

WONGA PARK & MERNDA REFORMED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

15 March 2026



ANNOUNCEMENTS

15 March Lord's Supper 10:00

19 March Prayer meeting 7:30pm

3 April: Good Friday Service 10:00am
Lord's Supper

2 May: Working Bee *

Please save this date!

Our church grounds and building need all willing hands.
More detail to follow soon.



ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dates for upcoming services:

15 March 4:00pm

29 March 4:00 pm

12 April 4:00pm

26 April 4:00pm

10 May 4:00pm

24 May: NO SERVICE

7 June: 4:00pm



How inspiring to witness the act from a small hand that can lead to big things! Children are joining in the quest to spread the word of the Mernda Church plant this week.

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.

Growth Groups

If you would like to join one of these groups or find out more, please see either Jenna or Chris.

Rob and Jenna - Tuesday nights 8pm online

Wendy ladies group Thursdays 10am @ church

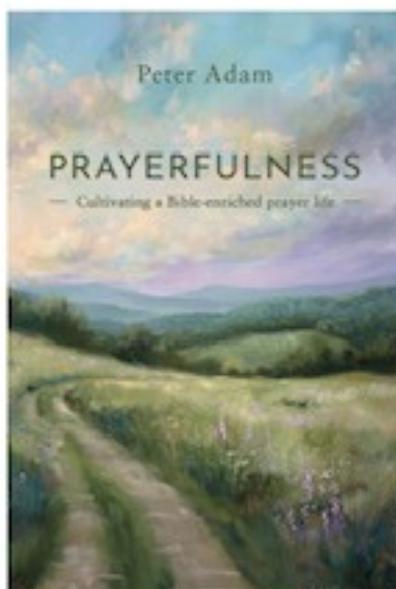
Chris and Sarah Wednesday fortnightly 8pm

Adri and Alister: Wednesday nights 7:30pm. in person

Herman Linde: Monday nights, 8pm online.



GROWING IN PRAYERFULNESS – A DAY WITH PETER ADAM



rtc.edu.au

Event Details

 Tuesday, 24th of March

 \$0

 Level 3, 221 Queen Street, Melbourne
Victoria 3000

A free event hosted by the RTC.
To register just click on Event Details or go
www.rtc.edu.au news & events.

Jenna invites you to join her to this meeting.

MARCH 2026 CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING FEEDBACK

The March 2026 Church Council meeting addressed significant developments in the church's ministry expansion and operational matters.

- The council reviewed and approved the comprehensive welcoming team procedures developed by Jenna, which include detailed training materials and a structured approach to integrating newcomers into church life.
- The Mernda church was discussed, including hall rental options, elder coverage, and the service schedule.
- Given that the congregation raised no objections, Martin van der Merwe's term as elder was formally extended by 12 months.
- Financial concerns were raised as giving is currently below budget targets, prompting the council to develop communication strategies to encourage consistent giving, including support for the Mernda church.
- The emergency response plan has been finalized information it posted in the foyer.
- Youth ministry has been expanded to include grades 4-7 (junior youth) and grades 8-12 (senior youth)
- A Youth Camp (years 6-12) in July in Anglesea will be promoted for those who wish to attend, but our focus (and fundraising) will be on the Convention in January.
- Preparations for the 2027 Perth Convention were discussed, including logistical challenges with flights and accommodation.
- The council also reviewed improvements to the livestreaming service, song lyrics readability during services, and various ministry updates.

EVENT SCHEDULE



Date & Time:
25 January, 2026
AT 1:00PM

SOCIAL

MEET AT WONGA PARK
CHRISTIAN REFORMED
CHURCH

Date & Time:
4 February, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
18 February, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
4 March, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
18 March, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
1 April, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
15 April, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
24 April, 2026
AT 7:30PM

SOCIAL

OZ TENPIN CHIRNSIDE PARK



IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN OUR YOUNG ADULTS GROUP OR COME ALONG TO ONE OF OUR SOCIAL EVENTS, WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU! SIMPLY CHAT TO INGE, MICHAEL, OR CASSIE AT CHURCH, OR SEND US A DM VIA OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE.



EVENT SCHEDULE



Date & Time:
29 April, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
13 May, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
27 May, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
10 June, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
20 June, 2026
AT 6:00PM

**CONVENTION
FUNDRAISER**

@WONGA PARK CRC

Date & Time:
24 June, 2026
AT 7:30PM

BIBLESTUDY

70-72 ENNISMORE
CRESCENT, PARK ORHCARDS

Date & Time:
28 June, 2026
AT 1:00PM

SOCIAL

LOCATION TBC

TWO WEEK BREAK!!



IF YOU'D LIKE TO JOIN OUR YOUNG ADULTS GROUP OR COME ALONG TO ONE OF OUR SOCIAL EVENTS, WE'D LOVE TO HAVE YOU! SIMPLY CHAT TO INGE, MICHAEL, OR CASSIE AT CHURCH, OR SEND US A DM VIA OUR INSTAGRAM PAGE.



TERM 1

SUPERDASH

2026



SOCIAL NIGHT

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Book of Acts

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC



STATE YOUTH SERVICE

4 PM @ Casey CRC

Sunday*



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



BIBLE STUDY

Juniors: Bible Timeline

Seniors: Testimony Writing

7:30 PM @ Wonga Park CRC

FOR MORE INFORMATION SPEAK TO YOUR YOUTH LEADERS

PRAYER POINTS

Personal prayer points

Holy Spirit, please take the prayers we bring and transform them so that they are acceptable to the Father.

As we go into the coming week let us daily pray;

That we will be humble with whatever gifts, talents or positions of authority we are given acknowledging that all we have is a gift from God and all we do must be for his glory. But he (Jesus) said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who have authority over them have themselves called 'Benefactors.' It is not to be like that among you. On the contrary, whoever is greatest among you should become like the youngest, and whoever leads, like the one serving." (Luke 22:25-26 CSB)

Give praise and thanks to the Lord our God for entrusting us with his wonderful gifts to use for his glory and the furtherance of his kingdom here on earth.

Congregational prayer points

Please continue to pray for Jenna Miller's mum as she is still recovering from a vicious dog attack. Pray that she will be healed physically as well as mentally and emotionally from the trauma she has suffered.

Please pray for Lauren & Ben Palmer as they are recovering from the trauma of a house break-in the past week. We thank the Lord for his divine protection over Ben and their home as the intruder left swiftly after entering.

Please pray for our children as they are growing up in a world of uncertainty, pray that the Lord will hold them close so that no matter what they see, hear or experience, they will know the peace of God.

Please pray for our young people at places of higher learning, pray that the Lord will protect them from ungodly influences and keep them close to himself.

Please pray for Chris Pretorius as he juggles the needs for the Wonga Park congregation as well as everything involved with the church plant in Mernda. Pray that the Lord will give him all the resources he needs and the wisdom to know how to pace himself.

Local & International prayer points

Please pray for our nation as many are feeling anxious about world events and how they will be impacted. Pray that God will use this situation to draw more people too himself.

Continue to pray for world leaders, pray that the Lord will move them to seek what is best for all the world.

Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in North Korea.

Continued from last week.

Crossing into China was not merely a physical transition for Timothy; it was a sensory explosion. After seventeen years in a landscape of concrete and "Great Darkness," Timothy's first escape from North Korea took place in 2004 when he was 17 years old. Facing a future of forced labour in a coal mine because of his father's defection, Timothy decided he had no future in his home country and chose to flee. Timothy crossed the Tumen River into China at night with a small group of people. They successfully reached the other side in about half an hour, narrowly avoiding being discovered or shot by border guards. Upon arriving in a Chinese border city, Timothy experienced profound culture shock.

For the first time in his life, he saw spinning, colourful lights, heard music in the streets, and saw people with exotic hairstyles and denim jeans. This experience made him realise that the North Korean state's propaganda—which claimed his home was the best country in the world—was a lie.

Shortly after arriving in China, Timothy met a Christian missionary who offered him help.

However, Timothy was terrified because of the intense anti-Christian brainwashing he had received in North Korea. Seeing a cross and a Bible for the first time, he feared they were a curse and believed that touching them would cause his fingers to rot.

Suspecting the missionary was a human trafficker kidnapping North Korean children, Timothy fled the safe house. By denying access to the internet, international media, and even diverse hairstyles, the state ensures that its citizens cannot imagine an alternative to their own suffering. When a human being is kept in a locked cage for their entire life, the sudden exposure to the "prosperity" of a common border town can be as psychologically devastating as it is liberating.

Timothy eventually joined a group of 17 other North Koreans (making 18 total) to attempt to reach Mongolia, where they could seek asylum. The group included two families with children as young as four and six years old. As they approached the Mongolian border at night, they were ambushed by the Chinese military. Soldiers opened fire, and Timothy recalled seeing bullets hitting the sand near his feet as children screamed in terror. The entire group was arrested. The group was forcibly sent back to North Korea. During the four-day bus journey back to the border, the boys were handcuffed and their legs were tied to prevent any escape attempts.

Once back in North Korea, Timothy was placed in a brutal detention centre. He was held in an underground, cramped cell with approximately 50 other people. The conditions were horrific, there was no space to lie down; inmates had to sleep sitting upright, leaning against one another. One night, a man leaning against Timothy's back died from starvation and torture.

Timothy did not realise the man was dead until his heavy body slumped over.

Timothy was the only one of the 18 people in his group to survive and be released. He suspects he was let go because he was still legally a minor. When he was finally released to his grandmother's house, he was so badly injured from the torture and starvation that he could not walk or sit down properly. Despite this trauma, he remained under constant 24/7 surveillance by the local authorities. Timothy's second escape, which took place in 2006 when he was 19 years old, driven by the constant 24/7 surveillance of the North Korean authorities and the trauma of his first repatriation, Timothy decided to flee again. At 3:00 AM, with the help of his grandmother and a lady from his village, he crossed the Tumen River back into China.

Once in China, Timothy received medical treatment before traveling 1,200 miles by bus and train to Shanghai using forged IDs. He was part of a group of nine North Korean refugees, including eight women. Timothy's plan was to reach the Shanghai American School, believing that its international status would provide diplomatic protection and prevent his deportation. During lunchtime, the group climbed the school's high fence and entered the grounds. They carried a note in English that read: "We are North Korean refugees, please help us". While the school principal initially suggested he would call the US Embassy, he ultimately informed the group that the school was not a diplomatic centre and allowed Chinese police to enter. The refugees formed a human chain on the floor to resist. However, dozens of police officers used force to drag them away, beating the women and pulling their hair while school children watched in tears.

Believing that being sent back to North Korea a second time—especially after seeking help from an American institution—would lead to immediate execution, Timothy attempted to end his own life. In the Shanghai police station toilet, he swallowed a stash of sleeping pills he had hidden in his clothes. He collapsed, expecting to die, but woke up later in the Shanghai International Prison, having survived the attempt. While in a cell with inmates from various countries, Timothy met a South Korean ex-gangster in the Shanghai International Prison. This man, covered in giant tattoos gave Timothy a Bible and taught him the only prayer he knew: to simply say "Amen" at the end of his wishes. It was in this cell that Timothy found the verse that finally penetrated his heart: John 14:18. "I will not leave you as orphans. I will come to you."

Unknown to Timothy, a 13-year-old student at the American school who had witnessed the arrest wrote a heartfelt email to a journalist. This sparked a massive international media campaign involving the BBC, CNN, and the Washington Post, leading to global protests at Chinese embassies. Due to the intense international pressure, the Chinese government made the rare decision to deport the group to the Philippines instead of repatriating them to North Korea. Timothy eventually traveled to the United Kingdom in 2008, where he was granted asylum and began a new life as a human rights advocate.

Today, Timothy Cho's life is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the grace of God guiding him through the trials he has faced. He has transitioned from a homeless child sleeping in train containers to a man working in the shadow of the British Parliament. Several years ago, Timothy received a call on a public bus in Manchester.

It was his dying mother in South Korea. Her body was paralyzed, and she had one final question for the son she had left behind in the dark: "Son, could you forgive me?" Timothy chose to say yes. His mother passed away two weeks later, on Easter Sunday—a day Timothy views as a beautiful bookend of redemption. By choosing forgiveness over the cycle of hatred instilled by the regime, he proved that the power of love is ultimately more enduring than the power of any dictator.

Our next prayer meeting will be held on Thursday the 19th of March at 7.30pm.

DIACONATE

The Deacons are grateful for the congregations continued financial support. This allows us to support our fellow congregation members either with a direct need or as a support.

The support varies from encouraging cards, phone calls to fruit boxes and meals to food vouchers when the need is dire or the soul is weak.



OUR GIVING, AN ACT OF WORSHIP

In our Church we have two offerings every Sunday. The first goes toward the ministry of this congregation. The second offering goes toward various Christian causes. This week our second offering is for the Diaconate.

If you would like to support the work of you can do so by in Church giving - simply add your offering to the bag at the back of Church or by bank transfer -

BSB 063-167. A/C 1015-8356

If using bank transfer please indicate whether it is for the first offering "Sun1" or second offering "Sun 2" in the reference line. Or you can give online via our Church app

<https://wpcrc.org.au/give>

SERMON DETAIL

15 March 2026

SERMON TOPIC:	One Church, Sent people: The Table joins people
BIBLE TEXT:	1 Corinthians 10: 14-22
PREACHER:	Chris Pretorius
ELDER ON DUTY:	Martin van der Merwe
OFFERINGS:	
1ST COLLECTION:	The work of the Church
2ND COLLECTION:	Diaconate

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why is our default instinct to negotiate with our idols rather than actively fleeing from them?
- How does sharing the Lord's Table help maintain our unity across both the Wonga Park and Mernda campuses?
- What is a seemingly good thing in our modern world that easily becomes an ultimate, idolized thing?
- What does the pressure to "fit in" and compromise our faith look like for Christians in our culture today?
- If partaking of the one bread welds us into one body, how should that change the way we treat the people sitting across the room?
- What is the practical difference between treating the Lord's Supper as a mere memory versus a genuine, spiritual participation in Christ?
- Why is God's "jealousy" for our exclusive worship actually a beautiful, comforting reality when viewed as a covenant marriage?
- In what subtle ways do we try to feast at God's table on Sunday while snacking at the culture's table during the week?
- When our own spiritual compromises crush us, how does Christ's perfect obedience give us hope?

HELPING HANDS

	15 March	22 March	29 March
Preacher	Chris Pretorius	Luke Edwards	Chris Pretorius
Elder on Duty	Martin	Kasha	Peter
Prayer Leader	Martin	Kasha	Herman L
Music Leader	Neil	Brendina	Neil
Children's Talk	Sarah	Inge	Jeanette
Bible Reader	Danika	Conrad	Adri
Sound	Nicolas	Michael	Nicolas
Visuals	Ene	Salme	Isaac
Broadcasting	James	Christo	James
Sunday School	Val, Sarah, Lynette	Lynette, Ilze, Lise S	Brendina, Ilze, Lise S
Coffee	Christina & Jacob du Toit	Roger & Jeanette Fernando	Michael Hayes & Ka-men Kam

BIRTHDAYS

MC van Gent	15 March
Matthew Bergh	18 March
Marius Strydom	23 March
Leonie Stork	24 March
Pieter Kellerman	25 March
Betsie de Bruyn	27 March
Francios Bezuidenhout	27 March

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:		admin@wpcrc.org.au
Deacons:	Leana van Gent	deacons@wpcrc.org.au
Music Ministry:	Mia Van Wyk	
Sound & Visuals:	Cassie Van Veen	
Children's Talk:	Janette Fernando	
Sunday School:	Sarah Pretorius	admin@wpcrc.org.au
Youth Group:	Kasha Schubert	youth@wpcrc.org.au
Young Adults:	Michael van der Merwe	
Growth Groups:	Chris Pretorius	pastor@wpcrc.org.au
Prayer Chain:	Herman Linde	herman.linde@live.com.au
Facilities & Maintenance:	Riaan Bergh	deacons@wpcrc.org.au
Newsletter:	Leana van Gent	newsletter@wpcrc.org.au

* To contact telephonically please refer to the directory in the Church app