

Noodling for Ministry Gems

in Coober Pedy

with Dave & Margie Wood • August 2025



God has answered our prayers for a new direction after a parent complained to the Department of Education about us handing out Christian material at school and we were asked not to come into the school anymore.

God has made a way for us to be heavily involved in Indigenous outreach at the Youth shed in town once or twice a week. We have deepened our connections in the Umoona community via the Toongabbie Anglican (TAC) mission team running a holiday program in the July holidays and also from helping the Aboriginal Brethren church around the corner from the Catacomb Church.

Our deeper connections with Umoona will mean we can use a spare building as a Praise and Worship venue for a Sunday night fellowship in the future.

We have been doubly blessed when a new teacher was appointed to the school as the wellbeing teacher, who just so happens to be an amazing Christian woman.

This role within the school will be so important for us to maintain connections and explore future youth group opportunities.

So how have all these connections played out? Well, there were a solid three days helping out at NAIDOC week. A youth sports day (lots of kite flying), a youth shed barbecue, where I (Dave) learnt how to cook Kangaroo tail and lastly the big Umoona community lunch at the basketball stadium.

The second week of the July holidays was full of community engagement with the TAC crew.

Being servant-hearted in Umoona, cleaning out the main building at the Drive In (we are members of the committee) and two massive days doing a holiday program at Umoona.

So, in and amongst all of this, we have our many, many outreach opportunities each week.

I do SES, Dusty Radio (up to six shows already), and Drive In volunteering (both of us). We attend tennis social once a week, the Coober Pedy Together group, Park Run and so on.



A uniquely Coober Pedy sign at the Drive In

Margie has ladies' bible study, and she helped in getting a suicide prevention network established.

This is alongside us both sharing in leading and running Church each week

Most of you know that the Catacomb Church is a bit of a tourist attraction or a church in a tourist location. This got me

Main Image: Kanku-Breakaways Conservation Park

Circle Image: Dave & Margie Wood

Middle Image: Youth Shed evening

Bottom Image: Umoona community lunch

Continued from previous page...

thinking, was there a comparable church in Paul's missionary trips that is like ours in some way?

Our church has a busier seven months in the tourist season, shouldered by quieter periods either side. Congregations swell to 30 plus in the busy times and go back to 12-15 in the quieter times.

As this is our second year and second tourist season, it got me thinking, is this travellers' ministry a good thing or a hindrance?

Why would it be a bad thing, you might ask? Well, a possible downside, is that the large number of new visitors each week can be intimidating to our small congregation or those who might see it that way.

But in reality, the sharing and fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ is an incredible blessing, not only to me and Margie, but to our Church.

We have been blessed with so many interactions that we could see God's hand in. The flip side to this story is that many travellers don't get to go to church every Sunday; they could be in a town that has no church, or a church that opens once per month and so on.

We have thought of the Catacomb church as a spiritual roadhouse

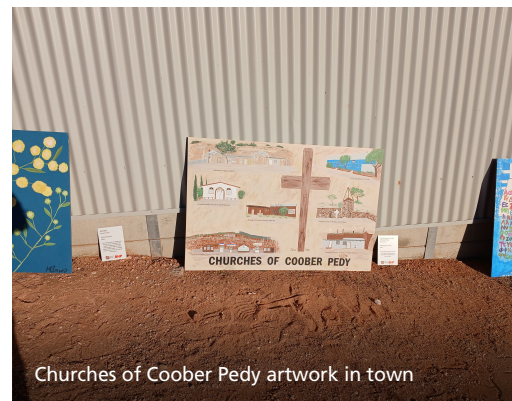
**We are ... a distinct
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that can "fill up our brothers and sisters as they are on the road."

So which church is the Catacomb-like from Paul's mission trips? I think we are a bit like the church in **Galatia** (working class town folk) – the church in **Philippi** (we have a history of benefactors who mined Opal) – the church of **Thessalonika** (we have people searching for hope in a change in their circumstances) – the church in **Corinth** (our town is a very busy thoroughfare of business and commerce between the north and south) – and the church in **Ephesus** (our base to do the ministry God has set us here to do!).

We are like all these churches in some ways but we are also distinctly, God-directed church for His perfect plan to live/walk/talk/gossip the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this place, Coober Pedy

Margie has recently spent two and a half weeks with our kids and grandkids over "east". This was much-needed mum and grandma time, which filled up a lot of emotional buckets on both sides, while I stayed behind to run the church and do all the stuff God would have us do here..!



Churches of Coober Pedy artwork in town



Margie manning the church tent during NAIDOC week

**God's rich blessings,
Dave & Margie**

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