Join Team UC for the 2015 City–Bay

Walk, run or wheel to Glenelg on Sunday September 20 as part of Uniting Communities’ Team UC.

You’ll receive a free t-shirt, race kit and a celebratory breakfast at the finish line.

Download and complete the registration form on www.unitingcommunities.org

Return it by Friday September 4 by email: marketingandcomms@unitingcommunities.org
OR mail to Team UC – Level 2, 10 Pitt Street, Adelaide SA 5000.

For more information, please call 08 8202 5658.

SAVR (South Australian Volunteers Returned) gathering for those returned from an overseas cultural experience.

Sunday 20 September, 2.30-4pm
Pilgrim Uniting Church lounge, 12 Flinders St Adelaide

Come and join in the conversation about mission experiences overseas and how these have impacted our life and faith.

Please bring a small plate of afternoon tea and invite others who may be interested.

Put this in your diary now!

International Mission
Adrian Nippress
International Mission Officer
(08) 8236 4203
internationalmission@sa.uca.org.au

Uniting Church: Uniting People.
Mission Resourcing

Next issue: Acknowledgement

Sometimes acknowledgement can be easy – giving an honest compliment to someone, admitting a minor mistake. But there are also times when it is difficult – remembering to sincerely thank someone for a generous act, opening up about something personal or confessing a wrongdoing. This edition of New Times looks at how individuals, congregations and faith communities across the Uniting Church SA consider and practice acknowledgement.

DEADLINE FOR OCTOBER 2015 Wednesday 9 September

Cover details
Jean Lang has a long family tradition at Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church. A member of the choir for over 50 years and still on the church council, Jean has generously served in the life of the congregation and helped maintain relationships with Annesley and Prince Alfred College. Jean is pictured at Wesley Kent Town’s 150th anniversary service on Sunday 9 August where she was chosen to cut a special anniversary cake.
I was checking in for my flight to Assembly in July when I was served by a woman I used to work with in the airline industry eight years ago. Her appearance had changed significantly since I had last seen her – lap band surgery had whittled her frame down to a point where I nearly didn’t recognise her.

Throughout the years we worked together, my job title was customer service manager. The responsibilities that came with the role were broken down into two main areas – oversight of passenger check-in and ensuring the aircraft met its on-time performance goals.

The term “service” as part of my job title often felt like an oxymoron. I didn’t really “serve” the customers. I was employed primarily to serve the organisation, protect its bottom line, and ensure the aircraft departed on time, every time. This would often mean informing customers who had missed their flight cut-off time that they would not be able to board, commonly resulting in heated exchanges. Missing a flight often triggers an emotional response in people, which can lead to frustration, anger, distress, and sometimes to clenched fists, red faces and yelling – particularly when a passenger is informed they will need to book and pay for a new flight.

Staff were discouraged from showing empathy towards someone who had missed a flight. Even if they had a genuine reason, the traveller was prohibited from boarding. Holding up a plane for a single passenger equates to hundreds of dollars for every second the plane is waiting on the tarmac.

After sharing a few stories with my old (but new looking) ex-workmate over the check-in counter, she bid me farewell and addressed me with a final remark that still rings in my ears: “you haven’t changed a bit.” The comment took me by surprise as I walked towards the boarding gate, the words whirling around in my head. For the next few days I pondered that statement. “You haven’t changed a bit.”

The way she presented to me was significantly different. I nearly didn’t recognise her – she had gone through an entire body transformation. I, on the other hand, looked pretty much the same. I may have a few more wrinkles, but in general my appearance has not really altered.

However, if we had spent a more significant amount of time together, rather than just a brief exchange, my past colleague would likely have discovered a unique transformation – one that Romans 12 defines as a change “from the inside out”. While working for the airline, I was dedicated to serving the organisation. But there was no greater good in my life to serve. In the eight years since leaving, my spiritual soul was awakened.

When I returned to church, I could soon see the transforming God at work, providing me with tender love and care so that I could be made whole, right, good and beautiful again. Prior to my faith transformation, my understanding of the word “service” was completely different.

Now, in my current role in the Uniting Church and with renewed faith, I am able to truly serve – serving Christ not only through my vocation, but extracurricular activities with people I love and things I am passionate about. Acts 20:35 reminds us that “It is more blessed to give than to receive”. It is when we are truly serving others that we experience a warm glow inside and provide glory to God in the process.

Maybe if I had a bit of extra time with my ex-workmate I could have demonstrated what God has done for me – the true transformation that Christ has made in my life. I have no doubt she would find that I have changed. I’ve changed quite a lot.

Bindy Taylor
In our era of celebrity, the way of service often goes quietly on without making the headlines or attracting fanfare.

As I reflected on this edition’s theme of service, I thought about Rev Dr Bill Edwards. We gave thanks for Bill’s life and ministry at his funeral service at Pilgrim Uniting Church on Monday 3 August. Bill ministered in Ernabella, Mowanjum and the Pitjantjatjara parish, and pioneered teaching Pitjantjatjara at the University of South Australia. He was awarded membership of the Order of Australia (AM) in 2009 for more than 50 years of service to the Indigenous community. His ongoing work as minister and educator was grounded in an understanding of the Gospel that respected the culture and language of Indigenous people and worked in partnership with Indigenous leaders.

Bill’s contribution to the Uniting Church, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) and to the community of South Australia was significant and substantial. He was part of our movement toward reconciliation and justice as a nation. He exercised his ministry with grace and humility.

In his reflection on Bill’s ministry, Ivan Copley, a former Covenanting Officer, noted:

“I can recall the many times when I was working for UCA Synod and Congress [UAICC]… when he led the Ernabella choir in song… the times he met and spoke in Language to APY [Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara] Peoples and with humility always... He was truly loved and appreciated.”

Bill embodied service in a way that reflects Christ’s ministry, a way to which all Christians are called – a way of grace, humility, wisdom, compassion, gentleness and strength.

Service that reflects Christ’s ministry includes relationships that are based on love and care, concern for the other, a commitment to mutuality and reciprocity, and a giving of one’s life for others.

Our formation in Christ’s servant ministry takes place over a lifetime, and it is being shaped in our congregations and faith communities throughout South Australia and beyond.

It was a delight to worship recently with The Corner Uniting Church, and to see the ways this intergenerational Christian community is living Christian service in acts of kindness toward one another. During worship we were given biscuits and other symbols of love created by children, young people and their adult mentors, to remind us of the community we share. The Corner is also engaged in serving through acts of hospitality via their café, playgroup and op shop.

As you read this article and reflect on servant ministry, I hope you recall the service you see embodied through your congregation or faith community.

Christ’s servant ministry is being expressed in our work places, neighbourhoods and communities in countless acts of kindness and care. They probably won’t make the headlines, but they are quietly, persistently and passionately transforming the world around us. Thanks be to God!

Dr Deidre Palmer
It is a real privilege to say thank you to someone for the way they have served others. As a leader, I make a point to constantly say to our staff “thanks for all that you do”. Sometimes I might thank people for what they do before a given task is completed. The reason for this is simple – serving is an attitude reflected in the doing of things. I want people to know that I am grateful for their servant-hearted attitude, not just for the completion of a job.

Attitude is like atmosphere. A poor attitude pollutes the culture of a team or organisation; a good attitude is like oxygen within an entity’s atmosphere.

Servant-heartedness is oxygen to any culture, to any relationship. Who doesn’t like being caught up in an environment where people are willing and able to give of themselves for others?

This is the kind of atmosphere that Jesus drew people into. When it came to Jesus, we know that “for even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The ways that Jesus gave of himself in service to others were many and varied. He often did for others what no one else could. The classic example of this is the healing work of Jesus.

In Jesus’ day there were many people whose illnesses or conditions could not be healed, cured or even treated. As a result they lived in an atmosphere of isolation, designated as impure elements of society. However, Jesus demonstrated that a servant heart provides a purview whereby people are seen as people rather than being cast as problems.

In one exchange Jesus healed 10 lepers. Jesus encountered the lepers on the outskirts of a village - their physical distance from others a reflection of their social position. Jesus drew these people into the oxygen of his loving concern for them and transformed the whole atmosphere of their lives. He then told them to move, and show themselves to the priests. This directive called for a total shift in head- and heart-space. Jesus called the lepers to move from society’s declaration that they were unworthy and damaged. He brought a re-visioning of their lives such that he declared that they were valuable beyond measure, as people. Jesus’ words carried such weight that the lepers followed his advice – the miraculous healing transpired as the lepers moved to go tell the priests. Life in Jesus’ atmosphere changes everything.

There are numerous possible reasons why nine of the lepers did not return to Jesus to thank him. However, one of the lepers did not just express his gratitude to Jesus – he praised God for the total transformation of his life. This person had been consumed with the revelation of what life is like in Jesus’ presence, in his atmosphere.

As Christians, and as a church, we breathe in the splendour of life in the love of Christ. We breathe out through our servant-hearted engagement with others. This kind of atmosphere permeates the

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**Placements News**

Placements finalised since the August edition of *New Times*:
- Rev Anne Butler to Eldercare as Chaplain (0.5) from 1 August 2015
- Susan Doughty (Candidate for MOW) to Adare from 1 January 2016
- Rev Dianna Bartlett to Brighton from 1 January 2016

**Vacant placements:**
The following is the current list of vacant (or soon to be vacant) approved placements:

Profiles available – Ascot Community Church (0.8); Berri Barmera (from 1 February 2016); County Jervois (Arno, Cleva, Coolalie, Cowell, Driver River); Kadina Wallaroo Parish (0.8); Kalparrin and Murraylands Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (0.5); Keith “One Church” (Uniting Church and Church of Christ); Prospect Road; Salisbury (from 1 February 2016); Walkerville (from 1 February 2016); Whyalla.

Profiles not yet available – Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations; Malvern and Unley (from March 2016); Moonta and Districts (from 1 April 2016); Parafield Gardens (from 1 January 2016); South West Fleurieu Linked Congregations (0.6); Tumby Bay and Districts (0.5); Windsor Gardens (0.5); Covenanting Officer (0.5) (to be advertised).

For more information on any of these placements, or to view national placements, please visit [sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations/placements-vacant](sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations/placements-vacant)
An uncommon community

Rev Dr Trevor Whitney

“We are not called by God to do extraordinary things, but to do ordinary things with extraordinary love.” – Jean Vanier

One warm Sunday afternoon in January 2013, an ecumenical group of 16 people met for lunch in a suburban Adelaide home. They were drawn together by a common vision of seeing a faith-based L’Arche community home for adults with intellectual disability established in South Australia. Now, just over two years later, supporters of L’Arche Adelaide have some exciting new developments.

L’Arche is an international, not-for-profit organisation first established in France in 1964 by Jean Vanier, a Catholic philosopher and theologian. Beginning when Jean welcomed two men with disabilities into his home, L’Arche communities have since been established in 147 homes across 35 countries. In 2013, each state in Australia had at least one L’Arche home – except South Australia.

The small Adelaide group who first met in early 2013 recognised the unique environment that could be fostered by the establishment of a local L’Arche home. While there are various community and institutional accommodation options for people with intellectual disabilities in Adelaide, there are none where people with and without intellectual disabilities can live together in a context of mutually shared love and care.

After this first meeting, the group continued to gather regularly – to share stories, pray, eat together, celebrate, and begin an ongoing journey towards understanding what it means to be a L’Arche community.

As part of this journey, the community has tried to raise its profile by participating in events such as the 2013 City to Bay Fun Run – where they proudly came close to last!

This year, the community has made huge strides to achieving their goal.

In January, they held their first community weekend at the Highgate Park chapel in Adelaide’s eastern suburbs. Approximately 24 people attended, including individuals from interstate L’Arche communities, gathering for community building, envisioning, fun and worship.

In recent months, the community has officially become an incorporated body under the banner of L’Arche Australia. They have also developed an interim board, and a mandate (strategic plan) to guide them as they take tentative further steps on the road to community.

Various denominations are represented amongst the community’s membership, including the Uniting Church. All are welcome to attend the community’s monthly gatherings.

For more information about the burgeoning L’Arche Adelaide community please contact Uniting Church SA Disabilities Ministry Chaplain Rev Dr Trevor Whitney on 0403 711 653 or twhitney@sa.uca.org.au

Tax deductible donations can be made to L’Arche Adelaide at givematcher.com.au/adelaide-city-bay-fun-run-sunday-20th-september

Save the date

Over the coming weeks, the Uniting Church SA Communications team will be finalising the 2016 calendar and this year’s Christmas postcard design, which will focus on the theme “Journeying together this Christmas.”

Orders for the calendar are already open, and must be placed by Monday 12 October. Uniting Church SA calendars provide congregations with lectionary readings, important dates, and the proposed Mission and Service Fund budget for 2016. This year, printed calendars will attract a cost of $1 per calendar to supplement printing costs.

The 2015 Christmas postcard campaign will be launched in September, and an update will be provided in the October edition of New Times. Orders for the Christmas postcard close on Wednesday 21 October.

Updates will be provided in the coming months via UC e-News and New Times.

For more information about the calendar or postcards, please contact the Communications team on 8236 4201 or communications@sa.uca.org.au

To download the calendar order form, please visit sa.uca.org.au/calendars-annual-reports
The Uniting Church Red Dove Café has a long history of fellowship, Christian hospitality, and fundraising for mission in South Australia. This amazing outreach of National & World Mission Support is powered by Uniting Church Adult Fellowships and supported by volunteers and congregations from across the state.

Since 1951, the café has opened annually during the Royal Adelaide Show with 100% of its profits going towards mission projects in South Australia. The café is operated entirely by volunteers, ensuring Red Dove is able to raise the maximum amount of money possible.

In 2014, $45,000 was given to Frontier Services, Uniting Church disability ministry, multicultural ministry, mental health support and services, prison ministry, the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress children’s ministry, and congregation-based projects in local communities.

This year, people are warmly invited to the “new look” Red Dove Café at the Adelaide Showgrounds from Friday 4 to Sunday 13 September. New signage and branding that showcases the Uniting Church emblem will ensure the café stands out in the hustle and bustle of the Show. The café’s committee are hoping to attract more visitors and raise more funds than ever before for SA mission projects.

The Uniting Church SA gives thanks for the many volunteers who serve at Red Dove each year – with hundreds of shifts to be covered and thousands of meals served, it’s a terrific achievement.

If you’re attending the Royal Adelaide Show this year, please show your support by visiting the café. Enjoy a meal, a beverage – or both! – in the welcoming atmosphere which makes the Red Dove Café so unique.

For further information about Red Dove Café, please contact the Red Dove Committee via email at red.dove.cafe@gmail.com

Uniting Communities recently announced it will demolish buildings on its existing site on the corner of Franklin and Pitt Streets in Adelaide. The new 17-storey building will provide accommodation for people with disabilities and include a retirement village.

This development will mean the demolition of the Maughan Uniting Church building – the current home of House International Uniting Church.

Through the Maughan and House International church communities, this building has a long history of service and ministry. Unsurprisingly, reactions to the demolition of the building have been mixed. While the development will allow considerable new opportunities to serve those in need, many are mourning this as the end of an era.

In a Letter to the Editor which appeared in the Adelaide Advertiser on Wednesday 19 August, Uniting Church SA Moderator Dr Deidre Palmer highlighted Maughan’s importance to the religious life of many people. Although the Uniting Church has not owned the building for over 40 years, it has been the site of ordinations, radio ministry, youth ministry events, and many other important programs.

Deidre’s letter also identified the church not just as a building, but as a living community of people who continue to bring hope, compassion and meaning through their presence in many communities around South Australia.

A celebration of the rich history of Maughan Uniting Church will be scheduled in the coming months. Updates will be provided via UC e-news and New Times.

Uniting Communities and the Uniting Church SA prepared a joint Q&A statement relating to the Uniting Communities development. To read this statement, please visit sa.uca.org.au/uniting-church-news
John 15:13 says, “There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.” One of the ways we lay down our lives is through service. In the Uniting Church, we have many opportunities to serve in big and small ways – through demonstrations of kindness, responsibilities within congregations, contributions to social justice efforts, or support for UnitingCare organisations. Acts of service connect us with others, and help us to express God’s love in the world.

Among the many who serve

Max Howland has been a member of the congregation at Seacliff Uniting Church for over 43 years. He has served as a lay preacher for almost 20 years and currently leads the Uniting Church SA Lay Preachers’ Committee, providing valuable support to leaders and preachers across the state. But Max’s faith journey has not always been an easy one, and his relationship with the Church was almost cut short 30 years ago. Catherine Hoffman talks to Max about study, service and rebuilding faith.

Like many members of the Uniting Church, Max Howland was introduced to Christianity at an early age, growing up in a Christian home and attending a Methodist church. His father was particularly involved in serving the church community.

“My father was a lay preacher. He would take about 12 services a quarter, and led Sunday school on Sunday afternoons and youth group on Friday nights,” says Max.

“Growing up, being involved in church stuff was just normal.”

As he grew older, Max continued to engage in church life and became a member of Seacliff Methodist Church in the early 1970s.

“But then, I saw the near destruction of my faith when I was widowed almost 30 years ago. During this time, many theological issues arose for me and I began to doubt my faith,” he says.

“It was only through the grace and help of the church community at Seacliff that I worked my way through that, and was able to build a new faith. I remember more about how this time affected my faith than how it affected my life.”

As part of the process of rebuilding his faith, Max engaged with a newly established study group at Seacliff. The discussions he had with members of the group helped him to put words around what he was feeling at the time.

“This was when I fully realised the impact that studying and discussing the Bible could have on my own life and faith.”

Maureen, a fellow Seacliff Uniting Church member, attended the study group with Max. The pair married several months after the study group was formed.

It was at Maureen’s prompting that Max later began studying to become a lay preacher; several years after doing so, as he approached his final year of paid employment as a teacher, he made the decision to begin a Period of Discernment.

The Uniting Church in Australia Assembly describes the Period of Discernment as “a gift which provides the opportunity for any member of the Uniting Church to explore a call to a particular form of ministry.”

In 2003, when Max entered this study, it was also advertised as being ideal for those who had reached a turning point in their lives – something Max felt particularly applied to him.

“One of the first topics we covered was the Basis of Union,” he recalls. “Although it was not the first time I had read this document, [Rev Prof] Andrew Dutney’s study made me realise that the Uniting Church was truly my spiritual home.”
Paragraph three of the Basis of Union, “Built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ”, resonated strongly for Max.

“I liked the idea of the Church being called to a fellowship of reconciliation. This seemed to connect with Jesus’ words about the kingdom being at hand or among us – his call to make the kingdom real now,” he reflects.

“To me, both of these speak to the idea of service and community work. They also form the basis of my theological viewpoint – reconciliation and service are the primary reasons I do what I do.”

The Period of Discernment built on Max’s interest in lay preaching – he’d been commissioned as an accredited lay preacher in 1997 – as well as strengthening his personal faith.

“I loved the Period of Discernment,” Max says. “I loved the thinking it provoked, and the increase of understanding I gained. The study was never dry – it was emotional, and helped to shape my faith.”

The study also required Max to participate in some form of service within the Church. Given his own past and his father’s long history in lay ministry, it was a natural progression for Max to volunteer with the Lay Preachers’ Committee.

Twelve years later, Max lives in “active retirement” and his involvement with the Lay Preachers’ Committee has grown – he is now the chairperson of the committee, a role that includes a range of administrative and pastoral activities.

Max continues to see his various studies and the support of the Seafill Uniting Church community as being key in reshaping his faith and calling him to his current role in lay ministry.

But he is quick to emphasise that he is only one person among many called by God to volunteer within congregations and communities.

“What is a lay preacher?”

A lay preacher is a lay person – an “ordinary” member of the community – who preaches the gospel as part of a worship service or gathering. Recognised lay preachers (formerly called accredited lay preachers) must undergo study. Other lay people may preach but are not recognised lay preachers.

What is the difference between a recognised lay preacher and a lay leader?

Outlined in the Basis of Union, lay preaching is one of the avenues available for Uniting Church members who have a gift of ministry and feel called to preach the gospel. Recognised lay preachers are authorised to preach in any Uniting Church congregation to which they may be invited.

The term “lay leader” applies to all other ministries conducted by people within a congregation. This includes the many people who preach while not holding formal recognition.

The service of both recognised lay preachers and lay leaders who preach are invaluable to the Uniting Church community. Without the service of these people, there would be many congregations each Sunday who would have no one to share a gospel message.

How does someone become a recognised lay preacher?

The process begins when a person believes they have received a call from God to undertake ministry as a lay preacher. That call is explored, or “tested” in the official lingo, through the person’s local church council and the Uniting Church SA Lay Preachers’ Committee.

There is a specified training and formation requirement, and the study component is delivered by Uniting College for Leadership & Theology. It is important to note that the study can be undertaken by any person at any time – it may even be that a call to lay preaching will arise out of study.

When these processes are complete, a commissioning service is held.

What further information is available on becoming a lay leader or recognised lay preacher?

A Lay Preachers’ Handbook is available on the Uniting Church SA website. It is currently being updated – the new version will appear online before the end of the year. The current handbook can be found at sa.uca.org.au/lay-preachers

Further information is available through the Lay Education Office at Uniting College on 8416 8427 or by contacting Max Howland on 0414 910 419.
Thank you!

“Thanks to you and your investment with UC Invest visitors to Adare Camp enjoy new experiences. The recently acquired canoes and bikes are a great hit with the kids, helping them to build confidence and have lots of fun!”
– Mark, General Manager, Uniting Venues SA

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Uniting Venues SA

Education with Uniting Church Schools

Our seven independent schools provide education for around 6,000 students in South Australia from Early Learning to Year 12. They offer a variety of learning environments, and a world-class standard of excellence in facilities and academic standards.

While these schools respect the faith diversity of all students, the story, values and practices of the Christian faith are expressed with integrity in order to nurture young lives for sound learning, faith, compassion and responsible service.
This September marks one year since Eldercare began implementing the Dementia Excellence Program across its residential aged care facilities. Feedback to date shows the organisation’s innovative approach to dementia care is delivering widespread benefits to residents, families and staff.

Brett Partington says he “knew nothing at all” about dementia when his father, Bob, was diagnosed seven years ago.

Today, Brett is committed to learning everything he can and volunteers at Eldercare’s aged care facility The Lodge, where Bob has lived for 18 months. The Lodge was one of the first sites to implement Eldercare’s Dementia Excellence Program and Brett believes it has made his father more relaxed.

“The ambience of The Lodge has become more about the resident rather than the system and because of that, people are happier and so are families.”

Brett says watching his father transition back in to care after a recent hospital stay has demonstrated the program’s effectiveness.

“It makes daily life for the residents more like home,” says Brett.

“Staff remain flexible and adjust their duties around residents, which reduces anxiety and frustration for both the carer and the person with dementia.”

Gary Campbell, an enrolled nurse, helps lead the Dementia Excellence Program at The Lodge. He believes “flexible care is paramount to practical outcomes”.

“We embrace the notion of change as a constant, and champion the idea that the best care is taken from what the person wants as opposed to imposing a set of task-based approaches onto them,” says Gary.

“To see task orientation dissipate and the energy level lift, with residents and staff laughing and sharing, inspires me to keep leading change.”

Faced with a growing demand for quality services, Eldercare established the Dementia Excellence Program to foster a new care culture with “person centred” nursing replacing “task focussed” support.

Program Manager Heather Engelhardt says the fresh approach is making a difference with reported increases in resident wellbeing and staff morale.

“By creating dining experiences that are more relaxed and inclusive with staff and residents having meals together, we’re improving residents’ nutritional status and seeing them interact more positively with others.

“We’ve also seen a big drop in verbal and physical aggression from residents by introducing more personalised hygiene routines.”

The Dementia Excellence Program is based on the successful integration of four key aspects – clinical leadership, tailored support and lifestyle programs for residents, ongoing family assistance, and supportive physical environments for people living with dementia.

It has been implemented at six Eldercare aged care facilities so far and will be rolled out across the organisation’s remaining sites by the end of June 2016.

Heather believes it’s the focus on clinical leadership that makes Eldercare’s program unique.

“We are selecting and recruiting leaders who are passionate about person centred care and who are allocated time to provide ongoing mentorship to staff on site,” she says.

“Everyone working with residents will be trained and it’s this site-based leadership and education that will build sustainability into the program for the long term.”

Eldercare is a UnitingCare organisation and a community service of the Uniting Church in South Australia. It was founded in 1979, and is now one of the largest providers of aged care in the state. Eldercare’s mission is to be “a leading provider of quality residential and community care for the ageing, based on Christian principles and the maintenance of dignity, rights and values of the individual.”

For more information about Eldercare, please visit eldercare.net.au or call 8291 1000.
Hospitality from the heart

In May this year, staff from various Uniting Venues SA sites attended a training workshop on their mission statement of providing “exceptional Christian hospitality.”

The group enjoyed a presentation on award winning service by Michael Collis, the Manager of the Majestic Roof Garden Hotel, and a talk from Rev Dr Ian Price providing a theological understanding of hospitality. Ian encouraged the group to reflect on scripture to seek out their own gifting and offering of hospitality.

A ministry of the Uniting Church in South Australia, Uniting Venues SA is a leading provider of camps, conferences and retreats. Operated by a team of managers, staff and volunteers, these people are at the forefront of conveying Christian hospitality to the wider community. With five venues around South Australia from Tumby Bay to Robe, Uniting Venues prides itself on providing “exceptional Christian hospitality,” but what does this really mean?

Suzanne Leong-Scott spoke to key staff members from the Uniting Venues sites to discover what Christian hospitality means to them.

What does service mean to you?

Brendan: Service means putting the needs of others before my own, and looking at what I, and my team, can do to make a school’s or group’s time with Uniting Venues as full and beneficial as possible.

Michelle: It means doing things for the benefit of others without any expectation of recognition or praise.

Jeanette: Service means working to maintain the premises, and then to enable people to enjoy their stay by making sure everything is working and at an acceptable standard. I keep my mind on serving Jesus, and consider that he came to show us how to serve.

Mark: To me, service is about anticipating what the guest requires before they have to ask for it.

What does service mean to you?

Brendan: Many times Jesus shows great hospitality to those who were “below” him. When we are showing hospitality we are showing God’s love and care for all people, regardless of if that person is a youngster on their first school camp, a guest for schoolies, or the principal of the biggest school in South Australia.

Jeanette: Jesus was willing to get down and wash his disciples’ feet as a servant would.

Jim: It has taught me to approach all our dealings with sincerity, showing God’s love and a caring attitude to all people we come in contact with.

Mark: Jesus served the needs of others; he was never concerned about his own welfare or comfort.

What do you believe to be the principles of good service?

Karen: Building positive relationships with our guests through respect, truth, grace and care. With a welcoming attitude, we provide a space where people can exceed their expectations as they explore their faith, foster community, celebrate, and share together.

Jim: Listen to the requirements of our clients, follow up on any issues in a timely manner, and always provide a friendly smiling face with a “can do” attitude.

Brendan: Relationship is key – if we know our guests, then we will be able to provide exceptional service.

Margaret: We endeavour to provide a welcome from the first enquiry, to booking, and the first face-to-face meeting. We want campers to know they matter.

Michelle: To be humble in what you do; to be polite, efficient, unseen, make things seem effortless and anticipate the needs of those you are serving. It’s not about doing the task that you like, it’s about doing what needs to be done. Taking care of the little things that sometimes make all the difference.

What do you believe to be the principles of good service?

Karen: Our model of serving comes from the heart of Jesus, who has touched each of us, who loves people and cares about the details of their lives. We hope to live and serve as loved people ourselves, and pray that Jesus’ love flows through us to others so they too may be touched by him.

Brendan: Our purpose. We show exceptional hospitality to point people to Jesus, not ourselves. One of the highlights of my role is being asked: “what makes your facilitator so different?” We love and serve our guests because we have received that love from God.

Karen: We try to provide “excellent Christian hospitality”, meaning we go the extra mile to do what is required for groups to have the best time they can.

What has Christianity taught you about hospitality?

Brendan: Our hospitality is based in Christian service, and showing Christ’s love for others in our welcome and service. It is a privilege to be able to welcome groups to Nunyara and to provide a space for them to relax, be engaged, be active, be in prayer, and grow in community.
Located near Tumby Bay on the iconic Spencer Gulf, the Thuruna campsite presents an affordable beachfront escape. Thuruna, an Aboriginal word meaning “together by the sea”, offers dormitory and holiday accommodation.

Perhaps the most iconic of the Uniting Venues sites, Adare House is a local landmark and heritage-listed building. Situated in the popular seaside town of Victor Harbor, the conference centre and caravan park at Adare is used for school camps, corporate conferences, holiday accommodation, on-site camping, and even the occasional wedding.

Just a 20 minute drive south the city, “Nunyara” means “place of healing” to the local Kaurna people. Thanks to its Adelaide Hills vantage point, the site of the conference centre boasts enviable views of the city, and is used for school camps, corporate conferences and retreats.

The Emmaus campsite is nestled in native scrubland at Hoyleton, near Balaklava. This venue is often used for low-cost school camp and leadership retreats.

Beyond Limits is not a Uniting Venues site, but an outdoor education venture offering programs across various Uniting Venues sites. This exciting initiative specialises in extra-curricular, outdoor education, adventure and school camps and workshops. Most recently, Beyond Limits began operating social justice camps, which aim to educate young people about homelessness, immigration and disabilities.
Our company has been helping Australian investors since our beginnings in 1937. While our reputation was established in stockbroking, we now cover all aspects of investing including financial planning, superannuation, insurance, cash and fixed interest, portfolio management, lending strategies and much more.

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Participant of ASX Group, A Professional Partner of the Financial Planning Association of Australia.
Service is a vital part of the learning experience at Westminster School. There is an underlying faith that is emphasised when helping others. Undertaking acts of service helps to prepare students for life by building compassion and tolerance.

“A key philosophy of Westminster is teaching students the importance of service and encouraging them to be compassionate and understanding toward others,” says Westminster Principal Steve Bousfield.

“We believe service learning is fundamental to creating an all-round exceptional education.”

The school provides a number of avenues and opportunities for students to serve the community on local, national and international levels.

Westminster is a proud member of Round Square, a worldwide association of schools that share a commitment beyond academic excellence, to personal development and responsibility.

Round Square’s philosophy is built on six pillars – international understanding and tolerance of others, democratic governance and justice, environmental stewardship, self-discovery through adventure, student leadership, and service to others.

Westminster finds that their Round Square ethos closely aligns and connects with the school’s Uniting Church affiliation.

As part of their work with Round Square, Westminster students have the opportunity to take part in overseas Service Learning Projects. These take place in countries such as Cambodia, India, Kenya, South Africa and Thailand, where participants help to construct buildings and water systems.

Students also learn about service first-hand through their chapel and school house programs, in addition to year level and co-curricular activities.

Steve believes the best learning outcomes are achieved by providing every opportunity.

“At Westminster, our approach to education is holistic. Our aim is to help develop the entire student – not just the mind, but also social, emotional, spiritual and moral growth,” he says.

As part of the school’s service learning programs, students and staff have the opportunity to volunteer with many of the school’s community partners. These include UnitingCare Wesley, Resthaven, Alwyndor Nursing Home, Westcare, Foodbank and the Red Dove Café.

Volunteer roles and tasks undertaken through this program are diverse – ranging from serving food, listening and talking to elderly citizens, and helping them use technology, to raising awareness about homelessness and collecting items of clothing for those who are currently homeless.

In the Preparatory School, Year 7 students spend an afternoon each week at Allambi Eldercare to share time with elderly residents. Students bring great joy to residents, providing them with opportunities to reminisce and helping them remember what their lives were like when they were young. Similarly, residents allow students to see life from a different perspective and help develop their confidence and compassion – qualities that will guide them into the future.

In the Senior School, a key service learning program is with the Community Accommodation and Respite Agency (CARA). Students program, fund and provide a four-day camping experience for children with disabilities as part of this association.

“For the Westminster service learning programs, we hope students can enter the real world with good values, strong ethics and morals, confidence and a healthy belief in themselves and others,” says Steve.

Westminster School is a Uniting Church co-educational day and boarding school for students in Early Learning to Year 12. For more information, please visit westminster.sa.edu.au
Ask your average congregation member about the Uniting Church in South Australia’s Called to Care initiative and they will probably be able to tell you very little. However, this small section within the Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning team has a huge impact on the daily activities and service of congregations and faith communities. Called to Care provides vital information and training for ministry leaders and volunteers.

“We want to make our churches safe places for everyone,” says Sharonne Price, the Executive Officer of the Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning team. “That’s the central message behind the work of Called to Care.”

Based on the Uniting Church SA’s “A Safe Place” statement (see right), Called to Care provides information and training courses to ensure Uniting Church communities foster environments that are safe – physically, emotionally and spiritually.

“We assist church councils and the Synod to meet compliance requirements in a number of different fields – from child safe environments training to risk management,” explains Linda Vinall, the Called to Care Training and Development Officer.

“It’s all about partnering together to ensure congregations have a safe base from which to effectively focus on ministry.”

Called to Care seeks to emphasise the collective responsibility of the Uniting Church SA and congregations to care for those who may be vulnerable to harm, injury or abuse.

Unsurprisingly, the initiative has a particular focus on areas such as duty of care, oversight of police history checks, and training related to reporting child abuse and neglect. Some of these courses and checks are mandatory for compliance with legislation and regulations; others are required within the Uniting Church SA, or are simply encouraged (see the table opposite for further information).

“The topics we address through our Called to Care training are all related to how we love one another as a community within the Uniting Church,” Sharonne explains. “But they’re also areas we often prefer not to pay attention to or talk about.”

This is certainly true of the mandatory National Police History Check, which all Uniting Church SA leaders and volunteers are required to complete.

The Called to Care initiative, along with the Uniting Church SA Screening Unit, works hard to make the process of completing this check as easy and affordable as possible. While Uniting Church SA employees must pay a fee of $35 to process this check, volunteers are able to do so for free – the only cost is the postage.

The requirement for volunteers to undertake a National Police History Check is not a new one. However, through Called to Care orientation sessions, a number of churches were recently reminded that their volunteer leaders must undertake this process.

Unfortunately, the Uniting Church cannot rely on criminal checking processes undertaken through another organisation – a specific check must be undertaken through the Uniting Church SA Screening Unit. This is part of the Church’s compliance with insurance, child safe regulations and the Aged Care Act.

“By having volunteers undergo a National Police History Check we’re helping our churches to build trust and foster safe relationships,” says Linda.

“Churches often have a high level of expectation from the wider community, which also demands a high level of trust,” Sharonne adds. “Having this level of transparency helps build trust between churches and the community.”

The Uniting Church is legally liable to state authorities to ensure that the Church has conducted its own assessments in this area. This includes compliance to the Uniting Church’s responsibility of being a child safe organisation.

In order to meet this responsibility within congregations, the Called to Care initiative requires the nomination of a congregational contact from each church community. In an effort to more accurately reflect Called to Care’s focus on safe environments, the congregational contact’s role recently changed from “Duty of Care Liaison” to “Safe Church Contact”.

“All congregations have been advised of this change and are required to nominate a Safe Church Contact,” says Linda. “We’ve
also compiled a Called to Care handbook detailing the responsibilities of this congregational contact person. 'This book will be sent to each congregation and minister in September.'

These responsibilities of the Safe Church Contact include:

- Assisting leaders and volunteers working with children, young people and other vulnerable people in congregational activities in dealing with child protection and any other concerns that may arise during the course of these activities.
- Promoting awareness of and adherence to the Uniting Church SA’s Safe Church Policy and Code of Conduct (available at sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care).
- Bringing "Safe Church" matters to the attention of the church council and the Presbytery/Synod when necessary and in a timely manner.

The handbook provides further details about the tasks the Safe Church Contact person must undertake, relating to the areas of administration, reporting and complaints, and training. This person is also responsible for ensuring the congregation is kept informed about safe church practices.

"This role is really important in making sure our churches are safe environments for everyone," says Sharonne.

Called to Care orientation sessions providing more information about the duties of Safe Church Contacts will be held in the coming months (details to be provided via UC e-news and New Times). Key leaders and members of church council are encouraged to attend these sessions.

For further information about Called to Care and upcoming training, please visit sa.uca.org.au/called-to-care or contact Called to Care on 8236 4262 or calledtocare@sa.uca.org.au.

For further information about National Police History Checks, please contact the Uniting Church SA Screening Unit on 8236 4282 or screeningunit@sa.uca.org.au.

A Safe Place

This statement forms the base for much of the training provided by Called to Care.

The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God and as such we should accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed or gender.

As a Christian community, we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance and that our relationships with each other should express love and respect and not be abused.

As a community of faith, we are committed to providing a place in society where human beings can explore what it means to be made in the image of God.

As an expression of this commitment, the Uniting Church in Australia recognises its responsibility to provide worshiping and pastoral communities that are free from abuse and that provide safe environments for all people to explore and express their faith in the Gospel.

Who needs training?

It can sometimes be difficult to determine who in our Uniting Church SA congregations and communities need training – let alone figure out what kind of training is needed.

The table below seeks to clearly explain what training or checks provided by Called to Care are mandatory for legal compliance, required by the Uniting Church SA, or encouraged by the Called to Care initiative.

The table details various roles within congregations and faith communities and four types of training/checks. It then specifies whether training is mandatory (M), required (R) or encouraged (E) for people in these ministry roles.

Please note that the Screening and Authority (which includes the National Police History Check) must be renewed every three years. Child Safe Environments and Code of Ethics are completed once as a full day, with refresher sessions undertaken every three years.

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<th>Screening and Authority (National Police History Check)</th>
<th>Child Safe Environments: Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect</th>
<th>Called to Care</th>
<th>Code of Ethics</th>
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<td>Employees: admin roles</td>
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Young adults in our culture don’t always get a good rap. When it comes to finding generation Y- and Z-ers who are willing to sacrifice for others, you could be forgiven for feeling it’s a bit of a lost cause. However, I would like to share some good news! Serving as a youth pastor alongside my husband at Seeds Uniting Church, I have had the extraordinary privilege of witnessing a whole treasure trove of young adults swimming against the tide of our culture.

Every Friday, Seeds runs XS youth ministry for high schoolers in the local community. Close to 50 young adults volunteer and give their time, energy and abilities to serve and disciple the youth, who are following close in their footsteps. They are leading by serving, and are calling others to do the same.

Leading small groups, coordinating worship teams, working with sound and tech, committing to set-up, participating in the welcome team, manning the welcome desk and café, lending skills to camp and event planning, contributing prayer, and investigating outreach – these are among the many and diverse ways that young adults are serving whole-heartedly. With support from their peers, these young people are finding places for their gifts to be utilised and their faith walk to be demonstrated in dynamic and practical ways.

The commitment that these young leaders bring demonstrates wisdom beyond their years and deserves commendation. They are defying the culture of the age that leads so many other young people into self-seeking materialism.

The XS leaders are not only providing shining examples for those who are younger, but are also inspiring the entire Seeds church community in their passion for Jesus and desire to serve others.

As they hear and obey this call to lay down their lives in service, these young adults are discovering the truth that is embedded in this call – in giving up your life, you find it! “For if you want to save your own life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it.” – Matthew 16:25

For more information about Seeds Uniting Church, please visit welcome.seedschurch.org or call 8370 6472.
Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church

This year marks the 60th anniversary of the Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church building. Formerly home to a Methodist congregation, it was the first church to be established after the suburb of Elizabeth was formed.

In 2000, the Elizabeth Grove congregation decided to focus on the formation of a lay ministry team. The congregation uses a symbol of a windmill to depict its lay ministry.

A common sight in South Australia, windmills bring water to the surface and give life to the surrounding countryside – something the church hopes to achieve in the wider community.

The many small blades that make up the windmill contribute to the whole. The congregation sees this as representative of their lay ministry team – each person playing a part in empowering the work of Christ in the community.

The power-providing wind represents the Holy Spirit, who drives the work of the Elizabeth Grove congregation.

The tail or sail keeps the blade in the wind, giving it direction. This represents the role of the congregation’s minister-in-association.

Rev Frank Measday has been Elizabeth Grove’s mentor and minister-in-association for the past 15 years. The congregation is thankful for Frank’s drive, his thinking, and his enabling of the lay ministry team. A scholarly approach to the Bible’s teachings has helped Frank to communicate a historical and deep understanding of the gospels, which has been greatly appreciated by the congregation.

Through the exploration of studies from modern Christian scholars, the Elizabeth Grove community has been provided with insights into Jewish history and its place in the development of the early Christian church.

The decision to be led by a lay ministry team has greatly benefitted the Elizabeth Grove congregation. After consultation with members of Elizabeth Grove, the church’s worshipping group reported a general consensus that the congregation has become a much closer family – more friendly and caring of one another, and more involved in church matters, spiritually and pastorally.

Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church is in the middle of an area with an ageing population, but the community caters for the needs of all. The caring congregation provides a warm welcome to all who enter the church.
**Finding our home**

My husband and I live in Murray Bridge as refugees from Fiji. We have been given a Bridging Visa but are not presently allowed to work. We arrived here with nothing but two cups, a container and one spoon. We had nothing else.

We walked through the town and happened to see the sign of the Uniting Church. As a child in Sunday School I had been told that if you are lost or in danger or need help, look for a building where there is a [cross] sign as that is the house or place where you’ll be comforted or helped.

The people of this church have helped us in many [ways], providing rides, much needed food and money for bills and rent. Sometimes that money has been secretly given with a handshake. These people have been God’s hands and feet to us.

The [church’s] thrift shop was specially opened for us and we were invited to enter and take whatever we needed. We have felt included in everything and feel really at home, truly a part of the congregation and no longer visitors.

This is a humbling experience for me and my husband, and there is no way we can repay these people for their kindness. We will continue to pray, with our family back home in Fiji, and thank God for this good and helpful congregation.

We want to the people of Murray Bridge Uniting Church to know that if there are any ways we can help we are always available.

*Mere and Isakeli,
Murray Bridge*
ART EXHIBITION at The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale), Tuesday 8 – Friday 25 September (Tuesday-Friday, 9am-3pm). This exhibition features artwork in various media by adult students enrolled at Hamilton Senior Campus, Mitchell Park. For more information, please visit thecorner.org.au

FUNDRAISING EVENT: Enfield Uniting Church (corner Main North Road and Park Street, Sefton Park) are raising funds for Stevo’s (emergency outreach) and their Refugee Support Fund. The Dusty and Friends Variety Night will feature Sheena Crouch, a nationally-acclaimed Dusty Springfield tribute performer, in addition to music from Sudan, and musicians performing original compositions. The event will take place on Saturday 12 September at 7.30pm. Tickets are $25 (adults), $20 (concession), $10 (children), and family (two adults and two children) $50. Bookings for tables of eight ($200) will receive unique privileges and seating arrangements. To book, please contact the church office on enfield.church@internode.on.net or 8344 7857 (Tues- Thurs, 10am-2pm).

EARTH SPIRITUALITY WORKSHOP. This workshop titled “I am an Earth Child: Stages on a Spiritual Journey Home to Mother Earth” will be presented by Dr Norman Habel on Friday 11 September, 7.30pm at the Effective Living Centre (26 King William Road, Wayville). Enquiries and bookings to the Effective Living Centre on 8271 0329 or at effectiveliving.org

EARTH SPIRIT PILGRIMAGE. This reflective walk in the Adelaide Botanic Gardens will allow time for contemplation and creative expression, and will be led by Rev Nicholas Rundle of the Effective Living Centre on Saturday 12 September, 9.30am. Enquiries and bookings to the Effective Living Centre on 8271 0329 or at effectiveliving.org

MESSY CORNER will be held on Sunday 13 September, 3.30pm-5.30pm, at The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale). Join in to explore the theme of creation through songs, drama, and many craft activities. Fun for the whole family, including a shared meal. Cost: $5. For more information, please visit thecorner.org.au

SPRING FESTIVAL. Let’s celebrate spring! If you enjoy flowers and floral arrangements, you are invited to visit Pilgrim Uniting Church (12 Flinders Street, Adelaide) during their Spring Festival. The church will be open for viewing daily, 12-2pm, from Monday 14 – Thursday 17 September. There will also be poems available for those who wish to spend time in quiet reflection. The displays will be in the church on Sunday 13 September, and visitors are welcome to attend any of the Pilgrim Uniting Church services (8am, 9.30am or 11am) to see the display. Let’s celebrate spring! For more information, please contact the church office on 8212 3295.

CONCERTS @ KENT TOWN. This event will be held on Wednesday 16 September, 2pm at Wesley Kent Town Uniting Church (corner Grenfell Street and Pullarton Road, Kent Town). Tickets are $10 at the door. This event is part of the 150 years celebration of Wesley Kent Town. For more information, please visit wesleykenttown.org.au

SURRENDER ADELAIDE: ‘15. This annual event, which has been running in Adelaide for the past two years, will focus on the theme “Making Things Right” in 2015. It will be held from Friday 18 – Sunday 20 September at Coastlands Church (9 Light Square, Adelaide). International and interstate speakers this year include: Paul Sparks, Dave Andrews, Teresa Lee, Jarrod McKenna and local Ngarrindjeri leader Clyde Rigney. Performers include Joel McKerrow and Lovers Electric. Full weekend, day passes and night session rates are available. The Uniting Aboriginal & Islander Christian Congress is one of the sponsors of this event. For more information about the program or how to register, please contact Bonnie on 0414 228 694 or bonnie@surrender.org.au or visit the website at surrender.org.au/adelaide

WILDFLOWER WALK IN LOCAL BUSH. Sandy Creek Uniting Church (162 Williamstown Road, Cokatoa Valley) will hold this event on Thursday 24 September, 1pm. The group will meet at the church and will be guided on an easy walk in the local area. Cost is $10, which includes afternoon tea. To book or find out more, please contact Molly Hughes on 8523 7428 or Hazel Aford on 8524 4149.

GARAGE SALE. Come grab a bargain and enjoy a sausage and cold drink, or cuppa and scones at The Corner Garage Sale. On Saturday 26 September, The Corner Uniting Church (corner Oaklands and Diagonal Roads, Warradale) will come alive from 9am-1pm with lots of wonderful stalls, including cakes, plants, clothes, books and more. Fun for the whole family! For more information, please visit thecorner.org.au

SMALL GRANTS AVAILABLE. The Australian Church Women SA Inc. advises that limited funds are available through Jubilee 150 Trust for women who, through lack of funds, are unable to undertake a course, attend training programs, or purchase equipment to enable them to fulfil their dreams. The applicant is always sponsored by a Christian church body or individual office bearer of a Christian group. The applicant herself is not necessarily a church attendee. Applications to be received by the Convener by Wednesday 30 September. Grants are presented in November. Enquiries and leaflets available from the Trust Convener, Coralie Wright, on 8258 3580 or wrigghtcoralie795@gmail.com

NATIONAL YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING 2015. This Uniting Church initiative will be held from Tuesday 6 – Sunday 11 October at Tweed Heads in Queensland. This will include two days of Uniting Church training and will also incorporate the ecumenical National Youth Ministry Convention 2015. The training event will help to equip young adult ministry leaders and volunteers, form connections between Uniting Church leaders across the country, and offer support for the service these leaders provide. National Youth Ministry training is an activity of the Formation, Education and Discipleship Working Group of the Assembly. For more information, please contact Tom Kerr on tomk@nat.uca.org.au or visit assembly.uca.org.au/nymt2015

To have your upcoming event or message published here, email diary@sa.uca.org.au with ‘Diary’ in the subject line.
The majority of people who travel through Port Wakefield only know the place for its superficial offerings of fast food, petrol and baked goods – all crammed along the edges of the Princes Highway and catering to those for whom the town is merely a thoroughfare. But wander further into the township and there’s much more to discover.

There are only two functioning churches in Port Wakefield – a Catholic church and a Uniting church. Sitting discreetly on the edge of the small township, Port Wakefield Uniting Church was established as a Wesleyan congregation in 1868. The congregation has a long history of local service – one which it continues to prize to this day.

The fishing, retail and agricultural community in Port Wakefield has recently seen the establishment of a number of businesses, including an art gallery and café, and the re-establishment of a community op shop.

The op shop is an extension of the Uniting Church and is connected to the historic church hall. Once the site of the church’s Sunday School, the building has been home to an op shop for a number of years. Twelve months ago, it underwent a renovation and general overhaul before opening its doors once more.

Extensive work was undertaken to get the missional enterprise ready for customers. This included installing a new ceiling and windows, laying new flooring, and repainting the exterior and interior of the shop. These refurbishments off-set the meticulously cared for and presented items within the shop. Along with the warm presence of the op shop’s volunteers, the fresh interior helps to ensure community members feel welcome when the enter the space.

The Port Wakefield Uniting Church Fellowship has run the op shop for many years, and were inspired to relaunch it as something which would truly serve the locals in the area. Funds raised go toward missional projects that support and assist other communities. Over the past 12 months the op shop has raised $2,000 for these projects.

Port Wakefield Uniting Church op shop is open every Saturday, 9.30-11.30am, and alternate Wednesdays, 2-4pm (or whenever the op shop’s sign is displayed). Stock is frequently rotated, and the community always appreciates donations of clothing and goods.

For further information or to find out how to donate items, please contact Port Wakefield Uniting Church on 8867 1045.

On Sunday 23 August, the Vermont Uniting Church congregation shared in a special day of celebration.

On this occasion, two members were officially received after transferring from other Uniting Church congregations.

In addition, five baptised members of the Fijian Methodist Church, who have been part of the Vermont Fijian Fellowship, expressed a desire to be confirmed as full members of the Uniting Church. With acknowledgement of the great partnership already in existence between the two communities, these five individuals were received as full members of the Uniting Church through the Vermont congregation.

All of those recognised made a commitment to serve God, the Church, and the community, through active participation within the life of the Vermont congregation and the wider Uniting Church in Australia. The congregation as a whole committed to support one another in fellowship and witness to the love of God.

On Sunday 23 August, after a long gestation period, a church plant became the newest Uniting Church congregation in South Australia – ConneXions Uniting Church. Many joined together to celebrate this special occasion, looking to the future and sharing in gratitude for the community’s past.

The church traces its history back to 2005 when Aberfoyle Uniting Church (now known as Seeds) was inspired to establish a church plant at the Seaford Hotel. The community there grew under the guidance of Rev Brant Jones in the following years.

Two years ago, the community uprooted and moved to Noarlunga Downs Primary School. The new Connexions Uniting Church will continue to meet in this space under the leadership of Rev David Kowalick. The congregation has developed a strong partnership with the local community, providing many opportunities to present the gospel in word and deed.

As they move forward, ConneXions Uniting Church will continue to make connections with God, its own members and the wider community.

ConneXions Uniting Church meets weekly on Sundays at 9.30am at Noarlunga Downs Primary School.
Concerns over food security existed long before the term climate change came into being. In the ancient history of China and Egypt the stable supply of food was a major issue. However, it was not until 1974 that the term “food security” was defined with the emphasis on supply. Later definitions also recognised demand and access issues. Importantly, the right to food was included in the 1948 Declaration of Human Rights, and is considered as vital for the enjoyment of all other rights.

From a justice perspective, food security "exists when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (definition agreed to at the 1996 World Food Summit).

Many factors can put food security at risk, including droughts, floods, wars, and economic instability. Achieving the goal of food security is still a long way off.

In 2011-2013, an estimated 842 million people in the developing world were still experiencing shortage in food supply. In many parts of the world, over 60% of children are malnourished, especially due to low protein diets. The combination of a lack of animal source protein and early pregnancy is also causing major health issues in young women and their babies in eastern Africa. Rapidly increasing populations, especially in less developed regions, further jeopardises food security in these communities.

When we add climate change to the mix, there is a real threat to achieving, or even maintaining, food security for large sections of the world’s population.

The complexity of the effects of climate change on food production makes it difficult to predict outcomes for specific regions – even predicting the effect of temperature increases on different crops is difficult. Individual plant species each have an optimal temperature range for growth, and as the temperature rises within that range, the plant grows faster. However, for grain crops this faster growth will reduce yields, as the plant has less time to fill out the grain. Once the temperature moves above the optimal range, yields for all crops will fall.

Significantly, one of the most important effects of climate change is that wet areas tend to get wetter and dry areas drier. Extreme events – notably heat waves, droughts, storms and flooding – are predicted to increase in frequency and intensity. These departures from the norm will have a substantial impact on global food security through reduced crop yields and forced changes in land use. For example, global wheat production is estimated to fall by 6% for every 1°C rise in temperature, and become more variable over space and time. While agronomists have a good track record in developing new strains of crops that are higher yielding and resistant to pests or drought, neutralising the negative effects of temperature changes on food production will require huge investments in research. Even then the reduction in yield may outpace any improvements that science makes. Unfortunately, many of the regions most threatened by climate change, such as tropical and subtropical Africa and Asia, are areas where food security is already vulnerable. Hence, already marginalised smallholder farmers and their families will be the first affected.

In a world where the food security of many is problematic even now, climate change adds an extra burden to making “the right to eat wholesome healthy diets” a reality for everyone. Burning fossils fuels may provide electricity for more people in India, but it also threatens livelihoods and food supplies. As an eminent scientist stated at a conference in Yogyakarta in 2014, “You cannot eat light bulbs”.

An environmental symposium will be held at Playford Uniting Church (Curtis Road, Davoren Park) on Saturday 17 October. The symposium will focus on environmental issues from theological and scientific perspectives, and features several high profile keynote speakers. More information will be available in the next edition of New Times.

Feedback about articles from the Environment Action Group can be sent via email to justice@sa.uca.org.au
Community continues to recover

Wendy Perkins

A special school holiday program in July provided fun and distraction for young people affected by bushfires earlier this year.

Whilst much of the blackened ground is now carpeted in green, and the charred tree trunks are sprouting new growth in various shades of green, recovery from the effects of the Sampson Flat bushfire in January 2015 is far from complete. Clean-up of properties is well underway, some fencing has been rebuilt, and many plans are being drawn up to replace existing homes, sheds and outbuildings. But deeper than the physical damage is the emotional impact on individuals and families whose lives have been affected by the fire.

Children and teenagers are particularly vulnerable to the emotional stress of a devastating natural disaster, but their needs can often be overlooked in the flurry of activity which takes place around cleaning up and rebuilding property in the aftermath. Returning quickly to the normal routines of school, sport and other activities is vital, but school holidays can be difficult. For some young people these weeks off school can represent lengthy periods of loneliness; others find they are unable to undertake their usual activities due to the change in their surrounding environment.

Knowing this, the Uniting Church in South Australia sought to offer a program where young people could engage in fun and healthy activities during their school holidays.

Through the generous donations of many Uniting Church members and congregations to the Uniting Church SA Bushfire Relief Fund earlier this year, the Church was able to partner with the Adelaide Hills Council and Red Cross to offer a program in the recent July holidays. These donations also helped to ensure the program could be offered at minimal to no cost.

Through the practical and creative skills contributed by people from across the Uniting Church SA, the program featured activities to appeal to a wide range of age groups and interests. Budding cooks had the opportunity to prepare and eat pastries. Young people with excess energy were engaged in a series of fun and challenging activities with the Uniting Venues Beyond Limits team. Teenage girls were encouraged by a self-esteem and make-up workshop. Little ones danced with performers at a Ticklish Allsorts Concert where they could also have their faces painted. Many amazing seed pod critters and decorated pillowcases were created by children who love craft activities. Catering generously provided by Balhannah Uniting Church was enjoyed by all.

But even more significant than the activities themselves were the conversations which happened with the participants and their parents. Issues related to physical, emotional and spiritual needs were gently explored by those with good listening skills, and further contacts for assistance were suggested when needed.

The ongoing recovery process is slow as the community continues to come to terms and heal. When community comes together – as they did in the funding, organisation and implementation of this program – recovery seems much closer.

Lending a helping hand

There are several ways people in the Uniting Church SA can continue to offer support to the individuals, families and communities who are still healing after the damage caused by the January bushfires.

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Energetic and time-rich people are encouraged to support agencies partnering with the Uniting Church SA, such as Habitat for Humanity SA, in efforts to assist families with clean-up and rebuilding. Providing food for volunteer teams is another way of showing support. Some of the funds from the Bushfire Relief Appeal are being used to support the partnership with Habitat for Humanity. For more information about this work, please contact Habitat for Humanity SA on 8344 6009 or enquiries.sa@habitat.org.au

Funding from the Bushfire Relief Appeal is also being used to run an Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training course through Uniting Communities. Ministry agents who may be called upon to support people at risk of suicide in the wake of disasters, like the January bushfire, will be offered this course in the near future. Further details will be provided in upcoming editions of New Times.

The Uniting Church coordinates Disaster and Recovery Ministries, an ecumenical ministry which trains and deploys chaplains for Relief and Recovery Centres and to visit those affected by bushfires. The next two-part training opportunity is on Wednesday 30 September and Thursday 1 October at Sunset Rock Uniting Church in Stirling, and will be facilitated by Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, National Disaster Recovery Officer for the Assembly.

For more information about the Bushfire Relief Appeal or Disaster and Recovery Ministries, or to RSVP for the two-day training session (RSVP by Friday 18 September), please contact Coordinator Wendy Perkins on 8236 4284 or wperkins@sa.uca.org.au

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