

New Times



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

April-May 2022

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‘For it is the God who said, “Let light shine out of darkness,” who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.’

2 Corinthians (4:6).





Palm Sunday

Halleluia,
Praise God

Good Friday

A time of
darkness

Easter Sunday

Christ has risen

a new day is dawning

As the Easter season approaches, a range of resources have been created to support congregations including:



Worship guides for Palm Sunday,
Good Friday and Easter Sunday

Moderator's video messages

Powerpoint template

Social media graphics.



All resources are available from the Synod website at the following link: <https://sa.uca.org.au/easter>

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Contributing writers: Rev Sue Ellis and Rev Cheryl Wilson.



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Cover details:

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Editor: Bridget Ransome

Advertising: Engagement Team

Design: Henry Nguyen

Print: Graphic Print Group

For editorial enquiries:

Phone: (08) 8236 4249

Email: engagement@sa.uca.org.au

Mail: The Editor, New Times

GPO Box 2145

Adelaide SA 5001

For advertising bookings:

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The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

Synod of South Australia

Level 2, 212 Pirie St, Adelaide

Phone: (08) 8236 4200

Fax: (08) 8236 4201

Country callers: 1300 766 956



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From the Editor

This morning as I was getting ready for work, I woke up to no hot water! I was annoyed and having a cold shower first thing certainly wakes you up that's for sure!

I grumbled to one of my son's and he replied, 'Mum, do you really want this to set the tone of your day?' Out of the mouths of babes it seems, it is so easy to let the small things get on top of us and eventually when the small things stack up ... well, let's just say you don't want to be around me and my Irish temper at that point in time!

I often say to my sons 'That's a first world problem,' like when the broadband is not fast enough for them etc. and here I was having to eat my own words.

When I look at the last few years and what the world has had to contend with, the weariness and impacts of COVID and now the war in Ukraine with a huge loss of life and displacement of millions, it kind of puts everything into perspective.

One moment young people in Ukraine were probably having coffee catch-ups with their friends just as my own sons do, and the next they were having to take up arms to defend their country – the loss of innocence and lives, coupled with absolute bewilderment must be all encompassing.

As Easter approaches, may we take time out to pray that we move from the darkness of the past few years, and personally I want to pray that as human beings we don't continue to make the mistakes of the past. May we turn our hearts and souls towards acceptance of each other, regardless of culture, skin colour, creed and whatever creates difference and separation. In the words of Rev Jesse Size in this issue may we, 'Wage peace with one another.'

(I might add in a small prayer for hot water – just saying!)

Bridget Ransome
Executive Officer Engagement



Time does not stand still. God does not stand still. We are called not to stand still, but to join with God on the journey, toward the promised goal, looking towards a time when we will live together in peace, all creation reconciled, one in Christ.

Our world is constantly changing. Night becomes day and summer turns into autumn. Our Covid rules have been modified (again) and our state election is over. In the church we are in the season of Lent: a time of reflection and preparation for Easter, as we consider Jesus' journey towards the cross and anticipate his resurrection.

Some of us remember the formation of the Uniting Church back in 1977. When we compare that time with the present, we realise much in society and in the church has changed significantly. We also recognise that God has been with us the whole while, and continues to lead us on our pilgrim journey as the Uniting Church – and what a journey we have been on!

In the last couple of years, change has happened even more rapidly. The pandemic has altered how we go about our lives; how we do things; and how we relate to each other. We are much more conscious about how disease is spread and ways to minimise it happening. We can see the effects of climate change and many of us are endeavouring to slow the rate of global warming. We have kept up with the technological changes and some of us have become used to Zoom and using smart phones to sign in. We have perhaps become more aware of helping each other through struggles and isolation.

Things have changed in our church also. When the Uniting Church was inaugurated, the church was still central to society, ethically, socially and politically. Since then the influence of the church in society has changed, attendance has declined and many congregations are now struggling to maintain ministry and property.

Congregations and other groups within the life of the church are discovering new ways of being church; new ways of conducting worship; new ways of relating to each other; new ways of reaching out to those in need; and new ways of being a presence in the community, both physically and online.

The seventeen congregations and faith communities on the Yorke Peninsula have formed a Parish Mission. Their aim is to work together to be an effective missional church in their local communities in a new way by drawing on each other's wisdom and seeking God's guidance together. The team in the Mission Resourcing ministry centre is engaging with congregational leaders so that together they may find innovative ways to engage in mission and ministry with local communities. There are exciting new possibilities emerging as they discern the way forward together.

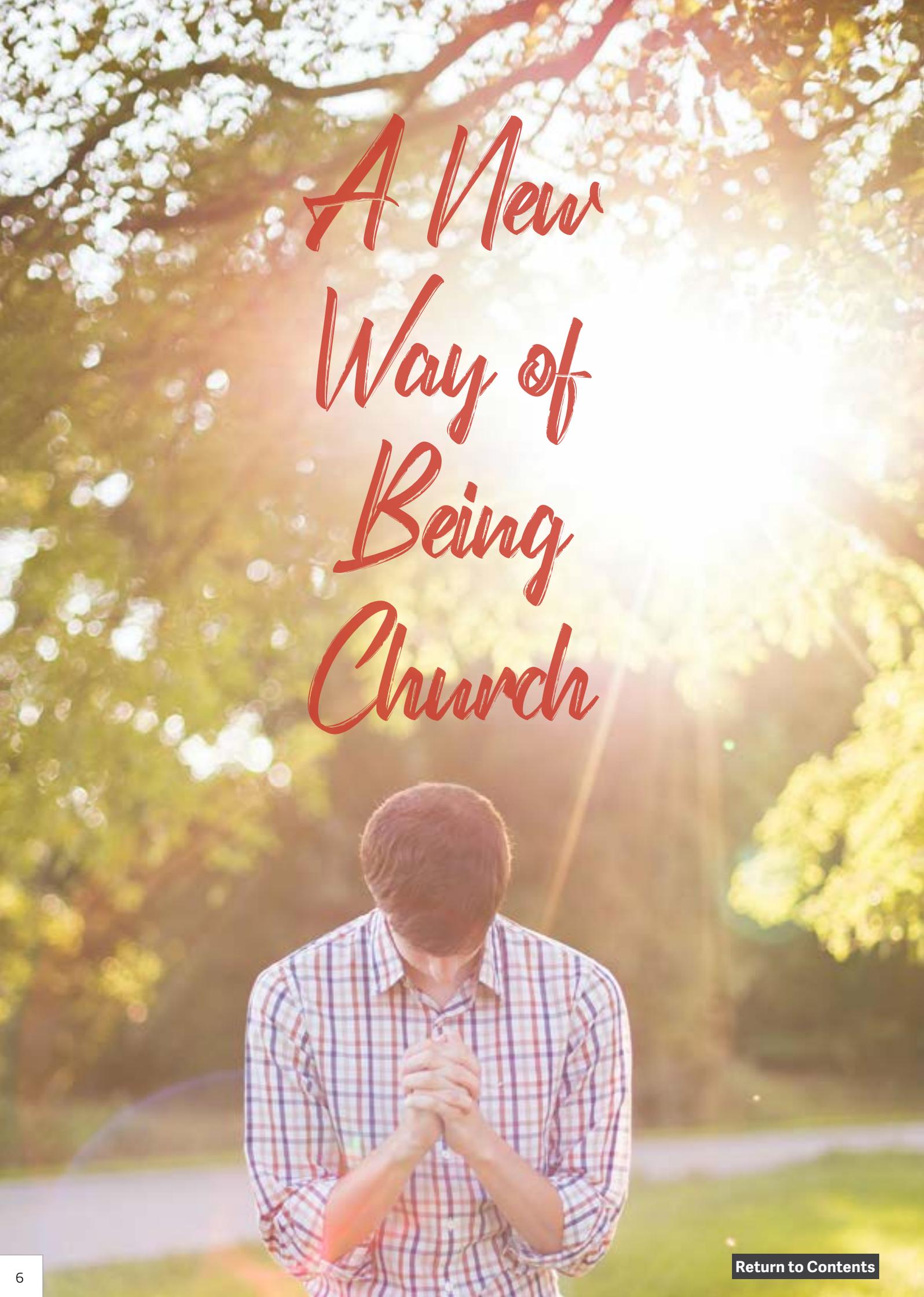
It is encouraging to see an influx of new students at Uniting College; over 20% more than last year. These students are there for both short and long courses, to broaden their knowledge and gain a greater understanding of what it means to walk the way of Jesus Christ in our world today.

Two thousand years ago, Jesus led his disciples and many more into a new way of being church, and a new way of living. As we recall and live out his teaching, and the significance of his death on the cross and his resurrection, we know of the hope this brings. We know that God is yet to do more things amongst us and within us.

Time does not stand still. God does not stand still. We are called not to stand still, but to join with God on the journey, toward the promised goal, looking towards a time when we will live together in peace, all creation reconciled, one in Christ. This brings us hope, and an assurance of who we are, and who we can be, redeemed in Christ.

Blessings,

Bronte Wilson, Moderator

A man with short brown hair, wearing a red and white plaid shirt, is shown from the chest up, facing away from the camera with his hands clasped in prayer. He is standing in a park-like setting with lush green trees and a bright sun in the background, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects. The text 'A New Way of Being Church' is overlaid in a red, cursive font on the upper right portion of the image.

A New Way of Being Church

Commissioning of UCFAMS President

by Rev Sue Ellis



“

Let us lift up seniors' ministry in the next two years and create new ways of connecting so that the good works that God has already planned for us to be part of, may be accomplished (Romans 8: 28).

After a couple of false starts due to COVID restrictions Rev Sue Ellis was commissioned as the President of Uniting Church Fellowship and Mission Support (UCFAMS) at Burnside City Uniting Church on the 20th February, 2022. Fifty-five people attended including family, friends and the UCFAMS team as they gathered to show their support.

Moderator Bronte Wilson shared the word about how we connect with each other and with the wider community. The work of UCFAMS is all about the connections that we have in the community and churches which leads to the mission that God has for us all.

Sue was commissioned by Rev Mark Schultz, Team Leader, Mission Resourcing. The UCFAMS Seniors Ministry is part of Mission Resourcing alongside the Children's Ministry, Youth and Young Adults, Covenanting, International Mission, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) Ministry and Justice portfolios.

After she was commissioned Sue encouraged us, with the words of her theme 'Together we can!'

Together we can all stay well and keep each other well as our fellowship and mission and other connection groups begin their life again after the summer break. Let this be our motto for 2022. Some of the mission that we will be encouraging is in rural areas, for example, Frontier Services, chaplaincies within the Uniting Church in South Australia, Packing Day for donations into Northern Australia and Alice Springs and UnitingWorld.

The Uniting Church has many senior members. Together we can connect with current groups and create new seniors' ministry groups for short-term connections that feed into congregational activities and the President's projects for 2022.

Let us lift up seniors' ministry in the next two years and create new ways of connecting so that the good works that God has already planned for us to be part of, may be accomplished (Romans 8: 28).

It was a great afternoon of celebration as we begin this journey with Sue.

Both our witness and our gift

by Rev Jesse Size

I remember the first time the Uniting Church really caught my attention. We had recently moved to Port Augusta and I remember reading an ABC news article¹ about how members of the 13th Assembly had chosen to interrupt normal programming by walking to Parliament House in a public act of worship, solidarity and lament.

The Assembly had been listening to the stories of harm and exclusion caused by the Federal Government's 'Stronger Futures' legislation. Andrew Dutney wrote about how the First Peoples are not them, they are us. He spoke about the improbable, uncomfortable, but wonderful recognition that we are one body in Christ and that if one member suffers, we suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:26).



The accompanying photograph was taken after Chelsea's ordination service. It features Rev Olly Ponsonby (Deacon), Rev Chelsea Size (Deacon), Mandy Harvey (Deacon candidate) and Rob Cartridge (Deacon candidate).

Chelsea and I would have a wonderful opportunity to walk alongside and learn from First Peoples in Port Augusta. Members of the Port Augusta Uniting Aboriginal Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) church would become family to us over time. Our kids grew up in a sea of aunties, uncles, poppas and nannas. Our Congress family would model for us ways of walking gently on the land. They would show us ways of remembering, ways of healing, and ways of honouring deep bonds of togetherness in community.

We would also feel the ache of broken relationships between First and Second People's, between hosts and guests. Our Revised Preamble to the Constitution is honest about how Second Peoples have often failed to be good guests while also calling us into the types of relationships that ultimately reflect the vision of the *Basis of Union*.

This vision of reconciliation and renewal for the whole creation has always inspired me and emboldened me. An embodiment of that from further afield is the Corrymeela community, a peace and reconciliation organisation in Northern Ireland. Corrymeela literally means, 'the place of the lumpy crossing.'

Peace and reconciliation is a bumpy, uncomfortable road. We are called to wage peace with another. Togetherness in community is always hard won because we are different and because we are human, but it is also possible because we are in Christ and because we are ultimately one body. When we talk about reconciliation and renewal we're talking about destiny together and we're also pointing to the ultimate truth of our profoundly interconnected lives. We are, as Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev Mpho Tutu wrote, 'sisters and brothers, whether we like or not.'²

“... the work of making the church a safe place for all people is more than compliance, more than meeting our duty of care, it is about living out Jesus' vision of the coming reign of God.”

I know many in the Uniting Church feel tired from the hard conversations we've had together along the way. The Uniting Church is one of those lumpy crossing places. I can understand how this could easily become a problem story but maybe in other ways it's a hopeful story that captures something of our real charisma and vocation together.

What if renewal is what happens on the other side of reconciliation? Perhaps before us, if we're brave enough and trust Christ to guide us, is the opportunity to really learn the ways of reconciliation and renewal, 'the things that make for peace' (Luke 19:42). In a world that includes much division and struggle perhaps this shall increasingly become both our witness and our gift to the world.

¹ <https://www.abc.net.au/religion/the-first-peoples-are-us-why-the-uniting-church-opposes-stronger/10100398>

² Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Rev Mpho Tutu, *The Book of Forgiving: The Fourfold Path for Healing Ourselves and Our World* (William Collins, 2014), p. 19.

Ordination of Rev Chelsea Size (Deacon)

In late November, 2021, Rev Chelsea Size was ordained as a Deacon in the Uniting Church. The service, coordinated through the Wimala Presbytery, was held at the Para Hills Community Hub, which was appropriate for her call to minister as a deacon to those in the community.

Chelsea believes that the marginal communities she and her husband Jesse have been involved with, have formed them, just as much as the theological formation at Uniting College. Being in ministry with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Church in Port Augusta and then Training and Formation Coordinator with United Aboriginal and Island Christian Congress (UAICC) in South Australia has left a lasting impact.

What Chelsea has found is that a young female ordained person is a surprise for many. She has always felt a responsibility to represent her faith community positively, but this is now greater.

The ordination means that her 'call is affirmed back' and that her life proclaims that she is 'caught up in a different narrative and story.' People now see her through another lens, but this carries an opportunity for enriching conversations about spirituality and people's experience of church. She has found that being a deacon invites 'a very specific kind of presence: non-anxious, non-defensive, compassionate and curious.'



We have to do something

by Rev Ruthmary Bond

As a church we are feeling the pressure to do something to help keep the church going. Why?

Because the Church is not what it used to be. Financially it can't survive. We know we have something good but others around us don't seem to understand that! Whatever the thoughts behind the need to do something we must acknowledge that it is God's church. Does that give us permission to do nothing after all? Of course not, if Paul had not gone to the gentile world how would they have heard?

We are called to bring change whether we are lay or ordained, young or old, male or female. As ministers, as leaders, as congregational members this is our calling. Although it can seem daunting it is also exciting because if we look around us we see that God is already at work and all we have to do is join in. We are not alone, all over the world God is moving we see this in the Fresh Expressions of Church Movement. Even in South Australia we have churches that have been trying new things for many years.

When something is initiated it is hoped that it will grow and be successful, not as the world would define 'success' but for the Kingdom of God. Success for us means seeing people connecting with a loving God as seen in Jesus, being a part of community, and living life together as disciples and active followers of Jesus.



What do we as a church do, where do we go from here, and what should the church look like in the future?

However, it is vital to look at key issues, such as: What do we as a church do, where do we go from here, and what should the church look like in the future? The answer in each situation will be different based on the context of where we live or are exploring.

The future needs us to love those who are around us, to relate to those in our community so that we know their needs, then be willing to create a space that opens the opportunity for people to interact with each other and the living God as seen as the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

So let's rejoice in that and spark off each other. Let us spark off the stories in history where revival has happened and let us spark off the early church as we read the Bible. This is part of what will sustain us as we make changes and will help us as we re-imagine the church.

Synod Resourcing Expo Update



Between September and November 2021, the Synod held six expo events throughout South Australia.

These events were designed to engage and to act as a catalyst for the church to participate in important discussions both from within and beyond the church in South Australia. Included in the format of each expo was a host of workshops and information that will ultimately assist us all to take another step in pursuing God's plans for the church. In the regional areas, time was taken to learn more from each other, sharing stories of challenge and hope.

The theme of the expos was 'Chasing the wind of the Spirit', which speaks to God's activity already occurring around us and the Spirit calling us to follow to where God's mission is taking the church; making disciples to be part of God's mission in congregations and through connections with local communities. To quote Paul Dearborn, 'It's not the church of

God that has a mission, it is the God of Mission who has a church.'

All expos were free to attend and open to church groups and individuals who may or may not be regularly involved in church. The aim was to connect people while at the same time resourcing them in areas of interest and passion. This was a milestone event for the Synod and not just another set of conferences or meetings. The church was never supposed to be just for Sundays, it is a pursuit of a higher purpose that connects with our world, an opportunity to identify and partner in God's mission locally.

For those unable to attend an expo, we invite you to experience Rev Canon Dave Male's keynote presentation which can now be viewed at the following link:

<https://sa.uca.org.au/synod-expo>

A New Church era

by Tim Littleford

Missiles and tanks in Ukraine. COVID, still COVID. We live in globally turbulent times and it's tough to make sense of it all. What change will this mean for the world? Will the dust ever settle?

It's a turbulent time for the Uniting Church as well. We are grappling with our numerical decline, a shortage of ministers, the viability of our buildings, our place in society, our structures and identity, and the future of our denomination.

It's becoming increasingly apparent that things are not going back to how they were before.

Mark Sayers in his first Rebuilders podcast on what's happening in Ukraine remarked: 'Two accelerations (COVID and Russia's invasion of Ukraine) in two years that have honestly brought fifty years' worth of change ... an era has ended, or is ending, and a new era is beginning.'¹

He is speaking about global culture. But I would strongly argue it's the same for the Uniting Church in Australia, and indeed the whole church in the west. An era is ending, and we are in the beginning of a new era.

No longer can we rely on the generations coming up behind us. No longer can we rely on a cultural or habitual Christianity to fill our pews and our offerings. No longer can we rely on our historic privileged positions culturally and institutionally in society. No longer can we do things the way we have always done them.

It's a new church era and a new era brings new opportunities, new edges, a renewed hope.

With the burning up of cultural Christianity in the west,² all that will remain is the white-hot embers of resilient disciples of Jesus Christ – this is an opportunity.

With the decline of our denomination and people power, we have a mandate to take courageous risks, with any surplus resources and buildings we have, toward a Church that has a future – this is an opportunity.

With the uncertainty and fear of death and war that grapples our communities, we have the chance to embody and declare the hope of the bodily Resurrection of Jesus. That sin, death and fear do not have the last word – this is an opportunity.

This new era, the future of the church, is unmapped territory. What does the Uniting Church in South Australia need to have a healthy, vibrant, missional future?

I don't know. And I think you probably don't either and maybe that's okay. Maybe we need to free ourselves from the burden of having to know all the answers.

In the book 'Canoeing the Mountains,' Tod Bolsinger uses the central metaphor of Lewis and Clark's (think Australia's Burke and Wills) exploration of the unmapped territory in America by Europeans and I think it is really helpful for us.

The long-held European belief was there was a water route that connected the Missouri River to the Pacific Ocean. A water route to connect the East to the West. But no European had ever found it. When Lewis and Clark canoed to the end of the Missouri River, they didn't find the ocean – stretching as far as the eye could see was the Rocky Mountains.

How do you canoe over the Rocky Mountains? You don't.

'If you want to continue forward, you change. You adapt. Meriwether Lewis looked at the miles and miles of snow-covered peaks and knew that to continue his journey he would have to change his entire approach. The same is true for all who are called to lead beyond the boundaries of what is known. We go through a personal transformation of identity and mission intention. We go from being river rats to mountain climbers. We keep on course with the same goal, but change absolutely everything required to make it through this uncharted territory. We ditch the canoes, ask for help, find horses and cross the mountains. And when the time comes, we make new boats out of burnt trees. You let go, you learn as you go and you keep going, no matter what.'³

What does this new era of the church need? Not to keep trying to paddle over mountains. Not a new mission. Not a new vision. Not a new strategic plan. Not a new program. Not a new resource. Not a new event.

“This new era
unmapped territory
Church in South Australia
healthy, vibrant, missional future?”

This is unmapped territory. We don't need answers, we need someone with greater insight and knowledge who can lead the way. We need a guide. We need God.

Not just God in principle, or God by committee or God in our neat theological frameworks or categories. We need the real God who is really there.

The God who is not silent.

We need a renewed hunger for the voice of God in our lives. To lead us. To lead the church.

We are stepping outside the boundaries of what we know. Without loving union with, and single-minded trust in, the leading of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, how can we muster the courage to let go? How can we muster the endurance to keep going? How can we muster the humility to say 'we need help?' How can we muster the sacrificial love to adapt and change?

The hard truth is that we can't – without God. We must fall at the feet of Jesus and ask Him to guide us.

Every renewal movement in history has begun with a personal renewal in the hearts of a few.⁴

What if you and I, in the face of all this turbulence and uncertainty, chose not to turn our faces to despair or apathy, but to our King Jesus, to let him renew, reshape, renovate our own heart? What if we chose to see the difficulty of this moment as a God-opportunity?

What if, faced with mountains, and no map, we turned to Jesus and said 'where do we go from here?'

Then it wouldn't matter what the new era throws at us. We wouldn't just survive, we would thrive.

Bolsinger, Tod (2018). *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. InterVarsity Press.

Sayers, Mark (2019). *Reappearing Church: The Hope for Renewal in the Rise of Our Post-Christian Culture*. Moody Publishers.

1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dzejafbr3uA>

2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=reTrkphAdcw>

3: (Bolsinger 2018, 34)

4: (Sayers 2019)

...a, the future of the church, is
territory. What does the Uniting
Youth Australia need to have a
vibrant, missional future?



Fresh Expressions require fresh voices

by Rev Dr Christy Capper

“

Sometimes it is helpful to get a ‘fresh take’ on an old idea. Getting a fresh perspective or looking at something from a different point of view can help us understand an idea better and understand ourselves better.

For much of the past 2000 years of Christian theology, perspective has been pretty limited. Early Christian theologians were generally situated around the Mediterranean and lived in the Roman Empire. As time went on, this moved into the Orthodox traditions in the East and the Western, Catholic (and later Protestant) traditions in the West. But much of the theology was still dominated by European attitudes and understandings. Viewpoints from anyone other than a European man were scarce. Colonialism expanded this somewhat, but theology was still the domain of white men.

In the 20th century, this started to change as women, people of colour and those in the Global South and Asia fought their

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way into theological colleges. And I say they fought for a reason. Entering these places of learning was not simple. There are stories of significant theologians who refused to engage with the women in their classes into the 1970s. Many theological colleges, especially in the Western world, are still dominated by the white and often male. This can result in these places being, consciously or unconsciously, less welcoming of the presence and ideas of those who sit outside this group.

But the exciting thing is what began to happen and what continues to happen when people who do not fit into this white, masculine mould begin to do theology. We start to see things from a different point of view. We begin to ask questions about things that we assumed were universal simply because they reflected the experience of a tiny segment of a global society. When we start to hear from the oppressed, we find the focus on justice within the Scriptures and Christian tradition. When we hear from women, we learn about experiences and see Scripture passages in new ways (how might Bathsheba have described her experience with King David had she been given a voice?).

Fresh expressions and fresh perspectives can be challenging. They make us take a second look at what we assumed was the right direction. They force us to learn, expand our understanding, and empathise with others. And so, because this can be scary, we like to give these groups labels. We have 'theology,' and then we have subcategories: 'Feminist theology,' 'Womanist theology,' 'Liberation Theology,' 'Asian theology,' 'Pacific Theology,' 'Black theology,' 'Queer theology,' 'First Peoples theology' and the list goes on. Those who do not fit into the old mould of 'theologian' have their theology labelled so that we don't have to engage in it. So that we

can see it as 'other' or write it off as a sub-category and not need to deal with it, we can stay comfortable with our ideas and let the perspectives we have inherited from one group of people remain unchallenged.

In studying theology, in following Jesus, we commit to lives of challenge.

Just as Jesus challenged the religious leaders of the day; just as the disciples challenged the leaders in the temple; just as Paul challenged the disciples with the inclusion of and advocacy for Gentiles; so these theologians, in their writing of theology, challenge us.

Without these fresh voices, our practices, our understandings can become stale. If we genuinely desire fresh expression in the church and a fresh missional voice in our communities, we must ask ourselves whose voices we are not hearing. We must read and learn from those who challenge us and empathise with new perspectives and ideas.

Theological education should not simply reinforce our beliefs but challenge them. It should help us to see our views in the broad and deep world of Christianity so that we know not only what we believe but understand and empathise with the beliefs and viewpoints of our siblings in Christ.

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We reflected on the miracle of new life which springs forth from a tiny seed buried in the ground, and were reminded that the seed needs a time of darkness in order to form and grow. We considered times in our lives when we may have buried an idea, a practice or an attitude, in order for something new to grow and take root. We were invited to plant a seed in a pot, praying that God's Spirit to nourish and sustain us through times of darkness, brings forth new growth and new opportunities

The Season of Lent

by Rev Cheryl Wilson

The season of Lent invites us into a time of self-examination and reflection as we seek to deepen our relationship with God. Ascot Community Uniting Church marked the beginning of Lent by setting up the worship space with prayer stations and activities. People were invited to spend time in prayer, moving at their own pace around the space.

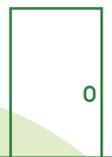
We were encouraged to consider these questions:

- How do you want to grow spiritually during these next weeks of Lent?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- How can you choose to grow closer in your relationship with God over the next forty days?

At the beginning of Lent, one Ash Wednesday tradition is to be anointed with ashes in the shape of a cross. The ashes remind us of our mortality, with a sense of humility and repentance. We were invited to reflect on things we might be holding back from God, asking God to help us surrender everything. We did not use ashes, but simply made the sign of a cross on our forehead or arm, receiving God's love and forgiveness.



Knowing that God forgives us, we thought about who we might need to forgive, named that person and released a rose petal into the water, watching it gently float. We prayed for God to bless that person, and ourselves.



In the midst of troubles in our lives, and our world, we were encouraged to shelter in God's faithfulness and love, knowing that God is always with us, giving us strength. We wrote prayers for our world on sticky notes and stuck them onto a window, joining our prayers with those of others.

Sitting in front of a door, just ajar, we thought about what might lie behind it for us, and where Jesus might be calling us to follow next, as we prayed to follow his path for us.

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We prayed a Prayer of Lament by writing, drawing, or scribbling in black pencils to express our struggles and griefs. We then screwed up our paper and threw it into the rubbish bin, trusting that God has heard our pain.



After reading the story of Jesus being tempted in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1-11) we were encouraged to reflect on the temptations facing us today. We wrote them in the sand, and then smoothed the sand over as we asked for forgiveness.



The forty-day season of Lent is an opportunity to disrupt our everyday routines by living more simply, taking up a spiritual discipline or being more intentional about our lives and habits. We were given some information about the UnitingWorld's 'Lent Event,' which is forty days of living more simply, learning from our global neighbours and choosing to make a difference in our own lives and the lives of others. Envelopes were available to make a donation, and a card to remind us of forty practical things we could do to be part of a movement to end poverty and injustice in our world.



As we lit a tea candle and reflected on the light shining in a mirror, we considered how we experience God's glory and love shining in our lives, and how we might shine the light of God's glory and love to those around us.



After reading Matthew 11:28-30 and being reminded that Christ bears our heavy loads, we reflected on the burdens we each carry, and in prayer we placed a stone at the foot of the cross in the worship space, asking God to carry those burdens with us.

We reflected on the significance of Communion and each received the bread and juice, celebrating Christ's death and resurrection and its meaning in our lives, as we follow him.



Quiet music played throughout, contributing to the gentle atmosphere of prayer and reflection.

The church was open all afternoon and evening, so people could come and go as they wished. Some came after they had finished work, and others brought family members to spend some time in quiet reflection. This was a lovely way to begin Lent and to inspire us to continue to set aside time for prayerful reflection throughout the season, anticipating the celebration of Easter which is to come.

Effective Living Centre (ELC) – Wilks Oration – Stan Grant



Recently over 350 people gathered in Concordia College's auditorium to hear guest speaker Stan Grant, international journalist, writer and occasional host of the ABC's Q&A program, present the Effective Living Centre's postponed 2021 Wilks Oration.

Stan's insightful and incisive analysis of world affairs viewed through the eyes of The Politics of Identity was inspirational. With the war in Ukraine having broken out the previous day, Stan gave his thoughts on the role of identity in Putin's actions, also touching on related issues in the United States and China. He then brought the subject matter closer to home and provided a rational, yet very personal perspective on Australia's inability to have moved forward with Indigenous reconciliation.

Stan generously gave further time to questions from the audience and signed copies of his books after the presentation.

Michael McClaren from Christ Church and the Effective Living Centre was the very competent Master of Ceremonies. Kaurna Elder Trevor O'Brien, gave the welcome to country and Vonda Last, a Ngaanyatjara performer, sang two beautiful songs accompanying herself on the piano. Reverend Sean Gilbert provided the background to the Wilks Oration, held in honour of Graham Wilks, one of the founders of the Effective Living Centre, and Dr Deidre Palmer introduced Stan. It was a truly amazing evening.



God of love and peace,

We grieve the loss of life and the continued fighting in Ukraine.

Jesus calls us to work for peace and understanding, tolerance and compassion.

We see the suffering and the pain of your people. We see the anguish in their faces and the despair in their eyes, and we feel so helpless.

Although we are so far away, we see that as your people we wish to support those working for peace. Grant us wisdom O God, to know how to make a difference, to support those in need, and to influence those escalating the conflict.

We pray that those who possess the power to make decisions will hear your voice and act to save lives and make peace possible.

While the conflict continues, we pray for those working with refugees, both in Ukraine and in surrounding countries. May they gain strength in the knowledge they are not acting alone. May they feel your presence and compassion as they show your comfort to people who have lost so much.

As your church in this place, may we know what to say and do, as we support and encourage from afar. In the name of the Christ who experienced deadly conflict and suffering, we pray. Amen.

Moderator Bronte Wilson

About Playgroups

A playgroup, hosted at Hope's Café since February 2021, was initiated to create support and to create 'family' for refugees with local families in the neighbourhood. It was graciously funded by the Mordialta Trust Fund, enabling two leadership positions for folk who were refugees when arriving in Australia.

Great interactions within a multicultural setting, welcoming many languages, singing songs and playing with word-comparisons delighted all. Concepts like hope, play, create, love, joy and compassion in Kaurna, Maori, German, Congolese, Spanish, Dari, Serbian and Chinese delighted and intrigued children and caregivers.

It was great to see how all bonded in strong relationships across language, tradition and culture, despite difficult COVID times, when the alternative would have been isolation and alienation.



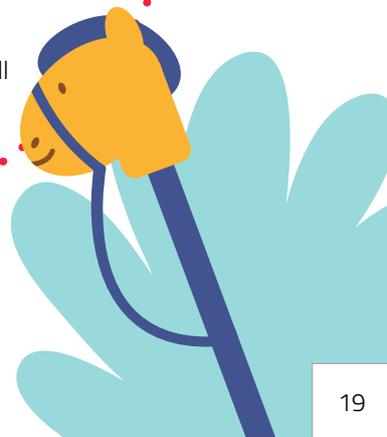
MOMENTS OF GRACE:

One of the grand-ma's had to return to her home-country and announced during tears of joy and sadness that she would be starting a playgroup in Columbia for poor people.

Another, when the grant-monies for our playgroup ran out a local UCA church overheard and they were offered payment for a whole month to help work out how they would continue in the future – what a gesture!

Significantly this gift acted as a very positive symbol for this group as those at playgroup were astounded that a church would deem them 'worthwhile'. This meant so much for their confidence and sense of worth.

We will continue to babble in many languages, laugh when we struggle to overcome messages lost in translation and continue to enjoy the good-will of all who work towards welcoming, belonging and validation.





Australian Women Preach

The Australian Women Preach podcast is celebrating one year of raising the voices of Australian Christian women preaching the Gospel.

An initiative of Women and the Australian Church (WATAC) and the Grail in Australia, the podcast grew out of a desire to share the gifts and insights of diverse women within the church in Australia.

‘Since our first episode we have had 52 women preachers from across different denominations, one every week preaching on the Gospel for the coming Sunday. Each preacher has brought their own experiences, each has shared from their heart and we’re very excited that all those women have had that opportunity,’ said Dr Tracy McEwan the vice-president of the WATAC and part of the Australian Women Preach organisation.

A special anniversary podcast episode was released on March 7th, 2022 and features a conversation with Tracy and four women who have preached on the podcast: Jacqui Remond, Di Langham, Rev Radhika Sukhuma White and Professor Mary Coloe.

Further information is available at the following website:
<https://australianwomenpreach.com.au>.

Eulogy

Mavis Ellis (nee Tayler) 14th September 1933 – 12th February 2022.

Mavis was born in 1933 and raised at Tarlee, where her family owned the local store. She was baptised and confirmed at the Tarlee Methodist Church. The early death of her mother from a stroke, caused her to leave Riverton High School as a teenager, and to care for her mother and help in the family shop.

After leaving home, Mavis attended Maughan Church and gained a receptionist position on the switchboard at the Adelaide Central Mission. It was at Maughan Church in 1966, that she met and married her husband of twenty years, Colin. Her second cousin, was the late Rev Bernie Clarke, whose part-time social work position at Lentara Girl’s home was offered to Mavis.

Her work focussed on reconnecting children and empowering families to care for their

children. She also helped older children find employment. At Lentara reunion days, Mavis was always affirmed by former children in her care as they gathered around her.



She continued as a volunteer to the Central Mission Office and was an early voice answering calls to Lifeline, when the Mission established that service. She became part of the team that formed the Adelaide United Credit Union in 1971 and was appointed as Secretary, and later became full-time Secretary Manager, as the credit union flourished. It now exists as the People’s Credit Union.

Mavis saw missional work as helping the poor in South Australia and making good use of her special ‘gift with numbers.’

She and Colin attended the Seaton Uniting Church and she remained an active Fellowship member at Maughan and Seaton churches, after Colin’s death. Always active in Adult Fellowship and Mission Support, she was

elected to the National Fellowship Committee as International Officer in 2002.

Mavis travelled to the South Pacific Fellowship conference in Fiji and to the World Methodist Federation conference at Rio de Janeiro, representing Australia, and staying with Ex-President Deidre Palmer in Dallas, Texas. Later she moved to West Lakes Shore where she was a member of the West Lakes Church.

A keen supporter of the Red Dove Cafe and serving a term as Treasurer, Mavis regularly appeared on Peter Goers *ABC Evening Show*. On hearing of her death Peter described her as ‘a good and ideal Christian woman: tough and soft. She helped many people.’

Mavis viewed Fellowship and Mission as a means by which lay people are given a wonderful opportunity to share their gifts from God, locally and regionally. She describes her working life as ‘interesting’ and believed God had guided her in all her endeavours. Her funeral was held at Tarlee Uniting Church on 1st March, 2022.

Rev Sue Ellis
President, Uniting Church Fellowship & Ministry Support (UCFAMS)



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Placements News

Placements finalised as at 7th March 2022

Conrad Tickner (MOP) to Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations (0.7) from 1 January 2022.

Vacant placements

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

PROFILES AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

Naracoorte UC
Salisbury UC

Presbytery of Southern SA

Adare UC
Glengowrie UC (0.5) (Vacant 2023)
Noarlunga UC (0.8)
Pilgrim UC, Adelaide (2 full time placements)

- Minister - Mission, Community Engagement and Pastoral Care
 - Minister of the Word - Ministry Team Coordinator
- Expressions of interest to pgardner@sa.uca.org.au

Wimala Presbytery

Croydon Park UC (0.3)
Lefevre UC (0.4)
Modbury (0.5)
Para Vista (0.3)
Western Link (0.5)

Placements Across Two Presbyteries

-

PROFILES NOT YET AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

Bordertown Parish

Wimala Presbytery

Berri UC / Barmera UC
Port Augusta UAICC

Placements Across Two Presbyteries

County Jervois (Generate and Wimala)

For more information about placements, please visit sa.uca.org.au

Deadline for the June/July 2022 edition:

Friday, 13th May 2022

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