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Issue 40  
No 2 | 2021

# Shaping the *Future*

What does it mean to be  
young and Christian?

seminaries

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# New Times

## Contents

### FEATURES

Q&A with Assembly Youth Nominees .....	6-9
Synod Meeting 2020/2021.....	10-11
Shaping our Future: Strategic Priorities .....	12-13
Being young and Christian .....	14-15
Intergenerational ministry and young people .....	16-17
Getting to know UAICC.....	18

### REGULAR PAGES

Message from the Moderator .....	3
Note from the Editor .....	4
Message from the General Secretary .....	4-5
Out & about in the community.....	19
Easter .....	21
Community news .....	22
Classified .....	22



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**Synod of South Australia**

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**Deadline for the June/July 2021 edition:**

Friday, 14 May 2021

**Cover details:**

Katie Freak, Kerry Wilson and Rev Benji Callen during a Synod Meeting lunch break. More information about the Synod Meeting which was held from 11th-13th February 2021 is featured on pp 10-11.

### PLACEMENTS NEWS

#### Placements finalised as at 1 March 2021

Rev Frances Bartlett to Resthaven, Westbourne Park (0.2) from 15 February 2021  
Robert Cartridge (MOP) (0.4) as Chaplain SAHLN (Flinders Hospital) from 15 February 2021  
Rev Sarah Williamson (0.6) as Chaplain SAHLN (Flinders Hospital) from 1 March 2021  
Louise Townend (Anglican) as Chaplain Resthaven Port Elliot (0.2) from 1 March 2021  
Suzanne Foley as Chaplain Correctional Services (0.4) from 1 March 2021

#### Advertised placements

Resthaven Coordinating Chaplain for Resthaven Craigmore 0.3 FTE  
Resthaven Relieving Chaplain - for all sites (Minimum 0.2 FTE - to assist in supporting absent Coordinating Chaplains)  
Wimala Regional Coordinator (0.2)

#### Vacant placements

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

##### PROFILES AVAILABLE

##### Generate Presbytery

Port Augusta UC (0.8)

##### Presbytery of Southern SA

Adare UC; Noarlunga UC (2nd placement); Rosefield UC; Newland UC (0.5 TBC)

##### Linked Congregations in Multiple Presbyteries

Southern Yorke Peninsula (0.5-0.6 TBC)

##### PROFILES NOT YET AVAILABLE

##### Generate Presbytery

Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations (0.7); County Jervois

##### Wimala Presbytery

Berri UC/Barmera UC from June 2021; Croydon Park UC (0.3); Grange UC (0.5) from June 2021; Kadina Wallaroo UC from May 2021; LeFevre UC (0.7) from May 2021; Modbury UC (0.5); Western Link (0.5)

##### Presbytery of Southern SA

Willunga UC (0.4)

##### Linked Congregations in Multiple Presbyteries

Ardrossan Parish (0.6) - Ardrossan UC, Clinton Centre UC, Dowlingville UC, Price UC

For more information about placements, please visit

**[sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations-mission-planning/placements-vacant-and-finalised](http://sa.uca.org.au/pastoral-relations-mission-planning/placements-vacant-and-finalised)**

# New beginnings, New opportunities

2021 is well under way. We have put away the Christmas decorations, participated in Pancake Day and Synod meetings and are now approaching Easter.

Most of us are still wondering what this year will be like. Will the vaccine provide sufficient protection from the virus? Will our congregations and ministry leaders recover from the exhaustion of the last year?

We wait with hope for the next new thing that God is doing; the promise of new life that Easter brings as Jesus' broken body, put to death on the cross is transformed into a new creation.

In late January and early February, some of us gathered for a series of Synod events. Due to the uncertainty of the extent of restrictions at any given time and the current density limits, this year's Synod meeting was different in many ways. As Moderator I appreciated the significant extra effort undertaken by many people to make the online session, the Celebration of Ministry Service and the face-to-face meeting happen in a successful and safe manner.

We found the different aspects of the meeting gave us opportunities to connect with each other in various ways – whether through the online experience, joining together in worship, taking part in lively discussion in working groups, engaging closely with the different aspects of the Synod in electives or speaking into the discussion in the decision-making sessions.

The gathering of the Synod members gives us an opportunity to reflect on where we have been and what we have done as a church, and provides a forum to consider where we are going next as God's people together. Whether we are looking at strategic priorities, property reports or how we connect with retired Ministers, our discussion and our discernment sets us on our journey for the next season as the Body of Christ.

When I looked around the room at the Synod face-to-face meeting I saw people who were passionate about the present and the future of the Uniting Church. I saw people who were keen to hear God's voice in the discussion and looking for the leadership of the Holy Spirit. I saw a spirit of generosity in the debate – people agreeing to

something that wasn't their first choice, but recognising the importance of the matter to others. However, as I looked across the room I noticed not only those passionate and present, I also noticed the absences.

**“**  
**When I looked around the room at the Synod face-to-face meeting I saw people who were passionate about the present and the future of the Uniting Church.**

Some of those who have had a significant presence at Synod meetings are no longer involved, and at this meeting many of the groups active in the life of our meetings seemed to be under-represented. This year very few young people or first peoples were elected to membership. There was little cultural diversity and there were nearly twice as many men present as women.

I write this after attending an online International Women's Day Breakfast where Natasha Stott-Despoja urged us all to model gender equality and respect for minority groups. We were reminded that we cannot include what we cannot see. She suggested 'who is in the room' sends a significant message.

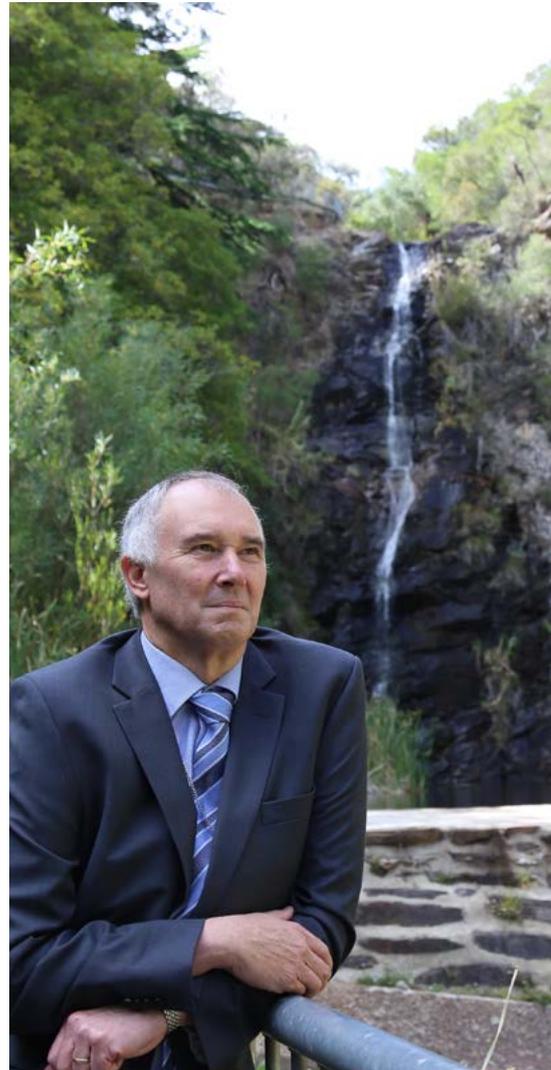
This issue of *New Times* celebrates a diverse range of young people in the life of our church. It showcases their lives, their aspirations and dreams for our church. Some of our congregations have very few young people and wonder what this means for their future. However it is evident that there are individuals and groups of young people who have a deep faith and a passion to be part of the Uniting Church. Their stories give us encouragement as we each look at our own priorities as individuals, congregations, church organisations and the Synod. Is this where we are looking for God to be doing a new thing amongst us? How can we join in to make this happen? What might we need to leave behind or give up? What new opportunities might emerge?

As the spirit of God works in our midst, among young and old, first and second peoples, men and women, may we be sustained and strengthened and empowered to make a difference in our situations and bring hope to others. In Christ, we are a new creation. We are transformed. We are made new. And so we are able to offer new life to others, in and through Christ.

Blessings,



Bronte Wilson ■



## From the Editor

In this issue of *New Times* you will discover a variety of perspectives from the recent Synod meeting. As the Moderator has mentioned in his opening article the first session was held online and was well-received. The format will certainly help the Church to embrace this concept in future should the need arise.

The face-to-face meetings, and especially the three days of the main Synod meeting were a highlight for me as it was the first time I have attended Synod. As well as being able to connect with a diverse membership of the Church I so appreciated the opportunity to meet in person and to be able to observe and listen to the important proposals that were discussed and to hear the decisions that were made.

One of the proposals related to the *Shaping the Future Strategic Priorities of the Synod 2021-25*, and from the Synod meeting we have now put together the separate wraparound cover of this April/May issue of *New Times*. The intention is that the wraparound cover be removed and retained as a guide to assist Presbyteries, congregations and associated agencies to embrace and apply some of the 12 themes contained within the *Shaping the Future* framework.

The Moderator also mentioned that there were very few young people at the Synod meeting and so this issue quite deliberately has sought to explore and listen to young voices within the Church. As such, I posed a series of questions to the three young people elected to the Assembly from South Australia: Hannah Gardner, Jacob Blackwell and Anna Wilson.

Their responses should give us all much to contemplate – as Hannah Gardner says ‘I think there are many roles for our youth in church today, but something that stands out to me is the ability to lay fresh eyes on the societal issues we face ...’

As we begin to engage with the *Shaping the Future* themes may we embrace Hannah’s words and also lay fresh eyes on the issues we face as a Church; and continue to be challenged by what it means to be Christian in a modern world.

Personally, I would like to thank Hannah, Jacob and Anna for their willingness to respond to the questions that I posed to them and I congratulate them for their refreshing, thoughtful and honest responses.



Bridget Ransome ■

## From the General Secretary



*Caption: General Secretary Rev Felicity Amery's presentation during February 2021 Synod Meeting*

Thank you to all those people who put in significant time and energy to enable the 2021 Synod gathering to be a special event in the life and witness of the Uniting Church here in South Australia. The space, the weather, the planning of the agenda, the slightly reduced membership, the worship, Bible Studies, electives and workshops all made for a great Synod.

If you were a member I hope there has been an opportunity to share with others some highlights. I also hope you have participated in the feedback survey that will help us receive your input so that we can continue to effectively plan for future meetings. If you were not a member please ask someone that attended so you can have an opportunity to hear their feedback. In the coming weeks you will be able to check out the Synod website for reports and the details of our key discernments.



For me there were a number of highlights throughout the Synod meetings, including the first session being virtual; our decision to maintain strong relationships and meaningful connections with associated organisations; a proposal to enable retired ministers to more easily stay connected and a commitment to strengthening our disciplinary processes to enable Presbyteries and the Synod to more effectively address bad behaviour in our councils.

Whilst we appreciated a little more space in the room, I believe members noticed the gender imbalance; the lack of cultural diversity; and the challenge we face in reducing the average age of the membership. It was acknowledged that there are some challenging conversations ahead around membership, the inconsistencies in our oversight of the Ministry of Pastor and the future stewardship and sustainability of ministry here in South Australia.

“

**These priorities will serve to connect the whole Synod, resourcing and supporting us, and drawing us into God’s future, as we partner together in God’s purpose.**



The two major pieces of work the Synod needed to address both invited and required the Synod to work intentionally and collaboratively together.

We determined to receive the much awaited Property Review Report, *God’s Church and its Buildings – Are they fit for Mission?* Further the members approved the recommendations, including a request of the General Secretary (in conversation with the Synod Standing Committee) to set up a skills-based Working Group to collaboratively develop ‘a future-focussed strategy to determine the number and geographic locations of buildings to house vibrant missional communities’.

The Synod also received the *Shaping the Future – Strategic Priorities 2021-2025* report. From a compilation of feedback from the Strategic Priorities Working Group’s extensive conversations across the Church, we compiled twelve priorities. These priorities will serve to connect the whole Synod, resourcing and supporting us, and drawing us into God’s future, as we partner together in God’s purpose.

I refer you to pages 12 and 13 in this issue where you will find more information about the wheel concept (and how to obtain a hard copy version of the wheel) and where to download the accompanying Action Plan. A case study example is also included to help you to consider how you might apply one or two of the priorities across the breadth and diversity of the Uniting Church in South Australia.

There are some tough conversations ahead. However, the team is rich with gifts. Together in Christ there will be courage and wisdom and God’s future for our Church.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felicity Amery'.

Rev Felicity Amery ■

# Q&A

With **Assembly Youth Nominees**

We asked the three young people recently nominated to the Assembly from South Australia the same set of questions ... here are their responses:



**Hannah Gardner**

**Q.** *How did you come to your faith – was it through your family up-bringing or more your own personal choice?*

**A.** I did grow up in a Christian home but had a crisis of faith as an eighteen-year-old. I desperately wanted to believe in a good God, but I couldn't understand the common question: If God is good, then why does He let bad things happen? Two years later, I was at a church service with my family and received the freedom of surrender, I couldn't turn down the peace it brought me! I still struggle with the above question, but I am constantly reminded to look at what He has already done on the cross. So a little of both I guess.

**Q.** *Why the Uniting Church?*

**A.** I am a firm believer that denominations don't matter to God, but I do find myself most at home within the Uniting Church. I grew up in a Uniting Church, so that's got to be part of it. But more than that, I love the inclusivity – especially of women in leadership, the partnership with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, and the attention to current social justice issues.

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing you as a young Christian in today's world?*

**A.** I think young people in general are facing many issues such as grappling with Climate Change, racial injustices, gender inequalities and more. As a young Christian in particular, I find myself constantly struggling to see the church (in general) at the forefront of these issues. Our identity as Christians demands that we seek His righteousness and justice, but often in my conversations with other Christians I notice a strong emphasis on evangelism with a neglect of social justice. While Christ does call us to make disciples of all nations, He also calls us to seek justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with Him. Regardless of political point-of-view, as Christians, we are first and foremost called to love our neighbours as ourselves. Neglect of this calling signifies to society that Christians don't care about social justice issues, that we care more about religion than the poor or marginalised or those that don't fit the 'mould', our LGBTQ+ brothers and sisters, for example. This kind of reputation is definitely a challenge I face as a young Christian in today's world.

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**I think there are many roles for our youth in church today, but something that stands out to me is the ability to lay fresh eyes on the societal issues we face ...**

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing the Uniting Church at this point in time?*

**A.** Similar to the above, I think the Uniting Church is challenged to respond to the current social, environmental and political climate in a way that truly imitates God's justice and righteousness. In a world where the church has caused so much pain, how can we reconcile and rebuild our reputation as followers of Jesus, how can we best display His all-encompassing love, His desire for justice, while acknowledging the pain of the past?

**Q.** *How has your faith sustained and supported you?*

**A.** My faith in a God that has already won the victory takes the pressure off me (in my white saviour, euro-centric position) to solve every single problem facing our world today ... something that I actually used to carry on my shoulders! Rather than becoming paralysed by the rampant injustice in our world, my faith in Jesus empowers me to join Him in His justice calling, knowing that solving Climate Change, poverty, social injustices etc. does not hinge entirely on my shoulders.

**Q.** *What do you think the role of youth is in the church today?*

**A.** I think there are many roles for our youth in church today, but something that stands out to me is the ability to lay fresh eyes on the societal issues we face, and how we can engage the church to pursue Jesus' calling of justice and restoration alongside us. The times move so fast, and I think there's a unique relevancy and authenticity that the youth can bring to the church today. ■



# Q&A

With **Assembly Youth Nominees**



**Jacob Blackwell**

“  
**My personal faith has been the only thing that has kept me here ...**

**Q.** *How did you come to your faith – was it through your family up-bringing or more your own personal choice?*

**A.** I came to faith at an early age, I grew up in church and through my father I grew to know about Jesus as a teenager.

**Q.** *Why the Uniting Church?*

**A.** It was only as an adult, however that I chose to make this a personal choice and my own faith rather than a hereditary faith. I'm part of a Uniting Church at the moment – *Encounter Adelaide*, mostly because of the leadership. I continue to attend because I see the work God is doing through his Church and I want to be a part of it in any way I can.

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing you as a young Christian in today's world?*

**A.** Currently the challenges I face as a young Christian in today's world are in fact the stigma the Church has around it. Most people I know have nothing against me or my personal faith but they do have issues against the institution itself. This makes it hard for me to invite and keep my friends coming to Church.

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing the Uniting Church at this point in time?*

**A.** I think that currently the biggest challenges facing the Uniting Church at this point in time happen to be our disunity, the struggle for individual congregations to assist or lift up other congregations.

**Q.** *How has your faith sustained and supported you?*

**A.** My personal faith has been the only thing that has kept me here, part of my testimony is God saving me from anxiety, suicide, depression and loneliness.

**Q.** *What do you think the role of youth is in the church today?*

**A.** I am still here glorifying God because he saved me when I needed him. I think the role of youth is trail-blazing, forging new paths together to lift up God's church and to move away from congregational disunity.

**Q.** *What do you think you would like to achieve during your time at Assembly?*

**A.** Being nominated to Assembly was a bit of a surprise but I hope to be able to give a voice to the youth who are tired of congregational competition and hopefully empower youth at other Uniting Churches. ■

# Q&A

With **Assembly Youth Nominees**



**Anna Wilson**

**I appreciate the way the Uniting Church is inclusive of and welcoming to everyone.**

**Q.** *How did you come to your faith – was it through your family up-bringing or more your own personal choice?*

**A.** I grew up in the Uniting Church, attending church every Sunday. When I was 5 years old I wanted to be baptised and acknowledge my faith in God. When I was 15, I reaffirmed my faith and was confirmed. I was prompted to be confirmed because I wanted to recommit my life to God. I was born with an immune disorder and had a bone marrow transplant as a baby. I spent months in hospital in isolation. Although I don't remember this my family tell me there were many people praying for me and this helped us get through this time. Whenever I have medical appointments and procedures now I know that God is with me and is looking after me. My faith has also helped me in everyday life because I know that God is always with me through anything. This year I am studying a Certificate IV in Christian Ministry and Theology as the next step in my faith journey.

**Q.** *Why the Uniting Church?*

**A.** I appreciate the way the Uniting Church is inclusive of and welcoming to everyone. This means I feel comfortable exploring my faith and my sense of identity and purpose within the church, whether that be in a Bible study group with elderly people or in my youth group.

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing you as a young Christian in today's world?*

**A.** A challenge for the Uniting Church, and for all churches, is to engage people of all ages to think about their faith and spirituality in new and exciting ways. I think the role of young adults in today's church is to continue to learn God's message and live it out.

**Q.** *What do you think are the challenges facing the Uniting Church at this point in time?*

**A.** Young adults today can help influence the church to keep growing and changing as well as be challenged to respond to modern issues. A challenge for me as a young Christian is being able to have a voice in the wider Uniting Church. I hope the Uniting Church will always encourage young people to have a say and be involved in leadership opportunities and wider experiences of the church.

**Q.** *What do you think you would like to achieve during your time at Assembly?*

**A.** I am excited about going to the Uniting Church National Assembly and am looking forward to being involved in the life of the wider church in a meaningful way. I hope to bring a different perspective to the Assembly meeting and to provide a voice for young people and people with disabilities.

# Synod Meeting 2020/21

The 2021 Synod meeting was held in somewhat different circumstances due to COVID-19 restrictions and as such the very first session was held online, with members connecting in via a webinar format.

Session 1 on Saturday, 30th January, included Rev Professor Andrew Dutney speaking about 'What is a Synod?' with an explanation of the government and Councils of the Church (*Basis of Union*, paragraph 15): 'In each Council we are doing something particular', discerning the guidance from the Spirit and from other Councils of the Church.'

Session 2 of the Synod meeting was the Celebration of Ministry and Recognition of Retired Ministers Service, held at the Burnside City Uniting Church on Sunday 7th February and was an opportunity to acknowledge key milestones in ministry within the Uniting Church in South Australia.

In this Celebration of Ministry gathering there were a range of ministry experiences acknowledged, a diverse set of backgrounds and a variety of pathways through life and service to the church and to God who has called and equipped and who continues to call and equip.

Sessions 3 through to 14 of the Synod meeting were held at Adelaide West Uniting Church from Thursday, 11th February through to Saturday 13th February. The Moderator welcomed members:

'This is the meeting where we report on and celebrate and lament the year of 2020 and it is also the time when we look forward to this year of 2021 and beyond. It is a time for celebration, to be part of the joy of being in community. The 2021 Synod meeting is different, starting with an online meeting nearly a fortnight ago, being followed by a Celebration of Ministry service last Sunday, and now gathering here in reduced numbers, noticing the absence of some familiar faces and welcoming some new members.'

14 decisions were approved by consensus and session 3 - 14 highlights included:

- Property Review Report – was presented and it was requested that the General Secretary in consultation with the Synod Standing Committee develop a future-focused strategy including the establishment of a Property Working Group and an implementation plan
- Synod Strategic Priorities – affirmed the 12 strategic priorities and requested congregations, presbyteries, agencies, committees, boards and staff of the SA Synod to initiate processes to help shape their own Action Plans for identified priorities

[Return to Contents](#)

- Respectful Communities – that the Placements and Safe Church team in consultation with Presbyteries collate current resources and develop further ones that help to clarify and strengthen expectations regarding mutually respectful communication and behaviour of congregational leaders and members.

Other decisions included continuity of pastoral care for aged care residents assisted by congregations; recognition of 'active' retired ordained ministers as a new category; a Synod resourcing event to be held in October 2021; the next Synod meeting in session to take place in June 2022; and various elections and appointments to boards and committees.

A complete list of the Synod Meeting 2021 decisions will be available on the Synod website at the following link: [sa.uca.org.au/about-us/synod-meetings](https://sa.uca.org.au/about-us/synod-meetings)



## Acknowledgement of Country – An explanation

At the opening of the Synod session on 11th February, Tarlee Leondaris, the Covenanting and International Mission Officer stated, 'My ancestors are from the Wambaya and Wakaya language groups of the Barkly Tablelands in the Northern Territory. I would like to acknowledge all other First Peoples present at the meeting today, especially from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. I pay my respect to the various Nations represented in you, I also thank you for the richness your leadership brings to the Synod.'

She went on to more fully explain the meaning of the Acknowledgement of Country. 'You may be wondering why this is referred to as an Acknowledgment of Country and not a Welcome to Country. I do not have the authority to provide a Welcome to Country, only traditional custodians can perform a Welcome to Country on their land, whereas an Acknowledgement of Country can be said by anyone. It is a way to pay respect and acknowledge First Peoples and their ancient connection to Country.

Acknowledgement of Country is actually an ancient tradition. For thousands of years protocols have existed for visitors acknowledging country in First Peoples communities. Visitors were required to acknowledge, adhere to and respect the rules of the Country entered.

We are truly blessed to have a way to honour this ancient tradition. It amazes me to think that the land we worship on retains this rich cultural history. This same land sustained Kurna People for thousands of years. By honouring Traditional Custodians, we honour God's mission on Earth.'

All congregations within the Synod of South Australia are encouraged to say an Acknowledgement of Country before each service as a way of honouring the traditional custodians on whose land the Church is located. Most importantly, congregations are encouraged to continue to develop mutually respectful relationships with First Peoples within your local communities.



## Philippines Partnership

During the Synod meeting Tarlee Leondaris also spoke to members with a call for solidarity with the United Church of Christ in the Philippines. The current administration sees many Christians as enemies. Bishop Joseph Agpaoa, who himself has been abducted and held, spoke to the Synod meeting via a pre-recorded video about the surveillance, harassment and intimidation he is under. For further information visit: [victas.uca.org.au/deadly-fight-for-rights-in-the-philippines](https://victas.uca.org.au/deadly-fight-for-rights-in-the-philippines)

A Task Group will be established to support this issue and to provide recommendations. Please contact Tarlee ([tleondaris@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:tleondaris@sa.uca.org.au)) if you would like to be involved with this Task Group.

Tarlee also led the meeting in prayer for Bishop Joseph and all Christians in the Philippines. ■



## Art Project

During the meeting Neryl McCallum of the Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts (CMLA) introduced the Synod Art Project. This project was initiated by the General Secretary and was created alongside the activities of the Strategic Planning Working Group. The CMLA encouraged local artists to submit works to broaden and open up the discussion beyond words. Artists were invited to create works that consider how we experience our communion, our togetherness, with God and one another and all creation in the everyday. The idea of the Trinity, as a symbol of God's salvation and grace, redemptive for all of humanity and how we hear our Triune God's all-embracing invitation to communion with God, all people and all creation.

“  
By honouring Traditional Custodians, we honour God's mission on Earth.”

# Shaping our Future: Strategic Priorities

Rev Felicity Amery

2021 is the beginning of something new.

This is not the time to sit on the sidelines and watch what others are up to. It is not the time to waste our energy arguing over who is right and who is wrong, whose idea is better, whose perspective gives greater clarity.

As the South Australian Synod we are committed to being the transforming presence of God, committed to discipling and growing the Church, advocating for justice in the world, being thriving communities of faith, gathering to hear Jesus' message to us and equipping ourselves to respond.

*Shaping our Future - Strategic Priorities* holds us together and connects us to the common purpose of being the Church. Collaboratively we are all the Synod and there is a place for each one of us.

*Shaping the Future* will work best if we are in conversation, if we can imagine ourselves as an effective team, if we are committed to a common purpose.

## It's beautiful and it's fun, but how does it work?

The easiest way to work out how it works is to do it. Let me share with you **the following example as a case study.**

**With the 'wheel' in your hand and a delegated scribe who has the Action Plan open or on a screen, make a start.**

## Who are you?

Think about who you are within the Uniting Church in SA e.g. a youth group of a local congregation. You could quite easily be a Church Council, congregation, presbytery, board, or an office ministry team too.

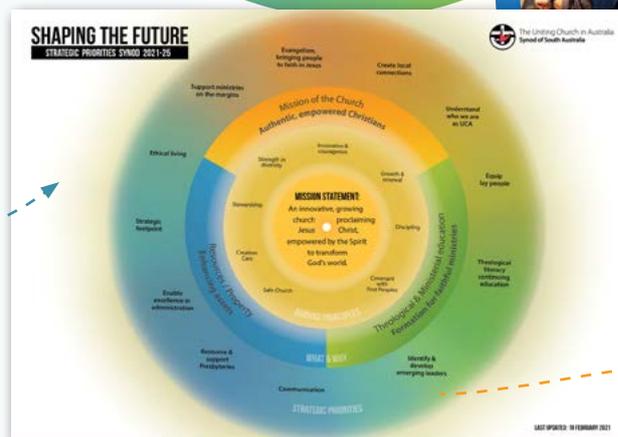
## Identify a priority

There is a list of twelve Strategic Priorities to choose from e.g. *Rediscovering who we are as UCA*. Choose one priority to start with and you may come back to identify another priority in another round.

## In what area will you partner with the Synod?

Which responsibility will you access and what row on the Action Plan will you follow? e.g. *Formation for Faith Ministries (green)*.

You might also identify with *Supporting Ministries on the Margins* through the lens of *Growth and Renewal* in the Guiding Principles section of the 'wheel' and the responsibility of *Enhancing Assets (blue)*, or *Enabling Excellence in Administration* through the lens of *Safe Church (Guiding Principles)* and the responsibility of *Authentic, Empowered Christians (orange)*.



\*A digital version of the 'wheel' and Action Plan are available to download from: [sa.uca.org.au/shaping-the-future](http://sa.uca.org.au/shaping-the-future) or request copies by email to [toengagement@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:toengagement@sa.uca.org.au)





### What will be different?

Continuing to use the **youth group** example in the Guiding Principles e.g. *Growth and Renewal* and *Strength in Diversity* think about *what else will be different?*. On your Action Plan, write some ideas on how you can be more excited and passionate about contributing to the ministry and mission of the congregation and/or the wider church. As a result, you may want to produce a resource to share with other youth groups, as one example.

### What initial steps will you take?

Talk to youth leaders and Minister/Pastor/Church Council about your interest. Research and think about other people/resources you might talk to about the idea. Think creatively about what kind of resource/platform e.g. video?

The initial steps usually include research, consider what is available, who can help or how much will it cost?

### What are your priority actions?

List down your priority actions, for example you may wish to:

- Make contact with the Mission Resourcing team and/or your Presbytery
- Over the next three months invite people and present your Action Plan to a group
- Send the Youth Group Leader (or others) to a *History and Polity* course at the Uniting College or ask the Presbytery to run one at your church
- Source expertise in video production, scope the project and plan the format
- Produce a video for sharing with the congregation and other youth groups
- Talk to your congregation about why and how you might further participate in the life and witness of the youth in your church.

### Who, what and by when?

It might be a 12 month plan or a 2 year plan. There may be an initial 3 month set of steps and conversations with key people, followed by a 6 month training/input/learning phase and a final 3 months of filming and editing (if you were going to use the video example). Useful resource people might include the UCA President with existing Assembly resources, Moderator, SA Synod Mission Resourcing staff, Uniting College faculty or Presbytery Standing Committee.

### Evaluation

Return to the question 'what will be different?' Host a launch of the video and have a missional conversation with your Church Council about how you might be more actively involved and connected to the activities of the wider church.



**Shaping the Future: Strategic Priorities for the Uniting Church Synod of SA 2021-2025**

**Guiding Principles:**  
Covenant with 2<sup>nd</sup> Peoples / Growth and renewal of the church / Innovative and courageous / Safe church / Creation care / Strength in diversity / Stewardship / Discipline

Priorities	Regulated Roles & Responsibilities of the Synod	What will be different as a result of the plan?	Initial Steps	Priority Actions	KPIs/SMART Goals*	Evaluation
1. Create local connections (clergy, parishes, teams, regional churches, extended organisations, organisations, organisations & community)	Authorised Empowered Christians Mission of the Church					
2. Redefining who we see as UCA (UCA EPW) who are, roles and responsibilities, qualification training, life leader training)	Authorised Empowered Christians Mission of the Church					
3. Support members on the margins (indigenous, ONS, 2 <sup>nd</sup> Peoples, etc.) (Resilience, enabling resources)	Authorised Empowered Christians Mission of the Church					
4. Theological Witness & continuing education (short courses, skills based, improving literacy, technology, leadership)	Authorised Empowered Christians Mission of the Church					
5. Equip for people (pastors, online training, collaborations, skills development)	Authorised Empowered Christians Mission of the Church					

**ACTION PLAN MADE BY ORGANISATION**



When you have completed your Action Plan, please send it to **engagement@sa.uca.org.au**. We will place it on the Synod website and at future Synod meetings there will be the opportunity for people to share their Action Plans with the wider church. ■



# Being young and Christian

*Dr Deidre Palmer*

From its inauguration the Uniting Church has affirmed the gifts and voices of young people shaping our life and mission.

Young people are members of our decision-making councils; they contribute to local churches; they are part of ministry in schools and universities; they express their Christian faith through the arts; they offer their gifts in worship; they are sharing their faith with their peers; and they are building pastoral networks.

Young people continue to discern the call of God on their lives and seek wisdom on where God is leading them. They are embodying the love and hope of Christ in their families, schools, workplaces and wider community networks; and they are passionate advocates for God's vision of justice, peace, and reconciliation for our world.

The Uniting Church believes that young people are the church of today (as are our children and older members!) as well as the church of the future.

## **National Young Adult Leaders Conference (NYALC)**

During my time as President, it has been a joy and great source of encouragement to meet with youth and young adults of the Uniting Church. I hosted, along with the Assembly Resourcing Unit, a National Young Adult Leaders Conference (NYALC) in January 2019. 120 leaders from across the life of the Uniting Church met in Adelaide to share their faith, their gifts and their hopes for our Church and its future. It was an inspiring time and those young leaders have continued to connect with each other and the Assembly. When

NYALC 2021 was cancelled, because of border restrictions, we went online. Rev Charissa Suli and I hosted four online conversations with young adults.

## **The President's Roundtable**

I have also hosted 'The President's Roundtable' – conversations with young adults in the Uniting Church. The Roundtable includes listening to the voices of Uniting Church youth and young adults around a series of key areas and questions regarding their journey with Christ and their Christian discipleship, their experience and views of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) and what sustains and encourages them in living the Gospel of Christ in their daily lives.

The Roundtable includes a conversation on their views on how the Church might engage in the public space and their hopes for who we are and are becoming as the UCA. The latest Roundtable was held in Sydney with 30 young adults in attendance.

In each of the Roundtables, young people are invited to respond to the following:

- The thing I value most about the Uniting Church is ...
- My best experience of the Uniting Church is ...
- The biggest challenge facing the Uniting Church is ...
- I wish that the Uniting Church ...
- How do we want the Uniting Church to engage in the public space?

**“The Uniting Church believes that young people are the church of today ...**

Some of the responses included the following:

Young people value our hospitable, welcoming church and its intergenerational and multicultural nature. One person noted ‘feeling like I come home when I go to church.’ Another valued ‘being comforted by my church community in times of grief and need.’

They value our Covenant relationship with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC). In the public space, they believe we need to respond to mental health issues experienced by them and their peers. They believe it’s important for the Church to be responding to domestic violence.

They are concerned about racism and the treatment of refugees. They are actively engaged in addressing the impacts of Climate Change and believe

as the Church we need to be actively and urgently responding to this crisis.

Young people affirmed the ways they are able to contribute to the UCA – leadership in local churches in Synod and Assembly. They are concerned about being patronised and dismissed, when they have much to contribute; and believe their viewpoints and insights can bring transformation to the Church. They love connecting with each other online, with others they met at NYALC, National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC), Synod and Presbytery retreats, and National Conference gatherings. They believe it’s important to connect with country, culture and language and they value the wisdom of their elders.

We asked the NYALC Online young leaders, what they have learned during this time of the global pandemic? Some of the responses included:

They are grateful to God for their pastoral networks. They are concerned for people around the world, who have been much more significantly affected by the pandemic, than their experience here in Australia.

**“It was an inspiring time and those young leaders have continued to connect with each other and the Assembly.**

‘It’s been a good opportunity to have family prayers.’ ‘As a family, we’ve been worshipping at home together and have occasionally checked out other services online – that’s been a good opportunity!’

‘I have learned that the church is not a building. The church is not contained to a building. The church is so adaptable, even with people we didn’t expect it to be. Church is about worshipping God, and it is another way of checking in with family and friends.’

If you are a young person in the Uniting Church, we at the Assembly would like to hear from you about your faith journey, your experience of the Uniting Church and your vision for who we are and are becoming as the church participating in God’s mission in the world. Email: [president@nat.uca.org.au](mailto:president@nat.uca.org.au) ■

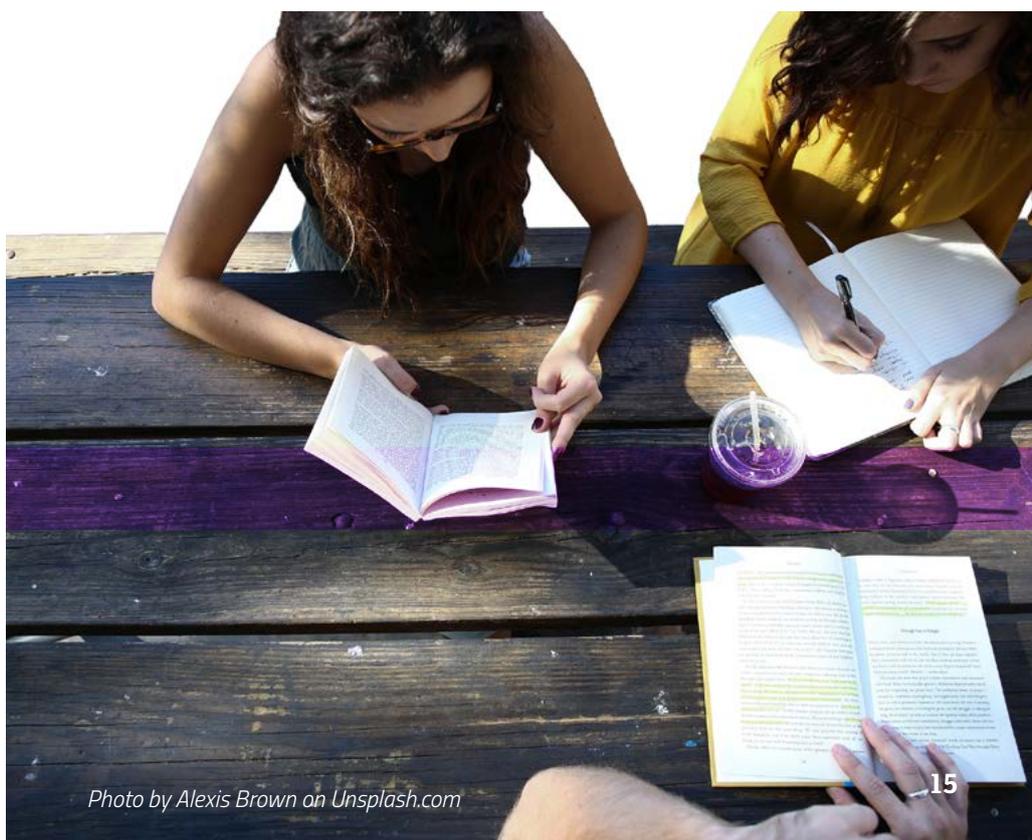


Photo by Alexis Brown on Unsplash.com

# Intergenerational ministry and young people

Melissa Neumann

Intergenerational Discipleship Developer, InterGen Team, Mission Resourcing

*The Church needs young people; How do we attract families? We only have a handful of kids and young people, what do we do with them?*

When we hear these statements and questions sometimes we shudder because churches do not need young people or families. If you're asking some of these questions, perhaps look at the strength of your church and the needs of your community. If young people and families are part of your wider community then consider how to begin building relationships with them and finding out what their needs are and how the church might engage with them. Young people shouldn't be treated as an answer to your church's needs.

If you have children and young people in your congregations, talk with them and their families about why they come to church; who they enjoy connecting with at church; and what would make it easier to invite other families to come to church?

Sure, these may be simplistic responses, but there are no 'quick fixes,' or easy answers to engaging young people in church communities. The above suggestions lean into the importance of relationships (which is really the primary focus of Christians – to Love God and Love others). If anything that 2020 has taught us it is that relationships are key and far more important than programming; programs are the tool that enable relationships.

Intergenerational ministry is defined as being about building and deepening relationships across two or more generations – to this end the key words are 'intergenerational,' 'ministry,' and 'relationships.'

Intergenerational means two or more generations, children do not have to be present to make an intergenerational

community. A community with forty year olds and sixty year olds and eighty year olds can also be considered intergenerational. Does your faith community have different generations?

Ministry can be described as caring, praying, learning, serving, celebrating – these words come from a framework by John Roberto in his book *Generations Together*<sup>1</sup>, about shared activities in the life of the church.

**“ Intergenerational ministry is about relationships and about who we are, not just about what we do.**

So how is your church or faith community caring, praying, learning, serving and celebrating? What does it mean to build and deepen relationships? It is primarily through spending intentional time together, usually involving conversation or shared activities. How can we be more intentional in how two or more generations connect?

Mission Resourcing provides a resource called *Engage Together: More than Worship, More than Sunday*. It contains questions for reflection and action about intergenerational ministry in a community or other context.

A Church Council or ministry leadership team can choose one of the ministry activities, such as serving and can then work through the questions:

- What is currently happening in this area in your church community?
- To what extent is it already intergenerational?
- Are relationships being built or deepened?
- How could the current activity be more intentionally intergenerational?
- What are our next steps?
- Who will do what by when?

Intergenerational ministry is about relationships and about who we are, not just about what we do. It also requires intention. If you are wondering what to do with the few young people in your congregation or you feel like you need young people in your church, then perhaps consider how you are intentionally encouraging relationships to be built and deepened between generations.

As you explore what intergenerational ministry means, you are exploring what living as God's people means – that every person is being encouraged to worship God with their whole life and to grow in faith – no matter their age.





## Intergen Conferences:

May

22

**Invigor8** Children and Youth Ministry Conference (in hubs around SA)

May

25-27

**Children's Spirituality Summit**  
[childrenspiritualitysummit.org/css2021](http://childrenspiritualitysummit.org/css2021)

**InterGenerate** (online from the US)  
[intergenerateconference.com](http://intergenerateconference.com)

July

26-28

**InterGenerate AUS** (Sydney & online)  
[intergenerate.com.au/events](http://intergenerate.com.au/events)

Sept

10-12

**Leaders to Go** (online & hub model)  
[leaderstogo.org.au](http://leaderstogo.org.au)

Contact Melissa Neumann to find out which conference might best suit you and your leaders. For further resourcing and support for your church contact the Intergen team via email at: [intergen@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:intergen@sa.uca.org.au) ■

<sup>1</sup> Amedei, Merhaut and Roberto, *Generations Together: Caring, Praying, Learning, Celebrating, and Serving Faithfully* 2014 LifelongFaith Associates.



# Getting to know UAICC

**Q.** *Tell us a bit about yourself*

**A.** My name is Candice and I am 34 years old. I am happily married with two beautiful children and I have lived in South Australia for 15 years and prior to this I lived in Queensland.

At present I work three days per week as the Finance and Administration Officer for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) which is located within the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (Yarthu-Apinthi) campus at Brooklyn Park.

This year I am studying Certificate IV in Accounting at TAFE SA and I look forward to using the skills I learn from this study in my role with the UAICC.

**Q.**

**A.** *How did you come to your Christian faith?*

It was actually my stepmother who introduced me to the church and God. I attended church with her sporadically as a child and returned as a young adult on my own accord. When I moved to South Australia, my love for God never wavered but my attendance at a church did. I listen to numerous sermons online and the most recent was a

wonderful one from Seeds Uniting Church, Aberfoyle Park. I am currently searching for a congregation where I feel I belong.

**Q.**

*What is your role for the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC)?*

**A.**

I provide clerical and financial support to all SA Congresses. I also support the Chairperson of UAICC in South Australia, Rev Mark Kickett, with administrative duties.

**Q.**

*What drew you to work for the UAICC?*

**A.**

After receiving a request to apply for the position from a TAFE lecturer I had an informal conversation with Mark Kickett and Ian Dempster about the UAICC, what do they represent, and how could I grow in this role and be of service to them? Before the meeting I asked God to help me and guide my heart and tell me if this would be right for me. Needless to say I got my answer. I am very proud to be a part of the UAICC. I also feel honoured that in this position I can contribute to the Covenantal relationship with the Uniting Church in SA.

Working with the UAICC presented the potential for both professional and personal development. Likewise, it is the opportunity to join a community of amazing and talented people, who are passionate about not just seeking God but are contributing to social justice and holistic ministries.

**Q.**

*What are your future aspirations for the UAICC?*

**A.**

To help the continued growth of UAICC in a supportive capacity whilst contributing to the Covenant with the Uniting Church in SA. I would like to showcase who we are, what we can do and what we want to achieve as we move forward. ■

“

**I would like to showcase who we are, what we can do and what we want to achieve as we move forward.**



An excellent day at Nunyara on 9th March for Retired Ministers in SA UCA led by Moderator Bronte Wilson, with Dr Deidre Palmer, President of UCA as speaker. Great to hear from the sponsor Mercer Super Trust with their leadership team. *Source: Facebook - Sue Ellis*



Vermont Uniting Church monthly special service on 7th March was held at the Woodville Uniting Church. Each confederacy (Tovata, Kubuna and Burebasaga) shared with the song. The Kubuna confederacy hosted the service. *Source: Facebook - Adelaide Fijians*



Ageing Well Matters Team at Walkerville Uniting Church received an award from the Walkerville Mayor, Elizabeth Fricker. Left to right: Rhonda Smedley, Mayor Elizabeth Fricker, Carolyn Andrew and Helen Penhall. (Team members Robyn Sellars and Merle Hill were not present.)



During the Wimala Presbytery Meeting held on Saturday 13th March 2021, General Secretary Rev Felicity Amery commissioned those elected to Wimala Presbytery Committees.



The global awareness day 'Sacred Earth, Sacred People' was organised by The Australia Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) and Green Faith Australia on 11th March. Rev Liellie Mc Laughlin, Pilgrim Minister of the Word-Community Connections, organised an event to mark the day with the band Planet Blue playing inspirational songs about caring for our environment. The gathering attracted many people and passers-by to the Pilgrim Uniting Church forecourt.

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 [engagement@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:engagement@sa.uca.org.au). Keep them coming!

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## Easter Campaign

Out of the darkness and despair of Jesus' death and resurrection we are all called to embrace a bright future with the possibility of new beginnings and new opportunities – for all of our communities. As a church we seek to be the streams of life-giving water, bringing new hope to the wilderness.

The 2021 Easter Campaign speaks to resurrection and renewal and features a range of themed postcards, posters and Powerpoint slides and a suite of other resources for congregations to use for free to promote Easter events. These resources are designed so that congregations can amend, print and promote their events themselves.

We encourage you to share your stories of new beginnings and new opportunities by posting your message on social media (i.e. Facebook, Twitter or Instagram) using the hashtags: **#Newbeginnings #Newopportunities** Let us know you have posted by tagging us **@UnitingChurchinSouthAustralia**.

[sa.uca.org.au/easter-2021](https://sa.uca.org.au/easter-2021)



## Centenary of worship beginning at Seacliff

In 2021 Seacliff Uniting Church will celebrate 100 years of continuing worship at its site. The Baptist Church bought the land in 1918, but was not able to establish a continuing community. The Methodist church purchased the land in 1921 (and the Presbyterian Church was established nearby in 1922). In 1976 the Methodist and Presbyterian congregations at Seacliff combined, and in 1977 became Seacliff Uniting Church. In 2021 the church will celebrate 100 years of worship beginning with these two elements of its heritage.

On Saturday 22nd and Sunday 23rd May 2021 former members and friends are invited to note the dates in their diaries.

For more information:

Contact Max Howland

Phone **0414 910 419** or email [max.howland@internode.on.net](mailto:max.howland@internode.on.net)

Visit [www.seacliffuc.org](http://www.seacliffuc.org)

### CLASSIFIED

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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, Crafers SA 5152**.



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## VOLUNTEER LEADERS WANTED

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For 40 years it has been a safe and welcoming place for members of the local community, including many who live with mental illness. We share friendship and skills (art, cooking, healthy living skills and more).

**Volunteers are invited** to contribute their skills to the various programs. Successful applicants will be given the necessary training to take on leadership roles.

If you are interested email [ckcommunityhub@tpg.com.au](mailto:ckcommunityhub@tpg.com.au) or call Port Adelaide Uniting Church on **8240 0200**.

An Information Package is available on request.



More information about CK Community Hub visit [ckcommunityhub.weebly.com](http://ckcommunityhub.weebly.com).

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**Application close date: 28 April 2021**

For further information about this position, please contact [office@dernancourt.ucasa.org.au](mailto:office@dernancourt.ucasa.org.au) or ring **0400 790 438**.



Send your letters to:  
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The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia





# Shaping the Future

## Priorities of the Synod of SA 2021-2025



### Introduction

Rev Felicity Amery  
General Secretary

In February 2021 the annual meeting of the South Australia Synod approved our *Shaping the Future – Strategic Priorities 2021-2025*. The Synod affirmed an understanding that 'The Synod' encompasses people gathering for ministry and mission throughout the state, a Council of the Church and staff who provide resources and support. The Synod embraced a process whereby the whole Church would speak into and find its place in identifying the church's priorities for this next season. You will hear and understand them as we form community, prayer and study scripture together, as we collaboratively discern and shape God's call on your ministry.

Using the colours of South Australia, our twelve (12) Strategic Priorities are offered to you as a wheel, designed to be in your hand, an invitation to play, and intentionally designed to encourage interaction – calling us to explore together what God might be up to in the world.

Central in the wheel and essential to the process is our mission statement – that we might become *an innovative growing church, proclaiming Jesus Christ, empowered by the Spirit to transform God's world.*

2021

Enable excellence in administration

### Guiding Principles

Shaping our response to God's invitation and with the mission statement as our primary goal, the next part of the wheel sets out a series of guiding principles. You may see them as values and each one provides a lens through which all of our priorities pass:

-  Our Covenant with 1st Peoples
-  To be a Safe Church for all people
-  Growth and renewal of the church
-  To be innovative and courageous
-  Discipling
-  Caring for creation
-  Acknowledging there is strength in diversity
-  Stewardship.

### Roles and Responsibilities

The third part of the wheel contains the three primary and regulated roles and responsibilities of the Synod. They are intentionally in a circle, not an ordered list and work interactively and together, and they move:

-  **Promote and encourage the Mission of the Church**  
– assist congregations, presbyteries and other ministries to form authentic, empowered Christians to be the transforming presence of God in the world
-  **Oversight of the provision of Theological Education**  
– helping in the formation of people who are faithfully responding to God's call in their lives
-  **Provide effective supervision of Property and Financial resources**  
– enhancing our assets and stewardship of resources gifted to us for the mission of God in the world.

### Next Steps

The twelve (12) priorities which form the outer circle of the wheel reflect our discernment. They echo the context in which the church is seeking to be present. They articulate points of energy, passion and call that the Synod has named through conversations with congregations, presbyteries, boards and committees, organisations, ministers, pastors and lay leaders.

The Strategic Priorities Working Group has developed an **Action Plan**. It is a template or a 'road-map' to help you document the priorities you and your ministry may be seeking to work and collaborate with the Synod on. The Action Plan can be downloaded at the following link: [sa.uca.org.au/shaping-the-future](http://sa.uca.org.au/shaping-the-future).

Each congregation, committee or ministry team, in your capacity and role as the Synod, are encouraged to identify at least two priorities that fit and enhance your existing goals, and one new priority that would encourage you to be innovative and courageous. Members of the Working Group are available to help you. Please contact us through the contact information included in this publication.

When you have completed your Action Plan, please send it to [engagement@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:engagement@sa.uca.org.au). We will place it on the Synod website and at future Synod meetings there will be the opportunity for people to share their action plans with the wider church.

2023

Theological literacy continuing education

Evangelism, bringing people to faith in Jesus

Strategic footprint

Equip lay people

2022

Ethical living

Identify & develop emerging leaders

Communication

2024

Resource & support Presbyteries

Create local connections

Support ministries on the margins

Understand who we are as UCA

2025



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

