



# UC Information

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## A Bad Start to Finishing Well

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I'm moving into a new ministry in a couple of months. It's not a surprise. I've known about it and have been preparing for it for nearly three years. Having learnt a thing or two about leadership and strategic thinking in the last few years from my colleagues in the College and the Presbytery I had put a lot of thought and preparation into using my last semester in the College to transition well from one ministry to the next. I was completely focussed on "finishing well" in one ministry and "beginning well" in my new ministry. I had a time line. I had my KPIs. I was good to go.

But, as Robbie Burns put it, "The best-laid schemes o' mice an' men gang aft agley". This year began with the theft of my wallet on New Year's Day and went down hill from there. I won't rake over the ruins of the first quarter now, but I wrote in my journal in early February, "This isn't where I'd hoped to be at the start of 2012". Quite an understatement.

In that same entry I noted that I had woken up with a new song in my head on Sunday morning. I wrote it down in the car park before I went into church and did a rough recording of it that afternoon – so I wouldn't forget it. The song felt like a gift to me and to several other friends and colleagues who were also struggling. (There's a recording of it online if you're interested: <http://introducingtheuca.typepad.com> .)

Breathe in  
Breathe out  
Breathe deep and slow  
Let life be alive in you  
Rest and let go

Breathe in  
Breathe out  
Rest and let go  
One word in a frenzied mind:  
Be still and know...

I wrote in my journal: "I think that's where I am right now. Making very little headway on the nuts and bolts of "ending well" at Uniting College and "beginning well" as President, but being forced to stop and rest and know God in whose hands I am. Maybe God is preparing me from the inside out. I pray that is the case. I'm in no place to prepare myself. I pray that God is doing the work in me that will make me ready."

It was a good time to see that. As it turned out, I wasn't even close to the end of the bad start to 2012.

I am reminded of the helpful, but very confronting book by Andrew Purves, *The Crucifixion of Ministry* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007). He explores the fact that ministry is fundamentally at odds with my natural "desire for power and success and the persistent wish to feel competent and in control". In fact ministry "crucifies" that expectation. Yet, over time, ministers learn that "the crucifixion of ministry is God's gift". We learn that, "Ministers can't forgive sinners, raise the dead or bring in the kingdom of God. Neither can we grow congregations, convert sinners or heal the dying. ... Jesus has to show up and do what he has promised to do." *Our* ministries need to be crucified for the sake of the ministry *Jesus* is doing around us and in us.

The pages of dot points and tables in my "strategic planning notes" look a bit silly now – a foolish attempt to take control of something that's only worth doing because Christ is already in charge of it. Strangely, the *failure* of all my careful preparations leaves me feeling more ready and better equipped for my new role than I ever expected. It has left me safely in the hands of the Lord who "comes, addresses, and deals with people in and through the news of his completed work" (Basis of Union, paragraph 4).

And so, a final (long) quotation from Andrew Purves:

*"To ministers I say this as strongly as I can. Preach Christ, preach Christ, preach Christ. Get out of your offices and get into your studies. Quit playing office manager and program director, quit staffing committees, and even right now recommit yourselves to what you were ordained to do, namely the ministry of Word and sacraments. Pick up good theology books, classical texts, great theologians. Claim the energy and time to study for days and days at a time. Disappear for long hours because you are reading Athanasius on the person of Christ or Wesley on sanctification or Augustine on the Trinity or Calvin on the Christian life or Andrew Murray on the priesthood of Christ. Then you will have something to say worth hearing. ... Let most of what you do be dominated by the demands of the sermon as if your whole life and reason for being is to preach Christ, because it is. ... Don't preach to grow your congregation; preach to bear witness to what the Lord is doing, and let him grow your church. Dwell in him, abide in him, come to know him ever more deeply and convertedly. Tell the people what he has to say to them, what he is doing among them and within them, and what it is he wants them to share in. He is up to something in your neighbourhood, if you have eyes to see and the ears to hear."*

## PLACEMENTS NEWS

Placements finalised since the last edition of UC Information:

- **Rob Morgan to Southern Yorke Peninsula**  
*Brentwood, Corny Point, Curramulka, Edithburgh, Koolywurtie, Minlaton, Port Vincent, Stansbury, Warooka, Yorketown* from 1 January 2013

Wondering if any new placements have become available between UC Information mailings? Check out the Website under UC positions vacant:  
[resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant](http://resources.sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant)

The following is the current list of vacant approved placements:

### Profiles available

- Ardrossan (0.5)
- Bordertown, Buckingham and Mundulla
- Hare Street (0.25)
- Plains Community Churches (0.5)  
(Windsor, Owen and Hamley Bridge)

### Advertised Placement/Position

- Director in Missiology (0.5)
- Post Graduate Supervision (0.5)

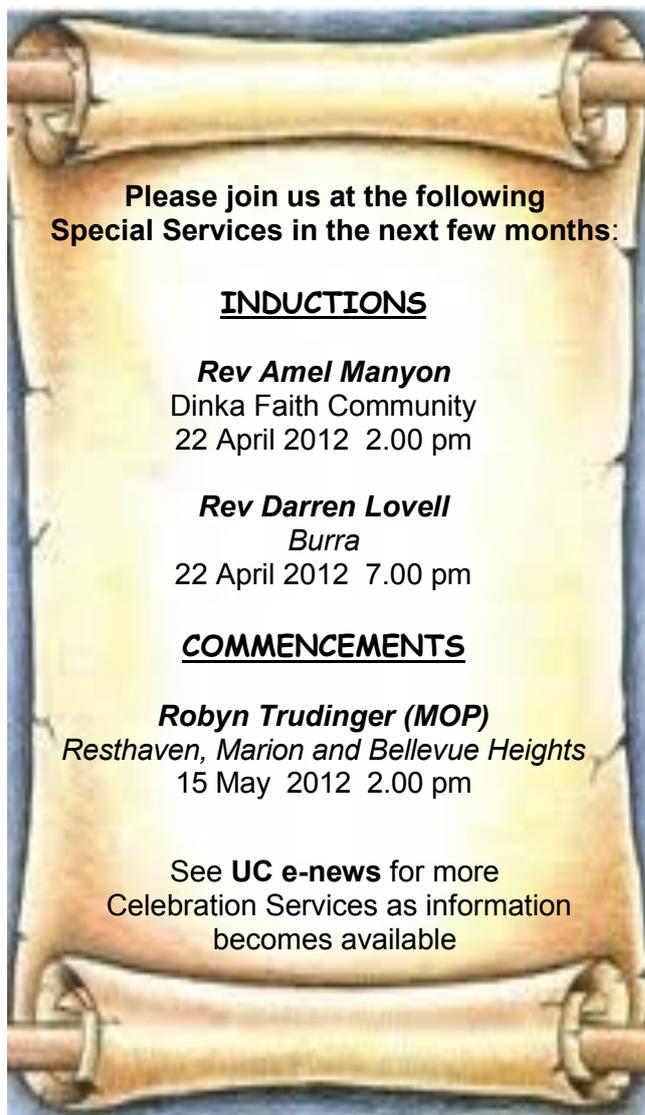
If you wish to express an interest in any of these placements, or would like to have a look at the profile, please advise Rev Philip Gardner, [pgardner@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:pgardner@sa.uca.org.au), by **Tuesday 17 April 2012**. **You should also inform your Mission Network's representative on Placements Committee of your interest.** The next meeting of the Placements Committee will be held on **Monday, 23 April 2012** when names of Ministers will be considered to fill a number of these placements.

### Review of the Ministry of Lay Preacher

The Ministerial Education Commission has just released a "Report and Response Paper" concerning its Review of the ministry of Lay Preacher. Councils of the UCA, relevant Committees and Agencies, and individuals, are invited to consider the report and submit a response by 21 May 2012.

The Report is available in electronic form on the Assembly website  
[assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/1101-review-of-the-ministry-of-lay-preacher](http://assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/1101-review-of-the-ministry-of-lay-preacher).

Printed copies of the report are available from Lay Preacher Review, c/- Uniting College, 34 Lipsett Tce, Brooklyn Park SA 5032. Please direct any enquiries to [mec@unitingcollege.org.au](mailto:mec@unitingcollege.org.au)



**Dinka:** is both a traditional language and a tribal group of South Sudan  
**226:** is the amount of Kilometres making up Ironman Australia

Put the two together, add a passionate Minister making a difference in the lives of others and you get Dinka 226. Rev Dave Williamson is poised to undertake the gruelling 226 kilometre, Ironman Australia triathlon on May 6 to raise funds for the Northern Suburbs Dinka Faith Community, South Australia's newest Uniting Church community. Find out more at [mrn.sa.uca.org.au](http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au)

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\* Mothers Day Intergenerational Worship Service \*  
\* now available at [mrn.sa.uca.org.au](http://mrn.sa.uca.org.au) \*  
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**No Greater Love**

Intergenerational Worship  
for Mothers Day

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