 Celebrating 25 years in 2002

Uniting Church Synod of South Australia
370 congregations in South Australia
From Penong to Port MacDonnell

Community Services
- Aged Care
- Clayton Homes
- Eldercare (9 sites)
- Helping Hand (9 sites)
- Resthaven (9 sites)
- Mission
- Adelaide Central Mission
- Hackney Mission
- Port Adelaide Central Mission
- UnitingCare Port Pirie Central Mission
- Wesley Uniting Mission
- Other Community Services
- Chaplains (Over 73 full-time and part-time chaplains)
- Past Disaster Ministry
- Dozens of congregational-based centres

Schools and Colleges
- Annadel College
- Linville College
- Parkin-Wesley College
- Pedare Christian College
- Pilgrim School
- Prince Alfred College
- Scots College
- Seymour College
- Westminster School

Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)
- Andamooka Health Centre
- Andamooka Community Support Service
- Port Augusta Ministry Centre
- Mobile Aboriginal Patrol (in partnership with Frontier Services)

Camps and Conference Centres
- Adare (Victor Harbor)
- Devona Units (Port Elliot)
- Emmaus (Halbury)
- Kurrajong and Symons House (Balaklara)
- Peter Wood Lodge (Victor Harbor)
- Point Lowly
- Redruth (Burra)
- Robe
- Thuruna (Tanunda Bay)

Frontier Services
- Andamooka Health Centre
- Andamooka Community Support Service
- Eyre Patrol
- Maria Health Centre
- Menindee Health Centre
- Mobile Aboriginal Patrol (in partnership with UAICC)
- Port Pirie Patrol
- Sturt Patrol

Note: Map only depicts services outside of the metropolitan area.

Illustration: The Editorial Works

Cover Pictures
Clockwise from top right:
Cummins Uniting Church. Last month it won the town’s garden of the month award; Moderator, Jan Trengove and General Secretary, Stu Cameron share a milkshake; Children at KUCA (Kids in the Uniting Church in Australia) Camp Out at West Beach; Members of the SA Heads of Christian Churches visiting the Al-Khalil Mosque.
God is indeed good!

As the Uniting Church prepares to celebrate its 25th anniversary this month, we have much to be thankful for. This annual report looks back at some of the highlights of the past 12 months. It has been an exciting journey for our church with many congregations undertaking new initiatives as together we seek to be an innovative, growing church. We are excited that our ministry extended in new ways overseas as we support the work of two South Australian families serving in mission placements — the Litchfields in Thailand and the Tretheways in West Papua. As Moderator and General Secretary it is our privilege to thank you for the part you have played in fulfilling the church’s mission.

We are constantly encouraged by the heartfelt, creative service being offered by so many individuals and groups across our church. God is indeed good! May your ‘heart and soul’ be in good spirit as you seek to live the adventurous life God has called each of us to.

Stuart Cameron
General Secretary

Jan Trengove
Moderator

This is the beginning of a new career

Getting a job isn’t easy. Getting a job when you’re an Indigenous person can be even harder. As one of the largest employers in the State, the Uniting Church has a unique strategy aimed at increasing the numbers of Indigenous people it employs. The church’s Indigenous Employment Strategy started in September 1999. By the end of 2001, 45 people had gained employment and traineeships in our agencies and congregations. The concept is now being taken up by other synods.

Wesley Uniting Mission has doubled its outside workforce, taking on four trainees in its property management section. Robert, Frank, Douglas and Brenton started in April 2002. Three of the men will undertake traineeships in civil construction and the other in horticulture. “This is something I’ve always wanted to do. It will be great to get a certificate,” says Frank Wanganeen. “I want this to be the beginning of a new career.”

The four men will receive on the job training in a variety of trades including carpentry, concreting, and brick laying. They will also undertake studies at TAFE. It is anticipated that, at the completion of their traineeships, they will be kept on as full-time employees.

Brenton, Douglas, Robert and Frank at Wesley Uniting Mission.
Lay ministry teams are in the city, too

Lay ministry teams developed in rural areas — but now they’re in the metropolitan area, too. Rev Dr Rodger Bassham, Adelaide North West’s presbytery minister, points out that there are three in his presbytery.

“There are now lay ministry teams at Ingle-Pooraka, Elizabeth North, and Elizabeth Grove,” Rodger said. He believes the development of lay ministry teams in the metropolitan area is significant.

“They’ve looked at the situation carefully and they believe this is the only way they can maintain their life as a congregation,” he said. “There was certainly some financial pressure on them. That was part of the decision. But at the same time there was a strong desire to maintain ministry in their local areas.

“They were willing to explore possibilities to see if they could do that in some way — and the lay ministry teams offered them an opportunity to do just that.” Rodger said two other congregations in the presbytery are also looking at the possibility of forming lay ministry teams. “By the end of the year we could have five lay ministry led congregations out of a total of 41 congregations in Adelaide North-West Presbytery,” he said.

Wanilla didn’t close — it grew instead

A few years ago it looked as though the little church at Wanilla, near Port Lincoln, would close. People were leaving the district and the congregation was down to about 12. As Ruth Sheldon put it, “Our little church was very little.” Then a member, Diane Borlase, went to a seminar on prayer. The church started a prayer ministry. “It reached into other people’s lives,” Diane said. “God touched each one of us in different ways.” And Rev Glenn Barnett with his wife Avriel agreed to pastor the church.

Church attendance grew — from an average of 12 to 35. “Some families with children joined us,” Diane said, “and we decided to minister to our children through a Sunday school.” But the increased numbers brought a new problem — the outside toilet. It was a bucket with a wooden seat. And we’re not on mains water.” So the congregation applied for gift funding to put in a environmentally friendly “hybrid toilet” — one that doesn’t use water. They also built a new hall and kitchen.

They use them for Sunday school, Alpha courses, youth sleep overs and various courses. The total cost was $20,000. The figure was kept down because members of the church did most of the work and some of the materials were donated. The gift funding grant was for $8,000. Wanilla raised the rest.

“We’re proud of our church facilities at Wanilla,” Ruth Sheldon said. “They’ll help us to live out our mission — to seek to follow God’s Spirit, caring and sharing in our community.”

A real blessing

Louis Townsend, 90 (above), has just retired from the Whyalla church council and is its former treasurer. He has been a lay preacher for almost 70 years and has exercised ministry in Whyalla for 62 years. He still occasionally gives the message in the mid-week service and also visits local nursing homes. Pastor Dianne Grimm said: “He’s a real blessing to the church and an encouragement to the older people.” Lou himself says: “It keeps me young.”
Worship is different at the Lighthouse Worship Café. The vision for the cafe came from a small bible study group led by Diane Holmes. “None of the people who came to that group were attending a church,” explains Diane. “They reached a point where they felt they needed more. We tried channelling them into our congregation, but it just didn’t work. So we asked the question ‘What would church look like for you?’ and set about trying to create it.”

“It took a while to emerge. I spent lots of time in prayer and testing the vision with my mentor, Pastor Anne Selth. She set me a-sail.”

Deacon, Rev Dr Murray Muirhead, is patrol padre for MAP — the Mobile Aboriginal Patrol. MAP is a joint venture between Frontier Services and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. It covers a huge area — almost all the north of South Australia, except the Pitjantjatjara Lands.

“There are about eight different language groups within the patrol,” Murray said. He speaks “just a little” Adnyamathanha and Pitjantjatjara. “That’s significant to the community,” he said. “The majority of the missionaries who went to the area tried to stop them from speaking their language. So they see this as symbolic and important. They see it as a reversal of that denigration of language and culture.”

One Aboriginal group has asked Murray to be part of its cross-cultural education program. “It’s powerful when someone from the church can say that the approach these days is very different,” he said. “Our approach now encourages and respects the people, their culture and their spirituality.”

“The spreading of the gospel is a dialogue. It’s not imposed. There’s a mutual respect there, and the acknowledgement that wisdom already resides in the community. In fact, Christ was already present in those communities long before the missionaries arrived.”

If you have never cared for a loved one with dementia, it is almost impossible to comprehend how demanding and tiring it can be.

The Warradale Club is a new initiative designed to give respite to carers. After 18 months of prayer, visioning, visits to other organisations, funding applications — and plenty of setbacks along the way — the Warradale Club opened in July 2001.

The club, held at the Wesley-Warradale congregation, is a joint project with Resthaven, the first partnership of its kind. Resthaven provides the professional expertise, referrals and staff. The congregation provides the venue and a keen team of volunteers to prepare meals and assist with the program.

“The bottom line is that we’re filling a very important need in our community,” says Isobel David, convener of the community programs committee. “This has given our congregation a new lease of life. As we move towards being a community church the challenge will be to expand our ministry to younger people as well. But for now, we’re touching lives through our commitment to caring for older people.” Isobel is already asking the question: who cares for the carers? She hopes the next step in the congregation’s journey will be a support group for carers.

The café church, which opened in May 2001, is an outreach of the Echunga Uniting Church. They begin with a café meal at 6pm, followed by worship at 7pm.

“We regularly have 70 people attending. Around half of those who come have no church connection or have fallen away from the church years ago. Our service is jargon free, non-threatening, interactive and low key.”

“It hasn’t been hard at all. When we’ve invited people to come, they’ve said ‘yes.’ We now have five small groups meeting weekly — two Alpha groups, two bible study groups and a prayer group.”

Caring for the elderly

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‘Christ was already present’
If you walk in the front door of the Port Victoria Hotel-Motel on the first Sunday of the month, you turn left for the ecumenical service, right for the pokies and the front bar. Publicans Wayne and Diane Davies have made the hotel’s dining room available for the monthly service. “It was John Lawrie’s idea,” Wayne said. “We just provide the facilities.” Although it is an ecumenical venture, Uniting Church minister, Rev John Lawrie, of Maitland, usually leads the service.

Wayne Davies said the hotel’s patrons are intrigued by the Sunday evening service. “They often crowd up the end of the bar nearest the front door so they can hear what’s going on,” he said. “And, if things get too noisy in the bar, I just shut the door. “People in the bar who want to go to the toilet have to walk through the dining room and past the preacher. It happens every time. They probably get a blessing as they go past.”

Publican Wayne Davies. His Sunday night patrons are intrigued by the service.

Turn left for worship, right for pokies and the bar

Some people at Keith see the Uniting Church building as a place of worship. But a lot of the town’s unchurched kids see it as somewhere where they go to have fun. One morning a week, small kids go to Jump ‘n’ Jive at the church. In the afternoon older children go to Move ‘n’ Groove after school. Lyn Howland said that, in some ways, the little ones at Jump ‘n’ Jive don’t participate as much as the older ones at Move ‘n’ Groove — but only because they’re enjoying themselves so much.

“They’re little,” Lyn said. “They do their own thing. They love all of it. At the end of the program they go out for their prayer time and the mums have coffee. “The older kids are different because they have their own opinions and ideas. They pick songs — and they certainly let you know what they like.” Move ‘n’ Groove averages about 20 children each week, Jump ‘n’ Jive about 30. Lyn said: “Mums will tell you that, when they drive past the church the kids will say, ‘There’s Move ‘n’ Groove’, or ‘There’s Jump ‘n’ Jive’. They don’t see the church as just for ‘those people’. It’s for anybody and everybody.”

Thomas and Luke cut the cake for the first birthday of “Move ‘n’ Groove”.

Music helps to break down barriers

About our church

Congregations and Presbyteries

The Uniting Church in Australia is made up of four primary inter-related councils: Congregations (Local); Presbyteries (Regional); Synod (State) and Assembly (National).

In South Australia we have around 25,000 worshippers in 330 congregations in 7 presbyteries.

Our 7 presbyteries are:

- Adelaide North West
- Eyre
- Fleurieu
- Frome
- Mount Lofty
- The Coorong
- Wakefield

Uniting Church Facts and figures

- 78% attend church services weekly or more.
- 31% attend study or prayer groups.
- 52% attend social groups.
- 65% believe their faith has grown in the past year.
- 81% have a growing or stable sense of belonging to their congregation.
- 58% feel at ease talking about their faith.
- 37% have invited someone to church in the past 12 months.
- 64% believe their congregation is always ready to try something new.

Uniting Church Age profile

- 15 – 19 3%
- 20 – 29 5%
- 30 – 39 8%
- 40 – 49 12%
- 50 – 59 16%
- 60 – 69 20%
- 70 + 36%

Source: 2001 National Church Life Survey (National figures).

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Ann Blackeby is a social worker with UnitingCare Port Pirie Central Mission and a member of the Port Pirie congregation. Ann coordinates the mission’s Community Support Program — one of 22 programs run by the mid-north agency. The Mission has 70 staff, 190 volunteers, many of whom are foster parents, and a turnover of $3.2 million in 2001. Ann spends much of her time on the road. Her 40 clients live at a range of rural centres including Peterborough, Wirrabara, Snowtown, Clare, Kadina, Yorkepeninsula, and Warooka. Many are socially isolated with no car or telephone.

The Community Support Program helps people who are facing personal barriers, including problems related to drugs, alcohol, mental illness or having a criminal record. “It helps people gain self-confidence, access to training opportunities and other community services and, hopefully, employment,” she said. Ann is contracted to work with each person for two years. “In rural areas, where staff change so frequently, it is a real bonus to have that continuity. While I will only see people once a month, I try to phone or write letters in between. Of course, if they have literacy problems or aren’t on the phone that can be difficult. It’s really rewarding to see people’s lives changed.”

Nurturing young Aboriginal people in their faith is just one of the aims of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. In January 2001, nine young people and five leaders from Congress attended the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) in Brisbane. “Being with so many other Christians was a top experience,” 20-year-old Bruce Carter (pictured) said. “The slogan for the convention was ‘Now is the time’ — and that’s so true. We have to make the most of our lives,” he said. “I was encouraged to be who I am and not to hide that I am a Christian. The fact that people wanted to listen to my story — well, that blew me away!”

A young delegate from Papua New Guinea made a big impact on Bruce. “It was great to exchange cultures and share language. He made me realise how lucky we are in this country. Over here people get down over nothing — perhaps because they are late because they get a flat tyre — but that’s nothing compared to being shot at or going down to the shop and not coming back. “NCYC helped me to understand that being black isn’t a problem in this country. We’ve got to move as one, to respect each other, and get on with it.”

More members of the Uniting Church are doing courses at Parkin-Wesley than ever before, according to principal, Rev Dr Andrew Dutney. “Most people are just doing one course, or a couple of courses,” he said. “Some are doing whole programs. Individual members of the church are making a real effort to foster their education and development for the ministry. What strikes me is their enthusiasm. It’s impressive stuff.”

Some congregations, both large and small, are sponsoring seminars and workshops. “It’s a real trend,” Andrew said. “And as well as all this, more ministers are enrolled in post-graduate courses than ever before. There’s been a strong response to the Master of Ministry program. And ministers are developing some very interesting projects that are closely related to their ministry. “So there’s a real buzz around the synod, with people finding courses or research projects or study programs to help them with their ministry. “This isn’t anything to be complacent about. It’s the start of something that we need to build on.”

Andrew said this must have positive effects on the life of the church. “And it becomes even more important as we rely more and more on lay ministry,” he said.
Financial Report

Each week through your offering, you contribute directly to the wider mission and ministry of the Uniting Church. Many of the stories shared in this Annual Report are possible because your congregation gives to the Mission and Service Fund. The Mission and Service Fund is exactly what its name suggests --- a fund which supports the mission and service activities of the Uniting Church. Your generosity has touched the lives of thousands of South Australians. Thank you.

How much do we spend?
In 2001, the Uniting Church (Synod of SA) had a $4.3 million budget. This figure does not include the additional expenditure of our 370 congregations. Nor does it include the budgets of our agencies (eg aged care services, missions and schools).

Where does the money come from?
Our income comes from three main sources:
• Contributions from congregations
  Congregations donated $1.2 million in 2001.
• Income from other sources
  The Synod also generates income from investments, bequests and grants from Uniting Church bodies. In 2001, the total raised was $1.9 million.
• Income raised by Synod bodies (Commissions etc)
  The Synod relies on income from various sources to supplement income from the Mission and Service Fund. For example: the Secretariat generates income from the sale of advertising in New Times; Parkin-Wesley College raises revenue through course fees and grants from Flinders University; some of our chaplains receive funding from the institutions who employ them.

Where does the money go?
The Mission and Service Fund gives us the opportunity to support God’s work outside the bounds of our local congregation.

The Income and Expenditure chart is a numerical summary of the Uniting Church’s activities in 2001. The real story is not about numbers... it is about local ministry that has been nurtured... mission activities undertaken... and lives changed by sharing the message of Christ.

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE

INCOME 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Income</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mission and Service Fund - Contributions from congregations</td>
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<td>Adelaide North West</td>
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<td>Eyre</td>
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<td>Income from other sources</td>
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<td>Institutional Levies</td>
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<td>Investments, donations and sundry income</td>
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<td>Total Income</td>
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EXPENDITURE 2001

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier Services grant</td>
<td>$20,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property &amp; Finance</td>
<td>$452,249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>$926,921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)</td>
<td>$76,302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Expenditure</td>
<td>$4,258,159</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Operating Surplus 236,819

Income and Expenditure Chart:

- **INCOME**
  - Adelaide North West
  - Eyre
  - Fleurieu
  - Mt Lofty
  - The Coorong
  - Wakefield

- **EXPENDITURE**
  - Assembly
  - Commission for Mission
  - Community Services Commission
  - Educational Ministries Commission
  - Forum of Presbyteries
  - Frontier Services
  - Property & Finance
  - Secretariat
  - Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)

Note: This financial report is a summary only. Detailed audited reports are available upon request.

RYM (Riverland Youth Ministries, pronounced “rhyme”) is an ecumenical venture based in the Uniting Church facilities at Berri. It coordinates youth activities, leadership training and school chaplaincy. Rev Kevin Hull (Baptist) is one of the school chaplains at Berri. He is pictured here with Olivia, Lauren, and Lachlan Sully and Callum Trifonoff. Lachlan, 9, said of Kevin: “He has a calming effect at school. He helps make us feel safe and secure. He solves problems without punishing people.”