



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

New Times

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Synod of South Australia

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Refocusing on Joy



From the Moderator

When I once joked that my election as Moderator suggested the church needed ‘a good laugh’, I did not realise how close to the truth that might be. However, it’s not so much about laughter, rather about joy. In the wake of pandemic, fires, floods, and global conflict, I continue to believe that our time calls for a renewed and continual focus on **joy**.

At my Installation, I introduced the theme of being ‘Joyfully Serious and Seriously Joyful – living in Christ’. This reflects a deep conviction that joy is not trivial optimism, but a mark of Christian faith. Theologians remind us that Christianity is uniquely a religion of joy (Jurgen Moltmann); that joy is the infallible sign of God’s presence (Teilhard de Chardin), an act of resistance against despair (Willie James Jennings), and the very beginning of mission (Lesslie Newbigin).

Yet too often we treat joy as though it is a practice to be developed or an occasional notion for celebratory occasions. In essence, we risk reducing joy to seasonal moments like Christmas and Easter, rather than embracing it as a daily reality of life in Jesus Christ.

Biblically, joy is not rooted in fleeting experience but in abiding relationship with Jesus (John 15:1–11). It is resilient, honest, and deeply integrated with lament and struggle. True joy is not about trying ‘cheer ourselves or others up’ but about living faithfully in God’s love, even in the midst of suffering.

In a fractured world, joy becomes countercultural. It is a practice of resistance and hope, a witness that resurrection is stronger than despair. As Pope Francis reminded us, joy adapts and endures – even as a flicker of light born of God’s infinite love.

My prayer is that as a church we will continue to embody this joy – serious and deep, yet radiant and contagious – as we live, abide, and serve in Christ.

Peter

Rev Peter Morel
Moderator

An explosion of Joy

From the General Secretary



In late 2022, after a couple of key members of the Mission Resourcing Team had moved on to new roles, the Ministry and Leadership Development Board (MLDB) decided to undertake a review of missional needs and opportunities in the Synod of SA before filling the roles.

This review was undertaken by AngelWings, and led by Steve, Kayli and Lynne Taylor. They found that many congregations and leaders were reporting feeling tired and dispirited. This was in part a response to the COVID-19 Pandemic that had led to rapid responses, sharp learning curves and an exhausting time of uncertainty and change. The pandemic hastened some trends, leading to some congregations moving from slow to rapid decline. The report reflected on the burden that is felt by many congregations and their leaders and began to reflect on what it might mean to 'lighten the load'.

The report led to the development of the Strategic Framework that summarised the ways in which Uniting College and Mission Resourcing could respond. A key insight was the need to recover a sense of 'gospel joy'. The quote from Lesslie Newbigin above was central to this. It occurs in a context where Newbigin laments the way that mission is often motivated by a sense of duty which is not always lifegiving to those we are seeking to serve, or for ourselves. Thus, one of the areas of focus in the framework is on 'Faith Vitality and Formation'.

Unlike happiness, which is often the result of circumstances, joy is a more about character and practices. Part of this will be an understanding of the world that is grace-filled; a world in which the goodness and faithfulness of God is the bedrock of our faith. Practices like gratitude (which nowadays is recommended everywhere by all sorts of people!), hospitality and blessing others will open up spaces where we are more likely to experience 'an explosion of joy'.² Encouraging people to learn practices, report on their experiences and to celebrate their successes, if not lightening the load, will certainly leaven our experience as communities of faith.



Rev Philip Gardner
General Secretary

"Mission begins with a kind of explosion of joy."
– Lesslie Newbigin¹

¹ Lesslie Newbigin *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* (London: SPCK; 1989) p 116.

² There are a number of helpful books on Christian Practices. A simple introduction is Michael Frost's *Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People* (NavPress: 2015)

From happiness to joy: a sacred journey

From the Editor

In a world of quick fixes and instant gratification, happiness often feels like the ultimate goal – “I just want to be happy”. We chase happiness in relationships, careers, possessions, and experiences. Yet, as many of us have discovered, happiness can be fleeting, dependent on circumstances, moods and moments. Beneath the surface of these transient highs lies a deeper, richer and more enduring sense of meaning – something we might call ‘joy’.

Happiness tends to be circumstantial. It arises when things go our way – a promotion, a sunny day, a compliment, or a nice meal. It can be beautiful but also fragile. When life turns difficult, happiness often evaporates.

Joy, however, is resilient. It is not contingent on external conditions but flows from an inner wellspring of faith, hope, and love. The Apostle Paul, writing from prison, exhorted believers to “Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). This wasn’t denial of suffering – it was a declaration that joy is possible even in pain, because it is anchored in God’s presence.

The path from happiness to joy

Moving beyond happiness into joy is not about rejecting pleasure or denying sorrow and pain. It’s about cultivating a deeper awareness of the divine working in our lives and our world, and embracing a fuller, more grounded way of living. Here are some ways of nurturing joy:

- **Practice gratitude daily**

Gratitude helps us shift our focus from what we’re missing, to what we already have – from the absent to the present. By regularly acknowledging the good in our lives – whether it’s a kind word, a moment of peace, or a shared laugh – we begin to see life through a lens of abundance. Gratitude doesn’t erase pain, but it helps us hold it alongside beauty.

In my early 20s, I was changed by one simple directive I read in a book by Matthew Fox, who called on his readers to “fall in love three times a day”. By this he meant that

we should cultivate a sense of awe, wonder and gratitude for the world around us – for the constant, generous and unselfish blessing that is God’s creation. Decades later, I still remind myself of these words at times that I feel overwhelmed or unable to cope, and try to consciously pause and reconnect myself with the beauty that surrounds us – perhaps through the scent of flower, the song of a bird, the gentle whisper of the breeze.

- **Embrace vulnerability and honesty**

Joy grows when we allow ourselves to be real. It’s not an escape from reality, but an immersion in it. That means acknowledging our struggles, speaking our truth, and creating space for others to do the same. When we stop pretending everything is fine and start connecting authentically, we open the door to deeper relationships and inner peace.

- **Live with purpose, compassion and connection**

Joy often emerges when we live in alignment with our values and contribute to something larger than ourselves. Whether it’s through creativity, activism, caregiving, volunteering, or community-building, engaging in meaningful work and relationships helps us feel centred and alive. In serving others, we often find a joy that surpasses personal happiness.

Joy is transformative

Joy is not a luxury – it’s a necessity for a fulfilling life. It’s what gives us strength in adversity, clarity in confusion, and hope in uncertainty. It’s not something we chase, but something we cultivate through reflection, connection and a conscious choice to find meaning and hope in everyday experience. And it often begins with a simple inward turn – an openness to life’s sacred and transformational moments.

Whether you find joy through spirituality, nature, art, human connection, or a combination of these things, the journey from happiness to joy is one of depth and transformation. It invites us to live, not just for the next good moment, but for a life rich in meaning, compassion, and resilience. It is ultimately a journey into deeper relationship – with ourselves, with others, and with God.

As Jesus said in John 15:11, “I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete”.



Clive Conway
Editor

Teresa's dream

By Margaret Gunn

"I want to build a hospital in Abyei"

– 14 year old Teresa in 2011

Abyei is a place of violence – a small, oil-rich region on the border between Sudan and South Sudan.

Teresa (Adhet) and her family had fled Abyei for the Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya before she was born. Her dream to build a hospital was motivated by her mother's experiences in childbirth and stories she had heard of family members who had died because of the lack of safe medical care in war-torn South Sudan.

Teresa knew the dream was distant and difficult, but as she said, "God has helped me, and in response I will help others". This was a commitment that the whole congregation of Enfield Uniting Church (now Encounter Enfield) came to share.

As fundraising gathered pace in the church community, in her school and at numerous public events, Teresa's family asked the church to operate the 'Hope for Abyei' fund to ensure independence and transparency. A long-term UCIInvest account was opened, and the community agreed that no decisions would be made without Teresa's input.

Teresa was one of a large group of children in 'Enfield Kids on Sundays' (EKOS). For more than 14 years, this Christian community in inner Adelaide has helped nurture children, teenagers and their parents – mostly mother-led households. Teresa's younger sister Diana and younger brothers Valentino and Emmanuel also regularly participated in Sunday morning classes, KUCA, SAYCO and other events. Teresa has gone on to gain several university and other qualifications and is now employed as a Work Health and Safety Officer in a major corporation.

As the fund grew, Synod began to ask "How long?" Recent changes to federal legislation brought the Hope for Abyei fund into the spotlight. Donations to overseas projects were now required to be made through official charities.

We had learnt that Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), also known as Doctors Without Borders, operated medical clinics in Abyei, despite the high risk to patients, staff and their infrastructure.

With Teresa's agreement, we approached MSF and an amazing sum of over \$31,000 has now been donated to their work in South Sudan. MSF has gratefully received this generous donation and will publicly acknowledge its source.



To contribute to Teresa's dream, you can donate to MSF here.

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Sudan

Abyei

South Sudan

The Abyei Special Administrative Area is a disputed region located on the border between Sudan and South Sudan.

It was established in 2004 in the Peace Agreement that ended the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983–2005). It is considered part of both Sudan and South Sudan until a referendum allows residents to decide which country they'd like to belong to. That referendum was planned for 2011 but has never been held.



Teresea (Adhet) (right) and her sister Diana (Aluong)

Teresa wrote the following Prayer for Hope and Healing for when the money was handed over to MSF:

Heavenly Father,

We come before You with humble hearts, giving thanks for the journey You began through 'Hope for Abyei'. Though our original vision was to build a hospital in Abyei, today we surrender our plans into Your greater purpose.

Lord, we lift up the people of South Sudan, especially those in Abyei. In the midst of ongoing conflict, displacement and suffering, we ask that Your peace reign. Comfort the grieving, strengthen the weak and protect the innocent.

As we donate our funds to Doctors Without Borders, we pray that this gift may bring healing where it is needed most. May it be a ripple of compassion in a region where medical care is scarce and hope can feel far away.

We thank you for the seeds of love that were planted through this charity. Let those seeds grow, even in ways we may not see. Use every dollar, every prayer, and every act of service for Your glory and the good of Your people.

In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

Yarta Wandatha:

THE LAND IS SPEAKING, THE PEOPLE ARE SPEAKING

Since 2013, the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (UCLT), in partnership with leaders from the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and other Elders, has been taking people Walking on Country. Sometimes this has occurred with other groups from within and beyond the Synod, but the original vision remains: to educate people *in relationship with Country and with First Peoples* so that our Covenant commitment as a Church might live and breathe in us and through us.

Until now, Walking on Country has been a four-day experience – significant but limited. The original vision as we sat together in 2012 – Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion, Rev Dr Tracy Spencer and myself – around my family's dining room table, was for a longer educational journey to enable greater depth of engagement as a smaller group in community. This year, for the first time, that has been realised in the 12-week course *Yarta Wandatha: The Land is Speaking, the People are Speaking*.



I think that one of our biggest challenges that needs to be addressed is the ability and need to listen. Throughout history it appears as though listening is not a priority. The First Peoples were treated in an appalling way, and it is understandable that the deep physical and emotional wounds of that are still felt. As one who has a relatively short family history here in Australia, with no connections to the early colonisers, the convicts or the missionaries, I see that this lack of communication and listening continues to be a challenge. How can we listen better?

Michelle Pruszinski

Contemporary Music Team Leader,
Burnside City Uniting Church

Yarta Wandatha was co-taught in 2025 by Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion and Dr Rosemary Dewerse – Theologian in Residence and Academic Dean, respectively, of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (a college of the University of Divinity). This article has been collated by Rosemary. All students named in this article have given their permission for their words and work to be published.



The stories that Aunty Denise tells are heart-wrenching ... The blood red of the sunset is a stark reminder of the Adnyamathanha blood spilled on this land. But it shows a fierce hope that the darkness cannot overwhelm ... God takes the colours of bloodshed, and paints arresting sunsets. Arrawatanha God Most High remembers, weeps, loves, creates. So I create too ...

The winding path towards ethical mission, ethical ministry, ethical people, starts with grounding ourselves in where we are, and who we are. It starts in creation, in the land, in *Arrawatanha*.

Susy Plein

Bookings Coordinator, Nunyara Conference Centre; Candidate for Ministry



The most profound lesson I learned on *Yarta* was less about the teaching and more about the people. We live in a fractured society and a factionalised church, that's no secret. When our perception of others is limited to how they align on certain issues or which 'side' they fall on within the broad spectrum of the Uniting Church, it becomes easy to 'other' them, if not in our actions, then at least in our mind. On *Yarta* I was profoundly touched, not just by Aunty Denise, but by the way I saw Jesus reflected in each person despite any theological differences we may have had. I hope others saw that in me too.

[I have been] reminded of the importance of seeing people in three dimensions and not just through the lens of our disagreements. That doesn't mean we ignore our differences; sometimes they need to be wrestled with. But when those conversations happen within deep and genuine relationship, we're all the richer for it.

Jethro Buxton

Pastor – Youth and Young Adults, Coro Uniting Church; Candidate for Ministry



Travelling north to Adnyamathanha Country. I was drawn in a way I hadn't been since childhood to the remoteness and beauty and relative hardship – insects, dust, lack of internet ... all useful for withdrawal and reflection. I found sleeping under the stars and experiencing the changing colours of the landscape in the new hours of the morning really beautiful, experiencing that sense of Christ coming into the world in a real way. There is fear among Second Peoples of building relationships, but I was very struck by the generous grace-filled welcome of Aunty Denise and Kristian Coulthard, a welcome that was given alongside an invitation to explore our own cultural context. The challenge I am now sensing is to develop my own voice around this learning.

Beth Prior

Former Librarian with Flinders University, Adelaide College of Divinity



A challenging question: do we practice 'ethical ministry' – from which lens should we ask that? From the privileged people that we are? Or from the people who have suffered? Aunty Denise noted that for Indigenous people 'BC' came to stand for 'Before Cook', the time before the fragmentation of people and land in Australia. Previously I understood, as Christian, that 'BC' referred to dark times, difficult times, as people did not know Jesus then. Yet now I have learned that 'BC' for Indigenous people meant a time of togetherness – where people understood God, understood creation, and understood their connections. We have to admit and understand how much that has been disrupted.

Upon returning from our immersion on Yarta I started searching the Bible for all the instances where people who did not know about God/ Jesus, yet were celebrated, blessed! Aunty Denise teaches that the Adnyamathanha word Arrawatanha translates as God Most High, while Stan Grant explains the knowledge of Jesus as the fulfillment of what the Indigenous had known for eons. For me to understand that the Cosmic Christ, in God, was and is here and everywhere, is such great news. This is the best 'good news' in the world that Aunty Denise has brought us; God doesn't have to be transported on a boat with a book. God *is*. To find God in creation means I don't enter with a why but because God is.

Liellie McLaughlin

Minister of the Word; Community Connections Facilitator at Prospect Road Uniting Church; Physiotherapist at the Brian Burdekin Medical Clinic



Being shaped by others' stories is something that I have been trying to do in my life and ministry. We all would say that we don't have preconceived notions about Country and about God but then being exposed to our own realities and our own prejudices and being able to move beyond them, lay them down and hear something different is a profound experience. What does Susy's unravelling of a blanket to crochet a new one say about theology? So much of what we do is trying to protect what was and hold onto this and never let it go, but what if we truly are meant to be people of the resurrection, making something new?

So much of my own concern is when the institution is trying to defend colonisation. It has to die. What new life can we experience and, inversely, what new life are we closing ourselves off to as a church, by refusing to let that story die?

Richard Telfer

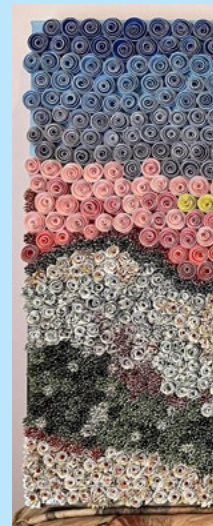
Minister, Church of the Trinity Uniting Church



Experiencing Aunty Denise experiencing Ikara, her Country, was such a privilege. I was struck by the long and deep connection Adnyamathanha people have with their land. Aunty Denise's song and tears at sunrise, around the fire, and when near to the sacred places of Ikara and Yurabila expressed this deep-felt connection. Sitting near a creek on Adnyamathanha country reflecting quietly about the presence of Arrawatanha – the Adnyamathanha name for God – made me very conscious of God being present. This creek-side experience was a sacred moment for me, teaching me that going to places that are sacred helps me to connect deeply with God. In my context, as a fifth generation coloniser who identifies with Christ, this leaves my western, rational approach feeling in need of refreshment.

David Bailey

Manager Growth & Investment Adelaide Plains Council; Member Adelaide West Uniting Church





Michelle Pruszinski: "Wanangha nai?" Papercraft in process.

Aunty Denise tells of her father saying to her mother "Anhangha idla ngukanandakai" ("I'm going to a place in my mind") and her mother asking him "Wanangha nai?" ("Where are you going?"). He would be travelling in his memory to a place of special significance.

Michelle's artwork – built out of more than 3500 paper flowers – is recreating a photo taken while on Yarta. It is her way of inviting herself to return in her mind to the lessons that she gleaned from walking in community on Country as she continues to build this intricate work. A literal window into sacred memory.



**View the *Yartha-Wandatha*
photo gallery**



As I began to hear stories from Country, I realised I still had a critical filter on them – a filter of scepticism. To share the journey and to move from scepticism to 'Where is God in this story?' has been a really significant transition for me in my approach to hearing the stories of others. Another's story doesn't all have to align to the way you think, nor do you need to fully understand it. It is important to take glimpses of what you see and find common ground without thinking that it needs to be your story. It's someone else's story. How then can we meet together in that and recognise familiar things?

Simon Story
Pastor, Village Church Alberton



We have heard so many wonderful stories. I keep seeing connections with the people of Israel. It seems to me that there were prophets sent to the Adnyamathanha in the same way that prophets were sent to the Israelites to teach them where they might be going wrong and bringing the law. Stories too of God coming down to the Adnyamathanha, like stories of God coming down to the people of Israel. Those parallels are becoming stronger and stronger for me. I'm still not sure where I see Jesus in that but there are certainly connections that point to Jesus.

Gillian Powis
Graduate; Biblical storyteller; Lay Leader at Cityview



One impactful thing for me of taking this journey is that it has always felt a bit like an 'us' and 'them' thing because I don't understand First Nations cultures. But then Kristian told an Adnyamathanha story similar to the Tower of Babel story. This opened up for me the realisation that we all are just one people. That divide between us and them became 'us.' The fear of making a mistake or doing the wrong thing in culture, of disrespecting someone when I don't know what's going on, has largely been taken away. We have different cultures, and First Nations peoples were here before, but ultimately, we are one.

Jennie Feldmeier
Bush Chaplain, Queensland

As a class together we explored the real and too-often devastating impact of Christian mission on First Peoples, as well as how Aboriginal theologians are making sense of the Gospel and understanding the significance of Christ today. We read Aunty Denise's *Anaditj* and *Yarta Wandatha* before travelling on Yarta (Country) together. Three practices shaped our learning together: ngakarra ngauniangkulu (deep listening), yanakanai (coming together), and God in my story. Aunty Denise was our main teacher; Kristian Coulthard from Wadna in Blinman was another. Our commitment was to listen to and learn from Yarta and Adnyamathanha in order to glean lessons for imagining and enacting ethical ministry today. We did life together, we yarned together, we walked on Yarta together, we reflected and wrestled together, we journalled, and we created resources to help us remember and to pass our learning on.



View the collection of
student-made resources

Photos: Simon Story

Susy Plein: Crocheted Journal

As we left Adelaide for Ikara Flinders Ranges, Susy started unravelling a blanket she had crocheted 15 years before. It became a metaphor for unlearning and relearning, for shame and hope, for unravelling good intentions in order to listen. After spending time on Country listening and learning she started re-crocheting the blanket and then embroidered on it symbols of key stories heard and needing remembering.

"I look at my finished creation. The blanket from 15 years ago is gone – but not really. It is still here, but woven together to tell a different and more complete story, of the *yura* who since time immemorial have cared for the land that I too call home ... *Arrawatanha ngarpalangha ikanda* (the Most High is still watching over us) and from the *Yarta Muda* (the stories of the Land), I will be shaped and formed for ministry differently, and more completely."



Enrol for 2026

Join us in Semester 1 2026 when Yarta Wandatha will again be taught! Come and wrestle with the history of mission in these lands now called Australia, and the question of what ethical ministry – ethical engagement – could look like in your context if you listen to the wisdom that Arrawatanha, the Most High, is offering through the voice of Yarta and Adnyamathanha.

Study for credit or for audit. Enquire today at Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, info@unitingcollege.edu.au

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The Hive

Serving the Bordertown community

By Maria Maratos and Mark Waters

The Hive at Bordertown is supported by Bordertown Uniting Church along with other local churches and community partners. The team from UnitingCare SA visited Bordertown early in July as there is interest in the Hive becoming part of the UnitingCare Relief Centres Network. They met with Margreet Diment who manages the local Op Shop and Food Relief Centre. Margreet is originally from the Netherlands and served in Christian missionary (missions or in YWAM) in India for 29 years. She and her husband Pastor Kym Diment returned to Bordertown, Kym's hometown, in 2019.

Having previously managed the Bordertown Salvation Army Op Shop, Margreet saw a continuing need when its doors closed in 2023. The community has a significant population of refugees and Pacific Islanders, mainly working at the town's meat processing plant. Many are there on their own, sharing one room with 2 or 3 other people and desperately missing their families back home.

How does The Hive help? Margreet re-opened the Op Shop, and added a café where people can connect and chat over a cuppa. At the same time, Margreet and her team of 30 volunteers started providing food relief for anyone who had a need. Often new employees at the meatworks have little to survive on until their first pay. The Hive team provides care and dignity to anyone who asks for their help.

Not long after The Hive opened its doors, a family of 10 refugees arrived, in the middle of winter. The government provided housing but little else. Their house was ready but completely empty – no beds, mattresses, blankets, heaters or kitchen items. Their own container of goods was still in transit.

The Australian Migrant Resource Centre (AMRC) approached The Hive, as their office is next door, and asked for help. The Hive team immediately sprang into action and were able to provide the family with beds, linen, heaters and kitchen items, all at no cost. They also reached out to the wider community for additional blankets and other household items. The town's response was overwhelmingly generous. It was in this moment that Margreet realised The Hive needed to do something about furniture provision.

Margreet decided to add a second-hand furniture store and watch repair service to The Hive's offering, as other institutions



Margreet with volunteers Joy and Rhonda.

were closing their doors and unable to provide these services to the community. The Hive took over St Vincent de Paul's furniture shed next to the railway line as they were experiencing a lack of volunteers. They work with a neighbouring Op Shop who also assist with the supply of excess furniture.

Margreet and her team took over the provision of furniture in June 2024. They cleaned out the shed and started afresh collecting items from July and opening in October. They now open regularly, meeting this essential need for their community.

Everything The Hive has achieved and offers has been done in the last 18 months. When you think of country generosity of spirit and helping your neighbour, The Hive encompasses these values in abundance.

17 & 18 October 2025

Renew

Synod resourcing event
for congregations, leaders and teams

“

Renew is a space for all who are passionate about deepening their faith and ministry, whatever your involvement in the life of the Church, whether you're part of a small community or a large congregation. We want to welcome everyone – because when the Church comes together, great things happen!

”

Rev Philip Gardner
General Secretary
Synod of South Australia

Renew. A dynamic event to help you refresh, reimagine and reignite the life of your church.

Together we'll explore Spirit-led renewal through practical workshops and inspiring keynote sessions. We will share in worship, and honest conversations that speak to the heart of ministry in today's world. You'll encounter fresh ideas, build deeper connections, and return home encouraged and equipped for what's next.

Renew is more than an event – it's a space to pause, breathe, listen and hope again. God is doing new things. Come and be part of them.

Who is Renew for?

Anyone involved in the life of the church – ministers, leadership teams, preachers, elders, leaders, regional and rural congregations – everyone is welcome!

Tickets are \$18 per person with a 20% discount for bookings of 5 or more people. Morning Tea and Lunch will be provided on Saturday as part of your ticket. Please contact synod@sa.uca.org.au if you would like to attend but the cost is prohibitive.

Please note: The Synod provides travel and accommodation support for those travelling more than 150 km to attend the event. Please contact synod@sa.uca.org.au for further details.

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Register
now!



Dates

Friday October 17 2025

6:30 pm – 9:00 pm

Saturday October 18 2025

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Location

Adelaide West Uniting Church and Yarthu-Apinthi
312 Sir Donald Bradman Drive
Brooklyn Park SA 5032

Keynote Sessions:

FRIDAY EVENING

Sacred Disruption: Joining the spirit in the renewal of the Church

Rev Glen Spencer

SATURDAY MORNING

Growing edges: Signs of hope for the Uniting Church in Australia

Rev Dr Karina Kreminski

SATURDAY AFTERNOON

Green shoots in dry ground: Missional renewal through church planting

Rev Dr Graham Hill

Workshop Topics:

Embodying God's mission in the neighbourhood

Following the Jesus way: Radical love, costly discipleship and the way of Jesus

Stories from rural Australia

Breathing life into dry bones – helping congregations re-discover their missional call



Rev Glen Spencer

Director of Mission



Rev Dr Karina Kreminski

Mission Catalyst – Formation and Fresh Expressions



Rev Dr Graham Hill

Mission Catalyst – Church Planting and Missional Renewal



Rev Ann Perrin

Mission Catalyst – Rural and Regional



Rev Dr Cameron Eccleston

Mission, Growth and Innovation Team Leader

Reflecting on MAPS

By Philip Gardner

I remember well sitting in a congregation's Property Meeting discussing the testing of the fire extinguishers, and thinking aloud, "How much does it cost to keep the doors open?" I have been in other meetings when the same question is raised and in the end the answer is always, "It all depends". That is to say, it revolves around a number of factors including the cost of insurance, energy, and maintenance, as well as a range of contextual factors such as the location of the building and its proximity to other Uniting Church buildings. The Property Team developed a very helpful *Property Viability Discussion Paper* to address these matters and it is well worth reading. You can click on the link or scan the QR code below.

Another paper was developed by the then Pastoral Relations and Mission Planning Team (now the Placements and Safe Church Team) called *Congregational Sustainability* as a supplement to the Viability Paper. 'Sustainability' is defined as the ability of a system to remain at a defined level of wellbeing indefinitely. The paper reflects on sustainability under the headings of Mission, Community, Worship and Governance. For example, sustainable governance would include a congregation's ability to fulfil the regulations and meet their responsibilities, as well as ensuring that too much is not left to too few. Again, it is a paper that is well worth engaging with.

Combining these ideas of viability and sustainability, the Synod also needs to consider what a sustainable number of church buildings would be for us. You might recall that we have been speaking of having "Vital congregations in safe buildings that are fit for purpose". Each of those phrases is important for 'a sustainable number of congregations'. Buildings that are fundamentally unsafe or too difficult to renovate to community standards are going to pose major challenges for us. Moreover, if a building matching this description is near other Uniting Church buildings this will add further concerns. Furthermore, as you travel around the state you might notice significant housing developments which will most likely need some form of worshipping and serving communities to be signs and instruments of God's work in that area. So, some form of rationalisation and redeployment of resources will be needed to meet the future needs of the community of SA.

To that end, in the Mission and Property Strategy Team, the Synod and Presbyteries are carefully working together to help us move towards a sustainable number of buildings in our state. Increasing costs, rural depopulation, and an ageing stock of buildings are among the factors which have an impact. They are also increasing the urgency of this issue. This is a matter of good stewardship in a whole range of dimensions. We would appreciate your thinking and prayers on these issues. Your participation in the recent 'MAPS Questionnaire 2025' will be most helpful. Opportunities for conversation with Presbytery and Synod leaders will arise as we work our way through these critical issues.



[Read the papers here](#)

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Walking the property with purpose

A new season for Annual Property Returns in SA

By Matt Wilson

The Uniting Church in South Australia is ushering in a new season of stewardship, and we invite every congregation to walk their property with purpose.

From August 2025, every congregation will receive a new digital Annual Property Return – a practical, accessible way to reflect on property matters and respond to our shared call to care for the places where ministry happens.

While the term ‘property return’ may sound bureaucratic, this new initiative is more than just a compliance exercise. It’s about safeguarding our spaces, supporting church leaders, and strengthening our church’s witness to the community through well-managed, welcoming facilities.

Why the change?

For many years, congregations have been asked to provide updates on their Building Safety Reports. The 2024 Synod resolved to take a broader and more consistent approach to property matters across the life of the Church. Drawing on Uniting Church Regulations, which place responsibility for property oversight with Church Councils (Reg 4.4.1) and require congregations to furnish information to the Presbytery or Synod (Reg 4.4.3 and 4.11.8), the Synod approved a plan to collect annual property information from all congregations, starting in 2025.

This is a significant shift, but one grounded in the Church’s commitment to safety, stewardship and shared accountability.

What’s involved?

At the heart of the change is a simple questionnaire, developed by the Synod’s Property Services team, approved by the Synod Property Committee, and refined with input from local congregations through a pilot program in early 2025.



Scan here to access the Annual Property Return.

Congregations will receive the questionnaire in August, with responses due by 30 September 2025. The questions are mostly yes/no in format and cover a range of topics, including:

- Property maintenance and repairs
- WHS responsibilities and documentation
- Disability access
- Bushfire preparedness
- Use of buildings by hirers or the wider community.

A copy of the completed return will automatically be emailed to the Church Council Chairperson. This ensures transparency and encourages healthy conversations within Church Councils about the state and use of property assets. By undertaking the process in August, it is hoped that church councils will be able to identify property budget needs for the following year and incorporate appropriate amounts into forward planning.

Designed with you in mind

The new online portal has been designed so that volunteers can walk through the church grounds with a mobile phone or tablet, completing the checklist as they go. For those unable to use the digital version, a paper return will be available (with Synod staff supporting data entry).

Importantly, this isn’t a ‘tick the box’ exercise. The responses gathered will provide valuable insights into how the Synod can better support congregations, whether that’s through guidance, training, resourcing, or advocacy.

Stewardship, together

As one pilot congregation was told, participating in the project doesn’t just fulfil a requirement – it shapes the way we care for what God has entrusted to us.

“Church property is more than bricks and mortar,” says Philip Gardner, General Secretary. “It’s the physical space where worship, witness, and service happen. This new return helps us pay attention to that sacred responsibility – not alone, but together”.

Whether your congregation meets in a heritage building, a multipurpose hall, or a country chapel, this new Annual Property Return is a step toward greater connection, clarity and care. And it begins – quite literally – by walking your property with purpose.

For more information contact property@sa.uca.org.au.

To complete the questionnaire, scan the QR code above or go to the website here: <https://annualpropertyreturns.powerappsportals.com/>



Discerning God's call for the next Moderator

One of the great joys of my life has been serving as the Moderator of the Uniting Church in South Australia (from 2013 to 2016). Since then, much in the world and Church has changed, but there are constants that shape and guide us as the Uniting Church today. We are centred in Christ, guided by the Holy Spirit, to be bearers of God's good news of love and hope in our contemporary world. Our congregations and faith communities across the state, are faithfully serving Christ through their loving and compassionate presence in their local and wider contexts.

As Moderator, I had wonderful opportunities to visit congregations, schools and associated organisations. It was moving to hear people's stories of faith and discipleship, arising from their deep love of Christ. It was a privilege to listen to people's concerns, and offer leadership to encourage and equip the people of God for their ministry and engagement in God's mission in the world.

The Moderator's ministry is never in isolation – it is a call into community and collaboration with others. I worked ecumenically with Christian leaders responding to our common concerns. I represented our Synod as we engaged with political leaders, working for the common good and flourishing of people in our state. I met with other Moderators and the President, for pastoral support and for listening to the strengths, challenges and hopes of the Uniting Church across Australia and with our global partners.

We have now begun the process of choosing the next Moderator of the SA Synod and I write this article on behalf of the Moderator Nominating Committee. Information has been sent to presbyteries and to the wider church about the nomination process. Nominations must come through the presbyteries. Nominations can be made by individual church members or congregations (with a nominator and seconder) and then sent to the presbytery. Presbyteries may nominate more than one person, although there is no requirement for every presbytery to nominate someone. Presbyteries are also welcome to nominate people from outside their presbytery (as long as they are within the Synod of SA).



Details of the nomination process, including the timeline, By-laws that relate to the Moderator, Nomination Form and Moderator Role and Person Specification are available on the Synod website (<https://sa.uca.org.au/choosing-a-new-moderator/>) and from the Associate General Secretary, Rev Sue Page, assocgenssec@sa.uca.org.au.

Nominations close on the 31 October, 2025. Send your nominations to presbyteries well before the closing date to allow them time for discernment and to forward them on to the Moderator Nominating Committee. The Moderator Nominating Committee may also discern further people to nominate.

In the Installation service for our Moderator, we pray, "God of gentleness and strength, in every age you have chosen servants to speak your word and lead your people". With this confidence, we invite the members of the Uniting Church here in South Australia to consider prayerfully who you believe God may be calling in this day and age to offer service to Christ and the Uniting Church through the role of Moderator.

Send your nomination to your presbytery and they and then the full Synod meeting, will continue the discernment.

Please don't seek the permission of the nominated person before nominating. The Moderator Nominating Committee will contact those whose names are forwarded by the presbyteries.

May God's wisdom guide us, as we engage together in this discernment process.

Yours in Christ,

Dr Deidre Palmer

On behalf of the Moderator Nominating Committee

Timeline for the selection process

2025

1 July	Nominations open – must come through presbyteries
	Moderator Nominating Committee (MNC) considers additional nominations
31 Oct	Nominations close
July – Nov	MNC holds informal conversations with potential nominees as nominations are received

2026

31 Jan	Paperwork from nominees due
Feb – March	Formal conversations with potential nominees
31 March	List of nominees finalised
April	Nominees invited to gather for prayerful support
May	MNC reports and nominee profiles sent to members of Synod
June	Ballot for Moderator-elect held at Synod 2026

The Moderator Nominating Committee

- Rev Sue Page (Convenor)
- Dr Deidre Palmer (Past Moderator)
- Mr Andrew Telfer (Presbytery of Southern Australia)
- Rev Elissa Inglis (Generate Presbytery)
- Rev Do Young Kim (Wimala Presbytery)



View details and access forms on the Synod website.



Fellowship, friendship, farmers and fun Padthaway and Echunga connect

By Chris Riemann

In mid-May, the Echunga Uniting Church chairman announced that his family was visiting his son's farm at Keith on the King's birthday long weekend. He invited other attendees to join the family in caravans and tents and enjoy a church camp together. He was very surprised a month or so later to learn that over 40 were planning to attend, with many staying at the local caravan park and motel.

To add to the story, for some time, Padthaway Uniting Church had, in the absence of a minister, been broadcasting the Echunga online service at least once a month. When they found out that many of Echunga's congregation were staying in Keith, they invited the Echunga visitors to join them for Sunday morning worship and then share a country lunch.

Highlights of the weekend included:

- the great joy in the South East farming community as heavy rains arrived at the same time on Saturday as the Echunga congregation. Echunga has been invited back a month earlier next year to open the planting season!
- the wonderful service led by Echunga UC including a welcoming coffee and bun before the service started
- the 3-course lunch provided by Padthaway members, which was sumptuous and delicious. It represented country hospitality at its finest
- The opportunity to spend quality time with friends in a warm and dry environment – with the heavy rain on Saturday, the farm activities at Keith had to be cancelled but the One Church (a merger of the Uniting Church and Churches of Christ in Keith) invited Echunga members to use their facilities
- the conversations between the Padthaway and Echunga members, which were rich and happy and created a strong bond for many years to come. In particular, the farmers from both areas enjoyed sharing stories about seasons, animals, machinery, hard and successful years and the rhythm of farm life
- the discovery of a wonderful bookshop in Keith which many Echunga folk visited.

The Echunga congregation hopes to invite Padthaway friends to the Adelaide Hills later in 2025 and is particularly looking forward to welcoming Padthaway to its online services again.

Many other rural Uniting Church congregations may also be without a resident. You are always welcome to join Echunga's online services minister (particularly on the 3rd Sunday of the month along with Padthaway). And who knows – one day we may visit you too!

2025 Polkinghorne Oration

with Rev Dr Tim Costello AO

By Rev Sue Ellis

7 pm Thursday 16 October
Adelaide West Uniting Church,
312 Sir Donald Bradman Drive, Brooklyn Park

The Polkinghorne Oration presents contemporary prophetic voices talking about the impacts of climate change. It focuses attention on the plight of those most vulnerable to the adversity that climate change is bringing.

The Oration brings a moral and ethical perspective to discussion of the climate crisis. Although it is a Uniting Church event, the Oration will resonate with all expressions of Christian faith and indeed of other faiths which recognise a spiritual connection to the earth.

The Oration aims to help remember the importance of working with local people, giving voice to their needs and alerting the world to the changes needed for a just, safe and sustainable world for all people and ecosystems.

The Oration is held every two years in October to coincide with St Francis of Assisi Day or World Animal Day, which occurs on October 4th each year. St Francis is recognised as the patron saint of animals, merchants and ecology.

The 2025 Polkinghorne Oration will be delivered by **Rev Dr Tim Costello AO**, Baptist Minister, Senior Fellow at the Centre for Public Christianity and Executive Director of Micah Australia.

Rev Costello is an important Australian public figure and theologian, and a much sought-after speaker. Beginning his working life as a lawyer, he was ordained a Baptist Minister in 1987 and served in St Kilda, Victoria, where he was later elected as Mayor. He is a Past President of the Baptist Union of Australia, a former CEO of World Vision, Victorian Citizen of the Year and a nominee for Australian of the Year in 2004, and winner of the Australian Peace Prize in 2008. Rev Costello has been described by the National Trust as a National Living Treasure. He is a strong advocate for the vulnerable and for Australian Foreign Aid to a world in need.

Rev Costello's topic is "The Challenge of Our Times: Climate Change in the Context of a Culture in Crisis". Climate change is creating cultural crises worldwide as productive land is affected by sea level rises and growing salinity, drier climate conditions impact on agricultural practices, and natural disasters become more frequent and severe. This in turn is causing greater migration of peoples, and annexing of places for them to pursue sustainable livelihoods and cultural life together.



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Brian and Jill Polkinghorne

The oration takes its name from Brian and Jill Polkinghorne.

Brian, a former Yorke Peninsula farmer, is a retired Uniting Church Minister who served in Tanzania with the Tanzanian YMCA and later with the Tanzanian Government in agricultural development projects at the request, initially, of the Australian Council of Churches, and later from the Roman Catholic Church and the Tanzanian Government.

Jill has been an early childhood educator, who became the Principal of a multicultural kindergarten in Moshi and on the return to Tanzania, led a kindergarten at Mwanza, trained kindergarten teachers, taught English, established early learning centres and chaired the board of Tanzania's most effective street children's centre.

The Polkinghornes served as missionaries from 1970 until 2007, with a brief respite back in Australia during political unrest in Tanzania. They are responsible for the establishment of the Kwimba reforestation project, planting of 6.7 million trees in Tanzania, and the Kilacha Production and Training Centre, which housed the 'Million chickens a year' project of the President of Tanzania, and contributed to the ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability for a healthy Mwanza city, through education and environmental work.

Port Broughton Uniting Church

celebrating 140 years of faithful service to God and to the community later this year

by Heather Dunstan



We extend a warm welcome to all visitors, far and wide who would like to share with us in a Special 140th Anniversary Worship Service on Sunday 7th December 2025 at 9.30 am and then sharing in fellowship together over lunch served by our members. We are thrilled that our SA Moderator, Mr Peter Morel will be leading the Worship Service.

A brief history of our church has been well recorded by one of our faithful members of 80 years, Beryl Noble, who saw the wisdom of keeping historical records, both for the church and the local community. Beryl passed earlier this year but her work lives on.

The first services of the Primitive Methodist Church (as it was first known), were held in a shop which was later used as a flour store. The names Henry Allchurch, his sister, Emily Allchurch, Rev A.W. Wellington, Rev S Gray and Rev J. Wills were all involved in the instigation or preaching in the church services during the time before or after the church was built in 1885.

“many seeds of love and care have been sown over these many years, bearing much fruit”

One June 5th 1885, a meeting was held to consider the building of a church. Following services at the goods shed, they adjourned to the hotel and took up collections; first for lamps, then for a stand, seats, organ and finally for the building of the church. On August 14th 1885 part of lot 15 was set aside for the church and transferred to the Methodist Trustees consisting of 8 men. Mr G A White gave the block of land, and principally through the efforts and gifts of Mr and Mrs D Gray, the church was built and consecrated almost free of debt.

On Christmas Day 1885, the church was ready and the Revs Jarret and Wellington were invited to preach at the opening service.



Fond memories

written by congregation members

In 1894 steps were taken for the building of the manse which is now used as the PBUC Opportunity Shop.

In 1922 the Memorial School hall was added as a tribute to the local men who fought in WW1.

In May 1934 the church porch was added, the funds being mostly donated by Ron Hewett's great grandfather. It had been proposed as far back at 1896, but for some reason was delayed until 1934.

Two memorial windows have been donated: one in the church in memory of Rev Thornley Wellington and one in church porch in memory of the Routley and Edwards' families. The cross above the communion table was donated by the Dolling family.

We give thanks and praise to God for all the Ministers of the Word who have served this church over the years. Rev Ian Kitto was the last Minister of the Word, from 1990-1995. During 1995 a Lay Ministry Team was established and commissioned to commence a new era of leadership commencing January 1996 which continues today.

Our church has continued to be active in nurturing and supporting each other in our faith and discipleship. We are an ageing congregation, but we are hardworking and know the confidence of praying in all circumstances and are deeply committed to the worship services both here and at Barunga Village, in the caring for each other in the church family and in their ministry that reaches out to the wider community in Port Broughton.

We pray that as many seeds of love and care have been sown over these many years, bearing much fruit, that this church will continue to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to preach the truth of the gospel, planting seeds of God's love, joy, forgiveness hope and peace for many more years to come.

The Port Broughton family has been so very important to our family. The prayerful support, fellowship, kindness and Christian love received from the church has always been so special to us. We have loved raising our family in this church, and feel very blessed to have always been a part of the church family. The Christian teachings and Christian witness to other fellow members in our church, has built a strong faith foundation in our children, of God's great love for us all and gives each of our lives such purpose, hope and meaning. We thank God for the church and pray for a blessing on all who gather here.

There are some very special past Ministers of the Word and their families and members of the congregation who have sown seeds, nurtured the soil, and spread of love of Jesus far and wide. I am afraid to mention them by name, should I forget one, or worse still not acknowledge how others' seeds of love and acceptance were also a contributor to the nurturing, un-beknown to me at the time, but known to God.

Bowmans Park church camps held the best memories ever. Our faith and acceptance in the church grew so much. Church camps are a wonderful place to experience God's love through the studies and the fellowship.

My prayer is that this church will continue to be empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to the goodness of the one and only, Lord God Almighty.

I have been attending this church for 80 years. I started at 5 years old at Sunday School.

I always, as a young person, admired the southern interior wall in the church. There was a painting of a large archway with ropes and tassels etc like you see in pictures in the Middle East cities. Around the edge of the archway in beautiful lettering were the words 'Oh worship the Lord in the beauty of Holiness'. I was always fascinated with the way the ropes and tassels were depicted as being double, as if a shadow was created by a light being on them. Unfortunately, it was removed in the early 60s.



Measuring happiness

The World Happiness Report 2025

By Clive Conway

I've recently been reading the 2025 edition of the World Happiness Report, a weighty 260-page tome which analyses global wellbeing and ranks countries based on how happy the citizens perceive themselves to be.

The WHR is published each year by the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, in partnership with research company Gallup, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

How is happiness measured?

How exactly do researchers measure a country's happiness? What criteria are used, and how are they interpreted?

At the heart of the World Happiness Report is data from the Gallup World Poll, which surveys people in over 150 countries. Respondents are asked to evaluate their lives right now, and how they think it will be in 5 years' time, using a scale from 0 to 10.

The report combines these self-assessments with six key variables that help explain the differences in happiness levels across countries:

1. GDP per capita

Economic prosperity is a strong predictor of well-being, but the report also recognises that an increase in income has a greater impact on happiness in poorer countries than in wealthier ones.

2. Social support

This variable measures whether people have someone to count on in times of trouble. It reflects the strength of social networks and community ties, which are critical for emotional resilience.

3. Healthy life expectancy

Good health is essential for a good life. The report uses life expectancy data adjusted for health quality, recognising that longevity alone doesn't guarantee wellbeing.

4. Freedom to make life choices

This variable assesses whether people feel free to make decisions about their own lives. Autonomy and agency are critical to psychological wellbeing.

5. Generosity

Based on responses to questions about charitable giving, volunteering, and helping strangers, this variable captures the role of altruism and social behaviour in happiness.

6. Perceptions of corruption

Trust in institutions and the absence of corruption are vital for societal wellbeing. This measure reflects how much people trust their governments and businesses.

The importance of caring and sharing

The 2025 report places special emphasis on caring and sharing, exploring how acts of kindness, both given and received, contribute to happiness. It looks at

- **Sharing meals** and how communal eating fosters social bonds
- **Living with others** and the impact of household size and family structure
- **Supporting others**, including volunteering and caregiving
- **Trust and social cohesion**, and how they relate to political stability and mental health.

A few interesting findings struck me:

- Researchers found that people generally underestimate the benevolence of others; our wellbeing depends both on our perceptions of other people's benevolence as well as how benevolent they actually are; and benevolence increased during the COVID-19 crisis around the world and remains higher than pre-COVID levels.
- Loneliness continues to grow among young adults around the world, although deaths by suicide or substance abuse are generally lower in most countries (with the USA and Republic of Korea being notable exceptions).
- Strong families are closely associated with happiness, with people who live alone much less happy. Similarly, people who often eat with others are a lot happier than those who eat alone.





[Read the World Happiness Report here](#)

What can we learn?

When reading a report like this, it's easy to skip straight to the rankings. If you've already done that, I confess, I did the same. But the real value of such a report lies in the lessons that can be learned. What can our governments and we ourselves do to improve happiness in our own society and more widely?

Here are 10 key focus areas:

- 1. Strengthening social support systems** by investing in universal access to healthcare, education, and social protections, helping to reduce stress, promote equity, and ensure that people have support during difficult times.
- 2. Building trust in institutions and each other** by promoting transparency and accountability in public institutions and encouraging people to participate in democracy.
- 3. Promoting physical and mental health** by expanding mental health programs in schools and workplaces, ensuring healthcare is affordable and inclusive, and promoting active lifestyles through urban design and public campaigns.
- 4. Enhancing freedom and autonomy** by protecting civil liberties and minority rights, encouraging entrepreneurship and flexible work arrangements, and reducing bureaucratic barriers to personal and professional growth.
- 5. Encouraging generosity and caring** by promoting volunteering, supporting community organisations and social networks, and ensuring that education focuses on values such as kindness and empathy.
- 6. Building strong communities and social connections** by investing in parks, libraries, and community centres, supporting intergenerational housing and initiatives, and encouraging cultural events and local gatherings.
- 7. Prioritising sustainability** by expand green infrastructure; promoting renewable energy, reducing pollution and encourage outdoor activities and nature-based tourism.
- 8. Addressing inequality and promote inclusion** by strengthening social safety nets, ensuring equal access to education and employment, and promoting inclusive representation in politics and the media.
- 9. Supporting young people** by providing mental health resources in schools, creating safe, youth-friendly public spaces, supporting mentorship programs and regulating digital platforms.

You can read the World Happiness Report at <https://www.worldhappiness.report/> or by scanning the QR code above.

Top 10 countries

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 1. Finland | 6. Costa Rica |
| 2. Denmark | 7. Norway |
| 3. Iceland | 8. Israel |
| 4. Sweden | 9. Luxembourg |
| 5. Netherlands | 10. Mexico |

Some other countries of interest

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------------------|
| 11. Australia | 95. South Africa |
| 12. New Zealand | 99. Iran |
| 18. Canada | 105. Nigeria |
| 22. Germany | 108. State of Palestine |
| 23. United Kingdom | 109. Pakistan |
| 24. United States | 111. Ukraine |
| 30. Kuwait | 118. India |
| 32. Saudi Arabia | 122. Somalia |
| 33. France | 132. Ethiopia |
| 34. Singapore | 133. Sri Lanka |
| 36. Brazil | 134. Bangladesh |
| 46. Vietnam | 135. Egypt |
| 55. Japan | 143. Zimbabwe |
| 58. Republic of Korea | 145. Lebanon |
| 64. Malaysia | 146. Sierra Leone |
| 66. Russian Federation | 147. Afghanistan |
| 68. China | |

How does Australia rate?

Criteria	World ranking
Social support	42
GDP per capita	13
Life expectancy	12
Freedom	49
Generosity	22
Perceptions of corruption	19

Happy 90th birthday to the 'Resthaven Twins'

Twins, Mrs Lynette Pickering and Mrs Heather Hender have always been there for one another. From celebrating successes, to shouldering burdens and everything in between. Turning 90 years old on 30 November this year, the pair share a birth year with Resthaven, which is also celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2025.

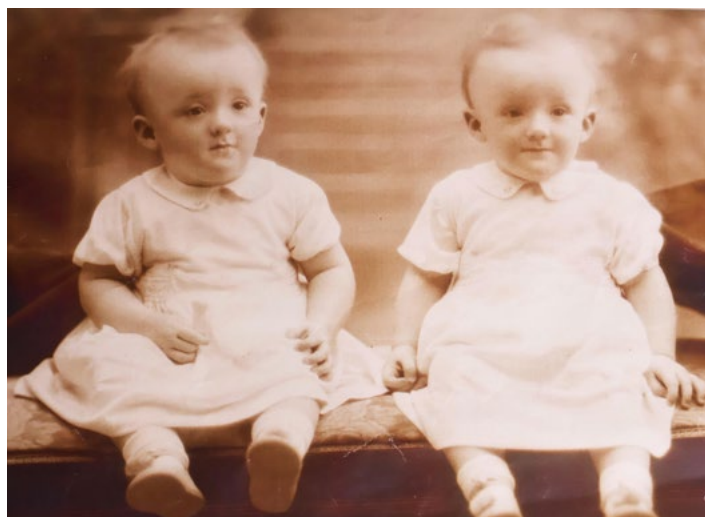
A resident of Resthaven Paradise, Heather had a successful career in nursing and was a member of the Resthaven Board from 1986 to 1995. Lynette is a resident at Resthaven Bellevue Heights Retirement Living and spent many years in retirement managing Op Shops with Save the Children and the Uniting Church. Lynette visits Heather regularly and phones each evening. The pair can often be found having a coffee, a biscuit, and a chat in the café at Resthaven Paradise.

Early life

Born two months prematurely, the twins were a surprise to their parents, Reg and Dorothy Lamshed of Kadina, who were only expecting one baby.

"We were tiny – our combined weight was just seven pounds!" Lynette says. We were fed with eyedroppers because we were so small."

Despite their precarious start, the twins grew strong and enjoyed their time growing up on the family's mixed-use farm. Both academically inclined, they began school at Boors Plain in one of the back rooms of the Methodist Church. The school



closed six months after they started so for a few years, they did Correspondence School lessons at home. At the age of eight, Heather and Lynette went to Cunliffe Primary School, where they drove the horse and cart six kilometres each way. They then attended Kadina Memorial High School until Year 10, when they completed the Commercial Course, learning typing and bookkeeping.

After school, Lynette was employed at the Kadina District Council and Heather began doing the accounts for the local garage.

"My first pay was 5 pounds and 5 shillings," Heather says.

Heather started her nursing career at the age of 19, working at The Memorial Hospital, North Adelaide. She was inspired to take on the career when at the age of 18, she was diagnosed with an ovarian cyst the size of three oranges.

"The care I received, when I was in such pain, made me want to care for others," Heather says. "The training at Memorial was 48 hours a week in broken shifts – it was really hard".

"The care I received, when I was in such pain, made me want to care for others"

In 1960 Heather began midwifery at The Queen Elizabeth Hospital, and in January 1962 she travelled with another nurse and two other friends to New Zealand. Deciding they didn't want to work in nursing while they were overseas, the four of them found work at the liquorice allsorts factory.

"It wasn't long before I found a nursing job over there instead!" Heather laughs.

The young women returned home, and Heather undertook an Operating Course at the Royal Melbourne Hospital in 1964. She received special mention for her proficiency at Cholecystectomy – removal of the gall bladder.

Meanwhile, at the age of 23, Lynette married her first husband, Doug, and moved off the farm to Edwardstown as he was training for the Methodist ministry at Wesley College, Wayville. Lynette worked as a Cashier at the City of Mitcham.

After training, Doug was appointed to Lock on Eyre Peninsula, and their first son, Michael, was born at Cleve. They then moved to Port Lincoln where Brenton was born. Doug started work as a Patrol Minister with the Methodist Inland Mission and was appointed to Meekatharra in Western Australia where Richard was born. They then adopted a baby girl, Julie, while in the Geraldton Parish.

"It was a tough time," Lynette says. "There were always people coming in for meals, I was looking after the children without help, and it was a long, hot summer – there were no mod cons in Meekatharra".



A trip cut short

In 1974, Heather travelled to Dallas, Texas where she worked in operating rooms at the Presbyterian Hospital and experienced the American healthcare system. "It was probably the best experience of my nursing career," Heather says.

From there Heather travelled Europe for six months. Lynette and her family had moved to Maitland, but her marriage had broken down and Lynette found a house in the Adelaide Hills with the children.

"Heather cut short her overseas trip and came and helped me to pack everything up," Lynette says. "We moved into a house in Woodside on New Year's Eve 1975".

After a few years, the family moved to Lower Mitcham, and it was here that she met her second husband, George Pickering. With teenage children of his own, neither parent was in a hurry to cohabit, but in 1990 Lynette and George married and moved to Eden Hills.

Lynette then volunteered for Save the Children for 10 years, before starting the Op Shop at the Mitcham Village Uniting Church. "I felt strongly that the items should be sold at reasonable prices to help those with low incomes," Lynette says.

Through the Mitcham Village Uniting Church, thousands of dollars have been donated to missions and needy causes, thanks to Lynette's work, now carried on by other volunteers.

Time on the Board

Heather continued working in nursing, completing her Diploma of Nursing Administration in 1977 and becoming Director of Nursing at Memorial Hospital in 1983. It was here that she was tapped on the shoulder to join the Resthaven Board. "I had the right skills, and my association with the Uniting Church made it a good fit," Heather says.

In 1982, she also found time to marry Barrie Hender at the Tusmore Memorial Uniting Church.

Later, while working as a sales representative for N. Stennings Surgical Supplies, Heather broke her femur and needed time off work. Heather's boss asked her if she knew anyone who could step into the role, and she recommended Lynette.

"It was the type of job that was mainly in the office, and involved a lot of faxing," Lynette says. "If I was ever stuck, I would ring Heather, and she would help me out. The postman came in every day, but I don't think he ever realised I wasn't Heather!"

From then on, whenever Heather needed time off, Lynette would step in. "It worked very well!" Lynette says.

In 1990, Heather passed with distinction the 'Transforming Mathematics for Women' course at the University of South Australia and followed this up with SAS Applied Mathematics and SAS Business Mathematics. She became the Patroness of the Memorial Trained Nurses' Association, after many years on the Committee and twice as President. Heather was also involved with the Tusmore Memorial Uniting Church and was the President of the Evening Fellowship for some time.

“Help the poor and needy where possible. We are on this earth to help others who are less fortunate.”

"The Church has been a big part of our lives, throughout all the years," Lynette says.

Sadly, both Heather and Lynette's husbands have now died. Lynette's eldest son, Michael, died when he was aged 33 and her second son, Brenton, when he was aged 58. Lynette's third son, Richard, is currently the Australian Ambassador in Croatia and Kosovo and her daughter, Julie, lives in NSW. The twins' sister, Isla, lives in the country, but visits as often as she can.

Lynette's advice to others: "Help the poor and needy where possible. We are on this earth to help others who are less fortunate".

Resthaven is honouring those turning 90 in its 90th year with a series of articles showcasing their stories.



Scan here to read other
Resthaven stories

Beyond the Beaches – Building a Brighter Future Through Education in Munda

By Kathryn Button

With its white-sand beaches, crystal-clear waters, and world-renowned diving spots, Munda in the Western Province of the Solomon Islands is the perfect tropical escape. But behind the postcard-perfect scenery lies a growing hub of educational and spiritual transformation.

On a visit to Munda in April, I represented Christian non-profit, New Hope International (NHI), conducting training for principals, teachers, and leaders from over thirty schools operated by the United Church of the Solomon Islands (UCSI), a partner church with the Uniting Church in Australia. The initiative forms part of a broader partnership to strengthen faith-based education across the region.

The region was once known for headhunting and cannibalism. Australian Methodist missionaries arrived in 1902 bringing the gospel and a commitment to community development. Today, the UCSI, formed in 1968, oversees three hundred congregations, 107 schools and a hospital, most of which operate in the now-peaceful Western Province.

Many of the United Church schools face challenges common across the Pacific – limited resources, insufficient infrastructure, and a lack of formal teacher professional development and training. That's where the work of NHI comes in. Through its internationally respected *Effective Teaching and Learning Series*, NHI helps equip educators in developing countries with practical classroom and leadership skills, grounded in Christian faith and values.

Jacqueline Riatako Turanga, UCSI's Education Secretary, expressed gratitude for the recent training.

"You are redirecting professionals to embed Christ-like features in the classroom," she said. "We have chaplains trained by the United Church, but this training redirects our hearts. It will surely enhance the lives of our teachers in strengthening both their faith journey and their teaching".



Top: Kathryn (second from left) with the General Secretary (right) and church office staff

Bottom: Munda course participants

As a Uniting Church member, I was delighted to also meet with UCSI General Secretary, Eddison Kotomae, while in Munda to discuss ongoing needs in the education sector and future opportunities for collaboration.

I discovered Munda to be so much more than just its natural beauty. It is also a place of deep Christian faith, rich history, and a shared vision for the future of education. NHI is privileged to walk alongside both the UCSI and the South Seas Evangelical Church as they build up a generation of leaders in Christ.

As the partnership continues to grow, please pray for the vital work of Christian education in the Solomon Islands, for the partnership with the Uniting Church in Australia, and for the dedicated teachers and leaders working tirelessly in places like stunning Munda.

For more information about ways to support the work of New Hope International, through prayer, finance or by offering to go yourself, see www.newhopeinternational.net or contact Kathryn Button, CEO (kbutton@csglobalconnect.org). Let her know if you would like a speaker at your next church event.

Walk as One Contemporary Australian worship music



Walk as One is a remarkable collection of 34 contemporary Australian worship songs by both well-known and emerging songwriters from the Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts (CMLA). The music is available in a range of formats for worship leaders, musicians, and teaching to congregations.

The songs include material for a range of uses in worship – gathering, praise, various forms of prayer, Scripture texts, blessings, songs of commitment and sending.

Songwriters include Steve Bevis, Rod Boucher, Lyn Bray, David Busch, Rosemary Dewerse, Maratja Dhamarrandji and Dorothy Gapany Gumbula, 'Ferg' and Mark Ferguson, David Froemming, Margaret Gunn and Helen Wiltshire, Jenni Hughes, David MacGregor, Robin Mann, Rosemary Nairn, Leigh Newton, Rose O'Reilly, Sharonne Price, Alison Campbell Rate, Paul Somerville, Nelson Varcoe and Andrew Williams.

A range of purchase options is available:

Walk as One Songbook	\$34.95 – downloadable PDF
Scores for all 34 songs	\$34.95 + postage – print copy

Music Packs 1–5	\$35 per 5-song pack
Each containing 5 songs with:	\$150 for 29 songs

- sheet music
- audio recording
- lyric video
- PowerPoint files for overhead projection
- text file for insertion into orders of service

Individual Song Packs	\$7.99 each
------------------------------	-------------

25 songs are available for individual purchase, including:

- sheet music
- audio recording
- lyric video
- PowerPoint files for overhead projection
- text file for insertion into orders of service



Listen and
buy here

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor,

I appreciate reading New Times in either the print version or the electronic version.

I was looking at pages 8–9 of the last edition. I recognised some of the people in the large picture on p9. I studied under Michael Trainor some years ago, knew Beth Prior in her growing up at Gladstone days and later at the ATL. And is that Alison W and...?

The two blokes cutting the 90th anniversary cake, though? No idea.

Is there some reason not to have captions? Names to faces? Otherwise any random stock photo would do.

Blessings,

Glenys Badger.

You're absolutely right, Glenys. We shall endeavour to include names on photos in the future wherever possible – Ed.



Send your letters to:

engagement@sa.uca.org.au
or GPO Box 2145,
Adelaide 5001

Introducing the 2025 Synod Standing Committee

We continue our series introducing the 2025 Synod Standing Committee, and getting to know the gifts and talents of its members.



Rev Christa Megan
Presbytery of Southern SA

Where do you worship?

Pilgrim Uniting Church.

What's your current role?

I'm a Deacon in congregational ministry in a supply role.

Why did you want to join Standing Committee?

I have been part of the Synod Standing Committee for some years, through more straightforward, as well as complex and challenging times. I feel privileged to be able to serve in this way and have certainly learnt a lot about the governance and breadth of the Uniting Church in SA. I value being part of a team led by the Moderator and General Secretary of elected members from across the three presbyteries, as well as resourcing people from the Synod staff, Congress, Mission Resourcing, Yarthu-Apinthi (Uniting College) and Uniting Care.

What are you looking forward to on Standing Committee this year?

We continue to be informed, discuss and make decisions regarding the many issues related to congregations, presbyteries and the Assembly. I appreciate being part of the big picture of our church and hope to contribute to making wise decisions for our future regarding property, finance, mission and more.

What are the key issues you think the Uniting Church in SA is facing?

The Uniting Church is shaped by belonging across difference and my prayer is that we persist in being unified in love and grace. This means embracing diversity as we look outwards to the wider community and welcome all people, especially those who are marginalised. Despite challenges relating to property, mission and lack of ministry leaders, may we open ourselves to discern the ways in which the Spirit is leading us.



Peter Hollister
Presbytery of Southern SA

Where do you worship?

Henley-Fulham Uniting Church.

What's your current role?

Accredited Lay Preacher; Board Chair of Uniting Country SA and Uniting Country Housing.

Why did you want to join Standing Committee?

I felt that I could contribute to the strategic directions of the UCA SA Synod, and bring insights as a lay person, as a lay preacher and from my experience with two Uniting Care agencies (UCSA/ UCH and Uniting Care Wesley Bowden), as well as knowledge especially in areas of governance and strategic planning/policy development. I also consider that I have valuable insights from recently having finished working in the Synod office for just over 7 years.

What are you looking forward to on Standing Committee this year?

Contributing to strategic level discussions on a range of topics, especially in the context of maintaining an overview of what's happening across the SA Synod as well as some insights to the operations of the Assembly and other synods.

What are the key issues you think the Uniting Church in SA is facing?

Increasing the relevance of the broader Christian faith to the general population.

QUICK BITES

Farewell service for Tim and Aunty Denise



[More photos](#)

On **Wednesday 28 May** a special service was held at Yarthu-Apinthi to farewell **Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion** and **Rev Dr Tim Hein** who have come to the end of their placements at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology, and to celebrate their immense contribution to the College. We wish them every blessing in their future endeavours.

Retired Ministers Day

On **Monday 5 May**, a Retired Ministers Day was held at Nunyara Conference Centre in Belair. On a beautiful sunny day, a large group gathered to share morning tea, worship, an information session and an excellent lunch.

There were many friendships nurtured, memories shared and stories told, and it was moving to see how engaged and passionate our retired ministers remain about the Church and the world.



[More photos](#)

Volunteers Day



[More photos](#)

To kickstart National Volunteers Week, a special service was held on **Sunday 18 May** to recognise and celebrate all our amazing volunteers who work so hard within their congregations, and who enrich their communities through our outreach programs.

The service was held at Adelaide West Uniting Church and hosted by the Mission Resourcing team, UCFAMS, and UnitingCare SA.

Dave Sigley's ordination

Huge congratulations to **Rev Dave Sigley**, who, after serving 8 years of his original 6-month appointment as the Pastor of Mount Gambier Uniting Church, was finally ordained as a Minister of the Word on **June 7!**



[More photos](#)

Geoff's last sermon

Prior to **Sunday 29 June 2025** **Rev Geoff Bridge** had announced that this would be his final sermon. Three generations of his family gathered in worship with the Belair congregation for his final service.

Geoff has been preaching for 65 years, as a student, minister in placement and a retired minister. Many congregations have benefitted from Geoff's thought-provoking words, often accompanied by visual aids.

Everyone who has worshipped at Belair Uniting Church, where Geoff has been in placement and then as a member of the congregation, is immensely grateful for his many, many years of faithful service. Thank you, Geoff!



Season's Bounty Art Exhibition

On **Saturday August 2**, a large group of art lovers gathered at **Willunga Uniting Church's** Bethany Hall for the opening of the annual exhibition held as part of the South Australian Living Artists (SALA) Festival. The event was formally opened by the federal member for Mayo, Rebekha Sharkie MP (pictured at left) and ran until August 24.

This year's exhibition was entitled 'Season's Bounty', and celebrated nature's abundance, with works inspired by the rich harvest of the Fleurieu Peninsula and beyond by the artists Elizabeth Bradley, Lynn Chamberlain, Roe Gartelmann, Denise Maddigan, Jacqui Martlew, Chris Olsen and Karen Plisko.



Awaken Adelaide Special Lecture



[More photos](#)



On **Thursday 24 July** we were blessed to have globally recognised theologian and justice advocate **Professor Namsoon Kang** present a special lecture at Yarthu-Apinthi. Dr Kang presented a fascinating and wide-ranging lecture on hospitality and leadership in a multicultural world.

Iksan Presbytery visit



[More photos](#)

In **early August** we hosted a **visit from the Iksan Presbytery**. The touring group consisted of 12 students from Year 7 to university age and their three leaders, Rev Lee, Rev Choi and Mr Seo.

The group was accommodated at Uniting Communities and in homestays, and had a whirlwind tour through many aspects of Adelaide life, history and culture. This included a wet and windy trip to Grange Beach, visits to Adelaide Zoo, Westminster School and the SA Museum, and learning a little about our First Peoples on a tour of Colebrook Reconciliation Park in Eden Hills. Culinary delights included the Pancake Kitchen, an Aussie BBQ and of course, Tim Tams!

FROM THE VAULT



We've been digging through the Synod archives and discovered a treasure trove of New Times issues dating back to the first edition in June 1982. We'll be featuring interesting snippets as a regular item in future editions.

Right: A very creative Editorial from the first New Times, June 1982

Below: Crossword from New Times, June 1982. Answers on P13 of that edition and on the QR code below.

The birth of New Times

A new life is a gift to the community. As the New Times leaves the hands of its editorial parents they will watch with interest, and some nervousness, its reception by the church community.

The production of this new SA Synod news-magazine has not been unlike the months of pregnancy. Once the idea was conceived there was a great deal of planning and preparation: choosing the right type-faces, deciding on the editorial content, experimenting with new layouts, and searching through lists of names.

As with all new arrivals the time of birth sometimes necessitates a midnight race to the hospital. It was as Assembly commenced that the frantic journey was made to the printers.

Like anxious fathers the editorial staff paced the waiting room, until the first copy came off the press and was handed to us. Scanning it eagerly we recognised some familiar characteristics in its appearance, marvelled at its own personality, and decided it looked beautiful!

Now the New Times has a life of its own. Its editorial parents still play a major part, but so does the community which receives it. That community may either assist or restrict its development.

Hopefully, it will be sensitive to the particular gifts and graces which it can offer. It will encourage and make its own contributions along the way. If a word of correction is needed it can be given with sensitivity and wisdom. The very worst which could happen is that it will simply be left to find its own way, and that it will stand in a corner waiting to introduce itself to those who may find it interesting and stimulating.

It is to you, the reader and church member, the New Times now looks to fulfil its ministry. We invite you to read it as it reflects the life of the church on the international, national and local front. Your contribution will be welcome, as will your encouragement and suggestions. Its producers believe that God has called it into being and given it a ministry — we need your support to enable that ministry to be fruitful.



ACROSS

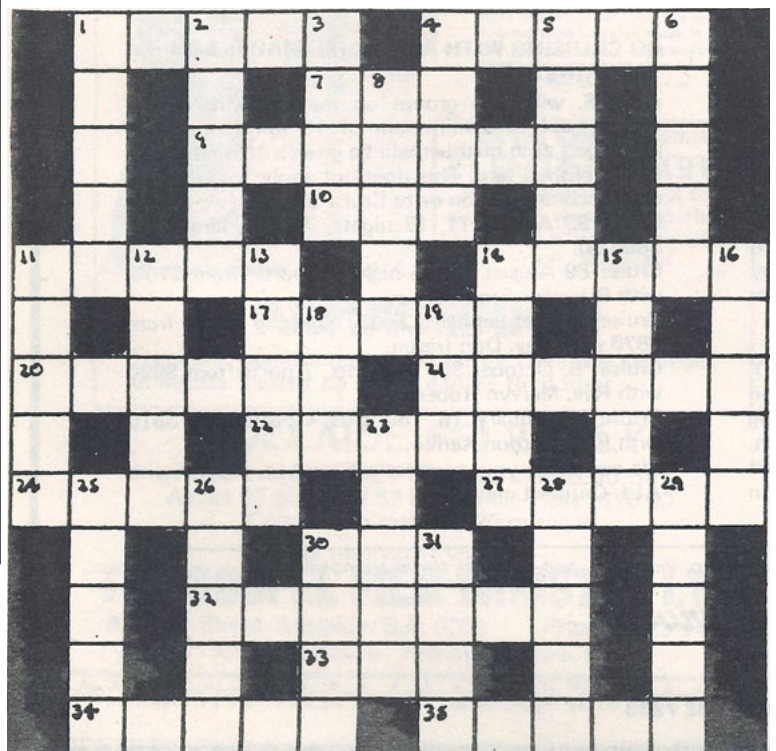
1. Tall, handsome and rejected (1 Sam. 16:6).
4. Wisdom has laid it (Prov. 9:2).
7. Malchus lost his right one (Jn. 18:10).
9. Control.
10. Era.
11. The elder brother heard it when he returned (Luke 15:25).
14. Foreigner who chose to serve David (2 Sam. 15:17-22).
17. Ordered the slaughter of boy babies (Matt. 2).
20. Northern kingdom.
21. Micah's mother ordered a silver-plated ... idol (Jud. 17).
22. Daniel had it as God's gift (Dan. 1:17).
24. Jesus brought it to the blind (Luke 4:18).
27. Pertaining to the sun.
30. The kingdom of heaven is like this (Matt. 13:47-48).
32. Absalom was having his sheep ... (2 Sam. 13:23).
33. A good king (1 Kings 15).
34. Bake.
35. The holy God is coming from its hills (Hab. 3:3).

DOWN

1. One of Job's "comforters."
2. Son of Asher (Gen. 46:17).
3. King of Sodom (Gen. 14:2).
4. Cause of Absalom's downfall (2 Sam. 18).
6. One of David's famous soldiers (2 Sam. 23:24-39).
8. Don't let it lead you into sin (Eph. 4:26).
11. Female servants.
12. Son of Reu (Gen. 11:20).
13. The giant statue's was made of silver (Dan. 2:32).
14. Paul wrote about food offered to them (1 Cor. 8).
15. Affected by the tides.
16. Inside.
18. Member of the deer family.
19. On the list of birds not to be eaten (Deut. 14).
23. Notions.
25. A son of David (2 Sam. 5:15).
26. Prophet with marital problems.
28. More ancient.
29. Brother of Moses.
30. Tidy and undiluted.
31. What the sins of a wicked man are (Prov. 5:22).



View the solutions to the crossword



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LED BY DR ROSEMARY DEWERSE.
COMMENCING SEMESTER 1 2026.

As featured in this edition of New Times! Learn about the impact of Christian mission on Aboriginal lands and communities and explore the gifts within Aboriginal wisdom. This unit will be co-taught with Adnyamathanha elders and leaders and includes immersion on Yarta (Country).



Rev Dr Rosemary Dewerse

Enquire today ☎ 08 8416 8420 ✉ info@unitingcollege.edu.au

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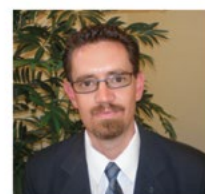
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Placements News

Placements Finalised as at 26 August 2025

Rev Darren Lovell to Pool Minister POSSA from 1 November 2025

Sonia Armani MOP (0.8) to Pool Minister POSSA from 1 February 2026

Rev Chelsea Size (0.5) to Bridgewater UC from 1 October 2025

Rev Christine Manning (0.8) to Goolwa UC (0.8) from 1 September 2025

Re Marty Rosenberg (0.3) to Generate Building Legacy Officer from 22 September 2025

Advertised Placements: Please see Positions Vacant for more details: sa.uca.org.au/uc-positions-vacant

PROFILES AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

Ceduna UC (0.6)

Echunga UC

Flinders (0.4 – 0.6)

Booleroo Centre UC, Booleroo Whim UC, Quorn UC, Wirrabara UC, Wilmington UC

Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations (0.8)

Lighthouse, Port Pirie UC

Naracoorte UC

The Vines UC (0.7)

Presbytery of Southern SA

Brighton UC

Seacliff UC

Unley UC (0.3)

Pool Ministry (x1)

Wimala Presbytery

Wesley UC Kent Town (0.5)

Placements Across Two Presbyteries

-

PROFILES NOT YET AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

Port Augusta UC (0.5)

Salisbury UC

Waikerie UC (0.6)

Presbytery of Southern SA

Lower Murray (0.6)

Newland-Port Elliot (0.6)

Noarlunga UC (0.8)

Yilki UC (0.3)

Wimala Presbytery

Goyder Ministry Area (0.8)

Grange UC (0.5) from Feb 2026

Placements Across Two Presbyteries

-

*For more information about placements,
please visit sa.uca.org.au/placements/placements-vacant-and-finalised*



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Synod of South Australia