



SA NEWS

Newsletter of the Presbytery of South Australia Issue 67 September 2025

God Is Spirit

Ours is a consumer culture. It schools us to demand that all things accommodate our appetites. Everything from diet to biological sex must bend in obedience to the dictates of private desire.

But when a consumer comes to Christ, a radical reordering takes place. Our appetites change. We come to desire God in Christ by the Holy Spirit above all else. We begin to say with David: “Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever” (Ps. 73:25–26). Of course, the old drive toward self-indulgence does not cease to exist, and sometimes, even in a regenerate heart, it flares up, like a long-dormant disease freshly active once more.

One particularly acute expression of that soul-disease is the way we allow our tastes and comforts to govern our choices in worship and devotion. We do want to worship the Lord. We love Him, and we rejoice in His love for us. But we prefer to express our love for Him in ways most convenient to ourselves. In church, we prefer a certain “vibe.” A particular vocabulary conforms to our contemporary sensibilities. We don’t like to speak of God, much less think of Him, as transcendent, as holy, as Other. “Have it your way” was Burger King’s famous slogan, and it has proven all too easy, even for Christians, to apply it to our understanding of God. We think we can have Him our way.

When Aaron made a golden calf, he peddled his idolatry as an aid to worshiping Yahweh. He called a solemn assembly for worship before the golden calf and designated it a “feast to the Lord” (Ex. 32:5). The Israelites were still worshiping the true God, after all. This was simply the latest craze, intended to help everyone worship Him well. Where’s the harm in that?

But the people had forgotten the spirituality of God. “God is spirit” (John 4:24). He is incorporeal. He is pure spirit, independent of the creature. Therefore, He is not capable of being depicted or represented or drawn. The second commandment forbids idols, whether golden calves or mental images, not because God wanted needlessly to restrict human creativity or limit choice but because to do otherwise is to cease to worship the God who is actually there. He is spirit, “and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:24).

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Some might complain that God's spirituality renders Him unknowable and out of reach. Indeed it does. The wonder of the gospel is that while "no one has ever seen God, the only begotten God, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made him known" (1:18, author's translation). Jesus said, "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (14:9). We needn't tax our creativity in knowing the God who is spirit. We need only look to Jesus Christ, the image of the invisible God (Col. 1:15). In Christ, we have everything we could want to satisfy our soul hunger for God. Why ever look elsewhere?

David Strain

Dr. David T.A. Strain is senior minister of First Presbyterian Church in Jackson, Miss. He is author of several books, including Expository Preaching, a commentary on Ruth and Esther, and a commentary on Philippians.

<https://learn.ligonier.org/devotionals/god-is-spirit-david-strain>



Chris Siriweera visiting Churches



Chris Siriweera, the incoming APWM National Director, is available to speak in churches in 2026. Chris is based in Melbourne and will be available to visit churches for opportunities such as:

- Talking about global mission at a morning tea, coffee and dessert evening etc.
- Preaching on global mission
- Speaking at church camps on global mission.
- Any other suggestions you might have!

If you'd like Chris to visit your church then please contact him at siriweera@apwm.org.au



APWM
Australian Presbyterian
World Mission

Wanted: People who will help change the lives of prisoners!



Prisoners from one of Papua New Guinea's prisons who have completed Bible Lessons from Crossroads Prison

We all recognise that the gospel has the power to transform someone's life. However, there are instances when God's Spirit can work miracles in the lives of those who appear to be the least likely individuals to embrace Christ. Consider the people in this photo. They are inmates in one of Papua New Guinea's prisons. For many, their lives have been deeply impacted as they have come to know the Lord Jesus.

How is this possible? Each has completed a Crossroads Australia course. Crossroads is a ministry that runs throughout Oceania and Australia. Through a series of Bible lessons, it seeks to introduce prisoners to Christ.

Prisoners like Darren have new life through the gospel while in prison. He writes, "It was the Lord's will I turned to his love when I was arrested. The only reason I survived this experience is my Bible studies and God's love for me."

How does it work? When students commence their correspondence Bible lessons, they are assigned a mentor from many different churches. Crossroads mentors receive completed Bible lessons from students in prison, then write encouraging feedback and a letter back.

It's an extensive ministry. But here's something surprising — the largest group of mentors come from the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

Every day, lessons completed by prisoners arrive from across Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific. But there's a problem. David Hughes, Chair of Crossroads in Australia, says, "The number of students we can serve is only limited by the number of mentors. Through the grace of God, this program is coming to every prison in PNG, and it is urgent we recruit 200 new mentors."

Mentors not only learn more about the Bible but practice the skills of listening, responding, and guiding others on their faith journey. If you'd like to find out more or would like to become a mentor, please go to <https://cpm.org.au>

Karnkendi Campsite

Hello everybody,

We are right in the thick of winter now so we hope everyone is rugged up and staying warm! It has been a quiet couple of months at Karnkendi with only a handful of familiar groups returning.

Once again, Don's Music Weekend delighted us all, bringing together a perfect blend of timeless classics, cozy afternoon teas, delicious dinners, and trips down memory lane.

July saw three returning groups who loved the familiarity of Karnkendi. All groups were able to use our space to carry out their activities with ease. And the toasty fire places kept them warm.

One of the highlights in this issue is the arrival of our brand new, custom-made mattresses. A big thank you to 'Sandman' from Ballarat for supplying them. We hope our guests enjoy the comfort and feel right at home.

Another highlight was that Nelson's Women's Shed recently hosting a heartwarming Casserole Night at Karnkendi, bringing the community together for an evening of comfort food and connection. Despite the rain, locals braved the weather to join in and bring their delicious winter warmer - from classic casseroles to hearty stews, all lovingly prepared and shared. The fire was roaring, adding a cozy glow and warmth to the space, making it the perfect setting for a winter gathering. It was a wonderful opportunity for everyone to come together, enjoy a homemade meal, and strengthen community bonds during the colder months. The welcoming atmosphere and shared laughter made it a truly memorable night for all who attended.

Need a space to hold an event? Karnkendi's doors are always open to all so don't hesitate to reach out. This could be from a family gathering to a social group looking for a space to hire – we have you covered. We have options for 'day hire' as well as our accommodation.

If you're interested in becoming a part of the committee for 2025, we'd love to hear from you! Please contact Harvey McBain or Gary Ware for more details on how you can get involved. We are always happy to welcome new members to our committee.

Blessings

Harvey and Heather McBain
Karnkendi Caretakers.
Nelson



Casserole Night at Karnkendi

Mount Gambier

This term our Growth Groups are studying chapters 17–24 of Proverbs with the title “The Tree Of Life”. Chapters 17–24 are titled “Truth, Way, Life”. Gary Ware produces the Study Guides each term for us to study.

Coffee and Craft numbers have increased in the last few months. We continue to have fellowship each Wednesday between 10am and 12noon. We have held three soup lunches in the months of June, July and August and they were well received. Christmas Boxes are almost completed, thanks goes to Kerry and helpers and to those who have brought in gifts and monetary donations. We had a visit from Val Hatch from Naracoorte who has made many skirts and shorts over a number of years, we all really enjoyed meeting her.

Beanies, made by Coffee and Craft members, were sent to children in the APY Lands. Their teacher comes from Glencoe so we were able to send them with her.



These photos show some of the beautiful handiwork done by the Coffee and Craft group as well as the children in the APY Lands wearing some of the beanies sent to them.



Friday 3rd - Monday 6th October

Full weekend: \$80 per person
(includes free camping onsite)

Day pass: \$40 per person

Children under 18 attend for free!

Artist Lineup

- Colin Buchanan
- Steve Messer's Strange Country
- Zoe Tyne
- Will Mackerras



The Piggery

Don't be fooled by its namesake! The Piggery conference centre is a comfortable, heated (or cooled) haven to sit down and enjoy 180 degree views of New Dunesk. The O'Brien library also sits inside the Piggery. Enjoy a relaxed browse or borrow a book to read by the fire.



Camping at Tracks



You'll get an outback camping experience at New Dunesk without needing to rough it. Our campsite has everything you need to enjoy the weekend.

Camp kitchen

Powered and fully equipped with a communal stove, oven, fridge, urn, washing up facilities and seating. As well as cooking up a storm, the camp kitchen is also a great place to come together and meet new people over the weekend.

Campsites

New Dunesk boasts countless acres of beautiful bush land to pitch your tent, campervan or caravan. Amongst the gums or the grassy paddocks, there's a spot that's perfect for everyone. Toilet and shower blocks are also available.



What else is happening at Tracks?

There's plenty more to get involved in over the weekend, including:

Kids activities

There'll be plenty to keep the kids entertained over the weekend, including the beloved colouring competition, face painting and scavenger hunt!



Nail drive competition

New for 2025! With divisions for men, women and children (under 14), start practising your skills now to have a crack at becoming the New Dunesk Nail Drive Champion! Running Saturday morning with the grand final held on stage.



Prayer on the ridgeline

We're bringing back prayer on the ridgeline on Saturday morning from 7am. A fantastic way to start the day!

Plus much more, including:



- Friday and Saturday evening campfires
 - Patrol team meet and greets
 - 4WD tours of New Dunesk
 - Self-guided bushwalks following the *Ridgeline Trail* map
 - PIM caps, beanies, t-shirts and work shirts for sale.
 - The O'Brien library - borrow a book to read by the campfire.
- Sunday morning onsite church service

For more information and to book:
<https://pim.org.au/event/tracks/>



Naracoorte - Pat Leitch

"There is movement at the station....." Much is happening in and around the church here at the moment. Rudi and some of the men have been busy trimming trees, renovating garden beds, spreading some lawn seed and planting flowers, and now there is a nice bit of colour showing - springtime has arrived.

We have celebrated another 80th birthday recently. Stuart McLean, Session Clerk turned 80 in June, and we have another two 80th birthday celebrations coming up in the next few months.

Rudi's Bible Study is going well as is the KYB ladies group. A good number of ladies come each week (we have about 20 on our list, but they all don't come every week) and good discussion and learning is enjoyed by all.

Pat Leitch has returned to the Missionary Training Institute (MTI) in Gwangyang (previously in Yeosu) South Korea for the Fall Term. Last year the directors of MTI with the help of supporters purchased a building in a nearby city. The building was built for and used as a kindergarten for 30 years, so it needed a huge renovation. They gutted the building and renovated the inside in two and a half months (3 floors and a basement!), making it 'fit-for-purpose'. Much of the labour, cleaning out, cleaning up and moving from Yeosu was done by volunteers and supporters of MTI.

The work that the native English speaking teachers do is to teach Conversation English (a curriculum textbook is provided), help, encourage and practice with the adult students (missionaries and missionary candidates) who are learning English. The Institute is run like a school where the students learn to speak, write and listen to English (having studied English at school). They also have to prepare and lead a devotion (in English) at morning devotion time, write and memorise a bible story to tell during Chapel, without using any props. The idea is that they can then tell the story to anyone anywhere they happen to be or meet someone - an opportunity to share the gospel. Another task is to write and share their testimony in Chapel. They also have to preside (lead the worship, pray and introduce the participants); share a memorised Bible text - usually 1 verse in level 1, 2 verses in level 2 etc. and share information about their Mission Field. For this they prepare a powerpoint slide show about their mission field/country and prepare prayer points so that everyone can pray for that country.



Stuart McLean cutting his 80th birthday cake.

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Native English speakers are always wanted as mostly the teachers are retired and getting older year by year, so there is a lot of natural attrition, due to age and illness, so if anyone is interested in this ministry please contact Pat who can provide more information - patleitch05@gmail.com

Pat says "it is a wonderful country and the people are very friendly and appreciative of our help. Koreans are very enthusiastic Christians and it is a great privilege to be involved in this ministry, which is a very rewarding experience".

A Plan to Deal with Death

The God of forever, who created people to live with him forever, set in motion a plan to deal with death, the one thing smack-dab in the way of forever. To the one who is the Author of life, death is unacceptable. For death to be alive and well is not all right. For every human being to face and fear death is not okay. Nor is it acceptable for the spiritual death of separation from God and the physical death that ends every person's life to dominate the human story. This enemy of for-ever, this horrible intrusion, this painful interruption, must be defeated. Somehow death must be defeated. Death must die because it stands in the way of the forever we were created to enjoy. But there is nothing we can do about it. The story of the Bible is the story of God's doing the one thing we don't have the ability to do: kill death.

— David Paul Tripp *Forever: Why You Can't Live Without It*,

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Penola

All the services have been led by Brendan since the last newsletter. Attendance has been between five and twelve. Some members are travelling this month and we had visitors from Queensland and Goolwa at our services in July.

A combined service for Anglicans, Lutherans and Presbyterians was held at the Lutheran Church on 29th June, with about 40 people attending. The service was followed by a shared lunch in their hall, enjoying food and time together and with heaters to keep the chill out.

It is with regret that a long-time member of our congregation, Faye Eason, passed away on 28th July. Her funeral will be held in St. Andrew's Penola on Monday 18th August. Rudi Schwartz will officiate.

Many of our older folk have ailing health and are unable to attend Church. Please keep them in your prayers.

Barbara Provis

“A footprint that cannot be erased”



Suzy Vines (middle) with Pastor’s wives

In May, Andrew and Suzy Vines (Hurstville, NSW) and Stephen Jones (Drouin, Vic) led two retreats for pastors and their wives for our Partner Church, the Church of Central Africa Presbyterian (CCAP) [Zambia Synod]. The Deputy General Secretary of the church recently sent this message to John Wilson who liaised with CCAP on behalf of APWM:

Dear Rev. Wilson,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I pray this message finds you well. I just wanted to express our heartfelt gratitude for the team you sent to us. Truly, we were blessed beyond measure. They arrived at a time when we needed them the most, and their presence left a deep and lasting impact on our hearts and communities.

It is evident that you have mentored them well. In every place they stepped foot, we saw fruit — genuine transformation, encouragement, and revival. Their visit was timely and Spirit-led, and we sincerely hope to receive them again soon. They have left a footprint that cannot be erased.

I’ve also heard with joy that one of the team members is the son of Rev. Andrew—what a wonderful legacy! We thank God for this generational blessing. With sincere appreciation and warm regards,

Rev Lloyd Mithi

Deputy General Secretary"

The effect of just one Bible



In July, a team of 16 people from the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, visited Malawi to begin distributing 8,000 Chichewa-language Bibles among remote Church of Central Africa Presbyterian congregations. Team Leader, the Rev John Wilson, writes:

“THANK YOU to all who contributed so generously to the Malawi Bibles Appeal, Hymnbook purchases and the sponsorship of TEAM members and hire vehicles. We purchased over 8,000 Bibles and 3,000 hymnbooks. All your contributions have been put to Gospel use with great effect both now and into the future. As a value-add, during the course of the mission we have raised a further \$21,000 – sufficient to leave an order with the Bible Society for another 1,000 Bibles. Thank you for praying.

The Director of the Bible Society of Malawi told us that each Bible we present has an effect on four other people – as the Word of God is read and shared with a spouse, neighbour and friends (so, 5,000 Bibles presented x 4 = 20,000 lives affected). It’s also a multi-generational gift as father teaches son and mother teaches daughter and the same book is passed down to the next generation.”

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Visiting Tokyo & looking for a church?



Visiting Tokyo and wanting to attend a Presbyterian Church Sunday service that is suitable for English speakers? Here are some suggestions:

You can see a map and a bit of an overview of churches here

<https://www.mtwjapan.org>

Western Tokyo - closer to typical tourist areas

Grace Harbour Presbyterian Church

<https://www.graceharborchurch.jp/english>

Meets in large shopping mall - near the cinema section.

Grace City Presbyterian Church

<https://www.gracecitychurch.jp>

Setagaya Grace Presbyterian Church

<https://www.mtwjapan.org/tokyo-city/>

Meets in a dedicated building but it is down a narrow street. Persistence may be needed!

Eastern Tokyo - further out from the main tourist areas and on the other side of Tokyo Bay. Some are an hour's train ride from downtown Tokyo.

Oyumino Presbyterian Church

<https://www.alive.international>

Dedicated building but would probably need a car or some form of transport to reach it.

Kaihin Makuhari Grace Church

<https://kmgch.com/english-welcome/>

Christ Center Presbyterian Church Chiba

<https://www.christcenterchiba.com/en>



In November last year, Kevin Murray sat down with Joe Congdon, the team leader of the Setagaya Presbyterian Church in Tokyo. They were discussing the prospect of Nate and Sami Ho from Campbelltown, serving on the Setagaya team. His opening words were quite confronting: "The aim of their first term of service will be just simply to survive. It will be bone-crunchingly hard."

Many of us may have visited Japan as tourists, but the reality of living there as a missionary can be quite challenging. There are numerous obstacles to overcome, including language barriers, adapting to unfamiliar ways of doing things, and navigating cultural differences.

If it's so hard, why do it? Of Japan's 124 million people it's estimated that around 250,000 are Protestant Christians. There are about 430,000 Roman Catholics. That leaves just over 123 million people to reach for Christ.

In November Kevin also spoke to another APWM missionary and asked her why the Japanese were so resistant to the gospel. She quickly replied "They're not. It's just that they haven't heard." The Japanese church needs missionaries to help them reach the 123 million people, who without Christ, are headed for hell.

Will you partner with Nate and Sami to reach those who live in Setagaya, Tokyo? To find out more you can visit Nate and Sami's web page www.hofaminjapan.com

If you have any questions or would like to support them, please contact the APWM office at (02) 8073 7490 or visit the APWM website at <https://www.apwm.org.au/missionaries/>

PRAYER POINTS

- Intercede for the Federal Government; Prime Minister Anthony Albanese; Leader of the Opposition Susan Ley; that they will be guided by Christian principles and come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.
- Pray for Bible Studies being held; that people may come to a deeper knowledge of God and our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.
- Pray for all security forces around the world working to prevent violence and destruction, that our Lord will lead and guide them in their work, even though they may not know Him.
- Intercede for our Defence force and all emergency services (Police, Ambulance, Fire & SES) that they will be preserved and kept safe as they serve the community.
- Uphold in prayer your parliamentary representatives, federal and state.
- Pray for persecuted Christians throughout the world.
- Pray for Jeroen and Diana Zwijnenburg as they serve in Papua New Guinea.
- Pray for the APWM office, Kevin Murray (Director)
- Please pray for Chris Siriweera at this time as he and Kevin Murray work together in the handover period.
- Pray for the Elizabeth Church; congregation and elders.
- Pray for the Presbytery of South Australia, Moderator Davo Gunning; Clerk Gary Ware.
- Pray for the towns and cities of South Australia, for the people in them who do not know Christ, including unsaved family members, friends and work colleagues.
- Pray for hearts to be opened as the Lord Jesus Christ is proclaimed by word and deed by PIM workers.
- Pray for Christian witness in primary and secondary schools (especially your local ones) through believing pupils, parents, staff and visiting teachers.
- Pray for the Wattle Range Charge; congregations and elders.
- Pray for the Karnkendi campsite. Harvey & Heather McBain; all those who stay there.
- Praise God for the ministry of Crossroads Prison Ministry. Pray that God would raise up many mentors and that many people would come to Christ.
- Pray for people living in remote and rural parts of South Australia with little access to the Gospel. Pray for PIM and the churches in SA to find effective ways to make disciples amongst these people
- Pray for 'M' serving in west Asia.

Editor's Note

Thank you to all who have contributed items for this issue of SA News they are all very much appreciated. Contributions for the December 2025 issue are to be in my hands **no later than 5.00pm Monday 17th November 2025.**

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