

Pilgrimage to Oodnadatta, April 2019

Oodnadatta is the driest town, in the driest state, in the driest continent, in the world and the Holy Spirit is moving across this land. In April I joined Rev Sue Ellis, the Moderator, and ten others from Adelaide, Port Augusta and Broken Hill on a Pilgrimage and working party to visit the remote outback town of Oodnadatta, a neat and tidy town of just over 200 people, known to the locals as Dunjiba.



People came from afar, particularly from the Communities at Indulkana and Finke, Adelaide and Alice Springs for a long weekend of worship, work and community. We worshipped bigtime. The first ever Anzac Day Service and March, then worship services on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights, plus Sunday morning, and the services went for hours! There was singing, preaching, choirs, communal praying, the laying on of hands with people asking to be freed from burdens they have been carrying, and communion (mind the dust on the bread).

At present the Oodnadatta worship community meets in the open air on the land where a slab of concrete is all that remains of the Oodnadatta Children's Home built in 1924 by missionaries from the United Aborigines Mission. Meeting under the stars sounds wonderful but often it is too hot, too cold, too dusty, too windy, and there are too many flies!



Oodnadatta needs a church building. It is needed for the faith community and to be a physical witness in the town, a centre for worship and tangible evidence of the presence of God in this remote part of South Australia. People in our work party, led by Ian Dempster and Rev Mark Kickett from the Congress State Office, erected a shade structure on the existing platform which is presently the centre for worship.

I helped the local ladies feed the seventy or so visitors who had come to town for this weekend of fellowship and worship and what remarkable people I met. Strong, capable, organized, passionate people working for God in their communities. It was emotional, humbling and inspiring.

Pray for Pastor Julia Lennon, a spirit-filled, inspiring and remarkable woman who leads this community and supports other Communities in the remote outback; she is a mighty woman of God.

Story by Gaynor Strapp from Burnside UC and a member of the Synod Covenanting Committee