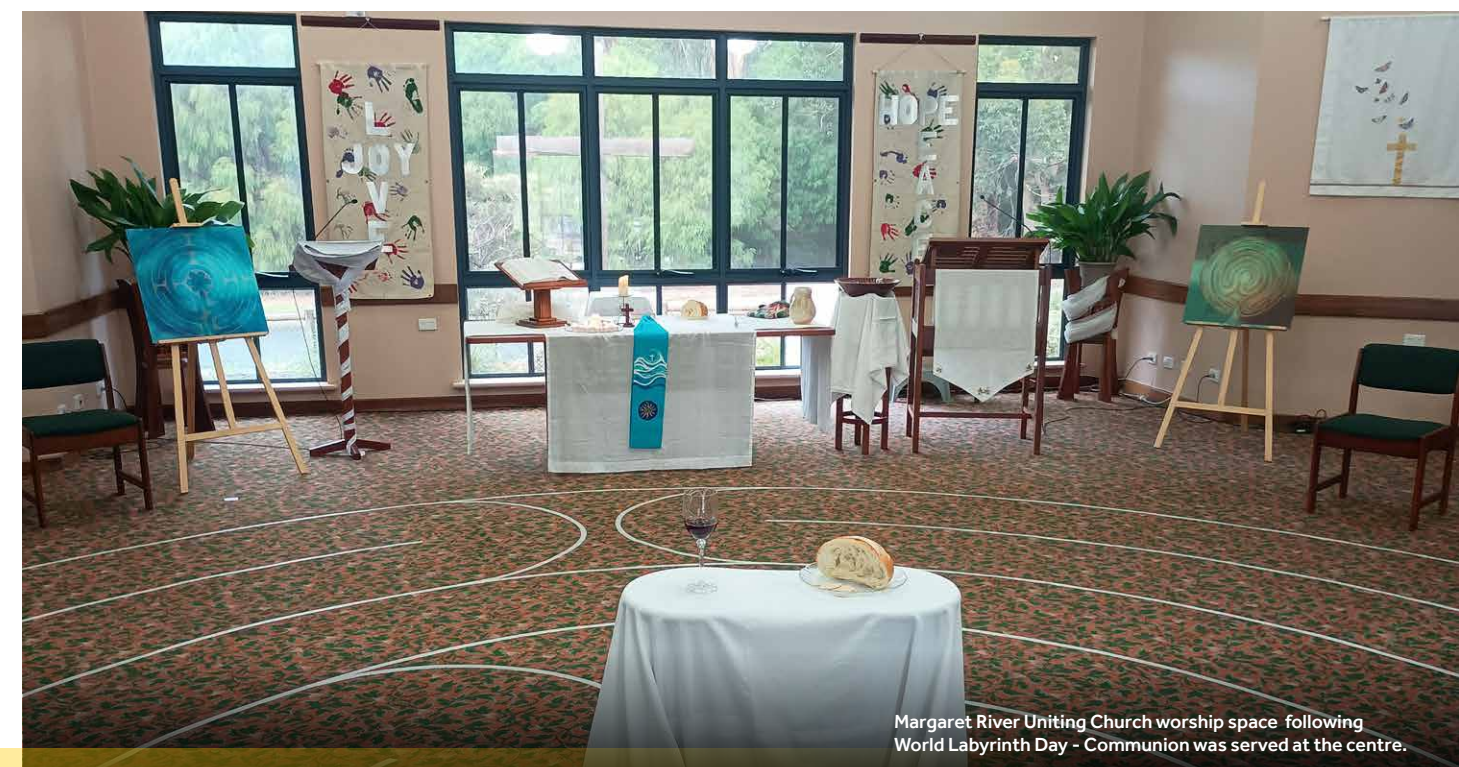
Editors Note: Many conversations and videos referenced in this article can be found on the Church Resources YouTube channel - <https://www.youtube.com/@churchresources2079>

To find out more about the artist Nari Jones go to www.narijones.com

To find out more about World Labyrinth Day go to - www.worldlabyrinthday.org



Artist Nari Jones with Rev Craig Bosman.



Margaret River Uniting Church worship space following World Labyrinth Day - Communion was served at the centre.



Celebrations for the Hedland Fijian Uniting Church!

Photo by Emily Reedy, Forget Me Not Photography.

Wendy Hendry

It seems fitting that as the Uniting Church in Australia celebrates its 40th anniversary of the declaration that “The Uniting Church is a multicultural church”, the Uniting Church building in Port Hedland was officially re-opened with much joy and celebration on Saturday 28 June as the new home of the Hedland Fijian Uniting Church, a faith community of the Presbytery of WA.

People from near and far gathered in Port Hedland for this special weekend including special guests, Uniting Church in Australia President Rev Charissa Suli, the Chair of the Uniting Church Fijian Conference Rev Viniana Ravetali, and Uniting Church WA General Secretary Rev Dr Andrew Williams. Accompanying Rev Ravetali was the Deputy Chair of the UCA Fijian Conference Konisi Vosaicake. Rev David Jackson, Frontier Services Pilbara Patrol Chaplain, who has been walking alongside this community since early 2024 and was also present through the celebrations. There were visitors from near and far, including a group from Wanneroo Crossways Uniting Church who attended and formed part of the Fijian choir for the services.

As the Uniting Church building in Port Hedland had been closed since 2018 the buildings needed a lot of repairs prior to re-opening. The restoration of the church was a team effort, supported by funding from the Future Mission Fund, guidance from the UCWA Property Team, and hard work from the local church community. Since early 2025, local volunteers have been meeting regularly to repair and restore both the inside and outside of the church.

In reflecting on the church opening, Tevita Naroba, Secretary of the Hedland Fijian UC said:

“This church building represents more than just bricks and mortar – it is a testament to our faith, our cultural heritage and our

commitment to service our community here in Port Hedland. It stands as a beacon of hope and a place where our Fijian traditions can flourish while we embrace new opportunities in our adopted homeland.”

This achievement was more than just hard work—it was a heartfelt offering of faith and love from all who contributed.

The opening celebrations over the weekend of 28 & 29 June included an Opening and Dedication Service in the morning of 28 June, followed by a time of cultural celebration and feasting in the afternoon. The following day there was a joyful Sunday service at the church led

by Rev Viniana Ravetali and with Rev Charissa Suli preaching.

The opening day was a wonderful display of Fijian and Pacific Island identity, blending cultural ceremony and joyful Christian worship into the service and celebrations. The Opening and Dedication began outside the church building with a *Qaloqalovi* ceremony. In Fiji, guests arriving by sea are welcomed with a traditional ceremony called *Qaloqalovi*, which includes a greeting from village elders to show respect and peace.

At the church opening a mat was laid out in the car park and the guests Rev Ravetali, Mr Vosaicake, Rev Suli and Rev Dr Andrews were welcomed with this ceremony by elders of the Hedland Fijian UC community. The choir greeted us in song, and then formalities continued in prayer and dedication. The new church signs were formally revealed and blessed.

Rev Suli was then invited to cut the ribbon to open the church doors,

welcoming all who gathered inside the sanctuary. Rev Dr Williams led the service, dedicating the space to the glory of God.

In the afternoon all were invited to the Port Hedland Community Centre - Milpaku Kuma for traditional Fijian ceremony and feasting. There was an observance of Fijian traditional protocols, carried out with deep respect and reverence, made even more special by the involvement of some of the young people of the church community, showing pride and joy in their cultural heritage. The ceremonies included the *Vakamamaca* and *Yaqona*. Traditionally, when guests are welcomed to shore the host provides dry clothes (bale of cloth and tapa) followed with drink (*Yaquona*/Kava ceremony) and food (whole pig).

A significant moment during the ceremony was the presentation of a *tabua*, a whale’s tooth, to Rev Dr Andrew Williams, which represented giving the church property back to the Synod.

Tevita Naroba shared **“In doing this the Hedland Fijian Uniting Church were acknowledging that the Uniting Church WA Synod still owns the Church property but that the Hedland Fijian church will be the responsible body taking care of it as the custodian of the property in Hedland.”**

These important protocols were then followed by joyful performances which included Fijian and Tongan dancing, and music performances by the local Tongan brass band. Afternoon celebrations culminated in a beautiful Fijian feast which was laid out for all who attended.

Vinaka Vakalevu, thank you very much, to the Hedland Fijian community for your warm welcome and abundant hospitality.

“For I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”
Jeremiah 29:11



Cutting the cake at the opening celebrations. Photo by Emily Reedy, Forget Me Not Photography.

Rev Dr Andrew Williams leading a Service of Dedication in the Port Hedland worship centre.



A Path to Independence

Good Sammy Enterprises

Sometimes, the most remarkable journeys start with the most uncertain steps. Good Sammy employee and star student, Kayla Barton, is a powerful reminder of what's possible when the right support meets unstoppable determination.

When Kayla first walked into the Good Sammy workplace skills development class last year, her warm smile lit the room—but behind it, she was a bundle of nerves. Within minutes of sitting down, she was overwhelmed and in tears, but the gentle support and reassurance from one of our Learning and Development Specialists, Peter, encouraged Kayla to stay. And over time, something began to shift. She not only completed the program but was keen for more.

Kayla graduated from the Work Ready and Work Skills programs in 2024. Kayla is currently enrolled in the DRIVE program, and after achieving her Learner's Permit, she completed her first driving lesson. Her transformation is well underway!

"She was so nervous but came home so happy that she had completed her first lesson," shared her mum, Leanne.

"She can now see a future in the independence she yearns for."

"At Good Sammy, we believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to grow, to challenge themselves, and to achieve independence in their own time," Peter said.

"Leanne's message reminds us that at Good Sammy, our impact goes beyond job training or skill development. We help shape futures. We empower families. We build confidence, one step at a time."

Kayla's courage, determination, and willingness to step outside of her comfort zone inspires and reflects Good Sammy's mission. Her story is a testament to the value of our programs.

Good Sammy's foundational courses help to shape futures

Work Ready is a 5-week training course for people with disability, designed to build job-seeking skills and confidence. Through interactive workshops, participants set career goals, learn to job search, write resumes, and practice interviews—gaining the tools to find and keep a job.

Work Skills is a 10-week training course that helps people with disability build essential workplace skills and confidence. Through weekly 4-hour workshops, participants learn about work routines, communication, teamwork, and workplace safety—

laying a strong foundation for future training or employment.

The DRIVE program begins with a 10-week Keys4Life course presented in Easy Read format that helps people with disability become safe, confident drivers. It combines road safety education with practical support to prepare participants for the Learner's Permit Theory Test. The program covers road rules, smart decision-making, risk reduction, and essential life skills like choosing a driving instructor and managing car costs, with the opportunity for supported practical lessons after passing the test.



Working With Nature Against Poverty

UnitingWorld

In the far north of West Papua, a human and environmental crisis is unfolding side by side. People struggle through poverty and the growing impacts of climate change, while the ecosystem they depend on is being destroyed for short-term profit.

Frans, a fisherman and grandfather (pictured), lives in a coastal town with three generations of his family under the same roof. Every morning, he goes out to catch just enough fish for the day.

"There's no market to sell the fish, and the power here is too unreliable for fridges," he says. "So we only catch what we'll eat."

In Frans's neighbourhood, flooding has become more frequent. The shoreline is eroding, and king tides and hurricanes have sent near waist-high seawater through houses, gardens and crops a few times in recent years. The destruction of mangroves along the coast also means fewer fish nurseries and less protection from storms.

"The government built two sea walls, which has helped, but they've also allowed companies to cut trees in the mountains. That has damaged the forest."

The damage has consequences. Illegal and unsustainable logging

has triggered flash floods and landslides in nearby communities.

The lack of economic and livelihood opportunities has tragic health implications, especially for children. One in five are malnourished, and rates of stunting are among the highest in Indonesia. Families are finding it harder to grow food, catch fish or access affordable alternatives. The cost of environmental damage is being paid in hunger and lost opportunities.

But our church partner, the Evangelical Christian Church in the Land of Papua (GKI-TP), is helping communities like Frans's find another way.

"People want a better life, but the quickest way to earn money is by cutting down the trees or selling their land," says GKI-TP Program Manager Donaltus Rumbesu.

"We want to help people make a living and have long-term food security without destroying the environment. If our approach works here, we can use it as a model to adapt for communities across Papua."

With support from UnitingWorld, GKI-TP is working with communities to grow food,

build livelihoods and protect the environment. Over the next three years, the project will support families to plant climate-resilient food gardens, start small businesses, and undertake sustainable agriculture and fishing. It will also train local leaders to become climate and conservation champions, especially women and youth.

"This is the work of the church and how we should be in the world," says Donaltus.

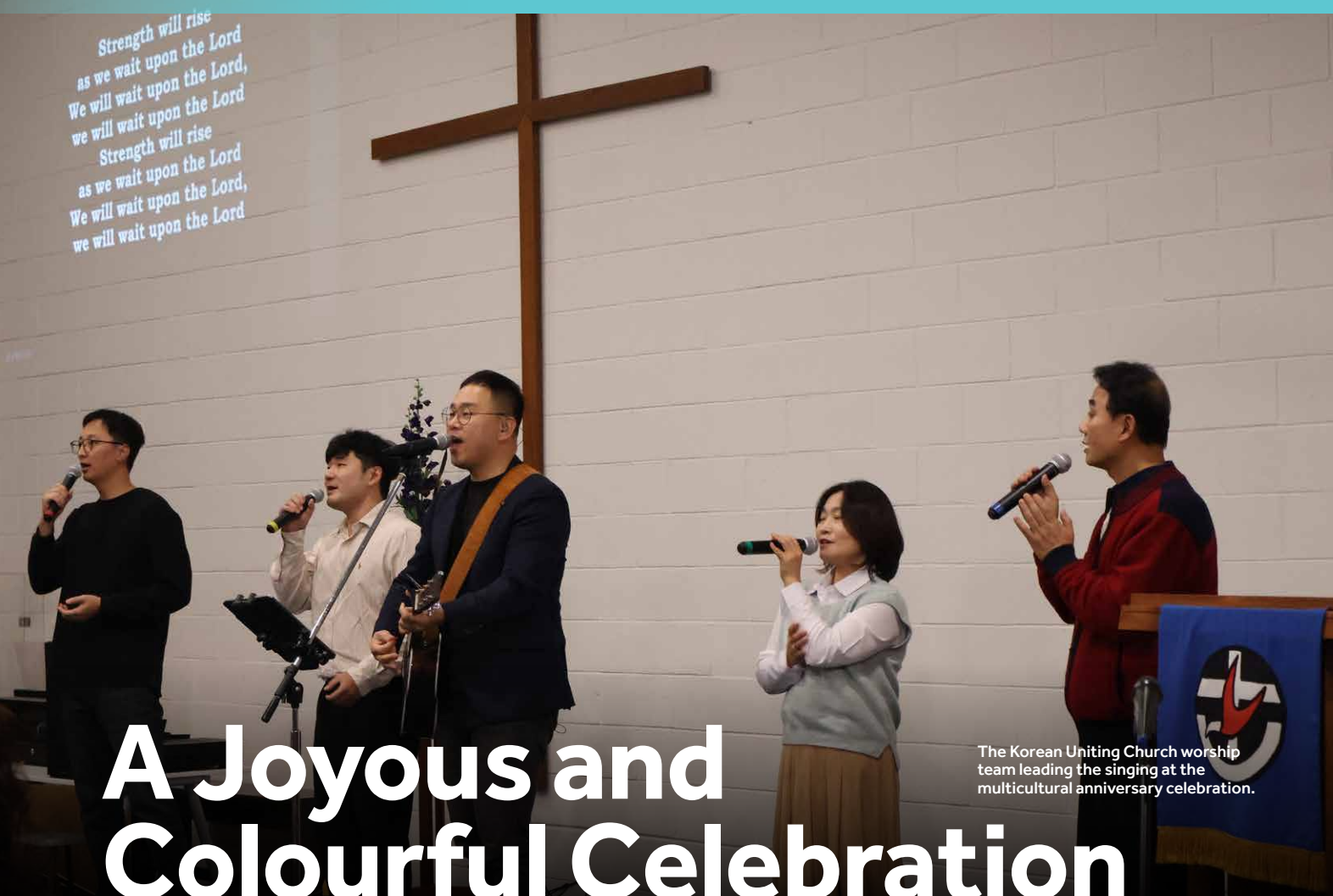
"When people come to us in need, we don't get to say no. We're called to do what Jesus did. We love and serve people; we do what we can to help them. And through that, we get to see Jesus in person."

Amen.

Support nature-based solutions to poverty and climate extremes

You can help communities grow food, earn income and protect the environment they rely on.

Visit www.unitingworld.org.au/westpapua to find out more and donate.



The Korean Uniting Church worship team leading the singing at the multicultural anniversary celebration.

A Joyous and Colourful Celebration

Rev Judy Sanderson

Celebrations hold considerable importance as they commemorate significant moments in our lives and history, akin to birthdays, anniversaries, certain holidays, and even Holy Communion. These events serve as reminders of pivotal occurrences. For instance, the annual Passover celebration recounts the story of God's deliverance of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Such occasions unify individuals, families, communities, and nations, fostering a collective expression of gratitude and joy for impactful events that have influenced and sometimes defined various aspects of our lives.

The 40th anniversary of the statement: 'The Uniting Church is a multicultural Church' was certainly a declaration—an event that impacted the life of our church. Our President, Rev Charissa Suli, speaks of the declaration in the introduction to the UCA's Multicultural Anniversary Worship Resources as a bold prophetic vision that was cast forty years ago—a vision to become a community where people of every culture,

language and story are not merely welcomed but truly belong as family. Her words resonated with me when she said, "This declaration was not simply a statement of who we were, but a calling into who God is shaping us to become; a living witness to the diverse and reconciled body of Christ, woven together in love." It was the 'welcome' expressed in the statements of the Uniting Church that drew me to this church.

I found the Uniting Church in 2007 while searching for a Methodist Church in Perth. I had previously attended a Methodist Church in the United States and was looking for something similar where I could find a sense of belonging. During my initial period with the Uniting Church, discussions were ongoing regarding the proposed Preamble to the Constitution. Some of the comments made at these discussions raised concerns

for me as they felt disrespectful, unloving, and even racist in nature. The heated discussions, along with personal experiences of not feeling welcomed, led me to question whether the Uniting Church could provide a sense of belonging for me.

Reading the Preamble led me to read other documents from the Uniting Church such as the Basis of Union, Statement to the Nation, and the Assembly statement adopted in 1985, "We Are a Multicultural Church." It was these statements that revealed to me the vision of the Uniting Church. It was this vision that I felt God had called me to be a part of—the vision of a multicultural church. Of course, since the initial statement was declared, we have had subsequent statements about being cross-cultural and intercultural.

I am originally from Atlanta, Georgia, the home of Martin Luther King Jr.—a city with a history of involvement in the African-American civil rights movement. I understand the importance of everyone having a seat at the table where decisions are made and know that people can gain insight and become empowered when working together. I believe in the vision and call of the Intercultural Network.

Also, being a part of a cultural group with a heritage of slavery, I know that statements and declarations matter. Statements can declare freedom to slaves¹, grant civil rights to those in a society who had no rights.² Speeches that declare "I have a dream" can highlight injustice and cast a vision for a just future and provide hope. I am, however, aware that we must keep important statements and declarations from being forgotten.

This reminds me of the Book of Habakkuk and Habakkuk's personal experience of the injustice that was



The GKI Church choir singing at the multicultural anniversary celebration.

evident around him. As he went back and forth with his complaints to God, God tells Habakkuk to get some tablets and write down what he sees and hears, sending him a vision about an appointed time in the future that may seem slow in coming but will certainly come. Habakkuk 2:2 says, "Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may run who reads it."

The Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church—a community where people of every culture, language and story are not merely welcomed but truly belong as family. That vision which was declared in 1985 was pivotal in the life of the church. It is important for us to celebrate and remember this important moment in the life of our church. And this is what we did. The Presbytery of WA's Intercultural Network hosted a joyful and colourful celebration for the 40th anniversary of the Assembly's declaration that "we are a Multicultural Church."

We continue the journey of living cross-cultural and intercultural as a multicultural church.

Yes, there are challenges we face, and we will continue to face challenges; but we will face and overcome them together. For we know that in the Uniting Church, we are not merely welcomed but truly belong as family—sisters and brothers in Christ. The vision that

was cast 40 years ago was made plain. The Intercultural Network has caught hold of this vision and will run with it, fully believing the vision will come to pass.

Rev Judy Sanderson is the Convenor of the Presbytery of WA's Intercultural Network



Rev Judy Sanderson.

¹ Emancipation Proclamation, issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, during the American Civil War. This proclamation declared that all enslaved people in Confederate states were "forever free" and made them eligible for service in the Union Army.

² Several key documents and statements played a vital role in the African-American civil rights movement. The Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the Supreme Court's decision in Brown v. Board of Education were landmark legal achievements. Additionally, speeches and protests raised awareness and mobilized action for equality.



Called to Serve

Ordained ministry in congregations across the Uniting Church WA, a personal perspective

Rev Dr Ian Tozer

In the last 48 years, dramatic changes have occurred in the placement of ministers across the Synod. Now large areas of Western Australia have little access to an ordained minister. This has become the norm in rural areas for years. Many rural congregations only occasionally have ordained ministers – often retired – to lead their worship or provide support. Now it's increasingly a pattern in metropolitan congregations. What do these changes mean for the Church, for congregations, for ministers...? These questions have become pressing.

A brief history

At union in 1977, the Congregationalists, Methodists and Presbyterians who joined the Uniting Church were divided into parishes, usually with multiple congregations, although there were some single congregation parishes. Almost all parishes had a minister in placement. Some parishes had teams of ministers. This did

not mean every congregation had a minister leading worship every week, and indeed, not all congregations gathered for worship every week. However, ministers were available for most.

During the first decade, when vacancies occurred outside Perth, some rural parishes were served by ministers from other congregations.

I recall a minister going one Sunday a month to lead the communion services in multiple congregations of a rural parish, or 'eight-day ministries', where a minister from another congregation would go to a vacant rural congregation lead worship across two Sundays, spending the week in the Parish before returning home.

Already in the first decade, financial stresses meant that 'top-up' grants were required to maintain ministry in some parishes. There were some congregations where ordained ministry was supported by such grants, including some in the metropolitan area, such as Kwinana and Girrawheen. The church determined this to be a priority.

However, as the decade went on, financial stresses became more pressing more widely across the church. Rising costs and declining populations accompanied rural mechanization and the emergence of the 'get big or get out' principle. Larger farms mostly meant fewer farming families. The withdrawal of government services because of changing policies also impacted the size and flows of population in rural WA.

By the end of the first decade, more and more rural parishes were without placements because of costs and the wider Church's reduced capacity to provide grants to assist them.

In the second decade of the Uniting Church, from 1987 to 1997, the rate of these changes increased. By the late 1990s, most rural parishes as originally established were without placement. One response was regional groupings, with ordained ministers seen more rarely. In other words, the model was left in place except that that these 'larger parishes', meant the nature of the ministry that could be provided was different. There was a loss of the intimacy and detailed knowledge between the minister and the people. The hope was that these ministers would focus on resourcing ministry in congregations by equipping lay leaders. Other factors came into play. With no placed minister and the rise of civil marriage celebrants and civil funerals, some lay persons began to offer Christian marriage or funerals in the name of the Uniting Church.

At the end of the second decade, the UCA Assembly (in 1997) determined that the parish structure should change. Congregations became the primary unit of the life of the church. Instead of separate Parish and Elders' Councils, the responsibilities

of both were incorporated into the responsibilities of one Church Council.

By the beginning of the third decade, greater demand for grants and less capacity to provide them meant that places like Kwinana and Girrawheen lost their funding. Financial constraints became more widespread across the church. This had an impact on placements. A number of ministers served part-time in congregations and part-time outside (for example, in some form of chaplaincy). Some ministers were content to serve part-time. By then, a number of metropolitan congregations began to combine or co-operate with another in order to share a ministry. Similarly, more and more rural placements were under pressure, and, over this decade were unable to support placed ministers.

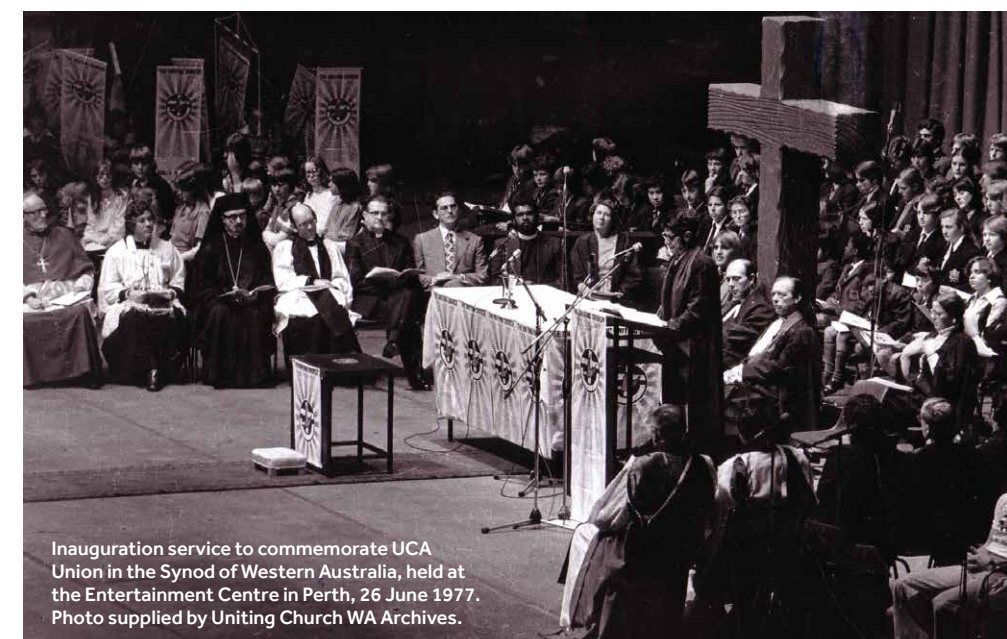
By the end of the first decade, more and more rural parishes were without placements because of costs and the wider Church's reduced capacity to provide grants to assist them.

At the beginning of our third decade, the capacity of presbyteries to fulfill their responsibilities diminished. One reason was that there were

fewer placed ministers on the membership of the presbytery and lay leaders who had previously been able to serve in wider church roles were fully occupied maintaining the life of their congregations. So, by the end of our third decade in 2007, the Uniting Church WA had joined the previous five presbyteries into one.

As we entered our fourth decade, more and more metropolitan congregations lost the ability to support placed ministers. This led to some amalgamations and some congregational closures. By that time, some of these congregations, like their rural congregations, had gone years without a placed minister. The Church has made many attempts to provide ministry through rural resource ministry, although that is currently now only one part-time position.

It seemed that there may be a crisis because of the numbers of placements and the numbers of ministers. There were fewer candidates for ministry. However, several factors meant that the crisis did not emerge. Congregations able to afford ministers began to reduce in number. A significant number of older ministers retired. Some were or became to serve part-time, particularly as they neared traditional retirement age. Some served past the age of 65. An equilibrium (of sorts) was maintained. By then, the pattern of 'you get a minister if you can afford one' was thoroughly established.



Inauguration service to commemorate UCA Union in the Synod of Western Australia, held at the Entertainment Centre in Perth, 26 June 1977. Photo supplied by Uniting Church WA Archives.

This is a pattern which we might well think about.

In my experience, metropolitan congregations have fewer connections with rural congregations. And although numbers of retired ministers offer themselves very freely to go and provide Sunday worship supply, this number is diminishing.

As we near the end of our fifth decade, many rural congregations have closed or ceased to gather for worship. As a result, some travel greater distances for worship. Some have begun to attend other denominational services, and some have simply dropped out.

Metropolitan congregations were thoroughly impacted by financial constraints, so have become unable to support a minister. More and more have simply continued their life as best they are able under local lay leadership.

There is much more that could be said about our history. These are only my first thoughts to show some of the broad trends.

The shape of ordained ministry

Near the end of our fifth decade, the shape of ordained ministry in the Uniting Church in Western Australia is in a very different place.

At this Synod, near the end of my 44th year since ordination, we will begin a conversation about the deployment of ministers. Some find the word 'deployment' disturbing, as it may imply that ministers are simply workers. Some wonder about what 'call' means now. However, 'deployment' is used in our regulations.

My prayer is that we will begin our sixth decade with new clarity, new options, and new ways of serving for those called to ministry in the Church as we continue being in ministry with Jesus.

We are planning a discussion that will begin to open up the issues. The 'elephants in the room' include (1) congregations can have ministers if they can afford one – in other words, we have moved to a 'user pays' model; (2) what does this mean for congregations with great need, gifted people, and sometimes significant ministry while being without a placed minister to provide leadership and support? (3) What about opportunities that are being missed? (4) We have begun to speak of 'clusters' and 'hubs' – what might this mean for ministers? These are some of the challenges before us.

If you have views on these matters, please communicate them to Synod members from your congregation or others you know will be part of the Synod membership, in order that your views and the views of people you know may be shared when the discussion is held on the floor of Synod.

My prayer is that we will begin our sixth decade with new clarity, new options, and new ways of serving for those called to ministry in the Church as we continue being in ministry with Jesus.



Clinical Nurse Manager Nitixa Patel with Les and Residential Manager Shila Rathnayake.

Michael Gill, Juniper

Les Barron took no time in volunteering to run the onsite kiosk when he moved to Juniper Elimatta Residential Aged Care Home, and to recognise his many years at the counter, the venue has been named in his honour.

After running the kiosk at the Menora location for close to a decade, Les has since decided to step away from the role and become a customer.

A former baker and Westrail employee, the longstanding resident has had a varied life, which also included 20 years as a horse trainer in Northam.

At the recent reopening day, Les was absolutely tickled pink when the name of the new-look kiosk was revealed.

Juniper Elimatta Residential Manager Shila Rathnayake said the

move to relaunch the venue proved a real group effort with Les' family, residents, volunteers and staff all contributing to the project.

"I feel that the kiosk gives Elimatta even more of a community feel, and a connection to the community," Shila said.

The kiosk is now open to residents and staff two mornings each week from 10.00am to 12.00pm, selling chocolates, magazines, greeting cards, soft toys and more.

Juniper Elimatta resident Meryl was one of the first customers on reopening day, buying a can of soft drink and a pack of mints for just a couple of dollars.

When not dedicating her time to supporting residents at Juniper Chrystal Halliday in Karrinyup, Juniper volunteer Sue Scott has taken on the role of looking after the revamped kiosk.



"I like older people, and I find volunteering very rewarding – I enjoy the interactions with people, and I feel like I'm doing something worthwhile," Sue said.

Sue will be ably supported by new Juniper volunteer Chris Tovey who will cover opening hours as needed.

Chris said she looked forward 'to be able to give back' to her local community while getting to know Elimatta residents and drawing on some of the counter skills she used working at Coles when she was a 15-year-old.



A Precinct for All: Building Wesley's New Community Hub

Wesley College

A new chapter has begun at Wesley College, where work has begun on the 18-month build of a state-of-the-art sports and community precinct.

The Centenary Building Project is more than a school facility. It is a bold reimagining of how a precinct can serve both the College and South Perth.

At its heart are four multi-use courts with seating for 1,800 people, a food science facility, a function centre, classrooms, a gym, and a medical space. "This precinct will not only elevate our sporting programs but also create a dynamic space where students, staff, and the broader community can come together," says Head of College, Mr Ross Barron.

"This journey began five years ago, and it's been a long and carefully planned process," continues Mr Barron. "Rather than simply refurbishing the space, we set out to create something truly unique for Western Australia. This new precinct brings together a range of integrated facilities in one central location – something not seen elsewhere in the state.

"It's not just a fantastic resource for our students, staff, and parents; it will also benefit the wider population of South Perth, with individuals, local sporting clubs and groups able to make use of the facilities."

Beyond sport, the new precinct is designed to be a central gathering place for events and performances. "This isn't just a sports facility – it's a community hub," says Mr Barron,

explaining the broader vision. "We're incorporating spaces for wellness programs, leadership workshops, and even alumni and P&F events. It's about creating an inclusive space where everyone feels welcome.

After the precinct's completion, it will be open to the public outside of school hours, every day of the week, "So it's a wonderful Wesley asset, but it's also a community asset as well," says Mr Barron.

The College's alumni will also be celebrated through the Old Wesley Collegians' Association (OWCA) Hall of Excellence. "It's going to be a space that will not only inspire current students but also be a fantastic meeting point for Old Collegians making a visit to Wesley," explains Ms Georgia Atterton, Alumni Relations Manager.

Strengthening Community Through Service and Shared Values

Luca Wedding-Pritchard

At Tranby College, community engagement is deeply embedded in our culture, with regular initiatives that reflect our connection to the broader Uniting Church and its values of compassion and service.

This year, our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Day became more than just a tradition—it was a purposeful act of giving. Organised by our Defence and Service Mentor and supported by Student leaders, the event raised funds for the Uniting Church, while also offering an opportunity to reflect on the significance of Lent. Staff and Students came together to prepare and serve pancakes across the College community, with proceeds donated to support the Church's outreach initiatives.

In an ongoing expression of our commitment to supporting others, every fortnight our College community bakes muffins for donation to Coastal Care Rockingham's Emergency Relief Centre, an agency connected to the Uniting Church. Coordinated by staff and supported by Student volunteers, baking takes place every second Thursday, with fresh goods delivered on Friday mornings. These muffins provide practical support for families and individuals in need, offering not just food, but also care and dignity in a time of hardship.

Both of these initiatives—whether a once-a-year event or a recurring act of service—reflect Tranby College's commitment to living out our values through action. Led by our staff and supported by our Chaplain and Students alike, they highlight the



power of small, consistent contributions to make a lasting impact in the lives of others.

Through acts of hospitality, generosity, and community partnership, we continue to foster meaningful engagement with the wider Uniting Church and its agencies, reinforcing the importance of service in everyday life.

Kirk @ Scotch

Rev Gary Van Heerden

As a College of the Uniting Church (originally Presbyterian Church), religious principles have always informed our endeavours here at Scotch College, but the theology underpinning this religion is a robust, earthy spirituality. At the opening of our chapel in 1968, then chaplain Rev. EH Blackman referred to this spirituality as 'a happy blend of the sacred and the secular'.

This taps into the Celtic heritage of our Presbyterian forebears. A central tenet of Celtic spirituality is the belief in the immanence of God. This continual presence undermines the dualistic thinking

so often prevalent that we are being religious when we are in chapel but less religious when engaged in secular pursuits. Whether in chapel, studying, on the sport field, on the stage or engaged in service-learning activities, all activities contribute to our search for wholeness, our desire to be fully human. Committed to this belief that worship is everything we do, as the chaplain I am constantly searching for new language, images, metaphors and activities to make spirituality more accessible.

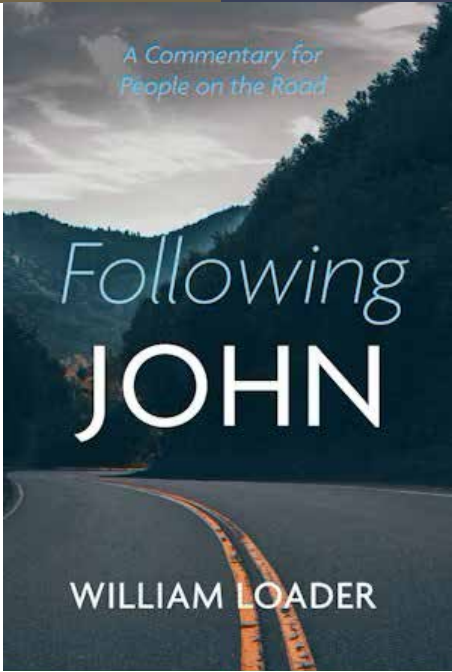
Kirk@scotch is an initiative that seeks to make this spirituality available to the wider community. It is a 30 minute meditative service at 5.00pm on the first and third Saturday of every month in term



time. Kirk is a blend of a Taize-type service, with choristers from Presbyterian Ladies' College and Scotch leading the chants, with liturgy from the Iona Community in Scotland. Tapping into the sense of God's continual presence, Kirk does not end with a benediction, but with responses that invite us to go out and to continue our worship in the context of our lives and work.

We would love you to join us. For more information, contact Rev Gary van Heerden at Gary.vanheerden@scotch.wa.edu.au

FOLLOWING JOHN
A COMMENTARY FOR
PEOPLE ON THE ROAD
BY WILLIAM LOADER



Bill Loader is a retired Uniting Church Minister, a former Professor at Murdoch University, and taught for many years in the Perth Theological Hall. He is a leading New Testament scholar and also a provider of resources for preachers and group study through his website - billloader.com. He has recently been publishing translations and concise, readable and up-to-date commentaries on the gospels. Following John. A Commentary for People on the Road is his latest, published by Wipf and Stock, and available for purchase on line and printed in Australia.

Description
This is an alternative commentary, concise, up-to-date, readable, and engaging the biblical text as a cross-cultural encounter. It both acknowledges the distance and difference of John's Gospel from our contemporary world as well as highlighting its proximity and relevance. The commentary explores John's special emphases, imagery, and distinctive creativity in portraying Jesus' significance in a way that is able to address a universal audience. The volume includes a new translation of the full text of the Gospel and is written for those with faith seeking an informed understanding of the past and a critical appreciation of its abiding relevance. It can serve for both individual and group use.

(source: Wipf and Stock publishers, <https://wipfandstock.com/9798385231201/following-john/>)

Praise for the book
Professor Dorothy Lee of Melbourne writes, "William Loader's commentary provides a vital resource for readers of John who want to understand it in a relevant and timely way, without being engulfed in technicalities. With its vernacular translation, its up-to-date reflections on the text, and its questions for further reflection, this is a simple and accessible commentary. It is written by an eminent Johannine scholar who knows his material so well that he can communicate it with clarity and lucidity."
Revd Alan Robinson, UCA NSW, writes: "Bill Loader takes us on a journey following John. Along the way there are helpful stops to converse with Matthew, Mark and Luke and opportunities to learn something of the Jewish and Roman culture of the time. Our guide has been exploring this road for 50 years; its promises and its puzzles. This is an invaluable resource for the preacher and pilgrim."

Editors Note: Bill Loader will be leading the Bible Studies at the 49th Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia on 13 and 14 September 2025.

The Prayer Room

Margaret Johnston

Kerry McCrie had been a member at South Mandurah Uniting Church where Thy Kingdom Come had been introduced to the congregation. Thy Kingdom Come is an international, ecumenical movement that brings Christians together to pray and encounter the love of Jesus Christ. The resources were from the UK Anglican Church intended to be used between Ascension and Pentecost, an important time of prayer in the Christian calendar. The theme for 2025 is "The Lord's Prayer".

Kerry has transferred to Gosnells Uniting Church, and she hoped that this prayer event being held worldwide would be appreciated there. Kerry sowed the seed, but it was twelve months before it sprouted into potential. Two members of Gosnells Uniting Church, Deb de Silva and Margaret Johnston worked with Kerry to hold an adapted Thy Kingdom Come, around Pentecost. The original eleven-day prayer program was condensed into three half day sessions, and this year was held after Pentecost on 12-14 June.

An adventurous space of prayer was created, with the intention to create a spiritual, safe, thought-provoking Prayer Room that could be engaged with by anyone, 'helping all ages to dwell on and linger over the words of the prayer as they use them to connect to God'. We became very creative and found what we needed for the 10 stations from our op shop, our own gardens,

such as an outdoor setting for 'Give us today our daily bread', and items from our own homes to symbolise each line and create a focus for contemplation and prayer. The space was peaceful; there were no conditions or expectations, with freedom to stay as little and as long as wanted.

We hoped for just one person to accept our invitation - more came. Most were new to this concept of individual prayer. After a little explanation and a walk through the first few stations, once comfortable, they made their own way. Some took up to one and half hours to sit with the ten stations and emerged "deeply touched" and said the Prayer Room was exactly what they needed on the day.

Deb de Silva said, "I wondered why I didn't give myself the time to engage with all the Prayer Stations after it was all set up. I think my immersion was in the preparation and creativity. I compare it to making a loving banquet for our guests and I remain hungry for more". The 'more' came when we rearranged the stations into a display at the front of the church on the Sunday after and then prepared a worship service to conclude the focus on the Lord's Prayer. No one missed out.

Deb added that it feels like it has been an awakening or "opening up" of the Lord's Prayer for her. It is a prayer that is frequently said aloud "because that is just what we do". Now I can say it with meaning".



Many years of devotion

Norm Green

As a church musician it is understandable that you become part of the furniture, so to speak. Churchgoers attend and sing to the music supplied mainly by a pianist or organist or both.

There are occasions when thanks are issued, and gratitude expressed and then life goes on. How many realise though, that sitting down at the piano or organ to play the hymns does not merely involve opening the music, reading it and playing as per the instructions? It can also involve rehearsing the music beforehand and in some cases transposing it down to suit the congregation. In some cases, hymns or songs are given to the musician that they may never have played before and hours of rehearsal may ensue.

Gloria Green of Northam and Swan View Uniting Churches has been playing for the hymns and church songs for 66 years and has been a churchgoer for 77 years, since she was three years old!

She started in 1959, playing for Sunday School at the Midland Methodist Church, when she was 15, and a year later playing not only piano but the organ.

Gloria has played more or less weekly at church since 1987, at Swan View Uniting Church before moving to Toodyay. After the move she travelled to Swan View UC every fortnight to play and in 2015 started playing in the in-between weeks at Northam Uniting Church.

Gloria continues to play for both congregations, in conjunction with other such talented musicians and sees it as her way of expressing her love of the Lord.



UNITING CHURCH WA Busselton Campsite

The Uniting Church WA campsite is located at 140 Caves Rd, Siesta Park, Busselton. With the adjacent dazzling waters of Geographe Bay and surrounding picturesque countryside, our campsite is an ideal location for school groups, youth camps and ministry retreats.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Hire bookings can only be accepted for members of the Uniting Church including employees, schools and agencies.

BOOKING OPTIONS

The campsite offers 19 powered sites and 7 unpowered sites. There are two booking options available:

Weekdays: Monday to Friday.

Weekends: Friday to Monday.

BOOK ONLINE

To find out more and book online go to our website via the **QR code** or go to - unitingchurchwa.org.au/congregation-hub/congregation-resources/campsite/
For group bookings email property@wa.uca.org.au



National Redress Scheme Update

The National Redress Scheme (the Scheme) commenced on 1 July 2018, in response to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse.

The Scheme is a way to support people who experienced child sexual abuse while in an institution that was supposed to be looking after them. It acknowledges the widespread sexual abuse of children in Australian institutions, recognises the suffering endured by survivors, holds institutions accountable for the abuse and helps people who have experienced child sexual abuse to gain access to counselling, a direct personal response from the institution responsible, and a redress payment.

An institution can be a children's home, mission, orphanage, congregation, school, hospital or sports club.

The Uniting Church has affirmed its commitment to justice for survivors, is committed to proactively participating in the Scheme in a trauma informed way and is encouraging people who may be eligible to approach the Scheme to apply for redress. To be eligible you must be an Australian citizen or permanent resident and have been sexually abused in a participating institution before you were 18 years of age and before 1 July 2018. You are required to tell the Scheme about what happened to you at the institution.

The closing date for applications is **30 June 2027**. No applications will be accepted by the Scheme after this date.

If you or someone you know would like to know how to apply, it can be done online via myGov or in writing by completing a paper-based form, calling 1800 737 377 or by asking a confidential Redress Support Service for help. You will find these by visiting <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/support>

If you have already received redress from a Uniting Church Institution and have indicated that you would like a Direct Personal Response, and are ready for the next step, please contact UCA Redress on 1800 411 739 or info@redress.uca.org.au

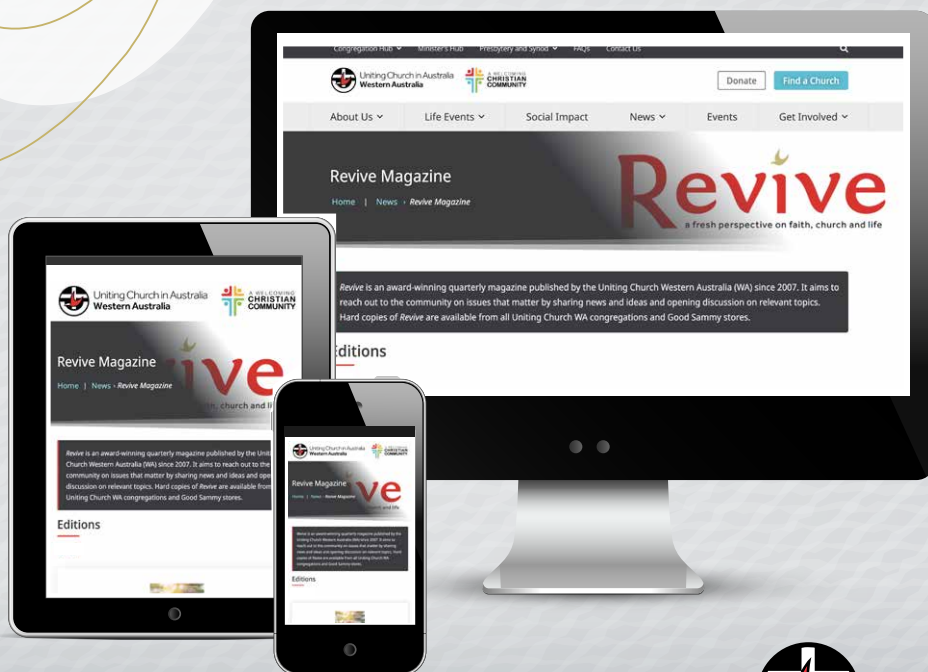
Fact sheets have been distributed to congregations to ensure that Uniting Church members are aware of the Scheme and how to respond to a survivor who discloses past sexual abuse experienced in our former Institutions or seeks help to access the Scheme. You can contact the Uniting Church WA Culture of Safety team for more information on cultureofsafety@wa.uca.org.au

If you have concerns about a child or any person currently being harmed or at risk of harm, please contact the police on 000 or child safety authorities.



Visit Revive Magazine online

Read more news, stories and reflections. Find previous issues of *Revive*. Keep up-to-date with all the events and activities of the Uniting Church WA and our community.



unitingchurchwa.org.au



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.



**Methodist
Ladies' College**
356 Stirling Hwy
Claremont WA 6010
T 08 9384 4000
mlc.wa.edu.au



Penrhos College
6 Morrison St
Como WA 6152
T 08 9368 9500
penrhos.wa.edu.au



**Presbyterian
Ladies' College**
14 McNeil St
Peppermint Grove
WA 6011
T 08 9424 6444
plc.wa.edu.au



Scotch College
76 Shenton Rd
Swanbourne WA 6010
T 08 9383 6800
scotch.wa.edu.au



St Stephen's School
Campuses in
Duncraig and Carramar
T 08 9243 2108
ststephens.wa.edu.au



Tranby College
90 Arpentur Dr
Baldivis WA 6171
T 08 9524 2424
tranby.wa.edu.au



Wesley College
Corner of Coode St
and Angelo St
South Perth WA 6151
T 08 9368 8000
wesley.wa.edu.au

* Not all schools offer Pre Kindergarten.