



TRINITY NEWS

THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

ttc.wa.edu.au

SPRING 2025 | Issue No. 112



Abiding in Christ Together

IN THIS EDITION

PAGE 3 Abiding in Christ Together

PAGE 4 A Worthwhile Commitment

PAGE 6 Preparing for Hope-filled Ministry

PAGE 7 From Uni Student to Campus Gospel Worker

PAGE 8 Shaped by Grace

PAGE 9 Interview with Thom Bull



A PRECIOUS COMMUNITY

Jesus Christ holds the church—his gathering—as precious. Perhaps nowhere is this preciousness better seen in the Scriptures than their revelation to us of the mystery that God uses the institution of marriage to point towards Christ and his church. Thus, Jesus laid down his life for the church and continues to work now to bring us to holiness and blamelessness until the final day (Eph 5:25–32).

There are many implications of this preciousness, but among them is the fact that Christ cares deeply about the kinds of shepherds that will guide the church to nourishment in the grace of God and guard it from both internal and external threats (Acts 20:28–32; Eph 4:7–16). He calls these leaders to have a godly character, gospel convictions, and the ability to teach (1 Tim 2). Conversely, we are warned that God will judge those shepherds that destroy the church (1 Cor 3:17). Likewise, because of his posture towards the church, Christians too will love and hold the gathering of Christ's people as precious as we are conformed into his image (1 John 4:17). So we are called to love one another in our fellowship together, even—and perhaps especially—when things are difficult. Such relationships can be difficult as they call us to humility, vulnerability, and the laying aside of rights for the salvation of others. But they are ultimately very good because this is the context in which Christ grows and establishes us in the gospel.

Because of how precious the church is to Christ, training for ministry to God's people can never purely be an exercise in box-ticking or even in skill development. Although qualifications and skills are right and necessary, far more important is forming a group of people together as a community who sits under and delights in the Word of God.

For these reasons, Trinity holds community as one of our core values, particularly expressed in our conviction to pursue face-to-face learning and relationships. This conviction does have pragmatic benefits for us as a College. For instance, it allows pedagogical advantages in and beyond the classroom as our students learn from us and one another. It also has relational advantages as we can better know our students and partner with them in their churches and ministries both during and after college. Yet beyond these, we value community because what we are doing is the ministry of the gospel—we are bringing the Word of God to bear on students' equipping as shepherds as we sit under it together and therefore live it out together. Our community under the Word is precious to us because it is precious to Christ.

Dan Cole
Principal

Welcome



We are called to love one another in our fellowship together, even—and perhaps especially—when things are difficult.





Students listening to Ben Johnston at the 2025 retreat

ABIDING IN CHRIST *Together*

After the busyness and intensity of exams, what could be better than gathering with dear friends to bask in God's Word, enjoy crisp country air, and share stories around the crackling fire?

The day after exams, a group of our full-time Trinity students headed down to Dunsborough for a student retreat. It's been a great blessing to have Spero Ministries provide us with restful, affordable accommodation and gospel-drenched wisdom for continuing in ministry.

At the retreat, set amid a working vineyard, I couldn't help being reminded of Jesus' words in John 15: "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me" (v. 4). Often after we've filled our brains and hearts with Bible things all semester, it can be so tempting to avoid personal Bible reading, reflection and prayer. But the retreat helps me to wind down from semester as we reflect together on key takeaways, challenges and joys. Most importantly, our unhurried conversations and time enjoying God's creation remind me afresh of the goodness and glory of Christ and my utter dependence on him in all things. This draws me in to read my Bible and be still before our Lord. There's a shift in my whole self as I relax into spending time with these brothers and sisters and we share life in a slower, deeper way. We help each other be oriented toward Christ as we rest and receive his grace. We abide in Jesus.

In same passage, John writes: "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you" (v. 12). This is another thing I love about our student retreat. It's wonderful during semester to come from different locations and denominations

across Perth and be strengthened together as we dig into the Bible, think through ministry, and pray together at Trinity. Yet our lives don't naturally intersect outside of College. Our Trinity-Spero retreats adds to our community life in this uniquely helpful way—it gives us opportunity to slow down and just live life together for a while. At College we share meals, dig deeper in pastoral care groups, and learn to love each other through the flames of ministry, assessments and learning other languages. But away from our normal responsibilities, routines and commutes, this is precious, intentional time to love each other well by listening, sharing our struggles and growth, and laughing together. As we gather together in Christ, we learn how to love one another better and support each other in ministry both as we train now and then as we spread out even further across WA, Australia and the world. We deepen friendships that will help us in the years ahead to remain faithful in ministry, abiding in Christ and loving one another through the triumphs and tragedies ahead.

We always have three key elements: Christ, fellowship and rest. This year we had the joy of Dan and Emily Cole joining us with their characteristic deep caring kindness, and clear gospel teaching. After so many new babies joining our Trinity family this past semester, it was a great delight to meet many of the little ones we've been praying for and to pray for and encourage each other through the challenges and joys of parenting. We also celebrated a couple of birthdays with some unique cake choices!

Praise be to God for precious time with dear brothers and sisters, and we are grateful for opportunities to rest and rejoice as people of our glorious Lord Jesus.

Sarah Michael
MDiv student



A WORTHWHILE COMMITMENT

Tracey, Paula and Nola's Story

Every Monday, three women from Bunbury make the two-hour drive to Perth for class at Trinity Theological College. It's a long day: four hours on the road and a few hours in the classroom—but for Tracey, Paula and Nola, it's been more than worth it..

The three are part of Trinity Equip, a certificate course for women involved in volunteer ministry. The course is designed to be practical, encouraging and deeply rooted in God's Word. While there are online options available at other colleges, the opportunity to meet face-to-face, learn in community, and sit under the teaching of experienced Christian women was exactly what they were looking for.

Tracey had been wanting to do theological study for a while. With her youngest son finishing high school, she saw the course promoted on Facebook and felt quietly excited. "It was going to be face-to-face, taught by women for women, and it would be nice to meet some other like-minded women," Tracey explains. "There would be no academic essay writing—I was going to be realistic with my current capacity."

Nola also joined in a time of change. After the passing of her husband, one of her pastors suggested Trinity Equip as a way to re-engage and refocus. "It was a good idea to get involved and give me direction," Nola reflects. "It was also encouraging to know Tracey and Paula had already committed to do the course."

For Paula, the course came at just the right time. "I've attended lots of Trinity in Town certificate units over the past 20 years, but I'd never done the assessment component," she explains. "I thought about starting a diploma a few years ago, but with work, family and travel, it just didn't seem realistic. When Trinity Equip was advertised, it felt like a good fit."

Working across three locations in the South West in her family's accounting practice, Paula was drawn to the course's once-a-week structure and accessible commitment. "My main reason for applying was to grow in my Bible knowledge and be better equipped to teach the Bible to others in my ministry areas at church."

Although they don't carpool every week due to different schedules, Tracey, Nola and Paula often catch up to talk about what they are learning. The women serve at Bunbury Baptist Church and have long histories of ministry involvement: leading Bible studies, playing music, supporting youth, visiting the elderly, and offering hospitality. They've always been active in their church, but Trinity Equip is giving them a new sense of clarity and confidence.

Nola says the course has given her "more confidence in God's Word." She especially enjoyed the biblical theology unit, and learning how to read the Bible one-to-one with others.

Top image: Paula (left) and Tracey (right)

Trinity Equip classes are taught by women who are theologically trained and have extensive ministry experience



Equip students enjoying fellowship over morning tea



The sense of community has also been a highlight. Conversations over morning tea, and time in prayer, have reminded them they're not alone in the ups and downs of ministry life.

"The best part for me has been the face-to-face contact with other women from other churches and the interaction we have in class," Paula reflects. "Being there in person among other Christian women has been the icing on the cake. Being able to chat with, pray with and learn with others makes a world of difference."

Tracey agrees. "God has been growing me in confidence, to some degree, and in perseverance... and always appreciation of his Word, of Jesus." For her the practical side of the course has been one of its strengths. She's found that what they're learning applies directly to real-life ministry situations. "The practical opportunities that God in his grace makes known, to take and use what we've been learning—that's been the best thing."

The gospel focus of Trinity Equip is another common thread. "I've grown in my love for Jesus and the wonder of his grace towards me," Paula says. "You can never get enough of the gospel, and Equip has the gospel threaded throughout all its units."



Praying together is an important part of College life

Beyond personal growth, the course has helped these women grow in their capacity to love and serve others. Paula puts it simply: "It's helped me learn how to listen, love, and be a blessing to others."

Nola is taking a break from the course this year while she travels around Australia, but she's still actively applying what she's learned so far, and she looks forward to getting back into it once she's home again.

Asked what they'd say to someone considering Trinity, Paula doesn't hesitate. "Go for it, even if you're from the South West! Trinity Equip extends your Bible knowledge and practical ministry skills without the burden of difficult assessments. It's made learning and growth possible, even with work and family commitments."

It's a big commitment to drive to Perth and back every week. But for these three women, the in-person learning, encouragement and growth have made the trip more than worthwhile.



PREPARING FOR HOPE-FILLED MINISTRY

Eh Yel's Story

Born in a refugee camp in Thailand, Eh Yel Shaw's early life was shaped by conflict and displacement. Now in his second year of a Bachelor of Theology, Eh Yel is preparing for a life of ministry shaped by his past and fuelled by a hope-filled vision for the next generation.

Eh Yel was born in a refugee camp on the Thai-Myanmar border—the middle child of nine children. His parents had fled Myanmar the year before, escaping the persecution that made everyday life dangerous, especially for Karen people like them.

His family arrived in Sydney in 2008 and eventually made their way to Albany, where they've lived ever since. After Eh Yel graduated high school, his dad invited him on a short-term mission trip to Thailand to help with translation. What started as a practical trip to support others turned into a pivotal moment in Eh Yel's own spiritual journey as he witnessed God's peace and power in a way he hadn't before. Eh Yel returned to Australia changed.

Soon after, he joined the internship program at Albany Baptist Church. This deepened his understanding of the gospel and began to shape his sense of calling. Through intentional discipleship, Eh Yel's faith began to take firm root.

"I realised I do enjoy diving deeper into God's Word and sharing it as well," Eh Yel explains. "It kickstarted my journey into wanting to go into vocational ministry."

A season of online study, working different jobs and serving in youth ministry at church expanded his vision for how God might use him in the future. As Eh Yel continued to grow in faith and ministry experience, conversations with his pastors introduced him to Trinity Theological College. The idea of studying in a community committed to gospel-centred training resonated with him—especially after the challenges of studying online in isolation.

In 2023, during Trinity's Mission Week in Albany, he met several Trinity students and saw firsthand the impact of their training. Their example and encouragement helped confirm his next step.

Eh Yel moved to Perth and began studying at Trinity full-time at the start of 2024. So far, God has been growing Eh Yel in both his love and knowledge of the Lord—especially through the theological units he's studying. "Getting to study God's Word every day is such a great blessing and privilege," Eh Yel reflects. "The gospel is kept at the centre of everything that is being taught at Trinity." Alongside this, the support and encouragement of the Trinity community have also played a key role in his spiritual growth.

Eh Yel plans to head back to Albany post-graduation, and hopes to have the privilege of pastoring the Albany Karen Baptist Church.

Please pray for Eh Yel in his studies, that he would be continuously reminded of the joy and privilege of studying God's Word. Please also pray for Eh Yel as he leads the youth group at Gosnells Baptist Church—that he would serve both the team and the teens well.



On 2025 Mission Week in Katanning with his pastoral care group



Eh Yel (far right) with classmates in the library

FROM UNI STUDENT TO CAMPUS GOSPEL WORKER

Jhenn's Story



Jhenn (left) with her Power to Change colleague at ECU Orientation Week

Originally planning to enter a career in public health, it was as a science student at university that Jhenn Hall (MDiv, 2023) first felt the call to vocational ministry. Through Power to Change, a campus ministry to university students, she met Christians who were very passionate about their walk with Jesus and impressed upon her the importance of sharing the gospel.

After graduating, Jhenn joined a mission organisation and spent the next two and a half years involved in cross-cultural missions trips. “I got to do all sorts of things, but it dawned on me that while public health is very valuable, people don’t really have life to the full unless they know Jesus. I wanted to do something that could have an impact for someone’s eternity.”

When she returned to Perth, almost every mission organisation she contacted suggested theological study as a next step. A friend of a friend was studying at Trinity, and she spoke so highly of it that Jhenn decided to attend an Info Night. First enrolling in the Graduate Diploma of Divinity, it wasn’t long before Jhenn realised she wanted more. She ended up transferring into the Master of Divinity, graduating in 2023.

As it turns out, Jhenn’s is a full-circle story: she is now serving in the same ministry that helped her first consider ministry for herself, Power to Change. She says what really convinced her to consider it as an

option was the realisation that her own life was the fruit of it.

When asked what she loved most about her time at Trinity, Jhenn offers two words: “Friends and frames.” The ‘friends’ were fellow students who loved Jesus deeply and were determined to shape their lives and ministry around the gospel. “Even having graduated, it’s such an encouragement to see them faithfully sharing the gospel, serving the body of Christ, depending on God,” she says. “It feels like you have allies. We’re doing this together. It’s like the Fellowship in Lord of the Rings—same mission, same goal, same purpose.”

The ‘frames’ came through the theological training that anchored everything in the gospel. “Trinity really instilled in me how you’ve got to keep the gospel central to everything,” she explains.

Looking back, Jhenn can see how God grew her love for his Word and deepened her faith through her time at Trinity. “I feel more equipped to talk with people about theology and spirituality, to evaluate different perspectives and resources,” she says. “But more than that, I cherish the gospel more. I love the Lord more. The Spirit moves through that—studying the gospel again and again—it pierces your heart and spills into your life.”

Please pray for Jhenn to remain faithful as she seeks to serve Christ and reach young people at universities with his love.

SHAPED BY GRACE

Tyler's story

For Tyler Swartzentruber (MDiv, 2014), Minister at St Matthew's Anglican Church in Shenton Park, the most fundamental truth about himself is simple: "I'm a sinner saved by grace," he says, reflecting on the path that led him to ministry. That grace, he explains, was modelled to him from an early age and ultimately during his studies at Trinity.

Tyler initially trained as a primary school teacher, working in Perth and Geraldton. It was through years of serving in youth ministry, walking alongside others in their faith, and being encouraged by close friends that he began to sense a deeper calling. "Through those experiences, my eyes were really opened to the joy and necessity of gospel ministry," he recalls.

Eventually, Tyler made the decision to pursue full-time theological study in the Master of Divinity. Unlike some who ease into vocational ministry through apprenticeships or part-time study, he jumped straight into the deep end. "I just decided to go all in," Tyler explains. "We knew people who had gone through Trinity, and had enough of a sense of what it was about—the character of the place."

At Trinity, Tyler found more than just theological training; he found a community that would shape him in profound ways. He fondly remembers the friendships forged over chapel services, pastoral care groups, and even table tennis matches. What stood out was how Trinity's teaching wasn't just academic—it was deeply personal and pastoral.



Tyler (third from right) as a student with his pastoral care group



Tyler preaching

"Studying within the Trinity community was so precious because both the people I learned from and the people I learned with were (and still are!) fellow pilgrims who need God's grace in Christ. We were being shaped by his grace, and had the daily opportunity to demonstrate that grace to one another. When you choose to study at Trinity in-person, you get to participate in a camaraderie of grace."

Even after graduating, Trinity continues to shape Tyler's ministry. "Some of the guys I'm closest to are those I went through Trinity with," he says. "God has used those friendships to keep encouraging and exhorting me." Tyler also speaks warmly of the faculty, who modelled humility and a lifelong commitment to learning. "They don't see themselves as having arrived. They come alongside us, helping us continue to grow in Christ."

The impact of Trinity has also carried Tyler into every ministry role he has taken on at St Matthew's. He led the children's ministry for many years and now shepherds a congregation. In all this, his approach remains the same: "Grounding myself and those I minister to in God's Word—that our attention might be directed to Jesus, seeing the sufficiency of him for our hearts and our lives."

Tyler recommends Trinity to anyone interested in pursuing ministry training: "Because in that environment and community, you are going to be so helped—not just in your head knowledge, but in a whole-person appreciation for Jesus Christ."

Please pray for Tyler to have a growing humility under God's Word, prayerful dependence upon God's Spirit, selfless proclamation of God's Son, and faithful shepherding of his immediate family and church family under our Chief Shepherd, Jesus Christ.

INTERVIEW WITH THOM BULL

Lecturer in Theology



Thom teaching at College

Thom Bull, Lecturer in Theology, successfully completed his PhD thesis on “Girolamo Zanchi’s (1516-1590) Doctrine of the Unity of the Church” with Moore Theological College this year. Thom teaches doctrine and ethics, and loves introducing students to the deep riches of the Christian tradition and Scripture. We recently asked him some questions about his research.

Tell us about your PhD research.

The focus of my PhD was a 16th century Italian Protestant named Girolamo Zanchi. Not a lot of people have heard of him these days, but he was well known and highly respected in his own time—he taught at some of the most important Reformed universities, published a lot, and served as a pan-European theological consultant. For my PhD, I zoomed in on Zanchi’s understanding of the unity of the Church. This was a big point of contention at the time of the Protestant Reformation, with Protestants often accused by their Roman opponents of being divisive sectarians who had torn apart the body of Christ—indeed, it’s an accusation that is still commonly made against Protestants today! I explored what Zanchi thought about that, and discovered that he had some pretty illuminating things to say in response.

How has your research helped your teaching at Trinity?

I’d say there are two main things. Firstly, one can’t complete a PhD without having to grow as a reader and communicator, and without sharpening one’s ability both to engage with arguments and develop persuasive arguments of one’s own. All of this is vital for the classroom. But it’s also vital for Word ministry more generally, and so improvement in those areas has hopefully equipped me to contribute more effectively to the students’ training in those things.

Secondly, my research has forced me to become better acquainted with Christian thought and biblical interpretation from the past. If someone really wants to come to grips with Zanchi (or any Protestant reformer for that matter), it won’t be enough for them to read

Continued on next page



Trinity's faculty team (left to right): Mike Webb (Lecturer in Missions), David Kummerow (Senior Lecturer in Old Testament), Dan Cole (Principal), Thom Bull (Lecturer in Theology), Grant Taylor (Academic Dean & Lecturer in New Testament)

just Zanchi. They'll have to gain some grasp of the Early Church Fathers and Mediaeval theologians whom he'd studied deeply, as well as those thinkers who were his contemporaries and with whom he was engaged in conversation. This is a great thing, because there is so much to be gained from exploring how these Christians from previous generations read the Bible, and from critically engaging with their ideas. Doing so expands our horizons, refines our theological judgements, and enriches our sense of how God's Word is to be responded to and wisely lived out in our own time. That's certainly been my experience, as I've looked into some of those earlier works through the course of my research. My hope is that, having done so, I'll be better able to help the students as they do the same.

“

Looking back from the vantage point of a completed PhD, I can see how God was ceaselessly providing for me, sustaining me, and directing me when I didn't really have a clue what I was doing or where I was going. ”

What have you appreciated about having the opportunity to do your PhD research?

My experience of PhD research was one of spending quite a bit of time feeling lost in a foggy forest, desperately trying to find some genuine path which would lead me out, and terrified either that there was no such path to be found, or that someone else would find it before me! All of which meant, I had to pray, depend upon God, and entrust everything to him. Looking back from the vantage point of a completed PhD, I can see how God was ceaselessly providing for me, sustaining me, and directing me when I didn't really have a clue what I was doing or where I was going. It's grown my trust in him, and I'm grateful above all for that.

Sometimes it's quite easy for a spirit of competition, possessiveness, and ego to infect academic research, but I experienced enormous generosity from other scholars throughout my studies. There were so many who were only too willing to share insights and discoveries, and to give encouragement and advice along the way. I appreciated having that kind of heart modelled to me—one of Christ-like humility, love, and selflessness.

I'm also grateful to have got to know Zanchi. He is a virtually untapped treasure trove of biblical, theological, and pastoral wisdom, and I've really only scratched the surface of his output. I'm looking forward to continuing to explore his work and learn from this teacher whom Christ provided for all of us 500 years ago, for our instruction and encouragement.

PRAYER & PRAISE

Give thanks for:

- The 76 students we have enrolled this semester, including 8 new students who have started their degree studies.
- Matt Fuller for sharing his wisdom and insights with our students and church communities at the Annual Lecture and Ministry Matters.

Pray for:

- God to raise up many prospective students to attend Info Night and Open Week in October, that they would be encouraged to be equipped for ministry.
- Many women to apply to study in Trinity Equip for 2026.
- The appointment process for an additional Old Testament lecturer; that God would grant wisdom and discernment.
- Dr Megan Best as she prepares for the events looking at Christian views on IVF in September and October.

UPCOMING EVENTS

13 Oct	Info Night
13-17 Oct	Open Week
1 Nov	Quarterly Prayer Breakfast

Trinity at Night

Accessible, short units of theological study for people of all walks of life

Term Four (Oct - Nov)

Isaiah

The Big Picture: Seeing the Bible as a Whole



INFO NIGHT & OPEN WEEK

13 - 17 OCTOBER

Get a taste of being equipped for gospel ministry

Sit in on lectures, meet staff and students, and tour the College campus

REGISTER ONLINE

ttc.wa.edu.au/open-week



TRINITY EQUIP

Training women to be confident and capable in volunteer ministry

BIBLICAL & PRACTICAL

Grow in Bible-handling, leadership, teamwork, and pastoral care skills in partnership with your church or ministry organisation.

FOR WOMEN

Taught by women with ministry experience for women in volunteer ministry.

SUPPORTIVE

Learn from mentors and alongside a cohort of peers.

PART-TIME

Monday morning classes during school terms over two years.

APPLICATIONS FOR 2026 OPEN IN SEPTEMBER





WHEN THE PENNY DROPS

Ben Johnston
Development Officer



While we no longer use physical pennies in Australia, we still use a phrase about pennies from a bygone era.

The phrase, "the penny dropped," simply means that there is a belated realisation of something after a period of confusion or ignorance. It is the "now I get it moment!" The origin of the term stems from a time when pennies were used in pay telephones or gumball machines and sometimes the coin would get stuck, but there was always a moment of brief uncertainty. When the penny drops the machine is activated and the machine can fulfil its purpose.

As I have visited with faithful supporters of Trinity Theological College, I hear a common theme: the penny has dropped. They understand that their giving is essential to helping Trinity fulfil its mission of training men and women for effective Christian ministry. They also understand that their giving will bring rich

blessings to churches and be used to further the Great Commission of Jesus.

My hope and prayer are that you understand the importance of people being equipped to clearly proclaim the gospel to a needy world. We know that Jesus invested three years of his life to training his disciples to become apostles to the world. Students training at Trinity are being prepared for effective Christian service that faithfully proclaims Christ's gospel. This time of preparation is important and often essential for future gospel ministry. Your support of the College is very much appreciated and necessary for us to fulfil our mission. I am especially thankful for those who participated in our mid-year appeal. Thank you for your ongoing prayers and financial support of Trinity Theological College.

PARTNER WITH US

By giving financially to Trinity, you are partnering with us to equip men and women for Word ministry.

You can give via our website (ttc.wa.edu.au/partner-with-us) or by filling in this form and mailing it to us.



All donations of \$2 or more are tax deductible

I want to give: ☐ \$100 ☐ \$500
☐ \$250 ☐ \$1,000

Frequency: ☐ Weekly ☐ Monthly
☐ Fortnightly ☐ Annually

Please use my donation for the:

- ☐ General fund (BSB 086 006 Acc No. 730 449 707)
- ☐ Library fund (BSB 086 006 Acc No. 560 085 401)
- ☐ Building fund (BSB 086 006 Acc No. 560 097 779)

One way of making a lasting investment in raising future ministry workers for generations to come, is by including Trinity in your will with a bequest.

☐ Please send me information about bequests

Title _____ Today's Date _____

First Name _____

Surname _____

Company (if applicable) _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Payment Authority

I am paying by: ☐ Cheque* ☐ Visa ☐ Master Card

*Cheques can be made payable to "Trinity Theological College"

Card No.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

Expiry: □ □ / □ □

Name on Card _____

Signature _____