



# Werribee Uniting Church

We acknowledge the people of the Kulin alliance, the original custodians of the land which was never ceded and on which our buildings for worship stand and we gather.

8 June 2025: Pentecost

## A special request at Pentecost

To Werribee Uniting Church, 28 May 2025

My name is Zeina Shouaa. I am originally from the Christian city of Mhardeh in Syria, a place known for its deep religious roots and sacred churches such as St. Elijah Church, St. George Church, and the Church of Our Lady—which, according to our tradition, was visited by the Virgin Mary herself. My family and I are Orthodox Christians by origin.

When the war in Syria began in 2011, extremist groups like ISIS targeted our city with massive rocket attacks, destroying many homes—including mine. These attacks forced us to flee and seek safety elsewhere.

In 2025, terrorist groups including ISIS overthrew the regime in Syria. Since then, the country has become extremely dangerous for non-Muslims, especially Christians and Kurds. Over the past month alone, there have been daily reports of Christians being kidnapped and murdered. Armed extremists have been entering homes and demanding: “Will you convert to Islam or be killed?” Many refuse to deny their faith and are executed as a result.

I came to Australia as a refugee with my husband. We have two kids now Selena and Jason and we have permanent residency. My entire family is still in Syria, living under constant threat simply because of their Christian faith. I have three brothers, each of them educated and my mum and dad.

- My eldest brother, Habib, is 30 years old. He is engaged to Zeina, who is 25 years old.
- My second brother, Karim, is 28 years old, married to Rita, who is 27 years old and currently three months pregnant.
- My youngest brother, Imad, is 21 years old and single.

They are all unable to work because they are Christians. The situation for them is extremely difficult. My parents are also with them, living in fear every day. I currently work with Uniting, and my husband is also employed. Together, we try to send them money to help them survive. However, often the authorities confiscate half of the money, leaving them with only a portion of what we send.

For all these reasons, I am urgently requesting your prayers, while we submit a humanitarian protection request for my family. They deserve the right to live in safety and dignity, free from fear and persecution. Thank you very much for your understanding and compassion.

Warm regards, *Zeina Shouaa*

## TODAY AND NEXT WEEK

### Worship services

8 June: Rev. Ian Pearse

15 June: Rev. Bruce Watson

**For Pastoral Care:** Please contact Raymond Surujpal, convenor of the pastoral care team on: 0432 619 184 or Margaret Bull: 0417 500 961.

### Bible readings

**This week:** Acts 2:1–21/Genesis 11:1–9; Psalm 104:24–35b; Romans 8:14–17; John 14:8–17

**Next week:** Proverbs 8:1–4, 22–31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1–5; John 16:12–15

### What's on this week

**Monday:** 9.30am Playgroup;

7.30pm Justice Task Group

**Tuesday:** 9.30am Bible Study

**Wednesday:** 9.30am Property Group

**Thursday:** 9.30am Gardening Group;

5.30pm Health & Fitness;

5.30pm Choral Practice (chapel)

**Saturday:** 7.30am Samoan Health & Fitness

### Rosters 8 June (& 15 June)

**Greetings:** Sandra Savory (Judy & Hamish)

**Audiovisual:** Jacob Lewis (Paul Kirkman)

**Morning Tea:** Sandra Savory & Margaret Gook (Mary Dixon & Margaret Dent)

**Flowers:** Mary Dixon (Emily Metusela)

**Music:** Wendy Barnes (Gina Lee)

**Prayers:** Sandra Savory (Liz Barnes)

**Reader:** Lyn O'Meara (Val Tardrew)

### Werribee UC on Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/621987747878234/>

### Church office

Open 9.30am to 12 noon. Phone 97411084

Email [office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au](mailto:office@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au)

### WUC Newsletter

Send information for inclusion to the Editor at [robert.renton@bigpond.com](mailto:robert.renton@bigpond.com) or 0427 812 606.

### Bank Account & Boom Gate (0459#)

BSB 083-909 A/c 516109795

### To book facilities at WUC:

Email: (Elizabeth Barnes)

[bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au](mailto:bookings@werribeeunitingchurch.org.au)

### Samoan service

3rd Sunday, 4pm, in the Church: All welcome.



People gather around a mass burial for victims purportedly killed at the massacre in the Syrian village of Houla on May 25. (Courtesy Reuters)

*This letter and picture have been included at the request of the Justice Task Group and Church Council. Luciana Manrique has provided an accompanying letter as follows.*

“I am writing to share a heartfelt plea from our sister, Zeina Shouaa, who has been a dedicated member of our congregation since 28/08/2018. During the picnic day organized by the JTG in February this year, Zeina shared with me the horrific situation in her hometown, Mhardeh. The persecution, abductions, and executions of Christians by extremist groups have left her family in constant fear.

With the support of an immigration lawyer recommended by Mark Zirmsak from Synod’s Justice & International Mission, we understand now that bringing Zeina’s brothers to Australia will require a miracle. We urgently seek your prayers and support for Zeina’s family and all persecuted Christians.

*Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:10)*

Your prayers and compassion are greatly needed.”

## Prayers at Pentecost

*The tradition of having prayers on Pentecost Sunday in a variety of languages has its origin in the story in Acts. There will be a variety of languages spoken this morning. Here is one prayer provided by Ashok Sherwal, in English and in Hindi.*

Loving and Faithful God, we open our hearts to receive your Holy Spirit anew. May your Church in Werribee and across the world proclaim the Gospel with clarity and love. Empower every believer to use their gifts in service to Christ our Saviour. Guide the leaders of nations to seek peace, justice, and compassion. Bring comfort to those affected by conflict and disaster. Bless our preachers, leaders, and volunteers as they serve with joy and purpose. Unite us in love, that our churches may be beacons of hope in our communities. Heal the broken, lift the weary, and give peace to troubled hearts. Let our lives reflect your presence in all we do and say each day. Send your Spirit again, O God, to renew us, our Church, and the world.

The Hindi translation:

### पेंटेकोस्ट प्रार्थना

प्रेमी और विश्वासयोग्य परमेश्वर, हम आपकी पवित्र आत्मा को नए सिरे से प्राप्त करने के लिए अपने हृदय खोलते हैं। वेरिबी और दुनिया भर में आपका चर्च स्पष्टता और प्रेम के साथ सुसमाचार का प्रचार करें।

प्रत्येक विश्वासी को हमारे उद्धारकर्ता मसीह की सेवा में अपने उपहारों का उपयोग करने के लिए सशक्त बनाएँ।

राष्ट्रों के नेताओं को शांति, न्याय और करुणा की तलाश करने के लिए मार्गदर्शन करें।

संघर्ष और आपदा से प्रभावित लोगों को आराम पहुँचाएँ।

हमारे प्रचारकों, नेताओं और स्वयंसेवकों को आशीर्वाद दें क्योंकि वे खुशी और उद्देश्य के साथ सेवा करते हैं।

हमें प्यार में एकजुट करें, ताकि हमारे चर्च हमारे समुदायों में आशा की किरण बन सकें।

टूटे हुए लोगों को ठीक करें, थके हुए लोगों को उठाएँ और परेशान दिलों को शांति दें।

हमारे जीवन में हर दिन हम जो कुछ भी करते हैं और कहते हैं, उसमें आपकी उपस्थिति को प्रतिबिंबित करें।

हे परमेश्वर, हमें, हमारे चर्च और दुनिया को नवीनीकृत करने के लिए अपनी आत्मा को फिर से भेजें।

Hindi is the official national language of India.

And here it is in Samoan (courtesy Google Translate):

Le Atua alofa ma le Faamaoni, matou te tatalaina o matou loto e toe talia lou Agaga Paia. Tau ina ia folafola atu e lau Ekalesia i Werribee ma le lalolagi atoa le Talalelei ma le manino ma le alofa. Fa'amalosia i tagata fa'atuatua uma e fa'aaoga a latou meaalofa e tautua ai Keriso lo tatou Fa'aola. Ta'ita'i ta'ita'i o malo e saili le filemu, amiotonu, ma le alofa. Aumai le faamafanafanaga ia i latou ua aafia i feteenaiga ma faalavelave. Faamanuia o tatou failauga, taitai, ma volenitia a o latou auaua atu ma le olioli ma le faamoemoe. Tuu faatasi i matou i le alofa, ina ia ave a matou ekalesia ma faailoilo o le faamoemoe i o tatou nuu. Ia faamalolo ie ua momomo, siitia e ua vaivai, ma avatu le filemu i loto mafatia. Ia atagia i o matou olaga lou auai i mea uma matou te faia ma tautala ai i aso taitasi. Toe auina mai lou Agaga, Le Atua e, e faafouina i matou, la matou Ekalesia, ma le lalolagi.

