



WONGA PARK & MERNDA REFORMED CHURCH NEWSLETTER



16 August 2026

This Week's Service:

Preacher:

Chris Pretorius

Elder on duty:

Martin

Prayer Leader:

Martin

Bible text:

Jonah 4

Sermon Topic:

"I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger, abounding in faithful love, and one who relents from sending disaster"

Bible Reader:

Lynette

Children's Talk:

Nicky

Coffee:

Martin & Annemarie

Giving

Today's

Second Offering:

Diaconate

I sat in on a Hebrew class at RTC this week as part of my denominational work for the candidacy committee. That's one of the jobs the candidacy committee does for our denomination, and it was a good one to do. The content hasn't changed. Of course it hasn't. The Hebrew Bible hasn't changed, and RTC continues to make Hebrew (and Greek) a large portion of the training we provide to our ministers before they enter pastoral ministry.

The candidacy committee exists to make sure those training for ministry are suitable for it. It's one of the ways we keep our churches well staffed with men suited to the work. RTC also trains women for gospel ministry roles across the board, though that side of things sits outside the candidacy committee's remit.

So here's the invitation. Maybe you've thought about studying at college yourself. Perhaps you want to audit a single unit to grow your own faith, or maybe you want to enter into formal training for paid ministry. I would love to be able to support you to do that, so please let me know if that's you!

In other, more local news our trivia night fundraiser is filling up fast, and we're excited about it. The money raised supports our young people heading to Convention, the denomination's big spiritual equipping event, held every two years for those aged 16 to 28. A good number from our church are going. It's been great to watch the wider church, and the broader community, get behind them. At this stage we expect to be able to offer substantial financial support, and we're looking forward to hearing how they've grown when they get back.

One more thing. I heard from the Convention convenor this week. Over 200 are already registered, and only 30 places remain. If you've been thinking about going, stop thinking and start moving! Speak to Kasha to get registered, or chat to me and I can get you connected. If finances are an issue, there will be some support available to help you get there!

~Pastor Chris

Year to June Budgeted
giving:
\$216,310
Actual (June):
\$218,410

THINGS TO PUT IN YOUR CALENDAR



Dates for upcoming services:

16 Aug:

4:00pm - Lord's Supper

30 Aug:

4:00pm - Worship Service

13 September:

4:00pm - Worship Service

BOTH CHURCHES

16 August: Lord's Supper
20 August: Prayer Meeting
29 August: Trivia Night



for:

Jaya and Jesse Winter



Visit this link or scan the QR Code:

mealtrain.com/993r2l



There are 6 spots left to fill this mealtrain.
If you would like to contribute please
scan the QR code.

VISITING OR NEW TO WONGA PARK OR MERNDA REFORMED CHURCH?

Jenna, our community engagement worker, would love to meet you and answer any questions you have about our Wonga Park church community.

Feel free to contact her on
0403650398.

UPCOMING *Events* JULY



15

**Young Adults Bible
Study**

7:30-9:30PM



29

**Young Adults Bible
Study**

7:30-9:30PM

AUGUST



9

After Church Social

12:00-1:00PM



12

**Young Adults Bible
Study**

7:30-9:30PM



26

**Young Adults Bible
Study**

7:30-9:30PM

If you would like to join please contact Inge on 0478001052 or enquire after the service.

TERM 3

SUPERDASH

2026



STATE YOUTH CAMP



Sunday*

STATE YOUTH SERVICE

4 PM @ Location TBC



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Book of Acts

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Book of Acts

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



Saturday*

CONVENTION FUNDRAISER TRIVIA NIGHT

5:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Book of Acts

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Book of Acts

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC

FOR MORE INFORMATION SPEAK TO YOUR YOUTH LEADERS

TRIVIA NIGHT

Bring your friends and your brain power
for an unforgettable night of trivia.

FOOD | FELLOWSHIP | FUN

29 AUG, 2026 | 5:30 PM

Wonga Park CRC

FOOD, DRINKS & DESSERTS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT
A SILENT AUCTION WILL ALSO BE HELD DURING THE EVENT

SAUSAGE SIZZLE & BOEREWORS STARTS AT 5:45 PM
TRIVIA STARTS AT 6:45 PM

Register Here



Become a **Mentor** Today



Kids Hope brings schools, churches, and communities together to form a village of hope around children facing vulnerability.

As a mentor, you step into a child's world for just **one hour a week**. You don't need to be an expert — just someone willing to show up. Your simple, steady presence helps a child feel seen, valued, and truly believed in.

YOU CAN CHANGE A CHILD'S STORY.

You can make all the difference.

WHAT MAKES YOUR YES POSSIBLE...



One hour per week, during school hours, for at least one academic year



Working with Children Check (and NCCHC in WA)



Connection to a local church, endorsed by leadership



Full training and resources provided



Commitment to child protection and program guidelines

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOU SAY YES...



See Lives Transformed

Through a trusted one-to-one relationship, children can rediscover confidence, hope, and a renewed belief in themselves and for their future.



Build Strong Foundations

Through a safe, nurturing environment, children learn to build positive relationships and develop the essential social and emotional skills they need to thrive.

You Can Change a Child's Story.

HOPE enters a child's world when someone says yes. That someone can be **you**.

Join the Kids Hope Village and share the message every child deserves to hear: **"You matter."**

One child. One hour a week. A story changed.

Scan to find out more:



kidshope.org.au

KIDS HOPE MENTORS NEEDED

As most of you know, our church has been partnering with Kids Hope and Yarra Road Primary School for 20 years! That is 20 years of helping and supporting kids who, for various reasons, need a little extra support and love from a caring adult. That is 20 years of showing our community the love of Jesus...

The school has recently asked if we would be able to supply a few more mentors. There are so many kids who will benefit from a caring and supporting adult in their lives. They have seen the difference the Kids Hope mentors make in the lives of these kids, and they'd love to be able to offer it to more children.

No prior experience needed, all we ask is that you can spare 1 hour per week during school terms, for a minimum period of 1 year. You will be paired with a single child that you see each week. Mentoring hours are not scripted. You and the child can decide how you want to spend that hour. You can read, talk, play outside, do crafts, paint, play basketball, bake cupcakes, build lego - really anything. The Kids Hope website and previous volunteers can also help you if you get stuck.

Please prayerfully consider if you can spare an hour a week, and would like to give Kids Hope a try. The rewards are numerous - not only for the child, but also for the mentor. If you would like to talk or have any questions, please reach out to Nicky Bester (0439 084 987).



JULY FINANCIALS

Monthly Profit and Loss with Budget

Christian Reformed Church of Wonga Park
For the month ended 31 July 2026
Cash Basis

	BUDGET	ACTUAL	YEAR TO DATE ACTUAL
Income			
Church Offerings	20,110	20,551	20,110
Total Income	20,110	20,551	20,110
Gross Income	20,110	20,551	20,110
Operating Expenses			
Church Expenses	22,086	12,144	22,086
Total Operating Expenses	22,086	12,144	22,086
Net Position	(1,976)	8,407	(1,976)

Note that the total Year to Date Actual excludes the value of a \$26,000 grant received to support us replacing our gas heater with split system air conditioners to reflect a fair assessment of our operating position.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING

Summary of Church Council's August meeting

The Church Council met on **11 August 2026** to review ministry progress, oversee finances and facilities, and consider strategic priorities for both the Wonga Park and Mernda congregations. Overall, reports indicated healthy ministry activity, stable finances, encouraging growth at Mernda, and a shift toward longer-term planning for 2027.

- **Mernda ministry continues to show encouraging signs of growth**, and the new venue is proving beneficial.
- **A significant strategic discussion** focused on developing a new ministry structure for 2027. The proposal would organise leadership into clearer ministry portfolios—such as Finance & Buildings, Pastoral Care & Community, and Training & Evangelism—to improve ownership, pastoral care, and follow-up of newcomers across both congregations. Chris will prepare a draft structure as a starting point [for further discussion](#).
- **The Council decided not to pursue employing a vicar in 2027** due to financial uncertainty and unexpectedly limited denominational funding.
- **Building and facilities projects continue to progress**, including completion of some audiovisual upgrades, ongoing planning for the music platform relocation, air-conditioning repairs, church signage, and establishment of a maintenance action list. A working bee has been scheduled for 3 October.
- **Financially, the church remains in a healthy position.** Income is tracking close to budget, Mernda rental funding has been received, and reserves are sufficient to support planned projects.
- The **deacons** continue to provide extensive pastoral support through meals, visits, and practical care, while commencing recruitment of additional deacons to strengthen ministry capacity, particularly at Mernda.
- **Young Adults and Youth ministries** remain active, with strong participation in upcoming events. The Trivia Night has attracted 63 attendees, and nine young people are registered for the CRCA Youth Convention with fundraising progressing well.

PRAYER POINTS

Personal prayer points

Heavenly Father we worship you, we praise you and honour you for all glory belongs to you.
As we go into the coming week let us daily pray;

That our dependence on the Lord our God will never falter that we might live in perfect peace.
You will keep the mind that is dependent on you in perfect peace, for it is trusting in you.

Trust in the Lord forever, because in the Lord, the Lord himself, is an everlasting rock! (Isaiah 26:3-4 CSB)

Give praise and thanks to the Lord our God for always being the solid rock beneath our feet.

Congregational prayer points

Please pray for Jenna's mother as she has two surgeries coming up. These are unrelated to the dog attack she suffered some time ago.

Please continue to pray for Jesse and Jaya's baby Zed that he will gain weight and be out of hospital soon.

Please also continue to pray for Charnice (Michelle's daughter, Gretchen and Chris' granddaughter) that she will find employment, a church where she can feel at home and means of transport. Pray for her family here in Australia that they will have God's peace in this.

Please continue to pray for Mernda church, that the Lord will use it mightily to draw people to himself either as new believers or for those seeking a spiritual home.

International prayer points

Please pray that Christians to be accurately represented when data from the from the census is analysed and that we will have an active voice in the considerations for current and future decisions made in our country.

Please pray for the many communities around the world suffering from the aftermath of earthquakes. Pray that they will be adequately provided for and that many will find peace and comfort in the Lord.

Please pray for God's church in Iran.

A historic evangelical church in Tehran has been threatened with closure by the Iranian authorities. St Peter Evangelical Church is one of very few Protestant churches in Iran operating openly and with its own building. The Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps has already seized a 10,000 square metre garden belonging to the church, and church leaders fear that the next step is to seize the building and close the church.



St Peter Evangelical Church in Tehran, Iran [Image credit: Herbert Karim Masihi/Wikipedia]

St Peter Church was founded in 1876 by missionaries from the US, and was granted land by Naser al-Din, the fourth Shah of Qajar Iran. As a historic church serving primarily Armenian- and Assyrian-speaking Christians, the church has thus far escaped closure. Armenians and Assyrians are recognised by the Iranian authorities as Christian minority groups, and are permitted to worship in their own language, albeit under severe restrictions and government surveillance.

St Peter Church has previously been ordered to stop conducting services in Farsi. Farsi (Persian)-speaking Christians are converts from Islam. Worship in Farsi and Christian evangelism in any language is forbidden. One convert from Islam, now living in the UK, has described how she attended the church as a 17-year-old and was warned by a government agent that if she continued she would be arrested as a CIA spy.

The church garden that was seized several weeks ago was home to around 20 families, mainly Armenian and Assyrian Christians, who "have no chance to survive without church support", according to Sargez Benyamin, executive secretary of the Synod of the Evangelical Church of Iran in Diaspora and a former pastor of the church. "In Iran, you don't have an independent court," continued Benyamin, "so it would not be possible for us to fight back, to start a legal fight."

How you can pray

Intercede for the leaders and congregation of St Peter Church at this time of great difficulty. Pray that they will not lose the building that has been theirs for more than 150 years. Ask the Lord to comfort them with the knowledge that even if they do lose their land and building, they have an inheritance that can never be taken away. Pray that the families dependent on support from the church will have their needs met.

Our next prayer meeting will be held on the 20th of August at 7.30pm

SERMON NOTES

Bible passage:

Date:



Something
that shines
from the
passage



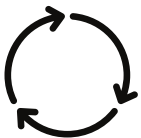
Anything
hard to
understand
or any
questions



Personal
application
for your life



Theme of
passage



How does it
fit with other
passages in
the Bible



Who will you
tell about
what you have
learnt?

HELPING HANDS

	16 Aug	23 Aug	30 Aug
Preacher	Chris Pretorius	Chris Pretorius	Chris Pretorius
Elder on Duty	Martin	Kasha	Peter W
Prayer Leader	Martin	Herman D	Peter W
Music Leader	Mia	Nelleke	Mia
Children's Talk	Nicky	Roger	Sarah
Bible Reader	Lynette	Janette	Sally
Welcoming	Ina	Anne	Marlene
Sound	Nicolas	Nina	Nina
Visuals	Isaac	Ene	Salme
Broadcasting	James	Michael	Christo
Coffee	Martin & Annemarie van Zyl	Pieter & Rachel Viljoen	Alister & Adri Bennie

THE ODYSSEY, ISRAEL & THE BRONZE AGE COLLAPSE ~ BY PETER WILLIAMS

Recently, two things came together for me: watching The Odyssey movie, and learning of the Bronze Age collapse. I wondered how this interplayed with ancient Israel – and it turns out it had more connection than expected.

This is only a rough note, quickly researched (including here[1] and here[2]), so please don't take it as definitive. I was just interested to explore the topic lightly, without going too far down the rabbit hole. Curiously, this Bronze Age Collapse was skipped over entirely in my secondary school Ancient History.

Bronze Age Collapse

Through until 1200 BC, the Eastern Mediterranean had developed into a sophisticated, interconnected civilization with a trading network from Greece to Ugarit in the East and south to Egypt. This network was highly efficient but brittle, being dependent on stable climate, trade routes, elite alliances, and the absence of major disruptions. The name Bronze Age refers to bronze as the primary metal used for weapons and other metalwork.

In the early 1100s BC, when The Odyssey is set, this civilization suffered a complete collapse. The Hittite empire in central modern Turkey collapsed. Ugarit and its empire vanished. Greece descended into a dark age lasting 500 years. Egypt was strong enough to survive, although weakened and with diminished territory. At this same time, Israel was establishing itself in the Promised Land of Canaan in the Eastern Mediterranean.

Some causes of the collapse were dramatic. Crete and parts of Greece were destroyed by earthquakes or warfare and fires. One example was Troy, a major city on the coast of modern Turkey, across the Dardanelles strait from Gallipoli. In 1184 BC, Troy was destroyed as depicted in The Odyssey, by destruction and fire.

At the same time, there was a prolonged megadrought across the eastern Mediterranean and inland further East. Reduced rainfall devastated agriculture, leading to crop failures, famine, and migration. International trade faltered and societies experienced internal revolts and social unrest. Egypt endured, although weakened, thanks to Nile River irrigation and a strong military.

[1] <https://biblicalhistoricalcontext.com/series/israelite-origins/>

[2] <https://historychronicles.org/the-bronze-age-collapse-why-did-civilizations-fall-around-1200-bc/>

The Sea Peoples

The people from the affected areas attempted to migrate to other lands. Modern archaeology suggests that these mass migrations were the feared "Sea Peoples" that invaded all the coastal regions of the Eastern Mediterranean. In *The Odyssey*, the Sea Peoples are mentioned several times as a distant but impending threat. They gradually coalesced into tribes, of which the best-known today were the Philistines.

The Sea Peoples attacked Egypt in waves from 1208 BC for about 30 years. The Egyptian Karnak reliefs show the invaders coming not just as an army, but also with ox carts, women, children and possessions. They were a migration force looking for somewhere to settle. Eventually, Ramases III defeated the invaders and they settled themselves in Canaan and assimilated with the native Canaanites.

From 1450 BC to around 1200 BC, Egypt had ruled Canaan. Living under strong Egyptian protection, most of the towns of Canaan had few if any defences, which also enabled Egypt to maintain tight control. Furthermore, almost 100,000 Canaanites were deported to Egypt as slaves, leaving Canaan more sparsely populated. The fringe areas were deserted, and the population of towns and rural settlements declined, particularly in the hill country where much of Israel was to settle.

Repelling the attacks of the Sea Peoples seriously reduced Egypt's strength, and during this time Egypt lost control of Canaan and their military gradually withdrew. This left a power vacuum in Canaan, allowing small cities and warlords to control territories of their own.

Importantly, this means that the Canaan that the Israelites invaded was no longer dominated by a strong Egyptian military. Instead, there were a number of minor kingdoms that the Israelites were able to pick off one by one. Some would see this as lucky or a coincidence, but the eye of faith can see God working things together for his purposes and the good of his people.

Exodus and the Promised Land

Israel's Exodus from Egypt took place after 1270 BC, arriving in Canaan some time before 1210 BC. Exodus 1:11 records them helping to build the city of Rameses, a construction which commenced after Rameses II came to power in 1279 BC. Rameses II was succeeded by Merneptah. The Merneptah Stele (a commemorative inscription on stone) records his military campaign around 1208 BC into Canaan, specifically mentioning Israel. So the Israelites were in Canaan by that time. Therefore, the Exodus took place in the mid-1200s BC, followed by 40 years in the wilderness. The archaeological records show a major influx of people into Canaan around 1200 BC.

"In the formerly sparsely populated highlands from the Judean hills in the south to the hills of Samaria in the north, far from the Canaanite cities that were in the process of collapse and disintegration, about two-hundred fifty hilltop communities suddenly sprang up. Here were the first Israelites." [1] This settling of the land was not instantaneous, but spread over many years, even a century or two. Joshua 11:18 records the takeover war lasting "a long time".

There is another reference which indicates that the Israelites took many decades to fully take up their land. The Song of Deborah in Judges 5:1-31 is believed to be one of the earliest-written parts of the OT, and is dated to around 1100 BC. Deborah lists the tribes that answered a call to battle, and those that did not. The clear expectation was that all tribes would turn up. The tribe names, and their locations where mentioned, align well with the tribal allotments in Joshua 13-18. However, three tribes are not mentioned at all: Judah, Simeon and Levi. The clear conclusion is that they did not yet exist in the sense that they had not taken up their allotment by about 1100 BC. The hill country where Judah and Simeon were located were recorded to be largely empty through to this time.

So while we may get the impression that Israel took over all of Canaan quickly, and that may have been the case in some areas, other places were populated over many decades or even longer.

Conclusions

Before or just as the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land of Canaan, God removed the powerful Egyptian military from the land, making Israel's entry much easier. Egypt had also deported many people from Canaan.

As a result, the Israelites moved into a land with a small population in a number of minor, independent kingdoms (really just towns with their surroundings), and these typically had minimal defences. Israel could attack these kingdoms one by one. God made it much easier for Israel to move into the land.

Israel spread through the land quickly in some areas, but over many decades in others.

While God presumably had many purposes throughout the Bronze Age collapse and the Sea Peoples migrations, he worked these things together to pave the way for his people to enter the Promised Land.

[1] Israel Finkelstein and Neil Asher Silberman, *The Bible Unearthed* (Free Press, 2001), 107





BIRTHDAYS

Marizane van Staden	14 Aug
Marlene Theron	18 Aug
Brendina Saul	24 Aug
Deon Terblanche	25 Aug
Nelleke Arnold	27 Aug
Alexandre Theron	2 Sep
Jenna Miller	3 Sep
Johan Schachtner	4 Sep



Who Should I Contact?

Pastor:	Chris Pretorius	pastor@wpcrc.org.au
Chairman of Session:	Peter Williams	session@wpcrc.org.au
Community Engagement:	Jenna Miller	jenna@wpcrc.org.au
Church Administration:	Chris Pretorius	admin@wpcrc.org.au
Deacons:	Leana van Gent	deacons@wpcrc.org.au
Music Ministry:	Mia van Wyk	miavwyk@gmail.com
Sound & Visuals:	Michael van der Merwe	vdmichael02@gmail.com
Children's Talk:	Janette Fernando	janettefernando@iprimus.com.au
Sunday School:	Ilze Kellerman	admin@wpcrc.org.au
Youth Group:	Kasha Schubert	youth@wpcrc.org.au
Young Adults:	Michael van der Merwe	vdmichael02@gmail.com
Growth Groups:	Chris Pretorius	pastor@wpcrc.org.au
Prayer Chain:	Herman Linde	herman.linde@live.com.au
Facilities & Maintenance:		deacons@wpcrc.org.au
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* To contact telephonically please refer to the directory in the Church app