



# The Uniting Church in the Eastern Wheatbelt

## SUNDAY 24th MAY 2020

### **CHAIRPERSON**

Steve Higgins

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Grace and peace to you all.

Last Thursday was Ascension Day when we remember Jesus's final ascension into heaven forty days after Easter. It was a pivotal event in the history of Christianity, marking the end of the disciples' reliance on the physical presence and personal guidance of Jesus, a prelude to Pentecost when he poured out his Holy Spirit, enabling them boldly fulfil the charge laid upon them to be his witnesses throughout the entire world.

We face a transition this week ourselves, although a far less dramatic one, as we are able to meet together in our church building for the first time since before Easter. There are still restrictions on how we can meet, so things will be slightly different than before. These differences are described on the last page of this newsletter, and it will be worth your while reading this before coming to church on Sunday.

Just exactly what does it mean to be Jesus's *...witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth...* as today's reading from Acts says? Mike will talk about this *mission* in his sermon this morning. He will talk about the difference between making disciples, which is what God wants us to do, and making church members, which is what we all too often try to do. It is about introducing people to a vital faith in a living God able to meet their deepest emotional and spiritual needs

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that can adapt to changing circumstances, rather than to set “Christian” attitudes and practices appropriate in some particular times and places, but not others. The concerns of modern Australians are different from those of mid-twentieth century Australians, and so are their spiritual needs. Their spiritual needs may very well have changed over the past two months as a result of corona virus, but the ability of God to meet them has not.

The Holy Spirit Jesus promised at his ascension empowered the early church to progress his mission throughout the entire then-known world in culturally meaningful ways. He can do the same for us today. I look forward to seeing you to celebrate his coming next week at Pentecost.

Until then, stay blessed

Bob French

## *Who invented God?*

A six-year-old Scottish girl named Lulu wrote a letter to God: “Dear God, How did you get invented?” Lulu’s father sent her letter to various church leaders: the Scottish Episcopal Church (no reply), the Presbyterians (no reply), and the Scottish Catholics (who sent a theologically complex reply). He also sent it to the then Archbishop of Caternbury Rowan Williams, who sent the following letter in reply:

Dear Lulu,

Your dad has sent on your letter and asked if I have any answers. It’s a difficult one! But I think God might reply a bit like this—

“Dear Lulu—nobody invented me—but lots of people discovered me and were quite surprised. They discovered me when they looked round at the world and thought it was really beautiful or really mysterious and wondered where it came from. They discovered me when they were very quiet on their own and felt a sort of peace and love they hadn’t expected. Then they invented ideas about me—some of them sensible and some of them not very sensible. From time to time I sent them some hints—especially in the life of Jesus—to help them get closer to what I’m really like. But there was nothing and nobody around before me to invent me. Rather like somebody who writes a story in a book, I started making up the story of the world and eventually invented human beings like you who could ask awkward questions!”

And then he’d send you lots of love and sign off. I know he doesn’t usually write letters, so I have to do the best I can on his behalf. Lots of love from me too.

+Archbishop Rowan

# prayers

## ***A Prayer for the Uniting Church in Western Australia***

God of Grace and truth, renew and revive your church,  
Deepen our love for you and others,  
Broaden our love for our church, our neighbours and your mission in the world,  
Holy Spirit breathe new life into us.  
In the name of Christ who loves us beyond measure.

AMEN

## ***Intercession***

Pray for ...

- \* Kevin Tengvall undergoing continuing medical treatment.
- \* Steve Higgins's cousin Ron with myeloma.
- \* Jill Tennent's continued recovery now that she has returned to Merredin.
- \* The Sutherland family, especially Peter and Anne .
- \* Gradual return to normal life as COVID-19 restrictions are gradually lifted.
- \* For chaplaincy in Eastern Wheatbelt schools: Merredin, Bruce Rock, and Mukinbudin.  
Pray for staff, students, and chaplains.
- \* For the Prime Minister and members of the Australina Parliament, the WA Premier and members of State Parliament, and the Police Force.

## ***From the Synod Prayer Calendar ...***

- \* Church Law Committee and the Nominating Committee. Please also pray for the Standards for Ministries Committee and the Church Polity Reference Committee.

**Do you have a special need for prayer? Remember the Elders are always available for one on one prayer following services at Merredin, and while we are isolating are only a phone call or email away.**

## ELDERS CONTACT DETAILS

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Louise French	9041 1780	Sal Marais	9041 2473
(mobile)	0438 337 490	(mobile)	0427 788 809
Kerry Hermon	0409 400 153	Steve Higgins	9041 5080
		(mobile)	0476 231 928

## WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

This Sunday we will resume worshipping at the Merredin Church, but we will do things slightly differently to adhere to the COVID-19 restrictions still in place.

There will be two services so we don't have more than 20 people in the congregation at the same time. The first will be at 9.00 am, and the second at 10.30 am. You will have been allocated to one of the two services before the lockdown began but if you cannot remember any of the Merredin elders can tell you.

Please arrive early as you will be ushered to your seats one at a time to maintain social distancing. Seating will be limited to two people per pew, and we will only use every second pew, also to maintain social distancing. We ask attendees at the early service to leave as soon as the service is finished to allow the pews to be cleaned before people attending the second service arrive. There will be hand sanitiser in the foyer for you to use on arrival and as you leave.

For those of you who still do not feel comfortable attending church in person, a video recording of the sermon will be available on YouTube, and a printed copy of the sermon accompanies this newsletter.

**The World Council of Churches is producing a series of spiritual resources for a world in uncertain times as a result of COVID-19. The first bible study on finding reassurance in the Psalms *Healing the world: sorrow without fear* is now available on the WCC website [here](#)**



### **Items for Newsletter:**

If there is anything you would like included in the next newsletter, including prayer requests, please let Bob French know on 9041 1780, 0428 125 613, or [robert.french@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.french@bigpond.com)