



Issue 39

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New Times

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THE VOICE OF THE UNITED CHURCH IN CANADA
FREE

SO WHERE IS
GOD
and the church
IN ALL OF THIS?

New Times

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Synod of South Australia

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The charred bushland in this picture, taken on Kangaroo Island after the bushfires, is indicative of the darkness and despair where many now find themselves. But where the land and people are healing, there will the Christian church be too, quietly working. Read more on p8.

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PLACEMENTS NEWS

Placements finalised as at 30 January 2020

Rev Barry Luke (Anglican) (0.8) to Lighthouse Church, Port Pirie from 1 January 2020.
Rev Do Young Kim (0.5) to Prospect Road UC from 1 January 2020.
Oliver Ponsonby (MOP) (0.6) to Eldercare as a Chaplain from 1 January 2020.
Rev Ashley Davis to Project Officer, Rural and Remote from 1 January 2020.
Rev Ian Dow to Region Minister (during Restructure) from 1 January 2020.
Wendy Perkins (MOP) (0.3) Region Minister (during Restructure) from 1 January 2020.
Rev Jesse Size (Deacon) to Para Hills UC from 1 May 2020.

Vacant placements

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

PROFILES AVAILABLE –

Generate Presbytery
Flinders Congregations (0.6) Booleroo Centre UC, Booleroo Whim UC, Melrose UC, Wirrabara UC, Wilmington UC; Loxton UC; Renmark UC and Renmark West; Port Augusta UC (0.5)
Presbytery A
Plains Community Church (Joint Church of Christ/UCA) (0.4)
Multiple Presbyteries
South West Fleurieu (0.5) Delamere UC (G), Range Road UC (G), Yankalilla UC (B)

PROFILES NOT YET AVAILABLE –

Presbytery A
The Grove UC (0.3)
Presbytery B
Aldinga UC, McLaren Vale UC (0.6); Bridgewater UC (0.5); Newland UC (0.5); Seaford Ecumenical Mission (0.4) (Joint Church of Christ and UCA); Willunga UC (0.3)
Multiple Presbyteries
Southern Yorke Peninsula

For more information about any of these placements, please visit sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations-mission-planning/placements-vacant-and-finalised

Whassup 2020?

2020 is a month old already and for many the start of this new year hasn't been easy. The ravaging bushfires destroyed many homes, livelihoods and even took away precious lives. Disasters struck not only here at home, but in other parts of the world too, including terrible flooding in neighbouring Indonesia where most of my family lives. Hearing so many stories of damage and destruction is concerning and I couldn't help wondering, what's next?

Here at the Synod Office the Communications and Events Team is undergoing a review and restructuring. Last September I was challenged to accept the temporary role of Interim Manager. After much prayer, I was led to take up this role and I believe that this will be the first of many positive changes for the team.

Another change within my own family is that my youngest child, who just turned one and has not mastered walking yet, will start to attend childcare regularly. The first few orientation sessions were difficult - with lots of crying and bumps - and I'm anticipating bouts of sickness that come with being exposed to more childcare germs.

But these changes are nothing compared to what the victims of the recent bushfire crisis are going through.

Again, I can't help but wonder, "What does 2020 hold?" Human nature wants to paint a gloomy picture in our minds based on what is going on around us. But I am reminded of Colossians 1:27, a scripture that brings hope to my heart: "Christ in us, the hope of glory". That is the hope! No matter what tribulations are on the outside, we can be of good cheer because Christ lives in us and we can draw strength to face the future because of Him.

This scripture comes alive whenever I hear stories about the Chaplains who are involved in Disaster and Recovery Ministries.

Chaplains are working tirelessly in shifts assisting many who have been affected both physically and mentally by the fires. Some are even supporting others while suffering losses themselves. They do whatever it takes to serve others with a warm smile and a servant's heart, including greeting those at

Recovery Centres, sitting and listening to visitors, making them a cup of tea, even cleaning up the messes left behind.

Learning of their selfless actions and warm, compassionate care exemplifying Christ's love brings hope.

Let us strongly hold to our hope in Christ. As we plan for this new year, let us remember that our planning is already included in His plan - God's plan for us is to bring hope and a bright future. ■



Arise & Shine!

Winaya (Kamaputri) Whitson



Little Johannah has not mastered walking yet. On top of a new childcare arrangement, it's one more new thing waiting to happen in the Whitson household.

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There is Hope

Summer – a time to sit back and relax, or maybe a time to get together with extended family and celebrate the joy of Christmas.

But for many it became a time of heartbreak and loss. Instead of watching the cricket and relaxing by the beach, our hearts have been drawn to regular news reports and social media feeds of the fires around the country.

In disbelief we have watched devastating reports of communities ruined, lives lost and incalculable destruction of property, animals and ecosystems.

Firstly in other states and then on Friday 20 December, closer to home. We had previously grieved the losses around Yorketown a month earlier, but what commenced on that day in four significant areas of the state was beyond our imagining.

Four weeks later Kangaroo Island was still burning with over 40% of the Island blackened.

Out of the destruction we hear stories of incredible generosity and sacrifice – donations of food, clothing, accommodation and money. We hear of people helping to save a neighbour's property while their own burns to the ground.

Many Uniting Church members and others have donated to the Uniting Church SA Relief Fund. Your generous donations are helping to fund two important Placements in the fire areas. Rev Matt Curnow is working with the Adelaide Hills communities and Rev Dr Phil Marshall with those on Kangaroo Island to assist congregations and communities in the recovery effort. They are working alongside members and leaders of local congregations who have already done a magnificent job of caring for and assisting those who have suffered from the effects of the fires.

As congregations reach out into the wider community offering help, care and compassion, there is an opportunity to connect in a deeper way with those being served, and for congregations and individuals to work together, building and deepening relationships. Personally, it has been an honour to share in inductions and commissionings, worship and fellowship across the breadth of our state, and to see how people support and encourage each other both in times of crisis, and in times of hope.

As green shoots have already started to sprout from the blackened trunks of gum trees, so too are signs of hope emerging in the local communities as individuals and groups see a way forward and – with the generosity of others – that there is a future.

And what of the future of the church – our Uniting Church? As we approach this time of Lent and Easter, and we remember the new hope that came with the resurrection of Jesus, may we look for new hope in our communities. In times of tragedy we find hope for a brighter future and a new way of being. ■

Blessings,



Bronte Wilson



"As green shoots have already started to sprout from the blackened trunks of gum trees so too are signs of hope emerging in the local communities." This photo of new growth was taken on Kangaroo Island in late January.

Photo: Bronte Wilson

“As congregations reach out into the wider community offering help, care and compassion, there is an opportunity to connect in a deeper way with those being served, and for congregations and individuals to work together, building and deepening relationships.”



*Moderator Bronte Wilson speaks at the commissioning of Rev Matt Curnow as the Disaster Recovery Pastor for the Adelaide Hills. Matt's position is funded through the UCSA Relief Fund Bushfire Appeal, as is the position of Rev Dr Phil Marshall on Kangaroo Island. **Photo:** Winaya Kamaputri*

A 'Clayton's' New Year

I wonder what you received for Christmas.

My husband gave me a desk calendar: "365 New Words a Year". Knowing his love of words and language generally, I suspect it might have been something he would have liked to receive. However, it has already attracted attention and some fun in the office. As I sit down to write, today's word is 'discomfit' – to frustrate or thwart the ideas or plans of others. It seemed to shape what I was feeling about the opening days of 2020.

We expect that celebrating the beginning of a new decade would somehow be challenging. We would have the usual New Year challenges around overseas events, world politics, renewed attacks on innocent civilians and distant environmental events. Certainly nothing that would threaten our appetite for New Year fireworks displays!

However, it was fire close to home and the loss of people and animals, homes and businesses, landscapes and dreams of those we know, that took away the sense of new beginnings this year. It has reprioritised the nation's summer holiday season. Our televisions and social media posts are full of distressing images and stories of loss and sadness, of heroic acts, of compassion and questions that seek explanation about how to celebrate, how to embrace with joy the possibilities that this new decade offer.

The Psalmist (who so often successfully reframes our thoughts and fears) invites us to sing a new song in Psalm 96:1-3. At the dawn of the New Year we are filled with hope for what is to come, we have thankfulness in our hearts for life and the years past, we have prayer that will keep our focus where it needs to be this year, leading into a decade filled with the activity of God, with joy, love and compassion.

2020 provides an opportunity for the Synod to do some strategic thinking: not about how the Synod can 'fix the church' but how we enable, resource and shape the Synod's roles and responsibilities.

It is not an opportunity for a survey, where everyone is heard but we don't find anything new. It's an opportunity to explore practical



My six-month-old granddaughter, learning the art of crawling.
Photo: Felicity Amery



Felicity helps to feed some cows, all that remained of a family's entire farm on Kangaroo Island. **Photo:** Bronte Wilson



I am looking forward to a second round of conversations with congregations and other ministries: opportunities to sit around the table and hear your story, what shapes your faith and service and how the Synod might effectively participate.

and measurable ways of shaping the Synod's ministry. Biblical principles, Christian values, and a renewed structural understanding of what the Synod is (a geographic area, a Council of the Church and offices with staff and resources) will shape our conversation together.

I am looking forward to a second round of conversations with congregations and other ministries: opportunities to sit around the table and hear your story, what shapes your faith and service and how the Synod might effectively participate.

To help us begin, I offer you a New Year photo of my granddaughter. At 6 months, she is poised to take on the world. With no carefully documented plan (?) she stretches all four limbs, glances sideways towards her mother with a 'now what?' look. With love and encouragement she will know what to do. Within days she is crawling, very mobile and equipped with a new skill, confidently exploring her world. Such a joy. ■

Rev Felicity Amery



KCO Time to Connect at KCO

This year's Kids Camp Out (KCO) will be held on the weekend of 21 - 22 March 2020 at Adare Camp & Caravan Park, Victor Harbor. Join us in praying for the children attending as they explore the theme 'Connect'. This theme encourages everyone to connect with one another, connect with Jesus and connect with nature... through games and crafts, songs, prayers and Bible activities, small groups and camping together, and simply sharing a weekend of fun!

You can keep informed about KCO and exciting program updates via the KCO website: sa.uca.org.au/kco, via [facebook.com/KCOUC](https://www.facebook.com/KCOUC) or via the Yapp App my.yapp.us/KCOUC.

Interested in sending your primary school aged child to KCO?

Contact your local church and see if they are bringing a group along or contact the KCO Office on kco@sa.uca.org.au to connect you with another group. Registrations are open now and will close on 11 March.

If you would like to join the KCO team and serve the wider church to make KCO happen, please contact Mark Schultz on mschultz@sa.uca.org.au.

Looking at the future KCO will be undergoing a re-visioning process for beyond 2020 to consider new and exciting ways to help today's young people explore faith. More information will be available in late February. If you are interested in being part of this process please contact the Mission Resourcing Team on mr@sa.uca.org.au.

Applications are invited for the position of

OFFICE MANAGER

Rosefield Uniting Church

Rosefield Uniting Church in Highgate is seeking a permanent part-time Office Manager (15 hours per week) to undertake a diverse range of administrative duties. These include attending the reception desk, responding to enquiries, providing administrative and secretarial support for Ministers, production of weekly newsletter and management of the data base system.

The position requires someone with excellent interpersonal and written skills, proficiency in Microsoft programs, the ability to work independently and proven organisation ability.

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Women's Suffrage Community Grant enables two Community Connections events

A generous Women's Suffrage Community Grant from the Department of Human Services allowed Pilgrim Uniting Church's Community Connections program to host two events in 2019. The first was a Mother's Day event held at Hope's Café that connected many different cultures in their love for mothers near, far and no longer with us. At this event politician and refugee Esther Simbi also launched her first book, 'Beyond Calamity: A South Sudanese Refugee Story'.

The second event, held in November, was a two-fold workshop wherein a panel of speakers addressed issues such as challenges and inspirations in public and political life. The panel included the MP for Florey Frances Bedford, researcher on inter-cultural relationships Dr Sunny-Rue Chivaura, convenor of the UCA SA Covenanting Committee Tarlee Leondaris, and author/

politician Esther Simbi. Another panel comprising Rev Mark Kickett, Tarlee Leonardis and Uncle Paul Anderson, reflected on the Uluru Statement of the Heart and the Voice of Imagination.

"The grant achieved so much," says Rev Liellie McLaughlin, coordinator of Community Connections. "We celebrated the success of the suffragists of 125 years ago where locals worked side-by-side with new arrivals to fight for political equality and representation in parliament. At the same time we introduced people from a wide diversity of backgrounds to one another, helped to showcase and share gifts and skills, and inspired and supported a wide range of cultures to contemplate life in the public or political sphere." ■

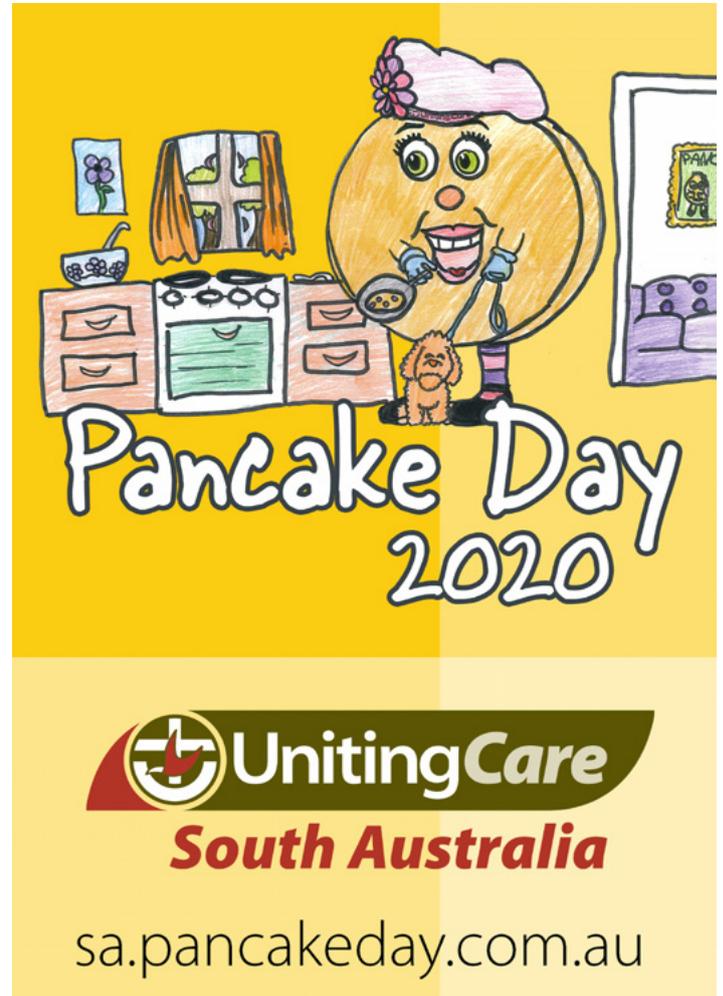
Research into veterans' health (moral injury) rewarded

Rev Timothy Hodgson, Executive Officer of UnitingCare SA and PhD candidate within the University of Queensland, was honoured last year with the Sir Edward Weary Dunlop Award 2019 by the Australian Military Medical Association (AMMA) for original research into moral injury and veterans' health. This is the association's most prestigious award and was presented to both Tim and his Associate PhD Supervisor, Rev Dr Lindsay Carey (Palliative Care Unit, La Trobe University, Melbourne).

Moral injury is a complex trauma-related syndrome involving biological, psychological, social, and spiritual symptoms which can have a substantial impact on a person's health and well-being.

The award is in recognition for Tim and Lindsay's combined expertise in developing, conducting and presenting original and exploratory research into moral injury, which will lay a foundation for future research and better pastoral care to aid Australian military veterans. Their collaborative research has also been presented at the Spiritual Care Australia Conference (2017), Royal Australian Air Force Chaplains' Conference (2018) and the Australasian Conference on Traumatic Stress (ACOTS, 2019).

Tim and Lindsay have been assured a publication in the AMMA Journal of Military and Veteran Health for 2020. They have already co-written several articles relating to moral injury research, one of which (according to journal analytics) is now the most internationally viewed article on moral injury for the past decade. ■





So where is God (and the church) in all of this?

Here in South Australia the summer's bushfires have left our communities reeling. In the wake of loss and disaster we sometimes struggle to see God and the church at work. As Coordinator of Disaster and Recovery Ministries SA, Pastor Wendy Perkins shares her views on the topic.

Above: This is Church Road, Kangaroo Island, in late January, where not a single property was left undamaged. Photo: Felicity Amery



After a disaster one of the questions in people's minds, if not on their lips, is, "Where was God

when this terrible thing happened?" Even those who don't purport to believe in God have been known to ask this question, a question which seems to be more prevalent in Western cultures than elsewhere.

In the wake of the tragedy of 9/11 Philip Yancey's book, "Where is God when it hurts?" was hastily republished in a special edition, made available to as many people and as cheaply as possible. 300,000 copies were sold on the first day of its release, with all proceeds directed to the American Red Cross. An avalanche of book sales occurred, a sure sign that the book was grabbed by

many people who were asking that very question, where is God in the midst of tragedy?

When asked to summarise his book in a sentence or two by a man too busy to read it, Yancey reports that he thought for a moment and said, "I guess the answer to that question is another question. Where is the church when it hurts? If the church is doing its job – binding wounds, comforting the grieving, offering food to the hungry – I don't think people will wonder so much where God is when it hurts. They'll know where God is: in the presence of his people on earth."*

If we were asked the same question in the midst of the current tragic bushfire season in South Australia, I believe we could respond in a similar way as Yancey: God is to be found in the presence of his people, often quietly and unobtrusively caring for people in practical and pastoral ways.

“

God is to be found in the presence of his people, often quietly and unobtrusively caring for people in practical and pastoral ways.

Love thy neighbour

Many people in the Uniting Church express their faith by performing acts of kindness for others, loving God by loving neighbour. They may be found as part of Blaze Aid teams, re-fencing properties so that stock can be returned; in Habitat for Humanity workgroups, helping with the time-consuming task of cleaning up and recovering fire damaged property; providing meals for emergency service teams and Blaze Aid volunteers; actively participating



Disaster and Recovery Ministries chaplain Eve Marsh accompanied staff from SA Housing Authority, and volunteers from Blaze Aid and the Red Cross, on an outreach around the Lobethal area on Friday 10 January.

in CFS, SES and Ambulance crews on the ground or behind the scenes.

Others demonstrate their love for God and for people by offering pastoral and spiritual support through their ministry of presence to friends, family, neighbours and strangers: they listen, they empathise, they care, they sit in silence (rather than stay away because it is all too hard to know what to say). Some of these people are serving as Disaster and Recovery Ministries chaplains, the team of around 250 trained voluntary chaplains from many denominations and other faith groups, who are found in Emergency Relief Centres, Recovery Centres and on outreach teams in partnership with the SA Government, visiting people affected by the disaster in some way.

Many Uniting Church people are praying for individuals and communities affected by the fires. Others are responding by generously donating to the Uniting Church

"... a very weepy and distressed lady came in to the Recovery Centre today. She lived in NSW and was visiting family in the Adelaide Hills when her uninsured house burnt down. She is now homeless, without a car and was very distraught. I spent considerable time with her. She left much happier saying: 'I came in powerless and am leaving powerful.' What a lovely testimony to the folk at the Recovery Centre."

– Marlene, D&RM chaplain.

SA Relief Fund as congregations, as families and as individuals, recognising that their financial gifts will be directed to projects proposed by local congregations which will assist in the recovery of their fire-affected communities.

Looking to the future

In future weeks, months and even years there will be signs of new life in the midst of charred bushland. Chaplains will be continuing their quiet ministry of care and comfort. Congregations and ministers

will be looking at how they support their communities for the long haul, when all the outside support agencies have left. There may be special events in these communities, sponsored by congregations with the support of donations to the UCSA Relief Fund – maybe a school holiday program for affected children, a family fun day to give people a break from the relentless clearing and rebuilding, an initiative to enhance the well-being and mental health of the community, vouchers for garden centres given to residents to help green the blackened landscape.

So where is God (and the church) in all of this?

Continued



Balhannah Uniting Church member Alverna Ballard of Brukunga is one of several people suffering devastating loss in this summer's raging bushfires. Her house was lost in the Cudlee Creek fire on Friday 20 December. Members of this close-knit congregation have rallied to support Alverna in many ways: towing her van to a safe place, clean-up, replacing tools, equipment and household goods, providing alternative accommodation, pastoral support, financial donations and more. **Photo:** Winaya Kamaputri

Across the state, from the Yorke Peninsula to the Adelaide Hills to Kangaroo Island to the Riverland – anywhere disaster has struck this summer – Christians will be demonstrating the compassion of Christ, God's Kingdom traits of healing and reconciliation. Motivated by Matthew 6:1-4 they will be God's hands and feet, eyes and ears in ways which are unobtrusive, even unnoticed but potentially transformational in the lives of those who are touched.

At a time of crisis, many may ask, "Where is God in the midst of this suffering?" May God be seen in those who love and care in practical and pastoral ways, especially outside the walls of our church buildings.

Thanks to them, may many people know where God is when it hurts. ■

**From: 'Where was God on 9/11?: Reflections from Ground Zero and beyond' by Phillip Yancey. Published in 'Christianity Today' October 1, 2001.*

Wendy Perkins coordinates the work of Disaster and Recovery Ministries SA, an ecumenical and increasingly multi-faith network of volunteer chaplains. Coordinated by the Uniting Church, Disaster and Recovery Ministries SA operates under a Memorandum of Understanding with the SA Government as part of the State Emergency Management Plan. Chaplains offer pastoral and spiritual support to people as they grapple with issues of meaning, justice, forgiveness, hope and worldview during a time of major loss.

Chaplaincy training opportunity

Disaster and Recovery Ministries SA are looking to train suitable volunteers who can offer pastoral and spiritual support to people as they grapple with issues of meaning, justice, forgiveness, hope and worldview during a time of major loss.

Their next 2-day training course for potential chaplains will take place on 26 & 27 March 2020 at Seacliff Uniting Church. For more information contact Wendy Perkins on **08 8236 4284** or **wperkins@sa.uca.org.au**, or go to **trybooking.com/BICAE** to book online.

Over \$110,000
 already given to
UCSA Relief Fund

140 D&RM chaplains
 ministering in
Relief, Recovery Centres +
on outreach this summer

At least 2,500 hours of
chaplaincy served already
this summer

15 Hills congregations
 considering how to best
work together to serve their
fire-affected communities

2 UCA congregations
 whose properties
were damaged

3 special placements
 funded by the UCSA
Relief Fund

Host a Pancake Day this year

And support organisations like *Uniting in Care, Salisbury*.

Julianne Rogers



Salisbury Uniting Church's community space has undergone a drastic transformation which invites the local community to spend time, share meals and have conversations. **Photo:** Julianne Rogers

It is a warm, sunny day in October and the UnitingCare SA team is at Salisbury Uniting Church. We've come here to volunteer for a day and to learn about the ways in which Salisbury Uniting Church is connecting with its local community.

What a transformation this church has undergone in the last eight years since my first visit! It has gone from a rather gloomy maze to a gorgeous meeting hall with full kitchen amenities. And the people of Salisbury UC haven't let one inch of this beautiful space go to waste – filling it with the local community.

Mondays to Thursdays Uniting in Care, Salisbury (the local UnitingCare organisation) offers emergency relief as practical assistance to the community. They have been doing this since 1993 and show no signs of slowing down. A fully-stocked pantry is ready to offer people food assistance – including fresh fruit and vegetables from local food rescue organisations. But that's not all: Salisbury UC also puts on coffee, tea and pastries for people who come in, have a chat and hang around.

Wednesdays are definitely the day to visit. The place is buzzing with activity from community groups to people sharing a beautiful meal together. Friends mingle while the kids zoom around with their juice.

This particular week is barbeque week and the volunteers and guests have organised a band for the entertainment. While the servers are preparing lunch, the band is rehearsing. People are coming in

“**He comes because he is lonely and the food is great.**”

and sitting down to chat or just to soak up the atmosphere.

The volunteers come from all walks of life: a young mother, a local council member, some retired ladies. A cake donation from a local bakery supplements the BBQ meat and salads on offer. When everyone has been served, the volunteers sit down to eat with them.

I sit next to an elderly gentleman who is originally from England and who had lived out in the country for a long time. We chat about all sorts of things. He comes because he is lonely and the food is great.



This beautiful fruit and veg trolley was purchased using UnitingCare Pancake Day funds. So too were two freezers that assist greatly with Uniting in Care, Salisbury's catering needs. **Photo:** Julianne Rogers

As we all begin to clear up, everyone disappears into the meeting room for movie time. Clearing up isn't a chore because we've had such a lovely time and it means so much to so many.

The church is doing this because they want to make a positive difference in their community and live the good news of Jesus Christ.

Salisbury UC's Rev Nick Patselis smiles as he recounts the occasions on which he has been invited to his own church's Wednesday lunches or movies by unsuspecting community members.

"We are blessed to be a church that is open Sunday to Sunday and as we were renovating, we felt that the vision God placed on us as a church was to be a church of 'Open Doors.' We value the trust the local community has placed in us by coming through our doors," he says.

UnitingCare Pancake Day will be on again this year at Salisbury Uniting Church and funds raised will help support the work Uniting in Care, Salisbury, allowing them to carry on this grassroots ministry.

Churches, schools, businesses and community groups are encouraged to host a Pancake Day anytime in February or March and support their local South Australian UnitingCare organisation. ■



A NATIONAL TREASURE:
**MARY LEE
 AND HER
 LEGACY**

by TRISH BRICE

Left: An 1880-dated photograph of Mary Lee, by Hammer & Co, from the State Library of South Australia's Photograph Collections.

A week before Christmas last year, on the 125th anniversary of Women's Suffrage, a group from Pilgrim Uniting Church dressed in period costume and made their way to the Parliament House on North Terrace, Adelaide. Armed with material from the original Hansard, they were prepared to play their part in a full-scale re-enactment of the debate that enabled women in South Australia to vote in general elections and to stand as members of Parliament.

The volunteers from Pilgrim UC spent a happy eight hours reliving the drama that saw South Australia lead the world, not only giving women voting rights but also the right to sit in Parliament - a two-fold blessing.

The volunteers were joined by descendants of Mary Lee, leader of the seven women who led the debate in 1894.

The powerhouse that was Mary Lee

No celebration of Women's Suffrage would be complete without acknowledging the legacy of the inimitable Mary Lee. She was Irish, lived through the Potato Famine and lost both her husband and two of her sons prior to arriving in the Colony of South Australia in 1879 with her daughter. After grieving the loss of her third son in the first year on South Australian soil, she wasted no time in building networks and supporting many good causes.

Who would have thought that such a broken woman could lead a reforming movement that would change the political landscape of South Australia?

Over 60, short, strong, healthy and forever busy, Mary was a practical Christian, having adopted the social reformist ideas of the Primitive Methodist minister Hugh Gilmore. In her now famous words, her motto in life was 'Let us be up and doing'.

When the South Australian Women's Suffrage League was in full flight, Mary was at the centre of the League's activities. She was focused, feisty, forward-thinking, and faithful - a regular attender at the Primitive Methodist Church in North Adelaide where Rev Gilmore often argued persuasively that faith and activism were inseparable.



Above: On 18 December 2019 several volunteers re-enacted the Women's Suffrage vote of 1894 in the chambers of the SA Parliament House.

“

Who would have thought that such a broken woman could lead a reforming movement that would change the political landscape of South Australia?

Mary was well read (she possessed her own library), politically astute and intellectually gifted. Her lofty ideals and steely determination found purchase in the nitty-gritty of the low-life in the streets of Adelaide in the late 1800s. The destitute, the abused, the hungry and the hopeless were a constant reminder that the Colony

only offered a bright future to those with material and political assets.

Mary and her cohort held the view that nothing would change until women could have a say in the laws that governed them. For that to happen, they needed some political clout. They wanted a voice to elect candidates as well as a democracy that did not exclude the very real concerns for their welfare and that of their children. The times were changing but the political realities frustrated their best efforts at reform.

A mistake and a fluke

It took six and a half years of concerted activism, but 'votes for women' became a reality on 18 December 1894.

This important decision became a watershed for Federation and set a new benchmark worldwide.

The political backdrop to this momentous shift has some unusual features, with the happy coincidence of a mistake and a fluke. An irate conservative MP, hoping to frustrate yet another tiresome Suffrage Bill in late December 1894, snuck in a ridiculous amendment adding female representation to the voting rights Bill, hoping that it would contribute to its downfall. It backfired.

The fluke was a narrow window of opportunity where the Upper House was controlled for a very short time by non-conservatives. Some well-to-do colonists were slowly moving towards supporting

A NATIONAL TREASURE: MARY LEE AND HER LEGACY

Continued



Mary's descendants Michael Poland, Rachael Norton and Aynsleigh Norton recently visited Mary's gravesite at the Wesleyan cemetery, Walkerville.



Pilgrim Uniting Church's volunteers who participated in the re-enactment of the Women's Suffrage vote of 1894, are (clockwise from the front left): Ruth Farrent, Graham Brice, Trish Brice, Peter Muller and Liellie McLaughlin.

the Bill and the wives of parliamentarians had the ears of their husbands around the hearth each evening. If you listen hard you might be able to hear the conversations in the corridors of power... "For goodness' sake, it's nearly Christmas... let's get this over and done with, so we can have a jolly time this festive season".

The suffragists were jubilant, their prayers finally answered, the challenges ahead many, but the biggest hurdle was behind them. Unbelievably, South Australia was hailed as the most progressive place in the world. They could now work towards a hopeful future.

Faith is inseparable from activism

Seventy years later Martin Luther King Jnr burned with a similar reforming zeal. His passion was racial equality, Mary Lee's

focus was gender equality, but both had their eyes on the plight of the poor.

In 1963 the Civil Rights Leader preached his most famous sermon which began with, "I have a dream. Every valley shall be lifted up and every mountain shall be laid low." (Isaiah 40:4). But in 1893, Mary Lee articulated her vision: "dream on the glorious dream, but act also, so as to make the dream a reality. Some people would have us believe that the present world is quite good enough. It may be good enough for them but it is not good enough for us. We must go forward and upward".

Leigh Newton, singer-songwriter and member of Bridgewater Uniting Church, wrote a song last year about Mary Lee after being inspired by her life and work. The lyrics can be found on Pilgrim Uniting Church's website at pilgrim.org.au/womens_suffrage.

“Seventy years later Martin Luther King Jnr burned with a similar reforming zeal. His passion was racial equality, Mary Lee's focus was gender equality, but both had their eyes on the plight of the poor.

For more information on the suffrage story, particularly the other women of faith who helped Mary move a mountain of prejudice, go to the New Times pages on the website sa.uca.org.au, or search for 'suffrage' on this website.

The recently published book 'Mary Lee' by Denise George (Wakefield Press) is highly recommended for further reading. ■

The Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations

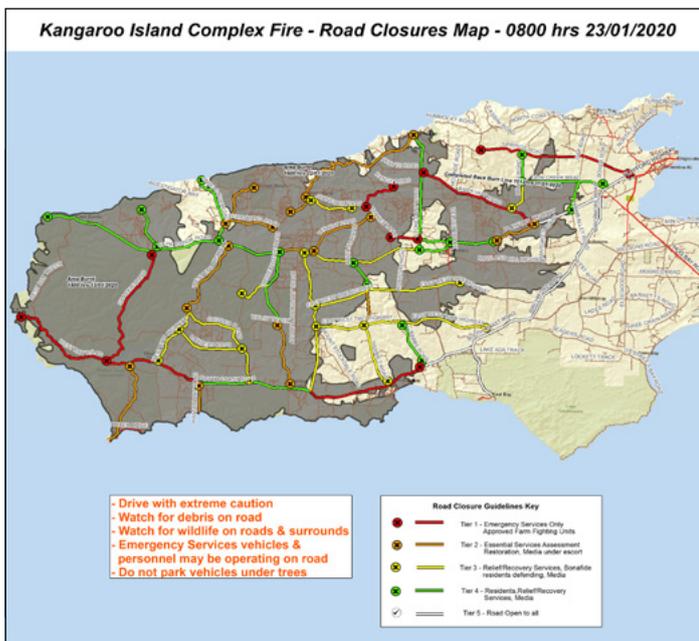
The communities who all form part of the Linked Congregations of Kangaroo Island have experienced a summer that has left them traumatised and exhausted. Bushfires have destroyed more than half of the island's habitat, burning away farms, homesteads, wildlife and livelihoods alike – but not the fierce determination and survival instinct of its inhabitants.

In the fourth week of January this year Moderator Bronte Wilson and General Secretary Rev Felicity Amery visited the Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations. During this time their ministry was one of listening and providing encouragement.

“We were able to affirm them in their courage to tackle what can only be described as a horrendous scenario,” says Felicity. “We could also reassure them that the church want to be there for them for the long haul, not just in their immediate need. We will continue to listen as their needs change and provide assistance in their rebuilding efforts as required. ■



Moderator Bronte Wilson (left) and General Secretary Rev Felicity Amery (right) with the leadership team of Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations, Pastor Des Pratt and Pastor Louise Davis.



This map from the kangarooisland.sa.gov.au website, shows the road closures due to the Kangaroo Island bushfires as on Thursday 23 January. It also shows the area that has been burnt in the fires.



This coordinated team of trained Disaster & Relief chaplains had been hard at work on Kangaroo Island from soon after the bushfires first broke out here. They gathered briefly at the Parndana Disaster Recovery Centre. From left is Colin Beaton, a member of Coro Uniting Church, John and Carolyn Oors, Baptist Pastor Kevin Hull, Army Reservist Padre Derek Croser, Air Force chaplain Tom Killingbeck from Perth and the KI Linked Congregations' Pastor Louise Davis. Rev Mark Dickens, the army coordinating chaplain who was instrumental in the team's operations, could not be present for the photo. **Photo:** Felicity Amery

Churches on the Fringe

February and March in Adelaide spells FRINGE. This year there are five Uniting Churches acting as venues for the Adelaide Fringe and Adelaide Festival shows. Here are some of the shows hosted at Uniting Church venues:

TOD Talks (Terrible Ideas Improvised): 20 – 27 Feb, at Scots Church Adelaide

A show of improvised presentations where audience members choose the topic for each presentation which comedians and improv artists have to develop. Spontaneous, organic and hilarious.

España El Vito the Spirit of Spain & Tango - Piano and Guitar Concert: 13 – 15 Mar, at Scots Church Adelaide

Award winning concert pianist Nicholas Young joins renowned 10-string virtuoso Guitarist Matthew Fagan, performing Spanish classical, flamenco, tango and modern jazz. Their shows were sold out at the Sydney Opera House.

Alaska String Band Down under: 14 – 15 Mar, at Church of the Trinity

Groove along while this captivating four-member family band offers up American roots favourites... swing, jazz, rock, original, pop, folk and Bluegrass.

"Too Good to be True!": 28 Feb – 8 Mar, at Burnside City Uniting Church

Release your inner POP DIVA and be transported with all-time favourites and iconic pop songs of the decades, performed by dynamic women's choir Illumina Voices - directed by Glenda Lynelle with accompanist Helen Angove.

Sax to the Max: 1 – 15 Mar, at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church

Enjoy the colours, moods, excitement and exquisite beauty of the live sax quartet when SAXISM presents an entertaining program of favourite classic SATB quartets and more contemporary jazz selections.

Pianist Tim Barton: 7 – 15 Mar, at Clayton Wesley Uniting Church

Tim presents new original compositions, ragtime piano, Chicago blues/boogie, classical music from Spain and Australian women composers Hyde and Katz-Chernin + Tim's favourite Rhapsody in Blue.

Evolution: 14 – 21 Feb, at Pilgrim Uniting Church

Set on a spaceship in the future, Evolution is a multimedia play that follows the events of three passengers who have woken up before everyone else. Tam, Jun and Will each learn of their individual and collective fates whilst discovering vital lessons that need to be implemented to ensure the survival of the human race.

Arts and Crafts: 14 Feb – 13 March, at Pilgrim Uniting Church

Ugandan artist Alon Kabaale exhibits batiks, sculptures, paintings and more. He uses his art for community improvement, while addressing the critical needs of the less privileged in Uganda.

Far Far Away: 3 – 7 Mar, at Pilgrim Uniting Church

Theatre production of a physical-experimental journey, which explores struggles of root and identity of younger generation from Hong Kong in this era.

The Great Among Band: 14 Feb – 7 Mar, at Pilgrim Uniting Church

Ghanaian gospel artist Isaiah Kwadwo Among is the kingpin of the trio together with Cee and Showboy. He has come out with a number of hit songs including "Jordan", "Osofoo Kasa" and "Hossana".

On My Skin: 3 – 5 March, at Kent Town (Wesley) Uniting Church

Aurora, Adelaide's hottest acappella women's vocal ensemble, sings about modern day love and relationships. Amidst the laughter, tears, glitter and confetti, there is glorious music with sublime harmonies.

ADELAIDE FRINGE
14 FEBRUARY – 1 MARCH 2020

The Bible says ...

but what does it mean?



There are texts in the Bible that can be difficult to understand or interpret. In each edition, New Times will pose a question and focus on one such a text, with a theological response to it. Pilgrim Uniting Church's Rev Dr Greg Elsdon takes another look at the story of the poor widow.

Question: What meaning might the story of the poor widow from Mark's Gospel have for followers of Jesus today?

Mark 12:38-44 [NRSV]

38 As he taught, he said, 'Beware of the scribes, who like to walk around in long robes, and to be greeted with respect in the market-places, 39 and to have the best seats in the synagogues and places of honour at banquets! 40 They devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance say long prayers. They will receive the greater condemnation.'

41 He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. 42 A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. 43 Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. 44 For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

Rev Dr Greg Elsdon answered:

This story is usually read as an affirmation by Jesus of a poor widow because of her exemplary devotion demonstrated in her sacrificial giving. After all, that's what the Bible says, isn't it? Unlike the rich who contribute large sums of money, presumably with little detrimental impact on their quality of life, this poor widow gives everything she had.

Jesus calls his disciples together and declares that the widow's offering is of far greater value than that of the rich people because she gave 'her whole living' (12:44). It's easy to see why the usual lesson drawn from this episode is that the widow's sacrificial giving is applauded by Jesus and held up to the disciples as devotion worthy of emulation.

But is this really the primary meaning of this story from Mark's Gospel? An alternative reading places the emphasis not on Jesus' acclamation of the widow's sacrificial giving, but on his condemnation of the religious system which exploits this poor woman. In the immediately preceding verses (12:38-40) Mark records Jesus' warning against religious leaders (in this case, the 'scribes') who parade themselves in public places and demand recognition and reverence in places of worship and celebration. These pretentious leaders are the very ones who exploit and

oppress vulnerable members of the community ("devour widows' houses") and at the same time seek public approval by their lengthy prayers.

For some reason this story of Jesus and a poor widow has traditionally been interpreted with blatant disregard for its immediate and instructive context in Mark's narrative. Given the force of this context it is difficult to avoid reading this passage as Jesus' penetrating critique of the actions of powerful people who control community life in ways that exploit the poor and take advantage of the powerless.

What meaning might this story from Mark's Gospel have for followers of Jesus today? How is power abused in our society and in our churches? Who has power and what do they do to maintain it? Where do we see silencing of minority voices and the manipulation of those people who have no voice at all? What unrealistic expectations do we place on people of limited resources? Do our church programs keep us so busy (and guilty if we aren't over-committed) that our frenetic activity can become the primary impediment to our love of God and neighbour? Does Mark's Jesus have something tough to say to our communities? ■

The Bible Says ... is an initiative by the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. If you have a question about a difficult text in the Bible, please contact Dr Vicky Balabanski by email: vbabanski@unitingcollege.edu.au

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lead 2020

with Craig Bailey

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"...but I work full-time!"

We get it. Craig has developed several Semester 1 study options to make this unit as accessible as possible.

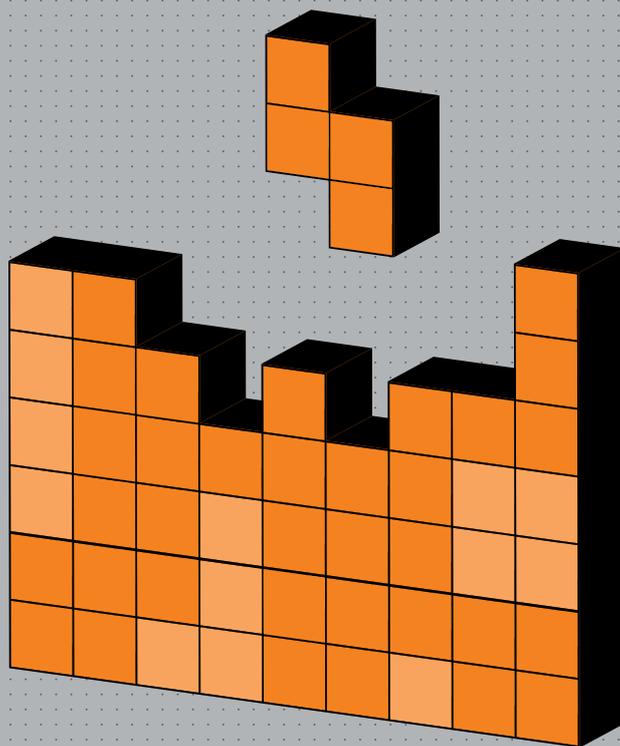
Visit the website for further details:

unitingcollege.edu.au/leaders

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 **UC Invest**
Securing your future

Nurturing leaders' hearts and minds

Andrew Dutney

In a few weeks I'll be teaching an intensive course on 'The Heritage, Theology and Polity of the Uniting Church'. Sounds dull? Maybe, but it's not. It's actually pretty exciting. It's one element in a suite of courses developed to shape and empower Christian leaders.

In this course I tell the Uniting Church's backstories, the things that explain why we are the kind of organisation we are, and where the untapped potential still lies. We delve deeply into the Basis of Union and explore the vision that inspired an earlier generation to risk everything to unite.

The people who take the course are almost all Uniting Church folk – mostly Pastors, ordination candidates, Ministers or other leaders. They take the course because they want to thrive – themselves, as well as their congregations and networks. They realise that to do that, they need to really understand this church, our church! Where it came from, what drives it, how it's organised, how decisions get made, how change happens and how to be involved.

Coming to understand all that, empowers people for leadership in the Uniting Church. To that extent this is a leadership course. It's

certainly a key element in the curriculum of Uniting College for Leadership & Theology.

So I'm excited that this year people will be able to follow up my intensive, if they choose, with Lead 2020, a refreshed version of 'Introduction to Christian Leadership' taught by Craig Bailey.

“
They realise that to (thrive), they need to really understand this church, our church! Where it came from, what drives it, how it's organised, how decisions get made, how change happens and how to be involved.

The course covers most of the key aspects of Christian leadership, from theology to the different models of leadership and types of leader. It gives focussed attention to emotional intelligence, and nurturing the qualities of Christian leaders. It's not just about leadership in the church either. It is equally concerned with the way Christians can offer leadership in their daily lives and occupations, in ways which reflect the faith that upholds and forms them.



There are multiple ways of participating in Craig's course, too. There's the standard 12 week option, either as an enrolled student or, at a much reduced cost, as an audit participant. There is also a three-week audit option for people who are primarily interested in one part of the course. Or there's a one-lecture option for people who'd like to hear about a specific topic.

Craig's theology of leadership is deeply Trinitarian, as we saw for ourselves in his Bible studies at the last Synod. And so a perfect companion to Lead 2020 next semester is 'God the Trinity' taught by Sean Gilbert.

Christian leadership is empowered by knowing how the Uniting Church operates and why, and by understanding the dynamics, tools and models of leadership. It is empowered especially by hearts that have been captured and held by the mystery of the triune God – the beauty of a God who isn't distant but is with us and among all things, inviting us to know we are loved and to share that love with others. ■

Below: Rev Prof Andrew Dutney is the Principal of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. Photo: Petronella Lowies



In early December, Resthaven Aberfoyle Park Lifestyle Assistant, Nav, delivered a bounty of warm, hand-knitted blankets to homeless people across Adelaide. Residents had been knitting these blankets since October. The aim was to knit just four blankets, but they kept knitting and knitting!



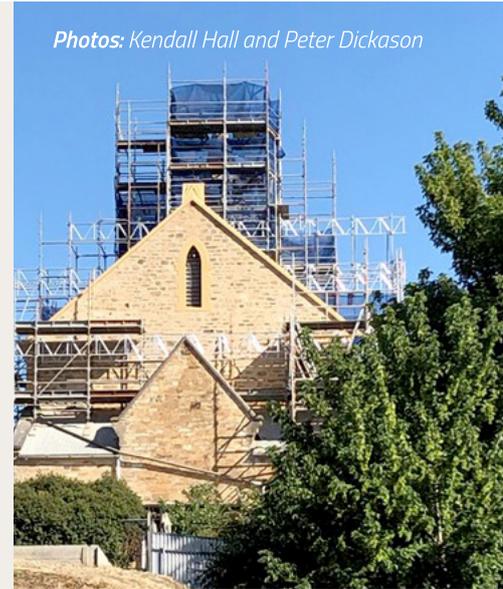
On 13 December, Hon Mark Butler MP (the Member for Hindmarsh), Lefevre Connections volunteers and community residents officially opened a new solar system at Lefevre Connections, a community outreach facility of Lefevre Uniting Church. The 8.775 kW solar system was installed thanks to the recognition of the work of Lefevre Connections in the form of a grant from the Australian Government under the Stronger Communities program.

The Narrung community welcomed the UCA in SA's Covenanting Committee to their community centre on 7 December 2019. The Committee met here for their last meeting of the year. In the photo (standing from left): Felicity Amery, Sean Weetra-Newchurch, Andrew Clarke, Mark Kickett, Liellie McLaughlin, Jesse Size, Brett Champion (on Jesse's shoulders), John Tsetsakos, Dean Whittaker, Di Russell, Lyn Leane, Ruth Harbison-Gresham, Mark Schultz. (Seated from left): Rhane Tsetsakos, Marelle Harisun, Barbara Horne, Aunty Betty Sumner - Ngarrindjeri artist.



Photo: Peter Russel

The front exterior of Mount Barker Uniting Church has been covered in scaffolding since October last year, with repair work being undertaken on the heritage-listed building. The repairs were rendered necessary as parts of the building underneath the spire have become unsafe. Over the years all repairs to the original brickwork were erroneously done with cement rather than mortar. The repairs were made possible by a substantial grant received from the SA Heritage Grants Program.



Photos: Kendall Hall and Peter Dickason



Photos: Jenny Esots

The most popular tree at the Willunga Uniting Church Christmas Tree Festival, held over the last weekend in November last year, was the 'Basket Tree' by the Southern Basket Cases. Chris Banks received the prize of a \$100 Officeworks voucher on their behalf. In the children's category Willunga Primary School emerged as winners. Their tree 'Our Christmas stories' was also placed seventh overall. There were 25 entries and 2,689 votes.

At Adelaide West Uniting Church the congregation and its surrounding community were inspired musically and spiritually by a performance of the Adelaide West Men's Choir (just in time for Christmas). Supported by guest artists they delivered a performance titled 'Behind the Christmas Story: a presentation in word and music'. The performance also served as a fundraiser for a school in Cambodia for displaced Vietnamese children.



Photo: Dave Roberts

Do you have a photo of your event that you would like to see featured here? If so, please send it to us along with a description of what happened, where it happened, and who is in the picture. We can only print high resolution photographs sent as attachments to newtimes@sa.uca.org.au. Keep them coming!

UPCOMING EVENTS

10+24
Feb

Become a friend with an ex-refugee / asylum seeker

6:00pm – 8:30pm

Broadview Baptist Church

Two nights where you learn how to be a friend with a refugee and explore Adelaide in new interfaith, inter-cultural ways. Volunteers are matched with a new arrival according to age, gender and interests.

Contact: 0466 776 501 or
volunteer@baptistcaresa.org.au

15
Feb

World Community for Christian Meditation SA

11:00am – 3:00pm

Immanuel Lutheran Church

A community day (bring lunch for sharing) where we explore what it means to be contemplative in our world today.

Contact: chr.med.southaust@gmail.com

16
Feb

25th Anniversary of The Vines Uniting Church

9:30am

The Vines Uniting Church

Sunday Service with a 25-year anniversary celebration. Morning tea afterwards.

Contact: 0430 646 844 or
thevinesunitingchurch@gmail.com

18-20
Feb

2020 Leadership and Theology Symposium

11:00am – 12:30pm

Uniting College for Leadership
and Theology

Join other Uniting Church leadership educators for a round table discussion on Christian leadership and theology.

Contact: 8236 4266 or
unitingleadership2020.com

Feb -
Apr

Soul Seekers: Living Inside-Out

19 February – 1 April, 11:30am

20 February – 2 April, 7:30pm

Grange Uniting Church

A seven-week program for those wishing to grow their spiritual lives through the Christian contemplative tradition.

Contact: 0403 829 085 or
enquiries.soulseekers@gmail.com

25
Feb

State Mission Fellowship

10:00am - 1:00pm

Scots Church Adelaide

Rev Felicity Amery, General Secretary of the Uniting Church in South Australia, will speak at this event, beginning with morning tea and concluding with a light lunch (\$6).

Contact: 8522 6188
or jillpolki@gmail.com

14
Mar

Presbytery Meetings

11:00am – 12:30pm

All three Presbyteries will be meeting on this day (separately). Details of times and venues not available at time of print – please contact your Presbytery for more information or follow them on Facebook.

Contacts:

Generate:
generate@sa.uca.org.au

Presbytery A:
presbytery.a.secretary@sa.uca.org.au

Presbytery B:
presbytery.b.secretary@sa.uca.org.au

21-22
Mar

KCO 2020

Adare Camp & Caravan Park

An overnight Christian camp for kids of primary school age, exploring faith through fun activities.

Contact: 8236 4266 or
sa.uca.org.au/kco

4
Apr

Twilight Market

4:00pm – 8:00pm

Adelaide West Uniting Church

Craft stalls (with some demonstrating their craft), fabulous food, children's and young adults' activities, vintage/classic cars to view, sausage sizzle. All proceeds will go towards Indigenous Children's Literacy Programs.

Contact: kbnsue@esc.net.au



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MORIALTA CHARITABLE TRUST FUND

Morialta Charitable Trust Fund has been supporting disadvantaged children, young people and their families in South Australia through its annual program of distributions for 40 years. To enable the Fund to continue this support through community organisations in South Australia, Morialta Charitable Trust Fund seeks donations from the public. Donations of \$2 and above are tax deductible and can be forwarded to the Morialta Charitable Trust Fund at PO Box 92, Crafrers SA 5152.



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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.



ENDURING HOPE

Living with great expectations

Easter 2020

1 Peter 1:3(NLT) "...because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation..."

Easter always presents a wonderful opportunity to connect with our immediate communities through special services and activities. This year, it once again comes at a time where many in our communities may be looking towards the church for guidance and messages of hope.

The UCA Synod of South Australia would like to assist congregations to reach those in their communities through an Easter campaign. This year, we would like to encourage them to look beyond the grief of tragedy to where hope can be found and where expectation lies in welcome.

For much of history, Good Friday was known as Black Friday, because according to Mark 15:33 the world quite literally went dark around the time that Jesus died on the cross. It's easy to see only darkness in death, or only despair when tragedy strikes and all hope seems lost. Those who loved and followed Jesus at the time must have failed to see any hope in His crucifixion, too.

But mere days later, with His resurrection, Jesus taught us to look beyond the darkness and despair. He restored hope, not just for those followers at the time but for every person who has ever lived, past, present and future. Out of the darkness and despair of His death grew the brightest signs of hope that humanity has ever experienced.

We can have enduring hope and live with great expectation: because of what He has done in the past when He died for our sins as Saviour, because of what He is doing in the present and what He will do in the future based on His promises to us.

We believe that this is a message for our communities to treasure.

The Easter campaign will work slightly differently this year. The SA Synod Communications and Events Team would like to encourage everyone to share this Easter message of enduring hope with their family, church and the wider community.

While we will still provide themed postcards, posters and PowerPoint slides, the campaign will also feature a suite of other

resources which congregations can use for free to promote their Easter events. These resources are specifically designed so that congregations can amend, print and promote their events themselves.

Share your story about "Enduring Hope" by posting your message on social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) using the hashtag **#EnduringHope**. Let us know that you have posted by tagging us **@UnitingChurchinSouthAustralia**.

There are two ways to make the best use of the Easter campaign materials:

Option 1 (Do it yourself)	Option 2 (Assisted)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We provide files on our website that you can download for free and edit yourself• You organise your own printing and delivery• No charges apply .• Here's the link to the website from which you can download the free, editable files: sa.uca.org.au/easter-2020 <p>HAVE FUN!</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We assist you with editing the files according to your congregation's needs• We organise the printing and delivery for you• Printing and administration fees will apply.• Contact us for assistance before Friday 20 March. Call the Synod Communications and Events team on 08 8236 4237 or email communications@sa.uca.org.au

Resources available for the Easter campaign:

- Poster
- Postcard
- PowerPoint Templates
- Invitation card (business card size)
- Email banners
- Social media images (Facebook Frames & Lent series posts)
- Moderator's Easter message video

For more information go to the website **sa.uca.org.au/easter-2020**.