



The Uniting Church in the Eastern Wheatbelt

SUNDAY 7th JUNE 2020

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Grace and peace to you all.

Life is beginning to return to normal in the Eastern Wheatbelt after the shock of the COVID-19 closing down our society. "In-person" worship wervices have resumed at Merredin and Mukinbudin (though not yet at Southern Cross) and Mukinbudin held their first post-COVID Corner Closet on the last Thursday of May. Today at Merredin we have our first worship service with the whole congregation able to attend, instead of being split into two, and we will also have a live Minister. We still have to keep our distance, so please observe the remaining restrictions outlined on the last page of this newsletter.

Last Sunday was Pentecost when we celebrated the coming of the Holy Spirit to the early church, and we saw what a remarkable difference it made to the effectiveness of its mission. There has been much debate about exactly what receiving the Holy Spirit means, and the nature and purpose of his gifts. Today Mike Fawcett is going to deal with this topic. He will liken the gifts of the Holy Spirit to tools we are given to accomplish the mission of the church which, according to Matthew, is to make disciples of all nations. They are not, in Mike's view, simply for the benefit of the receiver as a sign of his or her spiritual standing, but something of practical value for all of God's children, both redeemed and not yet redeemed. How can we recognise and use these gifts most effectively? You will have to listen to Mike to find out.

continued overleaf....

from the previous page.....

Please keep sending your prayer requests and stories of God's presence in your lives for inclusion in next week's newsletter.

Until then, stay blessed

Bob French

Social Justice in the Uniting Church

The Uniting Church has always had a strong social justice conscience. The Basis of Union says the Church is called to be a fellowship of reconciliation; that this is reconciliation among peoples and creation as well as between God and humanity is shown by its pledging at its formation in 1977 to seek the correction of injustices wherever they occur, to work for the eradication of poverty and racism in our society and beyond, and expressing its concern for protecting the environment and the replenishment of the earth's resources.

These concerns are currently topical. Last week was Reconciliation Week which focuses on breaking down barriers between indigenous and other Australians. It was somewhat overshadowed this year by the death of George Floyd in America at the hands of police and the worldwide protests that ensued. Institutionalised racism is not a peculiarly American disease, but also present in Australia, as Geoff Bice explains in this article in [Revive](#).

Friday was World Environment Day. Most people acknowledge our climate is changing, and not for the better. The devastating bushfires that swept eastern Australia this past summer were much worse than they would have under a more benign climate. Because climate change is a global problem it is easy to think anything an individual does makes no difference. However, in God there is always hope, and Uniting Earth has these [prayer and worship resources](#) on their website.

Next Sunday is the beginning of Refugee Week, with the theme "[Celebrating the Year of Welcome](#)". The plight of the refugee is likely to become more invidious in the near future as previously welcoming governments and societies become more insular in the wake of COVID-19 and deteriorating economic conditions, and tend towards authoritarianism. This could well become more challenging soon for our church, and I may have more to say about this next week.

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 who returned to hospital in Perth on Friday, and for Debbie.
- * 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 Australian Parliament, the WA Premier and members of State Parliament, and the Police Force.

From the Synod Prayer Calendar ...

- * All Saints Floreat and St Aidan's Claremont Uniting Churches. Please also pray for the President of the Uniting Church in Australia and National Assembly Staff.

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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Kerry Hermon	0409 400 153	Steve Higgins	9041 5080
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WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY

This Sunday we will continue worshipping at the Merredin Church, but with further relaxation of the COVID-19 restrictions we will be holding only one service at 9 am. And today we will have a live preacher for the first time since before the COVID-19 shutdown as we welcome Mike Fawcett to our pulpit.

Although restrictions have been relaxed we still have to maintain a separation of 1.5 m between people unless they are from the same household so each pew will still be limited to 2 people. Pews will be spaced further apart than previously so we can use each pew. Tea or coffee will be available after the service for those who wish to stay but we ask that you respect the 1.5 m separation and move outside if possible. The number of people in the morning tea room will be restricted to 13, and you are asked not to enter the kitchen. Cups and mugs will be collected and washed afterwards. If you have any cold symptoms like sneezing, coughing, or fever please stay at home for your own and other peoples' safety.

I have provided a printed copy of the sermon for those of you still not comfortable attending church in person.

Next Sunday Bob French will be preaching in Merredin.

ZOOM QUIZ NIGHT 27 JUNE

Trinity North Uniting Church is holding a Zoom quiz night on 27 June to raise funds for the Black Pearl Network, which they support. The Black Pearl Network aims to empower the indigenous people of the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua by peaceful means,

through education and overseas scholarships, including English language training. Tickets cost \$15 per person, or \$100 for a table of 8, and can be obtained from Kerry Povey (0403 434 842 or kerry@povey.net.au). There are more details on the attached flier.

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