



Witness



Johann Wenzel Peter *Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden* (1800-1829)
Pinacoteca Vaticana (public domain)

St Ninian's Uniting Church, Lyneham

August - September 2025

St Ninian's Uniting Church, Cnr Mouat and Brigalow Sts, Lyneham

Minister

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| Treasurer | Gwen Souter treasurer@stninians.org.au |
| Finance Committee Convenor | John Cutts (as above) |
| Chairperson, Property Committee | Cheryl Wright |
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Services of Worship at St Ninian's each Sunday at 9.30 am.

MATERIAL FOR NEXT WITNESS IS DUE ON: Sunday 28 September

From the Minister

‘THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTING WITH OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY’

Being part of St Ninian’s worship and faith community is also being part of the wider Lyneham community. Understanding this is an essential expression of our faith as we follow the examples of Jesus and his disciples when they were called into mission and ministry. Like them, we are called to love our neighbours, willingly serve those in need and be the hands and feet of Christ in ways that are visible and transformative. This engagement is rooted in our familiar stories and teaching of Christ who placed great emphasis on the importance of community, compassion, and selfless service.

Before anything else engaging in Christ’s mission is at the heart of the Gospel. Jesus’ ministry was well known for his love and care for those who sat on the margins of society and those who were stereotyped as disadvantaged. Through active participation in local initiatives, of all kinds, we are demonstrating God’s love and grace are more than merely words that make us sound good. We can help in food pantries (The Mustard Seed Food Pantry), rough sleepers, helping to provide meals, (The Early Morning Breakfast Program) donations raised from our Christmas Eve Program; in doing so, we are sharing hope that’s found in our faith.

Being missionally active with and in our community, we’re encouraging others to see the Spirit of fellowship and unity at work within the faith community and beyond. When others beyond our faith community witness us serving Christ with joy and compassion we are strengthening and deepening our bonds and relationships with each other and with Christ. This shared commitment to nurture and grow Christ’s mission creates has the happy knack of growing a vibrant church community where each of us have the opportunity to support and encourage each other as we live out our faith. As we do this, we’re also cultivating an environment where personal stories of faith are shared, inspiring others to grow spiritually and practically.

As we continue to pursue Christ’s objective to engage with our community, we are given opportunities to tell others about our faith, what keeps us going, and why we are doing what we do. Building real and authentic relationships with locals opens doors for sharing the Gospel in a relational context. When people witness faith in action – they witness kindness, generosity, and genuine concern- they are more receptive to hearing Christ’s message of Good News. Missional engagement often leads to conversations about faith, allowing each of us to witness and speak about the power of Christ’s love to those who are just meeting Him for the first time.

Engaging with the community also places us in positions to be a source of hope and healing in a world filled with despair, loneliness, grief, anxiety and unanswered questions about just who Jesus is. In times of crises, whether due to natural disaster such as winds, storms, fires, loss of employment creating economic hardship, or social unrest, a missionally engaged church such as St Ninian’s is trying to achieve can respond swiftly and effectively, clearly demonstrating the love of Christ is alive and well in Lyneham. This not only fulfills our calling from Christ, but also shows the community the love is real and we are a place refuge and support can be found. When we are missionally active in this way with the community we are fulfilling the Great Commission to go and make disciples of all peoples. The integration of local mission work with St Ninian’s nurtures a holistic approach to discipleship – one that emphasises service, love and outreach as integral aspects of faith.

Missionally connecting with the local community is vital for St Ninian’s. Acting in this way is showing our faithful determination to follow Christ’s teaching, always mindful of strengthening our community bond with each other. In our serving others we are also given opportunities to share the Gospel, positions St Ninian’s as a beacon of hope in their darkest hours, fulfilling the call to make disciples, all of which are contributors to our being a vibrant, and transformative congregation.

Rev’d Sharon Cutts

News of People

Cath and Lionel Davidson have moved to Amala Aged Care Facility, Gordon.

It is good to hear that Margaret Clark is home after major heart surgery. Also Grace Sugden is now home after a time in rehabilitation. Our best wishes both of them.

Congratulations to Mary Featherstone, who celebrated her 100th birthday with family on 8th July.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Women's Activity Group (WAGs)

Our last meeting in May was cancelled due to the passing of one of our former members. Edith Webster was one of our older members and had not been able to attend meetings for a number of years but had been a great supporter of Wags in the past. We will all miss her.

In June our guest speaker was Jane Southwell who has a strong family connection to St.Ninian's. Her topic was "Bringing Country To The City". It had been her lifelong dream to give city people an idea of what happens in country areas and to promote farming. She did this for many years taking animal exhibitions to many of the agricultural shows all over the country. As well as travelling to places like Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide and Sydney she did lots of school visits, educating children about animals and the sources of their food.

Food was the topic of our next meeting as we had our annual mid-year lunch. This year the venue was Quan's Kitchen at Kippax where we all enjoyed a banquet of Chinese food and great conversation.



A surprise for me was the lovely chocolate cake Sharon brought for my birthday which we all managed to find room for. Thank you, Sharon.



In July we had Lyn give her member's profile. They are always very interesting talks as we all learn a little bit more about our members. Lyn has had a very interesting life as a wife of someone in the services which meant moving around the country. Everywhere she went she managed to find employment in a variety of different roles. She was very much involved in supporting her boys, whether at school canteens or helping on scout camps. She has worked on hospitals, aged care and also at the Mint here in Canberra. Also, at this meeting we celebrated Mary Featherstone's 100th birthday with flowers and a card. Mary has been a member of Wags for many years but sadly is unable to attend our meetings now.

Last week a few of us went to Hungry Bird for morning tea. It is always good to chat and catch up over coffee and cake.



Coming up next, one of our members Wendy Veenstra is going to talk about her trip to New Zealand, then we are having a games morning

which will NOT include anything strenuous!! In September, Kay will give another travel talk about her trip from Normandy to Nice. We round off our September meetings with morning tea and a chat about our favourite song or piece of music. Please feel free to come along and join in the fun. We would all be happy to see you.

Irene Reid

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF)

We enjoyed 2 very interesting and talented speakers recently, beginning with Beth Roberts who introduced us to botanical art at our June meeting. Beth began this hobby some time ago, starting with lessons from Ellen Fitzgerald in Bungendore. As she found this enjoyable, she has continued with it, at present meeting monthly with a group at the Botanic Gardens to paint and sketch. She had many examples of her work in all sorts of media – we were very impressed and admiring of her skill and ability. She sells her cards and pictures and clearly enjoys these activities.

At our July gathering, Horst Hahne gave us an overview of coin production in his talk on 'Making Money at the Mint'. Horst obviously is an extremely gifted artist and engraver to having produced work to such demanding standards, and it was very interesting to follow the steps taken in introducing a new coin. We looked at the examples he brought, giving us a real 'behind the scenes' look. Anyone who comes to our meeting to follow a topic of interest will not be disappointed. You are welcome to join us in the Williams Room at 1.30 on the first Wednesday of the month.

Thank you to Barbara Mackay and Kay Hahne for organising the 13-- 14 June 2025 Book Sale. The participation of students from Radford College was very welcome and made the setting up so much easier. Some of us helped with the midyear sale and we will also be at the garage/clothing sale on 23 August.

Coming Events Meetings

6 August 2025 **Speaker:** Marion McConnell
Topic: A Trip to Japan
3 September 2025 **Speaker/Topic** TBA
Events
23 August 2025 Garage/Clothing Sale

Pat Semmler

Church Council

St Ninian's Uniting Church
Mid-Year Financial Report 2025

At the Congregation Meeting in November 2024 Marion McConnell resigned as Treasurer and several people also concluded as part of the Finance Committee. This included Bob Crawford and Bob Munro and we continue to give thanks for their faithful service over the many years past.

The Finance Committee was reformed with John Cutts as Convenor, Gwen Souter as Treasurer with Rev Sharon Cutts, Joyce McGuire, Marion Mc Connell and Anita Hutchinson as part of the committee. Anita has since resigned, and we thank her for her service. The Finance Committee is committed to keeping the Congregation informed regarding the ongoing financial position of St Ninian's and hence this Mid-Year Financial report.

Looking back over the last 5 years, much has happened in the life of the Church. The Congregation survived the Covid pandemic and during that time enjoyed the ministry of Rev Neil Miller (3 years) and Rev Charles Vesely (9 months). Charles covered ministry pro bono and a donation to the Bible Society. During early 2022 you decided to call a full-time minister to St Ninian's and Rev Sharon Cutts commenced in October 2022.

At the commencement of the Financial Year 2023 on July 1, 2022, the bank accounts held about \$224,000 dollars. This amount has been significantly reduced over the last 3 years such that the bank accounts on 30th June 2025 held about \$115,000, a reduction of \$109,000.

"Why is that so?" you may ask.

There are 2 main reasons this has come to be. Firstly, when the financial position of St Ninian's was calculated for the Congregation Profile back in 2022 the cost of full-time

ministry was not factored in adequately. A significant part of that was the loss of income from renting the manse.

Secondly, costs of operating the church have increased at a rate higher than the income. This is despite the increase in offering levels and much effort put into fundraising and property usage by other groups. From a cost perspective, significant amounts were spent on the garden project and the manse bathroom renovations in this 3-year period. During the same 3-year period we also faced increases in things like cleaning, bookkeeping and musicians, all activities that were formally done on a voluntary basis but are now paid to take place. Ongoing maintenance costs on aging buildings will not reduce into the future but most likely increase.

Forward forecasts show that the situation will not improve, costs will continue to rise, and income will most likely be lower. For the 2 years ahead, Fiscal 26 & 27, a further deficit of \$53,000 is projected.

What does this mean?

The future of full-time ministry at St Ninian's is in jeopardy and will come to an end in the near future. Future ministry will likely be a part-time minister or a shared minister with another congregation.

We don't like to paint a picture of gloom in our first mid-year report, but it is important that you know and understand the situation regarding the costs of operating a church with a full time minister.

John Cutts
Finance Committee Convenor.

Choir

Once again I write this as the choir is in recess - this time for 6 weeks during the cold, dark winter months when going out on a Thursday night might just be a bit of a chore instead of a joyously anticipated event!

The first part of the year has sped by, but in that time the choir has presented 5 new anthems plus 9 old favourites that we have done before, plus 4 more oldies for Palm Sunday in April. Also, the choir has helped lead the congregation with new

congregational hymns chosen by Sharon. We go over these new songs thoroughly so that we can help introduce them to the rest of you with the right notes and rhythms. Sometimes Kay leads from the microphone to make it easier to catch on to a new tune. And I must say, St Ninian's people do catch on fairly quickly, you are a good musical group which sing out firmly and are willing to try new things, which is great. I have to admit that I sometimes grab a song that Sharon has chosen as a hymn and say "Please can the choir do this first as an anthem, it is so beautiful?!" Well, what better way to introduce a new song. But then she needs to choose another hymn - sorry, Sharon! We now have *In Christ Alone*, TIS 724 *Hosanna, hosanna, hosanna in the highest!* and TIS 720 *Halle Halle Hallelujah* in our repertoire as a congregation, as well as the snappy new one Kay led today *Put on Love Every Day*.

We will resume our practices and anthems on the second Sunday of August until after our "Lessons and Carols" in December. Bring on the second half of the year ...

Kay Hahne, Choir Director
July 2025

Social Action Group

Marion and Bill continue to attend the Presbytery Social Justice group meetings every six weeks or so. The meetings are held via zoom on a Monday evening. At its last meeting the Assembly's *Vision for a Just Australia* document was discussed. If you are interested in this document it can be found at uniting.church/a-vision-for-a-just-australia/ Our discussion focussed on 3 of the 7 themes which are contained in the document

1. A First Peoples Heart
2. A welcoming, compassionate and diverse nation and
3. Flourishing communities

Following this discussion we decided to explore further what the ACT has in place or aspiring to in regard to implementing the

Uluru Statement's three elements of Voice, Treaty and Truth
Organising a workshop on climate change and the Pacific was also discussed.
Also at this meeting Evan Mann from Woden Valley Uniting Church reported on the successful initiative of building affordable housing on Uniting Church land in Curtin. This is to be a supported (MYHome) and affordable rental housing project and will be led by Wesley Mission. Evan Mann and others from the former St James Uniting Church are to be congratulated for many, many years in their efforts to make this happen. There will be ongoing fund raising to fit-out and furnish the MYHome section of the building and contributions to future running costs. You may have seen the publicity given to this in the Canberra Times on Wednesday 9 July.
If anyone is interested in joining this group please speak to Marion.
Marion McConnell

LOST AND FOUND

Lost

Reading glasses in a dark blue case. If found, please speak to Barbara Mackay.

Missing from Kitchen

The Church's Coffee Plunger has disappeared from the kitchen along with mugs and glasses. If you know of their whereabouts please let Cheryl or Marion know.

Events

Two Reviews of 'Impromptu':
Linus Lee Concert at St Ninians

1 On the afternoon of Sunday 6 July 2025 we experienced a glorious concert like no other previously seen at St Ninians. Linus Lee is one of our regular organists at both church services and special events. We have all appreciated his relatively recent arrival in our midst, and we were delighted to help organise

a special event with Linus himself at the centre.

This special event was called 'Impromptu'. Linus played an array of light, classical pieces, selecting the better known movements from compositions by Beethoven, Chopin, Strauss and more. The concert started with about 40 mins in the church, with Linus on the organ, followed by another 40 mins in the hall, with Linus on piano.

The concert turned out to be absolutely amazing!! Linus' skills on the keyboard have to be heard to be believed, and everyone was spellbound. Then, to finish off what was already a superb concert, Linus played some fun pieces, including one that was called "How Not to Play Fur Elise".

What was equally wonderful was how many people turned up for the concert. Linus is not only an organist/pianist at St Ninian's, but is an accompanist for several large choirs and a regular organist at other churches as well as St Ninian's. Maybe we shouldn't be surprised at how many turned out to attend his concert at St Ninian's, but we were. Our church is a very small, heritage-listed building, that officially holds about 110 persons, but could probably stretch to about 140 if everyone squeezes up a bit. Well, we had 161 people there! We did fit everyone in, just. There was much moving of chairs, and a few still had to stand!

We all were captivated by the concert, including the encore that we encouraged Linus into playing (we were not going to stop clapping until he did). The magic of the day is still with us. Linus, if you are reading this, may we thank you from the bottom of our hearts. We were honoured to be able to be there to listen to you, to share this experience, and please, may we have another concert sometime in the future??

Also, if I may be excused a little advertising, Linus will be participating in two further public events at St Ninian's this year - *Come Sing With Us*, in mid-September, and our *Christmas Eve Carols in December*. We hope to see you there. Jane Allen

2 The date of July 6th will do down in the life of St Ninian's as one which has gifted us with a great memory. Linus Lee who we know well, had a performance on the organ in the church and after a short interval continued his performance on the piano in the hall.

By 2pm the church was packed full with no room to spare where Linus played a variety of well-recognised pieces. When the time came for us to move into the hall, we ran out of chairs leaving many to stand- they didn't mind. Every chair was in use including the office chairs. The music was absolutely wonderful.

Once again, the ladies who prepared the afternoon tea did a superb job in providing a variety of food. It was amazing as Cheryl and her helpers provided for 90-100; the food stretched to cover the 165 attendees a most unexpected high number of people.

May I take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to the many hands that made it such a memorable afternoon. Don't be surprised if there is another concert in the future.

Rev'd Sharon

WINTER POT LUCK

July 13th saw a number of us enjoy our winter potluck lunch after church. We gathered around tables and shared food that came from all those who attended. We played three rounds of heads and tails and three rounds of indoor bowls and had six happy winners.

Our theme centered on the cost of living with three meat trays from Kaleen Butchery, 1 bag of afternoon tea goodies, 1 bag of personal products, and 1 fruit bowl. Well done to our winners! Our Spring Potluck is on October 16th we would love you to join us, you never know you may go home with one of spectacular prizes. Rev'd Sharon

'LIVING BY FAITH' - wisdom from the Prophet Habakkuk - Ian Carmichael (September)

A short bible study focused on the book of Habakkuk. Tuesday afternoon 2-3:30pm in the small meeting room.

Week 1 September 2: Lost and Found

Week 2 September 9: The unbelievable God

Week 3 September 16: The Letter of Complaint

Week 4 September 23rd: Write it down and live by Faith

Week 5 September 30th: Living by Faith

If you would like to participate in the study please let Sharon know.

MONDAY GARDENING GROUP

The St Ninian's/Benedictus Gardening Group works to create and maintain our own little Garden of Eden. It meets on the first and third Mondays of each month from 9.30 for an hour or so, and then enjoys a cuppa and a chat. There are tasks for every level of skill and fitness: pruning, weeding, collecting mulch and so on. The photo shows Marion moving compost on a Monday morning



If you would like to join in, please contact Marion or Mary Bush.

If you look at the painting of the Garden of Eden on the front page, you'll see differences and similarities. First, our gardeners are fully clothed; we have fewer animals, though a lot of birds and no known snake. We have trees, shrubs, flowers, a water feature and a rocky outcrop. Definitely a little Eden. Enjoy our gift from and for God.