



Witness



The Last Supper ca 1325-50 Ugolino da Siena

St Ninian's Uniting Church, Lyneham

February - March 2026

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

Minister

Rev'd Sharon Cutts

Pastoral Assistant

Julie Gillespie

Witness Editor

Elizabeth Smith **Email:** witness@stninians.org.au

All mail to PO Box 7181, Kaleen ACT 2617

Telephone: 6248 9198, Church Office

Email: stninians@stninians.org.au **Webpage:** www.stninians.org.au

Chairperson, Church Council	Neville Biggs chair@stninians.org.au
Deputy Chairperson, Church Council	Stephen Priest
Secretary, Church Council	Marion McConnell secretary@stninians.org.au
Treasurer	Gwen Souter treasurer@stninians.org.au
Finance Committee Convenor	Marion McConnell (as above)
Chairperson, Property Committee	Cheryl Wright property@stninians.org.au
Honorary Pastoral Assistant	Julie Gillespie

Services of Worship at St Ninian's each Sunday at 9.30 am.

Easter Services

Ash Wednesday: Feb 18th 6:30pm

Palm Sunday: 9:30am

Good Friday: 9:00 am

Easter Sunday: 9:30 am

MATERIAL FOR NEXT WITNESS IS DUE ON: Sunday 29 March

From the Minister

‘LIVING THROUGH LENT WITH HOPE AND FAITH’

This year Ash Wednesday 18th February marks the beginning of our time of deep reflection, as we ask ourselves what more can we do for to our ever-developing faith. It’s a time when we anticipate what’s coming next in our Christian traditions – the colour purple accompanies us through Lent ending on Maundy Thursday. This time is followed by black; Good Friday and then the brightness of Easter Sunday – Gold and White. Lent is the 40 days leading us up to Easter and it’s a time we spend preparing our hearts and minds for Christ’s resurrection. Living in Lenten hope and faith not only rejuvenates our spiritual life but it’s also a time when we can nurture our community’s sense of purpose and renewal.

Now may also be great opportunity to allow yourself to immerse yourself in deep reflection, to identify what distracts you from your faith and to consciously make the necessary adjustments to take you back towards a more enriching relationship with Christ. This process often begins with prayer, fasting, and discipleship. Three practices deeply founded in Christ’s teachings which encourage us to remain focused on our relationship with Christ and each other.

Through prayer, we’re engaging in dialogue with God, seeking guidance, wisdom, and enduring strength. During Lent, prayer becomes our lifeline providing us with solace and empowerment to overcome our distractions. We continue to worship, enjoy fellowship and witness to others inside our faith community and importantly beyond it. In doing so, we deepen our intimate relationship with Christ as we take a firm hold on our dependence of trust and hope that we don’t stand alone in our struggles – we have the gift of the Holy Spirit on our journey.

Controlled fasting during Lent is also a powerfully dynamic practice that goes beyond abstaining from certain foods or habits. It serves as a reminder of the sacrifices Christ made and encourages personal discipline. One of the hardest things I fasted from was music

for 40 days (except for Sunday worship) – I was very relieved when the 40 days was over! By giving up something that gives us pleasure, we can experience the humility and simplicity that Jesus embraced. The act of fasting, when looked at from the spirit of humility perspective, cultivates an awareness of what’s desirable and can lead to a deeper longing for spiritual fulfillment. This realisation anchors our heart with hope, shining a light on a pathway to a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God.

Discipleship personifies answering Christ’s call to love God, and our neighbour, deepening our relationships with each other and sharing the Good News with those we meet along the way. It’s a personal commitment that we desire to carry through. In freely giving our time, resources, or support to those in need, we are sharing the Good News and love of Christ. Through acts of kindness and charity, hope is rekindled with all those who experience it. These experiences reinforce the belief in a compassionate, loving God who inclusively cares for all of creation.

Looking back at these practices of prayer, fasting and discipleship, Lent becomes a journey of change. It’s an opportunity to take the time to strip away the distractions of daily life and to nurture our inner landscape, giving permission for us to develop more fully our spirituality. It invites us to take a firm grip in our moments of vulnerability, as our moments of reflection can open areas of our lives that may need healing or perhaps attitudes that may require work to change them. Yet, in our vulnerability, Lenten hope is the bright light shining in the darkness. Hope reminds us that, while we acknowledge our imperfections, we are embraced by grace and the promise of new beginnings.

One final thing, living in Lenten hope and faith creates a deeper anticipation for Easter, where the message of resurrection, renewal, and eternal life although new thoughts or a new message, is well worth hearing again as they cement themselves deep within our natural selves. As we move through Lent, I would hope that our hearts are opened and prepared to celebrate the triumph over despair

and darkness, moving forward with a revived faith and an unwavering hope that manifests in every aspect of our lives. As we each take our own journey, among friends in the company of the Holy Spirit, we emerge as a changed people of God, involved with our wider communities with renewed energy to share the light of the risen Christ Jesus.

In His Service

Rev'd Sharon Cutts

Easter Services

Ash Wednesday: Feb 18th 6:30pm

Palm Sunday: 9:30am

Good Friday: 9:00 am

Easter Sunday: 9:30 am

Sunday Service now on ZOOM

We would like to encourage anyone who cannot attend Sunday's Service in person - for any reason - to join us online.

Our Zoom connection has recently been improved, making it easier and clearer than before.

If you visit the St Ninian's home page (stninians.org.au), simply click the "Join Us on ZOOM" button. The service will open automatically for you.

We hope this helps everyone feel included and connected, wherever you may be.

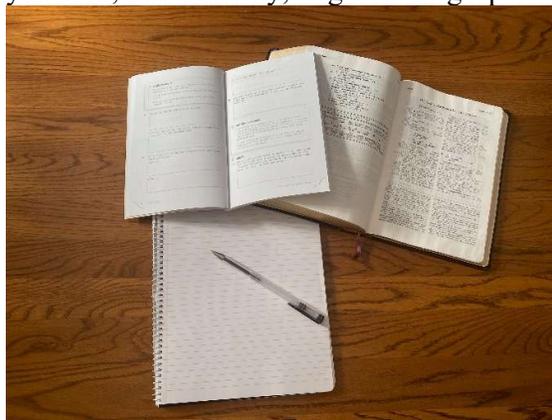
7 Bible Discussions on 1&2 Timothy – Guard the gospel by Phillip D Jenson

The Bible Discussions will be in the small meeting room 2 – 3:30pm

'The two letters Paul wrote to his protégé Timothy were inspired by God for our learning. Nowhere can we get closer to Paul's mind than when he's talking to his true child in the faith; Timothy.

Yet these letters were not for Timothy alone – they reveal God's plan for our lives as well. The context of 1 & 2 Timothy is the Christian mission. Christianity is missionary at heart, so to be a disciple of Jesus is to be a missionary. Jesus himself was on a mission: he was sent by God and 'came into the world to save sinners.' (1 Tim 1:15)

Because all Christians are engaged in the mission of Christ, the letters of the great missionary apostle, Paul, are obviously important to us. These seven studies will thrill and challenge you as you see how to walk through life in a way that pleases God, and as you seek, like Timothy, to guard the gospel.'



Weekly Topics:

Week 1 Thursday March 5th: Christ came to save

Week 2 Thursday March 19th: Men & women of the gospel

Week 3 Thursday April 2nd: Godliness training

Week 4 Thursday April 16th: The great gain of godliness

Week 5 Thursday May 7th: Do not be ashamed

Week 6 Thursday May 21st: Work and life in the last days

Week 7 Thursday June 4th: I charge you....

If you would like to participate in the study, please let Rev Sharon know so you can receive the information. Phone 0424 366 962.

News of People

We are saddened by the deaths of:
Allan Asquith 21 November
Grace Sugden 7 December
Mary Featherston 18 December.
Our sympathies are with their families.

On the other hand, we are pleased to hear that Mary Bush is now home from hospital and doing well, after her fall.

Women's Activity Group (WAGs)

Wags will begin again on 5th February and we hope everyone has enjoyed a restful break. Over the holidays Melda, Cheryl and I have put together the programme for 2026 and we hope it will have something for everyone. As always we are extending an invitation to anyone who would like a cuppa and a chat to come along and join in the fun.

Irene Reid

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF)

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF)

We ended 2025 with a happy time in December reminiscing about Christmases enjoyed in our younger years. Some had memories of cold weather while the remainder looked back to a hot Australian festive period. All celebrations seemed to be very traditional, whatever the temperature.

We are now ready to begin 2026, our first meetings on Wednesday 4th February, the AGM at 1.30pm in the Williams Room with the election of our office bearers, followed by the monthly meeting. Everyone is welcome to join us and we would be pleased to welcome newcomers. After this a new program of speakers and activities will be commenced which will be advertised in following issues of Witness and also in the pew sheets.

Fundraising begins immediately with a clothing sale as part of market@themeetingplace held on 13 and 14

St Ninian's Witness – page 5

February. We will follow a more traditional format this time which we hope will include a wider range of items such as shoes, linen, handbags etc. The amount of stock we can display will largely depend on the help we receive. We would love to clear the storage shed and we are looking for a great result.

Best wishes to all for 2026 and we look forward to working with you as we face the future together.

Pat Semmler

Church Council

I am happy to report that your Church Council has had its first meeting for the year and is ready and willing to continue managing the business of our mission here at St Ninian's church. The appointment of office bearers and convenors of committees was our first task. The results are as follows:

Chairperson Neville Biggs

Deputy Chairperson Steven Priest

Secretary Marion McConnell

Treasurer Gwen Souter

Carers Group Rev Sharon Cutts

Co-Operating Committee Sarah Bachelard (Benedictus)

Finance Committee Convenor Marion McConnell

Futures Committee Convenor Neville Biggs

Property Committee Convenor Cheryl Wright

Presbytery Representative Kerry Wright

The Meeting Place Convenor Steven Priest

Worship Team Rev Sharon Cutts

Ex Officio Rev Sharon Cutts

Safe Church Convenor Janice Schroder

Church Councillor Alan Briscoe

Church Councillor Tim Hobson

Church Councillor Beth Roberts

Church Councillor Kingsley Sutton (Leave of Absence)

Business matters we have already dealt with include new property hire fees and approval of the Church Calendar for 2026. The

calendar is displayed on the wall of the kitchen vestibule in the hall where you can readily access information about upcoming events. Should your group be planning an event, the calendar is the place to start by finding a clear date and, when your decision is made, to confirm the date of that event on the calendar for all to see.

Each year we are faced with changes. In fact change is inevitable and we have to rise to meet whatever change comes along. One thing, however, that doesn't seem to change is the increasing challenge to fulfil our mission, whether our needs are personnel, material resources or finance. Our property needs constant maintenance and other costs are rising while we are faced with increasing pressure on our personnel and financial resources. Yet when I look back over the few years when I have been a part of this congregation, I see some wonderful times and significant achievements such as the special worship services, the exciting fetes and the enjoyable concerts and carols nights.

We have a church of enthusiasm and strength with a desire to reach out to our community and tell people we are here because we want to worship our Lord and to share him with others. Let us take on our role with all the armour of God, the encouragement of the Holy Spirit and the example of Christ our Saviour.

Neville Biggs Chairperson

Choir

CHURCH CHOIR

The last three months of 2025 was full-on for our choir. We practiced many lovely old hymns through the centuries for the very special hymn service on 5 October. Mervyn Olds led on the organ and not only Heather Powrie on viola but also Anna Ambrose, Robert Harris and Paul Whitbread. What a treat for us in the congregation. One of the 'newer' hymns is a combination of *Amazing Grace* and *My Chains are Gone*, which has become a favourite of mine; we must have the congregation sing this one again soon in the

new year.

Another lovely 'new' song was aired on 12 October for the Baptism of Tate Rawlinson (Janice Schroeder's grandson). *I was there to Hear your Borning Cry* will certainly be used again for any future baptisms. The beautiful melody and meaningful words by John Ylvisaker are so precious as they tell of the Lord being with you from birth, baptism, childhood, young adult travelling, exploring and falling in love, middle-age and elder years until your eyes close for the very last time ... all your life through the Lord is there with you *to see your life unfold*.

As soon as the Fete was over, it was time to start on the four extra anthems for our Lessons and Carols on 14 December as we 'Heralded in the King'. With music and readings we called Him *Wonderful* (Is 9:6); we made the plea *Lift up your Heads, ye mighty Gates* (Ps 24:7-10); we *Prepared the Way before Him* (Lk 1:67-89) and commended *Righteous Joseph* (Mt 1:18-25) for listening to and heeding the angel's message.

We have had a much appreciated break over Christmas and January, but will start our practice again on Thursday nights at 7:30 from 5 February. If you can read music and sing in parts, please come and talk to me, you would be welcome to join our small choir. We miss Kingsley, a long-standing tenor, who has had to stand down due to ill health. PS: we have no basses – any fellow out there with a nice low voice?

Also a warning note ahead of time. I will be in Queensland in March-April, so I will not be rehearsing the choir for our usual Palm Sunday program. Instead, Reverend Sharon is going to prepare something different for you.

Kay Hahne, Choir Director
Jan 2026

Safe Church Report

In the last Witness (December/January) Margaret Clark, John Cutts and Janice Schroder – the Safe Church Team – explained the proposed process for screening and appointing leaders, both paid and volunteer. This is currently being discussed by the Canberra and Region Presbytery and the NSW Synod. Once any issues are resolved, Margaret, John and Janice will let us know and go ahead with the process.

Events

MARKET@ THE MEETING PLACE

Market@ The Meeting Place will kick off 2026 on the Friday 13th and Saturday 14th FEBRUARY and this will be a full on UCAF Clothing Sale with all proceeds going to UCAF.

Look forward to seeing you at The Market@ The Meeting Place on the 2nd and 4th Friday/Saturday of the month.

RECYCLING

I notice that the hand wash pump containers are disappearing. Please do not throw these out when empty. We refill them. Trying to do our little bit in reducing waste.

Thank you. Marion

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.