



Witness



Photo by M. McConnell

St Ninian's Uniting Church, Lyneham

June – July 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.

MATERIAL FOR NEXT WITNESS IS DUE ON: Sunday 26 July

From the Minister

As Rev'd Sharon is on leave, there is no piece from her this issue.

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.

Your favourite hymns

In July, Rev'd Sharon will be asking for your favourite hymns, so she can include them in our Sunday services. See also the item below on articles for Witness, including your favourite (and not so favourite) hymns.

Church Flowers



We are very grateful to the people on the flower roster for providing beautiful arrangements each Sunday. If you would like to donate flowers on a particular Sunday, for a memorial or a special occasion we

would welcome that. Please let us know a few weeks in advance in order to accommodate you. You may arrange your special day with either our minister, Rev. Sharon Cutts on 0424366962 or Anita Hutchinson on 0417693338.

Security at St Ninian's.

If you notice any suspicious activity around St Ninian's, do not approach, but report it to the police and to Church Council.

In addition, please ensure that all doors and windows are locked when you leave.



DOORS ARE STILL BEING LEFT OPEN!

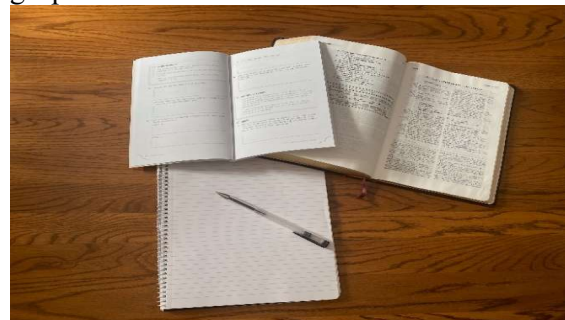
Please note that the hall's glass doors near the church only lock from the inside. They do not latch when simply pulled to.

We can all help to keep our St Ninian's secure.

7 Bible Discussions on 1&2 Timothy – continued. '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.'



Final Topic:

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 think of:

Yvonne Gibson who is now a resident of Morshead Care home;

Keith la Fontaine and family on the death of Dawn on 16th April. The large funeral was a tribute to the esteem in which she was held;

Kingsley Sutton as he continues weekly treatment;

Irene Reid as her daughter is now in hospital in Canberra after weeks in a Sydney hospital;

Robin Russell who is now a resident in RSL Life Care Home;

Doreen Kranz who is in hospital after a recent fall;

Neville Biggs on the death of his brother.

You are all in our thoughts and prayers.

Women's Activity Group (WAGs)

Our first meeting for 2026 was on February 5th. It is our custom at WAGS to share with each other books we have been reading, films that we have seen over the holiday break.

On February 19th the WAGS met at Melda & Bob's home. Bob shared with us about a nostalgic trip we had to Wellington NSW. He wanted to visit his best friend's grave there, but the plans ended up to be in vain. However, he was able to tell us about his friend Robert Playford and the things they did together when they lived in Cootamundra.

On the 5th March, Marion McConnell showed us lovely slides of her trip to Japan.

On Maundy Thursday Rev. Sharon served Communion to us. It was a good start in preparing us for Easter. Cheryl Wright organised a board game called Travel Bingo. We all enjoyed playing it.

We have been to Rodney's Nursery, Federation Square for morning teas.

On Sunday 17th May the WAGs hosted a morning tea to raise money for the Cancer Council. We raised \$956. Thank you to the congregation for your generosity.

On the 21st May, Margaret Vile showed us some great slides when she & her husband went on a safari to Africa.

We welcome Barbara Chappell to WAGS.

Melda Crawford

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Uniting Church Adult Fellowship (UCAF)

The last few months have seen us participating in market@themeetingplace with our clothing sales, trying to offer good quality and varied items, appropriate to the season. This enabled us to donate to the church council \$2,000.00 in addition to the amounts processed by electronic funds transfers which are received directly.

As the April meeting was the closest before Easter, Reverend Sharon Cutts was our speaker, leading us in a very interesting devotional lesson concerning the bravery, faith and endurance of various women surrounding Jesus at the time of His betrayal and sacrifice. Their role tends to be overlooked throughout history but the gospels point out that they were standing at the cross, witnesses to His suffering and death. They also followed His body to the burial site and it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first appeared after He had risen from the tomb.

In May, Nicole Wiggins brought us up to date with the Early Morning Centre operation at Canberra Uniting Church. It is now run by paid staff, all part time, on behalf of the Community but still with assistance of church members. They have applied for and received government grants which help with operating costs, but more is always needed. Hot breakfasts and lunches are served and various services are provided including medical and dental. Links to staff from organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and Centrelink give information to the attendees regarding other useful services. We were impressed by this work and pleased to donate \$500.00 on behalf of St Ninians'.

We look forward to welcoming all who are interested to our meetings at the first Wednesday of the month at 1.30pm in the Williams Room.

Pat Semmler

Coming Events:

Next Meeting: Wednesday 3 June 2026

Speaker: Vanessa Brettell

Co-founder & CEO Stepping Stone

Mid Winter Sale: Fri/Sat 12-13 June 9.30-12.30pm

Church Council

With apologies to Banjo Paterson.....

There was movement in the church hall, for the word had passed around

That renovations could soon be under way,

For savings, gift and legacy – worth many thousand pounds,

Had emerged in God's own mysterious way.

There has been some excitement that the injection of funds into our accounts has triggered discussion that the renovations which have been planned for the kitchen and toilets in the hall for some years now could soon become a reality. There would still be a shortfall to cover the whole cost and we have to make plans to ensure that the project can be brought to a satisfactory conclusion. The Church Council has commissioned a small committee led by Stephen Priest to liaise with the builder in all aspects of the project and we have a small group of people well versed in how our kitchen works to advise on details regarding equipment and layout. A very exciting chapter in our history could soon be unfolding.

This excitement must not distract us from other business within the Church Council's ambit. Yet another break-in has occurred with damages to the glass doors allowing entry to the Williams Room as well as damage in the hall and the church building. Apart from the usual excess, the damages will be covered by insurance and we are examining further security measures to protect our precious property.

In happier news, I can report that the Market at the Meeting Place continues to flourish and we are upgrading our street signage advertising because our research shows this is our best avenue for publicity. Our recent purchase of an automatic coffee machine enables quality coffee to be available for customers as well as for the congregation when we gather for refreshments

after worship or on other occasions. It was very pleasing to note that the purchase price of the machine plus cleaning materials was completely covered by donations.

After a long wait, the guttering on the church building should soon be completed. Although we received notice of a government heritage grant for half the cost of repairs last year, the money has only recently been transferred into our accounts. Talking about money is never easy. When we changed to decimal currency in 1966, I asked a colleague what he thought of the new coins and notes. He replied, "I like it and I'm going to get as much of it as I can." I think that his comment resonates with us all, and this is especially so when we talk of church finances. It is with some irony that we use the old saying *as poor as a church mouse* because, apart from the fact that there would be very little that a mouse could find to eat in a church, we find that the church, any church, is always looking to improve its finances, and not just to feed the mice! Special gifts and bequests are wonderful and generous but they are usually directed towards special undertakings and we need to maintain the mission of the congregation through ministry and use of our property. It is our weekly offerings and fund-raising activities that keep this happening. This is why the Church Council decided to issue the letter you received recently concerning stewardship. Let's all do what we can to keep St Ninian's flourishing.

A lot of the work attributed to the Church Council is actually done by our various committees of which so many in our congregation are contributing members. I have chaired Church Councils in suburban Brisbane, on the Darling Downs and on the Sunshine Coast and I say honestly that St Ninian's has the most effective and efficient system of committees I have ever experienced. Thank you to you all.

Neville Biggs, Church Council Chairman.

Social Action Group

The Advocacy Calling of the Uniting Church for Climate Justice

The first roundtable was held on 21 May and I have copied here a summary of the first presentation given by Rev Meredith Williams, a Uniting Church Minister and the recently elected President of Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC).

Meredith reminded the gathering that the Uniting Church in Australia has always understood that **faith without action is incomplete**, and that in our Assembly Strategy 2026–31 is the call to use our voice and our actions to confront injustice — not just within our own borders, but across the world. And nowhere is that prophetic call more urgent than in the global fight against climate change. As a church committed to Liberating Justice, we are called to stand with those on the front lines of the climate crisis: our First Peoples, and our Pacific Island neighbours whose very existence is threatened by rising seas.

Meredith outlined a number of key strategies for climate justice which are being pursued by ARRCC and in which the Uniting Church is invited to collaborate. These strategies include:

- the campaign for a global Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty being initiated by our Pacific Neighbours. The first international summit for a phase out of fossil fuels has just been held in Colombia.

- it is hoped to integrate this work into the pre-COP 31 meeting in October, to be hosted by Tuvalu and Fiji.
- working with like-minded organisations in Australia to push for a federal government commitment to a fossil fuel phase out and an end to fossil fuel exports. Since coming into office in 2022 the Labor government has approved 34 gas and coal export projects.

Meredith encouraged all parts of the Uniting Church (members, leaders, congregations, presbyteries, synods, boards, schools and agencies) to **sign the petition seeking a Fossil Fuel Treaty**. Go to the ARRCC website to sign as an individual person of faith, a faith leader or a faith organisation

https://www.arrcc.org.au/fossil_fuel_treaty

You can discover more about ARRCC from their website <https://www.arrcc.org.au> and sign up for their newsletter.

ROUNDTABLE 2 (Practical Steps toward Net Zero by 2040) will take place on Tuesday 16 June at 2pm. Learn about the concrete actions being taken across the Church to reduce emissions – and how our congregation or ministry can be part of the solution. The meeting is held online.

Register here: <https://uca-nat.zoom.us/join/10ExNwT6Sc-v-la552tcRg#/registration>

Marion, for St Ninian's Social Action Group

Safe Church Report

Thank you to all the leaders and volunteers who have handed in their Ministry Engagement forms. We still have a few that need to be returned. Please can you return the forms as soon as possible to Janice Schroder or John Cutts so we can complete our Safe Church Register. Janice Schroder

Choir

Our choir has been practicing 3 Thursday nights a month since the beginning of March. Our first anthem was due for 8 March, but we discovered there were only going to be four of us present, including myself, so we abandoned ship. Sometimes discretion is the better part of valour! I knew Linus could play a stunning musical interlude for us instead. We made up for it on 15 March with a rousing *Let there be Glory and Honour*, with Neville belting out the descant in his strong tenor voice.

The beginning of March also meant the beginning of the autumn season. Time to change the Benediction. Between Rev Sharon and myself, we keep finding appropriate songs. This time I chose *God Moving*, which luckily had 3 verses, one for each month. We sang “autumn leaves are turning ... fruit is on the vine ... come, let's join the harvest ... God moving in our land/age/lives.” We will soon begin a new one that Sharon found for the three winter months called *Peace in Our Time*. The words are lovely, but the music was a bit daunting, so Neville Biggs wrote a new melody for it. We are thankful for such musical talent in our choir.

April 26th was Easter 4 which is always Good Shepherd Sunday with Psalm 23 as a lectionary reading. We have many great anthems appropriate for this Sunday (about our loving Shepherd, sheep/lambs, safety, following, love and guidance, comfort and rest).

We have sung many versions: *The Lord is My Shepherd and I want to follow; The Lord is my Shepherd, no want shall I know; The Lord's my Shepherd, I'll not want; The Lord is my Shepherd, I walk at his side; Loving Shepherd of thy sheep;* but this year we tried a new one called *A Shepherd I'll be to you, I know your name*, which is a lilting song in ¾ time with more modern words for today "...some people think that a shepherd's no fun, just because the road sometimes gets narrow ... "there are other sheep I need to find. Will you seek them and welcome wherever they be, 'cause I'm dying with them on my mind."

In May we welcomed a new choir member, Keith LaFontaine, who is giving us a trial run. It is great to see Keith out and about and trying new things after the death of his lovely wife, Dawn. I understand that he used to play the violin.

Kay Hahne, Choir Director, May 2026

Events

St Ninian's Mid Year Sale

Books, Craft, Clothing, Garden, Jams and Pickles, White Elephant, Treasures, Sausage Sizzle

Fri 12 and Sat 13 June

9.30am to 1pm.

Morning tea/coffee, cakes, scones and light lunch

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.

Can I contribute to Witness?

Yes, you certainly can! An item about your travels, previous or current career, volunteer work, a craft or hobby you enjoy, a film or book review, your faith journey, a poem – all are welcome (depending on space available).

For the next issue I plan to compile a list of your favourite and least favourite hymns. (Rev'd Sharon and I came up with similar ideas quite independently.) Please include the first line, the source (eg The Presbyterian Hymnal or TIS, etc), the tune, if known, and why you have chosen them. Please, no more than one or two of each!

Your editor would appreciate it if you could submit them a week or so ahead of the due date to allow time for sorting and compilation. Thank you.

Other Items of Interest

Do you remember this song? My family used to sing it on long car trips (among others) when I was little. I was reminded of it recently and it all came flooding back! I'll include more about it in the next issue.

Green Grow the Rushes O

I'll sing you twelve, O
Green grow the rushes, O
What are your twelve, O?
Twelve for the twelve Apostles
Eleven for the eleven who went to heaven,
Ten for the ten commandments,
Nine for the nine bright shiners,
Eight for the April Rainers,
Seven for the seven stars in the sky,

Six for the six proud walkers,

Five for the symbols at your door,
Four for the Gospel makers,
Three, three, the rivals,
Two, two, the lily-white boys,
Clothed all in green, O
One is one and all alone
And evermore shall be so.