



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

New Times

June 2026 • Issue 64



Contents

Features

Gambling reform 7

Bagshaw House 8

A long-distance friendship 9

All I need is water 10

Crossing the line with wisdom 11

Living the story: Intergenerate conference 12

Where water and humanity meet 14

Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church 17

Sanctuary Gallery 18

Introducing the Moderator Nominees 20

Our guests at Synod 2026..... 24

An interview with Cathie Lambert 25

Letters to the Editor 27

Seeking the welfare of the city 28

Regular features

From the Moderator 3

From the Editor 4

From the General Secretary 6

Quick Bites..... 30

From the vault..... 32

Classifieds 33-35

Cover details:

Orange (warm) cards held high at Synod 2024.

Editor: Clive Conway	Editorial and advertising enquiries:
Sub-editor: Megan Koch	Phone: (08) 8236 4249
Editorial Assistant: Louise Jackson	Email: engagement@sa.uca.org.au
Design: Alex Gatley	Mail: The Editor, New Times
Print: Lane Communications	GPO Box 2145
Print circulation: 6,000	Adelaide SA 5001

Deadline for next issue:

Sunday 2 August 2026

New Times is produced on the lands of the Kaurna people. We are deeply grateful for their stewardship of the land on which we live, work and play and we pay our respects to their Elders past and present. We celebrate the continuous cultural, spiritual, and physical connection that our First Nations peoples have to their land, waters and community, and we commit to truth-telling, seeking justice and healing.



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



sa.uca.org.au



[Return to Contents](#)

From the Moderator

Hope and anticipation

As we look ahead to the forthcoming Synod Meeting, there is a growing sense of anticipation for the ways in which we can celebrate what God has been doing in the life of the church since we last met. There is also a great sense of hope and anticipation for what God can, and will do among us.

Synod is always more than just gathering; it is a time of community building, worship, discernment, and shared commitment to Christ's mission in our local communities and the world.

We will begin by grounding ourselves in worship, with **Rev Ken Sumner** offering the theological reflection. This will set the tone for our time together where we recommit ourselves to being attentive to the Spirit and open to being shaped anew.

It is with great pleasure that we welcome **Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll** to guide us as Bible Study Leader, helping us engage deeply with Scripture and its call on our life and witness with a spirit of joy-filled hospitality.

A highlight of Synod will be the Celebration of Ministry service, with **Rev Dr Cathie Lambert** as guest preacher. This will be a moment to give thanks for faithful leadership, to honour those who have served, and to be inspired for the journey ahead. In particular we will be honouring Ministers who have recently retired, and Ministers celebrating milestones since ordination. We will also be recognising a number of milestones of our Lay Preachers and acknowledging new Candidates for Ordained Ministry.

Significantly, Synod will undertake the prayerful and important process of electing our next Moderator. This decision will help shape our shared future, calling us to listen carefully for God's leading.

We will also be asking members to consider the Synod Strategic Plan, discerning priorities and directions that will guide our ministry and mission in the years to come.

Lastly, I warmly encourage all to attend the public event on 'Gambling Reform' on Friday 26th July, featuring guest presenter, **Rev Stu Cameron**. This promises to be a thoughtful and challenging conversation about justice, advocacy, and the Church's role in seeking the wellbeing of our communities.

Whether attending the Synod as members or visitors, may we come expectantly, ready to listen, to contribute, and to be renewed for God's mission.

I encourage us all to pray for the planning and preparation of the Synod Meeting, regardless of whether or not we are directly involved.

May God's peace and wisdom be our strength.

Peter

Rev Peter Morel
Moderator



From the Editor

Standing on holy ground

"Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground." – Exodus 3:5

In the darkness before dawn on 25 April 2026, as we have every year since the guns fell silent, Australians gathered to remember another darkness before another dawn – the cold Aegean morning of 25 April 1915, when young men clambered from boats onto an unfamiliar shore, many of them never to return. It is a sacred hour, heavy with memory and grief, and it belongs to all of us.

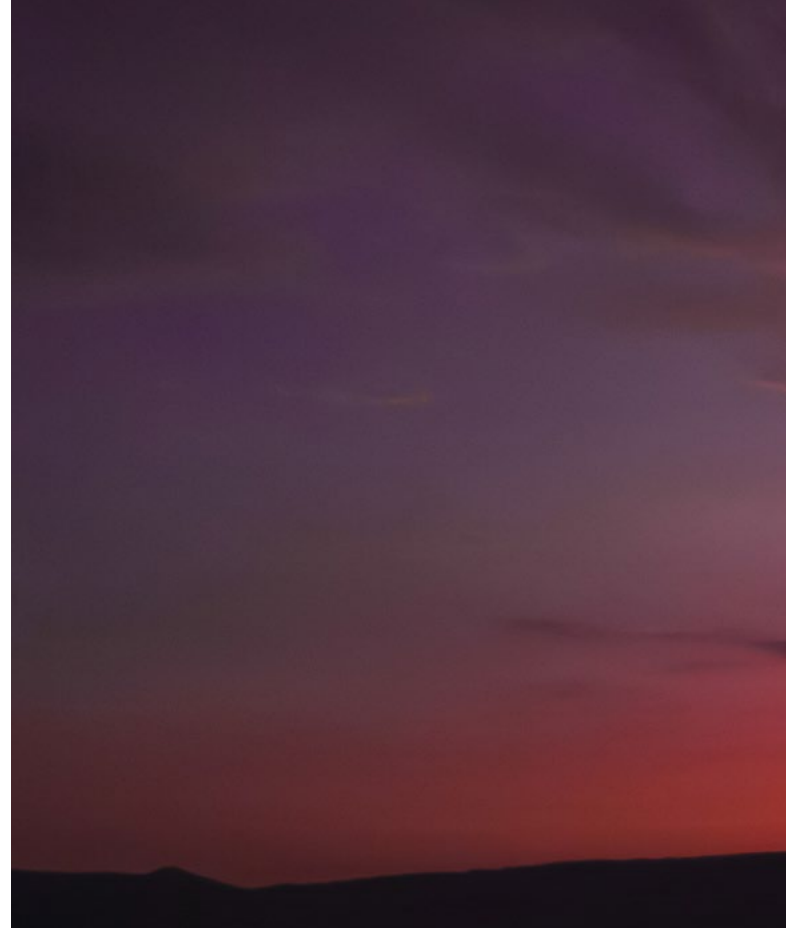
As the Last Post prepared to sound across Sydney's Martin Place, Melbourne's Shrine of Remembrance, and Perth's Kings Park, Indigenous Australians – many of them veterans who wore the same uniform as those being honoured – rose to offer a Welcome to Country. And in each city, they were met with booing from small sections of the crowd.

Here in Adelaide, attendees gathered at the South Australian National War Memorial on North Terrace. I was there, singing in the choir, as an Acknowledgement of Country was offered with quiet dignity. For the vast majority of those present, it was received with the respect the occasion deserved. Yet even here, a small handful of voices – perhaps only three or four – chose to boo. It was a brief but jarring intrusion, quickly swallowed by the solemnity of the crowd, but a reminder nonetheless that the tensions playing out more loudly in other cities were not entirely absent from our own.

I think these were events that call for careful thought. What do they tell us, and how we are called to respond?

I worship a God who meets people on holy ground – ground that was already holy before any of us arrived. The theological tradition I inherit insists that to encounter the living God is to be confronted by the other, to be asked to remove my sandals, to listen before I speak. When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples extend hospitality through Welcome to Country, or we are invited to shared reflection through an Acknowledgement of Country, they are drawing on something ancient and generous – an invitation to acknowledge deep belonging, build bridges and share humanity.

And yet I must also acknowledge that not everyone who objects to these ceremonies does so from bad faith. In the years since Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country became widespread in public life, a genuine conversation has been taking place in Australian society – sometimes thoughtfully, sometimes poorly – about the purpose of these practices, how frequently they occur, and whether they achieve the reconciliation they are intended to foster. Some Australians feel that the ceremonies have become rote or tokenistic. Others worry about a sense of cultural obligation that sits uneasily with their own sense of national identity. These are not automatically racist concerns, even if racism can sometimes be found among them. In a democracy, the freedom to hold and express such views is something I should be slow to dismiss, and the challenge for me – when I disagree – is to engage with those views with patience and respect rather than to simply condemn the people who hold them.



“The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress stands as a partner at the heart of our identity, and our Basis of Union commits us to a continuing journey of reformation and justice. That commitment is not negotiable.”

For us in the Uniting Church, the challenge is to hold this complexity with grace. We have made a covenant commitment to First Nations peoples that is woven into the very fabric of who we are as a Church. The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress stands as a partner at the heart of our identity, and our *Basis of Union* commits us to a continuing journey of reformation and justice. That commitment is not negotiable. But it is nevertheless possible to engage those who disagree with us not with condemnation but with positivity and genuine enquiry about what lies behind their concerns, and with confidence that respectful conversation is more likely to open hearts than arguments conducted on social media. I can hold a clear view that Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Country are important and deserve respect, while also remaining genuinely open to the person who hasn't yet understood why I hold that view.

The Church plays an important role in influencing cultural values. This is exercised not through advocacy alone, but also through the quality of our relationships, the generosity of our listening, and our willingness to model the kind of community that takes the dignity of every person seriously, including those with whom we profoundly disagree.

All of this gives particular weight to the Synod gathering ahead of us. At that meeting, the Church will choose its next Moderator, ponder the 2026–30 Strategic Plan, and discuss key social issues such as gambling reform and domestic and family violence. In a time as fractured and tender as this one, our future leadership will require both courage and gentleness in equal measure – the courage to stand up for our vision for a fairer

and more just society, and the gentleness to remain in genuine conversation with those in our communities who are still finding their way.

I pray for our wisdom, and that we arrive at Synod as a people committed not merely to the positions we hold, but also to our love and respect for one another, centred in the ancient, insistent call of a God who meets us on ground that was always holy.

May we be found worthy of the ground on which we stand.

Clive

Clive Conway
Editor



From the General Secretary

Synod Strategic Plan 2026–30

Since the last Synod Meeting in October 2024, we have been working on updating the Synod Strategic Plan. This has proved a time-consuming task, as we sought to incorporate planning frameworks already developed, the continuing work of the Synod and presbyteries, and new ways to shape our participation in the mission of God.

It has been an iterative process as we have consulted with Synod Standing Committee, Synod staff, presbytery standing committees, representatives of Congress, and congregations in some of our regions. This has assisted us in identifying gaps in the plan, highlighted where language is confusing, and helped us clarify what we are hoping to achieve.

I was greatly helped in my thinking about leading in times of change and complexity by Peter Kaldor in a course on executive leadership. He talked about the value of 'small, iterative steps' – not bold initiatives, but rather small steps, then reviewing and reflecting before taking the next steps. I know that not everyone will agree with me, but I am convinced that patient persistence in the practices of ministry leads to doors being opened, and new possibilities appearing. So this plan is an invitation to begin to take the steps rather than a compelling vision of future possibilities. In complex, changing times that seems to be both realistic and effective.

The Synod Strategic Plan is an invitation to conversation and exploration. We speak of four streams:

- Congregational Renewal
- Discipleship and Leadership
- Renewing the Covenant
- Wise and Faithful Stewardship.

We invite you to start where you are. We are all at different places in the journey in these four streams. Some of us might be at the very beginning and others will have travelled a long way.

Don't judge yourself too harshly, and don't set goals that are too far beyond your reach. In your discernment as a community, you will want goals that stretch you but seem achievable, with prayer, reflection and effort.

The image of streams reminds us that we are not seeking to serve in our own strength – God in Jesus has promised us life-giving water, bubbling to life in all its fullness (e.g. John 4:11; 7:38). We are trusting that as we discern at Synod, and in presbyteries and congregations, we might experience renewal, deepened discipleship, new calls to ministry, stronger relationships with First Peoples and our land, and grateful and creative stewarding of God's good gifts to us.



Rev Philip Gardner
General Secretary



Gambling statistics

The March edition of New Times featured an article on gambling reform by Mark Waters, Director of UnitingCare SA.

Gambling reform and the related issue of domestic and family violence are key focus areas for Synod 2026 and for the Justice, Mission and Theology Subcommittee.

Here is some data about gambling harm in South Australia and nationally:

- Gambling losses have increased over the last 5 years, with 80% of that due to online and sports betting
- Cost of living pressure correlates with higher gambling losses
- The greatest amount of losses occur in the lowest socio-economic areas of SA
- In 2023, 18.1% of South Australians who gambled were ‘problem gamblers’. This increased to 22.5% in 2025.

Gambling harm

Gambling harm includes **financial distress** and **increased risk of family violence**.

- 15% of all Australian adults have experienced gambling harm in the last 12 months
- Harm from pokies is greatest in the 40+ age group
- Harm from online gambling is greatest in 18–40 age group.

Justice is what love looks like in public

Rev Paul Turley, Convenor, Justice, Mission and Theology Subcommittee, Mission and Leadership Development Board, reflects on what justice means to him and why it matters.

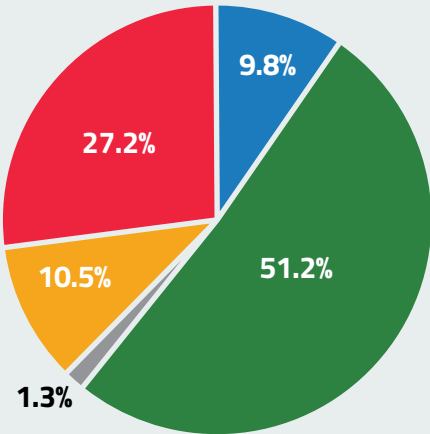
“And now faith, hope, and love remain, these three, and the greatest of these is love”
(1 Corinthians 13:13).

It is love that shapes and fires our lives. When we are loved, we are recognised, known, and celebrated; we live in the minds of others. This is the great joy of being human. Justice is about desiring and working for this experience for all.

Cornel West said, “Justice is what love looks like in public”. That is as good a focus for the Church’s work and thinking on important community issues as anything I can think of: justice – love in action.

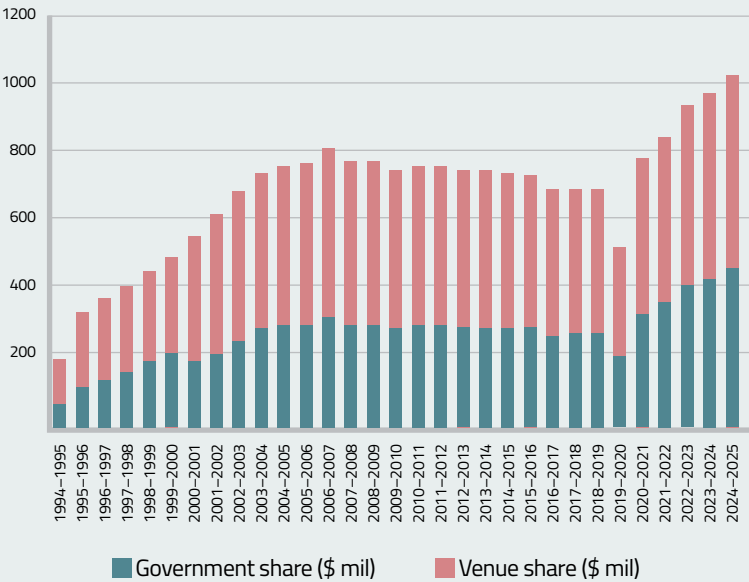
.....
The Justice, Mission and Theology Subcommittee is mandated to encourage, resource, and foster discussion around ministries of justice and mission within the UCA Synod of SA, in keeping with the strategic vision of the Synod and the Mission and Leadership Development Board.

Where are South Australians spending their gambling dollars?



Casino Pokies Keno Lotteries Wagering

Where does revenue from pokies go?



Government share (\$ mil) Venue share (\$ mil)

Bagshaw House

Locals helping locals

By Debbie Terrett and Megan Koch

Nellie Bagshaw was a Copper Coast local. Born in Wallaroo in 1917, she and her family lived near the fishing town of Tickera, before moving to a farm at Willamulka (on the road between Kadina and Bute). When Nellie was 27, the family relocated to Adelaide, where she enjoyed a varied career at some of the city's historic department stores, along with a stint in a real estate office.

In 1978, Nellie and her older sister Doris returned to Kadina. Having earned a reputation as professional and precise, Nellie was pleased to channel her energies into the life of the town. She was an active member of the local Probus club and the Kadina Uniting Church. When she passed away in 2013, at the age of 95, her will directed that her estate be used to benefit the community in a sustainable and meaningful way.

UnitingCare Copper Triangle received a generous bequest from Nellie's estate. Planning how to use the funds was a 12-year project. They identified housing for those in extreme need as a priority, and after extensive research into the most effective way to address this concern, they decided to purchase and refurbish a local property in conjunction with Uniting Country SA.

This property – just a four-minute walk from Nellie's Kadina home – is now known as **Bagshaw House**. The house will be offered to local individuals and families in urgent need of short to medium-term accommodation, providing stability and an opportunity to build a rental history as they look for more permanent housing. "[It] will mean hope and a home for people at a pivotal moment in their lives," said Dr Harry Randhawa, CEO of Uniting Country SA.



Landscaping works at Bagshaw House



Kadina Uniting Church members Dawn, Trevor, Kylie and Isabel

When tenants leave Bagshaw House and move into longer-term accommodation, they will continue to receive support through a home relocation service that supplies furniture, bedding, and kitchen necessities.

The community has embraced the scheme, and Bagshaw House has welcomed its first tenants. UnitingCare Copper Triangle will continue to play an active role in maintaining the property and preparing it between occupancies.

Brenton Smith, Acting Chair of UnitingCare Copper Triangle, called the initiative "a wonderful example of what can be achieved when local organisations work together for the benefit of our community". Projects like these embody UCCT's mantra of 'locals helping locals'. Just as Nellie Bagshaw hoped, the bequest from her estate will have a lasting impact on the community she cherished.



Nellie's 80th birthday



Sisters Nellie, Mabel and Doris



Nellie's plaque at the Kadina Cemetery

A long-distance friendship

By the Morialta and Kimba Uniting Church communities

For many years, Morialta Uniting Church has taken seriously the desire to build partnerships between rural and urban congregations and provide worship resources to individuals and smaller faith communities.

This ministry began with reciprocal visits with Jamestown Uniting Church in the 1980s. Later, Morialta UC began producing a monthly recorded service, *Beyond Our Walls*, which was mailed to church partners as a DVD or USB stick. This experience stood them in good stead when COVID-19 arrived; they transitioned smoothly to livestreaming their services. For over five years now, Morialta UC have shared livestreamed services weekly (and sometimes more frequently), so that members, and other individuals and groups, can join in worship as part of their digital community.



"Locals helping locals: we aim to help those in our community experiencing difficulties in their lives"

– the UnitingCare Copper Triangle mantra

Bagshaw House is just one of the many ways UCCT is actively caring for the local community. UCCT is a group of passionate local volunteers working in partnership with Uniting Country SA, Uniting Country Housing, the Department for Child Protection, Yorke Peninsula Uniting Churches, and Country and Outback Health to deliver meaningful community support.

In May, Kadina Uniting Church recognised the efforts of UCCT volunteers as part of National Volunteer Week. Three volunteers were presented with certificates of thanks for 20 or more years of service to UCCT programs.



Kimba Uniting Church is one of the congregations who regularly participate online. A warm friendship has developed over the years, which has resulted in two visits to Kimba by Morialta folk. Other groups that join them for services online include Ceduna and Orroroo.

Until recently, the interaction and leading of worship had been driven by Morialta UC. However, following significant experimentation, an inaugural digital combined service was conducted for Palm Sunday, led by people at both Morialta and Kimba Uniting Churches.

This initiative demonstrates the potential of inter-congregational cooperation for building lasting and fruitful community bonds, even over long distances. It is also a wonderful example of how worship resources can be shared in a proactive and practical way.



All I need is water!

By Mark Waters

Director of UnitingCare SA

Imagine living in a peri-urban community with no mains water and relying upon rainwater tanks. After a long dry spell, there's a significant risk of simply running out of water.

Earlier this year, a young single parent found themselves in exactly this situation, only a year after having experienced the death of one of their children. On top of that, they had also been involved in a serious accident where they had broken their back.

When the water tank ran dry, they found themselves carting two 25-litre containers of water from a nearby township to try to sustain their children, animals and some plants.

One of our UnitingCare Relief Centre Coordinators stepped in and sought support from the **John Lodge Trust Fund** which has been established to meet poverty and hardship head-on.

The brief application process has to be signed off by two leaders in a church congregation. Once the application was submitted, the John Lodge Trust Fund Committee made its decision via an email discussion, and within one week, a 16,000 litre water tank delivered water to the family property.

This is the way UnitingCare SA wants to keep offering support for those who can't get easy access to support from other places.

In 2025, Church Leaders and Ministry Agents were sent the guidelines and application forms for the John Lodge Trust Fund – Stream 2. If you have any questions about accessing this fund, please talk to the Chair of your Church Council or your Minister in placement, or contact Johanne Manning at UnitingCare SA on jmanning@sa.uca.org.au.

Crossing the line with wisdom

Awaken Adelaide Learning Plenary explores interfaith leadership

By Rev Dr Paul Goh
Mission Activator, Mission Resourcing Team

More than 30 people across cultures and faiths gathered at UCLT/Yarthu-Apinthi on 30 April for the Awaken Adelaide Learning Plenary, *Intercultural Leadership and Interfaith Dialogue*, co-hosted by Mission Resourcing and the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology.

The evening brought together ministers, lay leaders, and multi-faith community members for theological reflection and conversation about intercultural leadership in a multicultural and multi-faith Australia.

Keynote speaker Rev Prof Wonyoung Sohn, Professor of Christian Education at Seoul Christian University, offered a deeply personal and challenging address titled *Crossing the Line with Wisdom: Formation for Intercultural and Interfaith Leadership*.

Drawing on his own experience in South Korea, Prof Sohn reflected on the consequences of religious hostility and the urgent need for Christian formation that prepares leaders to engage neighbours of other faiths with wisdom, humility, and compassion. Prof Sohn challenged churches to move beyond both fear of the religious other and superficial forms of tolerance. Instead, he proposed a model of formation grounded in three movements: honest self-examination, meaningful encounter across faith boundaries, and renewed understanding of one's own faith through relationship with others.

A panel response and discussion followed with Dr Deidre Palmer, Dr Toar Hutagalung, and Philippa Rowland, exploring the implications of intercultural discipleship and interfaith engagement within the Australian context.

It was wonderful to be able to support fuller participation through the use of an AI-assisted translation program. Language should not be a barrier to learning or shared discernment.



Keynote speaker Rev Prof Wonyoung Sohn



With Rev Prof Sohn (centre) are Dr Toar Hutagalung, Rev Prof Vicky Balabanski, Dr Deidre Palmer, Philippa Rowland, Rev Jenni Hughes and Rev Dr Paul Goh

The plenary formed part of the broader Awaken Adelaide renewal initiative, which encourages congregations and leaders to listen deeply to their communities and cultivate intercultural capacity to participate in the mission of God within an increasingly multicultural South Australia.

The keynote address and panel responses were recorded and are available to view on the Uniting Church in SA YouTube channel.

If you would like to receive a copy of the keynote address or learn more about Awaken Adelaide, please contact Rev Dr Paul Goh at pgoh@sa.uca.org.au.

Living the story

Intergenerate Australia and New Zealand conference

By Melissa Neumann

In April, Village Church Alberton hosted the Intergenerate Australia and New Zealand conference. Among the 20 attendees were 13 representatives from 6 different UCASA churches.

We spent the day walking through 13 biblical stories, moving from **Creation** through to the **Cross**, and finally to **Calling**. At each step, we participated in an activity to help us connect with the story and consider what it means for our churches today. Visual learning, physical activities, quiet reflection, small group conversations, games, crayons, doll houses and tracing all enabled us to engage with these biblical moments and deepen our reflections.

We were also encouraged to use an all-ages lens when reading, to recognise the inclusiveness of the Bible and to consider the implications for some of our programs and approaches today.

There were three video input sessions from key leaders in NSW, New Zealand and the USA who invited us to reflect on:

- How 'our stories happen as part of the unfolding of God's story in the world'
- Collaborative remembering (remembering the stories of the Bible, of the Church universal, and of our denomination and local congregations), and how we tell and live those stories to build a community of belonging and discipleship
- The power of story-sharing across the generations – particularly ways that churches can encourage and empower the 'Boomer' generation (born 1946–1964) to share their stories with younger generations, especially Generation Alpha (born 2010–2025).

I highly recommend listening to the *Engage All Ages* podcast, produced by Intergenerate Australia and New Zealand, to hear more about material from this and previous conferences, along with interviews from people locally and internationally, both academics and practitioners. These resources can help us all grow in our understanding of being intergenerational churches for the discipleship of all people. Find the podcast here:

<https://www.intergenerate.com.au/podcast>

If you're looking for resourcing or seeking collaboration in being a church for people of all ages, please feel free to contact me: mneumann@sa.uca.org.au



ATTENDEE REFLECTIONS

Helen Young

Spicer Uniting Church (St Peters)

What was a highlight of the conference?

The conference was an engaging Bible-based experience that blended recent research which inspired some possible next steps for Spicer. It was incredibly powerful to engage in authentic storytelling and connect with others who are exploring similar paths, allowing me to see our mission in a fresh light.

What was a key takeaway?

Leaning into our identity as an authentic, all-ages community. This means understanding our unique history – the 'Spicer story' – while embracing how we are evolving. I was encouraged by the reminder to celebrate the 'mustard seed' moments that happen every day. This has confirmed for me that the Holy Spirit is guiding us as we weave our collective memories into the next chapter of our story.

What are you looking forward to implementing?

I'm inspired to explore with others how we foster deeper connections between generations, leaning into the wonderful kindness of our community to create opportunities for the older and younger generations to listen to each other's stories and to learn from one another.

I am excited about how we could continue strengthening our existing 'welcoming' approaches which will lead to a stronger sense of belonging. This involves creating spaces that cater to the needs of everyone. I am passionate about hearing all voices in our Church and learning from them.

What are you still thinking about or feeling challenged by?

I am reflecting on our calling to walk, live, and celebrate life together. I'm thinking about how to discern exactly what that looks like in practice and how we can most faithfully live out our communal calling together.

[Return to Contents](#)



Bhavani Quirke

Mount Barker Uniting Church

What was a highlight from the conference?

Seeing the collaborative effect from the individual tasks set for us.

What was a key takeaway?

That intergenerational work serves more purpose than we might think.

What are you looking forward to implementing?

New ways of teaching old lessons. The group activities can be modified to suit our varying age groups but will still get the same meaning across.

What are you still thinking about or feeling challenged by?

The idea of 'collective memories'. It fascinates me to think about the history of our church from different generations and perspectives.

Larissa Genat

Coromandel Valley Uniting Church

What was a key takeaway?

We don't have to share God's story in the way we think it 'should' be shared. God created each of us uniquely, with different strengths, and we can use our unique strengths when we share God's story. It doesn't have to look the same as others; in fact, we honour God when we are not afraid to share with the strengths He gave us.

What are you still thinking about or feeling challenged by?

It was easy to picture how to integrate the ideas in smaller groups, but I was challenged to think about how it would work with our whole congregation together. I'm excited to continue thinking through how it could look.

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES IN 2026

Amplify Conference for children, youth and family ministry volunteers and leaders

Saturday 15 August at Unity Hill (Port Lincoln)

Saturday 29 August in central Adelaide (location TBC)

Amplify is for all children and youth ministry volunteers and leaders, including junior leaders. This year we're combining the Adelaide hubs to host one space with a ministry expo. There will be in-person presenters along with our highly valued keynote speakers via video. It promises to be a great day of inspiration, equipping and networking.

For more details visit <https://amplifyconference.com.au/> or contact Melissa: mneumann@sa.uca.org.au.

If you'd like to host a regional hub, please see the website or contact Melissa for further details.

Missional Reflection days at the Royal Adelaide Show with Red Dove Cafe and Mission Resourcing

After a successful pilot run in 2025, Mission Resourcing is again offering a day of service and missional reflection with the Red Dove Cafe. Participants will do a volunteer shift at the Red Dove and have guided times of observation around the Show. This is ideal for individuals and church groups wanting to hone their reflective skills as they contemplate missional engagement in their own context. The Show starts 5 September 2026, with more details on the program coming soon.

Please contact Scott Litchfield to find out more: slitchfield@sa.uca.org.au



Where water and humanity meet

By Eva Grace K

The recent heavy rains across the Flinders Ranges and north of South Australia have brought a mixture of deep joy, relief, gratitude, and also quiet sorrow. Across our region, many farmers and graziers have welcomed this rainfall after a long period of drought. For years, they have watched the skies with longing, and now, at last, their prayers have been answered.

Eva's latest article captures these moments beautifully, highlighting both the challenges and the joy experienced by families in our remote communities. Eva has been serving as a full-time volunteer with Frontier Services for the past 12 years. She left her nursing profession to fully commit herself to supporting my Bush Chaplaincy ministry and caring for people living in remote and isolated communities across Australia.

She has been deeply involved in supporting families in pastoral stations, particularly caring for women in remote areas, preparing meals for volunteers and local communities during Frontier Services' Outback Links volunteers work projects and working extensively with me throughout the outback. Through these experiences, she has gained a deep understanding of the real-life stories, struggles, resilience, and faith of people living in the bush, which she thoughtfully captures in her writing.

Rev Sunil (Sunny) Kadaparambil

[Return to Contents](#)



Dear friends,

Out here in the wide, remote outback of Australia, the land moves between silence and sudden changes. Long droughts and sudden rains, dry creeks and flowing streams. Here, we reflect on different moments that quietly reveal the same truths of life: the courage and effort it takes to save a single life in raging floodwaters, the determination to help a neighbour, the quiet joy of seeing life flow again where love once stood beside a dry creek. Across distance, through drought, dust, rain, and the flood, this remote outback reminds us of something simple – every moment, and every returning season carries the pure meaning of care, love and compassion.

We invite you to walk in reflection with us.

Life, hope, and resilience in the outback

It was lovely to see the rain falling and settling the dry dust. Slowly it made little streams and then creeks started flowing. But within no time, raging water flowed over our remote roads and the flood began.

Our friend Rebecca from Quorn said, “We are thankful to God for the recent rainfall in Quorn and surrounds, the likes of which have not been seen this time of year since early 1974! Dams are full, creeks continue to flow, and ground water has been restored ... after several days of temperatures well into the

Kindness, care and love are quiet forces that outshine hatred and heal even the deepest wounds, while compassion is the bridge that turns distance and difference into connection.

high 40s in early February. This of course comes with a cost – damage to infrastructure [like] fencing, roads and bridges are issues still arising from the flooding that occurred in some parts of the region. We pray for those who were affected and ask for God to continue to strengthen his people to be faithful in uncertain and challenging times”.

That’s right, this beautiful rain also comes with a cost – the damages. But people here helped each other with smiling faces and open hearts. They tried to avoid the closed roads, but unfortunately near to Yunta, a driver was caught up in his truck which was trapped in raging floodwaters. A helicopter crew risked everything to pull him to safety, leaving the vehicle behind. Watching that determination and energy, all to save one life, one heartbeat, moved me deeply.

When it reached the news, I took a moment to go through those images. I scrolled down and the next image was about a school destroyed in the war. My thoughts drifted to that distant place where innocent lives disappear in moments and tragedies are reduced to numbers. The contrast is hard to ignore, that fierce determination to save one single life here, and the helpless silence that often surrounds the loss of many elsewhere.

Out here, in our remote stations, the rains have finally come after long, dry years. Creeks are running again, plains are turning green, and towns more used to dust are now watching floodwaters move across the land. Yet even in this quiet corner of the world, global worries travel with the wind, through radios, phone screens, and conversations at the local store. We met backpackers who carry heavier thoughts than the loads they lift each day, thinking of families far away, waiting for news from places touched by conflict.

One shearer said it simply with a sadness in his voice, while watching a swollen creek pass by, “We can’t fix the world, but we can look after each other here”.

That may be the lesson this land quietly teaches. When floods come, neighbours check on each other across miles of red earth. Supplies are shared. Gates are lifted together. In these small, ordinary acts, compassion moves as naturally as rainwater across the plains. Perhaps the courage and care invested in saving one life can remind us of something larger – every life, everywhere, deserves the same urgency, the same compassion, the same hope.



Sometimes the quiet strength of our remote outback can show the world what humanity looks like at its best.

The same place, the same hearts and the creek flowing again

Three years ago, Rev Sunny conducted a wedding on Christmas Eve beside a small creek in Wonoka Station. The creek area had been decorated with such care and warmth, and the beautiful couple Robyn and Andrew McInnis exchanged their rings there on that wonderful day. Even though the creek bed was dry and resting quietly under the wide blue outback sky (just like so many creeks across South Australia during those long years of drought), it was a joyful day that we still remember with warmth in our hearts. Even the summer heat and the dust seemed to belong there, as if they were part of the rhythm of the land itself – almost like a quiet background music for the wedding.

Over time, that lovely couple became our good friends. Years passed, and life, as it always does, moved on with its busy seasons. Yesterday, we were talking on the phone about the recent rains and Robyn said, “What a wonderful blessing for all in Far North SA. Our creek was one of many waterways overflowing with a raging torrent. We will be busy fencing and cleaning up like many farms, but all working with a smile to get the job done”. She sent me a photograph. When I looked at it, it reminded me of another one I had kept from their wedding day. I placed the two pictures side by side – the same place, the very same couple.

But this time the creek was different. It was no longer quiet. After the generous rains of this past week, it was flowing fully and beautifully, winding through their land with fresh energy, mirroring the happiness and fullness of their lives. When I saw those two photographs together, something stirred in me. It felt like looking at life itself. Dry seasons come. Hard years pass. But somehow, the water always finds its way back.

When I spoke with Robyn this week, I could almost feel her happiness through the phone. It’s a thing I always notice – there is always excitement in her voice, even in the drought, even in the driest times, even during the busiest days on their property, even in the middle of shearing, there is always laughter and joy. That is the spirit of people who live in our remote stations.



Robyn and Andrew McInnis beside their flowing creek.

But yesterday, in that photograph, there was an extra glow – the kind only people in these places truly understand when the land finally drinks again. When creeks begin to run, when the country starts breathing again, and hope quietly returns with the sound of moving water. Out here, the land teaches us patience. Creeks fall silent, seasons grow hard, and the country waits. But when the rains finally come and the water begins to run again, the land gently reminds us that life too, has a way of flowing back to where it belongs. Like these creeks, life always seems to find its way forward.

“Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven you.”

(Ephesians 4:32)

This article was originally published in Eva's Sunrays on the Endless Trails letter series.

Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church

70th Anniversary and official merger

By Raelene Walden and Maureen Driver

Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church (EGUC) celebrates its 70th Anniversary this year. Originally called the *Elizabeth South Methodist Church*, at its opening in 1956 it was the first church in the newly formed suburb of Elizabeth, and its historic importance has been recognised through heritage listings with both the City of Playford and Heritage SA.

The church played a significant part in the community from the time it was built. It was the first hall of any kind built in Elizabeth and as such was the first 'home' for many denominations in the area. Strong connections were made with the growing community, and it provided a safe haven for those who felt disconnected.

Healthy fellowships thrived and flourished in a multi-generational environment. Church sports teams were the springboard for broader community clubs and associations through tennis, netball and music. Fellowships, youth groups and music groups shared with those further afield, participating in events and activities between districts and denominations. Always filled with activity and energy, the church's reach has continued to be felt far and wide.

In its early days, EGUC was grateful for the support of many other churches, and folk who came from Blair Athol and beyond. EGUC was able to 'pay forward' this kindness by assisting with the mission thrust toward Elizabeth Downs, Elizabeth East and later, Elizabeth Vale and Elizabeth West.

As the energetic have grown, experienced faith for themselves, married and moved away, formed families and taken the gospel beyond the borders of the area, age has taken its toll on the remaining faithful congregation. From a fellowship which in the 1960s, barely 5 years after establishment, recorded 400 to 600 in the Sunday School, requiring 3 services on a Sunday to include everyone, it no longer had need of a Sunday School.



Christmas play 2025

In the year 2000, when faced with the decision of whether to close or proceed with a different ministry format, the fellowship decided to appoint a Lay Ministry Team for their governance, the first in Metropolitan SA. The church was blessed to have Rev Frank Measday as the mentor of this Lay Ministry Team and Minister in Association for 16 years. His drive, his thinking and his enabling of regional Lay Ministry Teams has been acknowledged over many years within the Uniting Church of Australia.

At the end of 2008 the church was approached by the Burundian congregation of the International Prophetic Pentecostal Church (IPPC), with a view to worshipping in the hall. With a 150-strong congregation, they have been part of the regular activities at the EGUC ever since. After sharing occasional combined services, in June 2024 the Lay Ministry Team held a service to acknowledge the integration into one service, and shortly afterwards, IPPC were acknowledged by UCA as a Faith Community. They have since worshiped each week in the church and taken responsibility for the heritage and maintenance of the building. They continue to bring a new breath of life to the area and to the church.

It was great to celebrate both our 70th Anniversary and the official merger of EGUC with the IPPC congregation at the 11 am service on 24 May 2026. See the **Quick Bites** column for more.



Sanctuary Gallery

A lifelong pursuit of beauty and wonder

By Megan Koch

In his novels and non-fiction, C.S. Lewis returned repeatedly to the idea of *sehnsucht*: a profound but often indistinct longing for something we have never known and yet recognise as 'home'¹. Lewis believed that this feeling – which might accompany certain passages of music, lines of poetry, or experiences of the natural world – is a God-given glimpse of his eternal glory.

For Amanda Tuohy, wildlife artist and owner of Sanctuary Gallery Hahndorf, *sehnsucht* is something she experiences when listening to birdsong: "it just penetrates the inner part of your being ... all of a sudden it flashes across your mind that you're not of this world, you're from another world". This sense of awe (an increasingly rare feeling for many of us in our distracted modern lives) is what inspires her creative practice.

Amanda displays and sells her richly detailed portraits of Australian wildlife at her Hahndorf store, which she opened soon after moving to South Australia with her husband Rev Nicholas Tuohy (Minister at Echunga Uniting Church) five years ago. Sanctuary Gallery is the culmination of a lifetime of creative ministry.

She credits the humble sparrow with igniting her wonder at God's provision. As a young girl, she remembers marvelling at the finely wrought detail of a feather and being struck by the full meaning of the Gospel writers' assertion that God values us even more than the sparrows.

A self-described "painfully shy" child, she started entering speaking competitions in high school and found to her surprise that she "felt alive" on stage. Although she had originally planned to become an ordained minister, her life changed course when she won a scholarship at a creative arts college in Sydney where she studied music and drama. It was here that she met Nick. The two bonded during student prayer nights: "often he and I would be the only ones there ... and that's when we found out there was a real kindred-ness".

The couple married in 1993 and moved to Melbourne, settling in to their first house – a tiny log cabin at the foot of the Dandenong Ranges. Here, Amanda's passions for nature and

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, Chapter 1.



art collided: "We had ... owls, sugar gliders, wrens, robins. It was magical. At night, I'd go and stand outside and there'd be a tawny frogmouth just on the balcony. So, I started doing markets big time. I started selling my work in galleries and gift shops all around the place". The self-taught artist soon found herself the recipient of a Best Exhibit award from the Wildlife Art Society.

She also discovered a talent for bringing Scripture to life through art, poetry and storytelling, and began to receive invitations to speak at churches and women's events, and to share her original stories and picture books with schools. "I love weaving together words," she says of this work. "I love to try and make it come alive ... [People] may say, 'I've read the Bible [for] 50 years, but wow, I've seen that in a whole new light now'".

Connecting with people is one of the joys of having her own gallery and shop space, which has been a long-held dream. Each morning, she spends a few quiet moments in prayer in the upper room of the shop: "It's my favourite time of the day, and I say, 'Whoever you bring in here today, Lord ... speak into their heart, whatever they're going through'. And some people come down and they're crying and they say, 'I don't know what it is, but there's this presence up there that's beautiful. There's this peace'. ... And then they'll open up and share a story".

Amanda's journey has encompassed many periods of grief and uncertainty, but her quiet self-discipline and faith that God had a

purpose for her work has sustained her: "I just sensed that God saw ... even when people said, 'Oh, give it up. Why are you still doing it?' And then that's when I started going around, taking my art and speaking and sharing. So, I knew. I said, 'Amanda, you heard right. It was good to keep going'".

While time spent running Sanctuary Gallery and the physical strain of years of artmaking means she isn't painting as much as she used to, Amanda continues to use her creative gifts in other areas. She frequently preaches at Bridgewater Uniting Church, and she shares poetic reflections with her followers online. For her, these activities are "more of a ministry ... I see every part of my being as something that I've surrendered over to God".

At the heart of all her work is a hope that people can regain a sense of wonder in their experience of God and his creation. "I think especially in the Protestant church," she reflects, "it's very word-heavy ... Sometimes I just think, 'Oh, wouldn't that be lovely ... to have some silence just for a bit, or [something] creative'".

Art, nature, a moment of connection with a stranger – all of these can jolt us into a reawakening of the soul. "We can forget," says Amanda, "and lose our wonder, and then suddenly we go, 'I remember Jesus. He's not just living in a book that I keep on a shelf. He's alive. He's more alive than the person I see right here'. And once you see that, that is the most beautiful thing to me".

Introducing the Moderator Nominees

One of the most important tasks of the upcoming Synod will be to elect our next Moderator. We asked the three nominees to introduce themselves to New Times readers, and tell us how they view the role of Moderator. Their full submissions can be found in the Moderator Nominating Committee report on the Synod website by following the QR Code link below.



Moderator
Nominating
Committee
report

[Return to Contents](#)

Rev Dianne Holden

Moderator Nominee

As I reflect on the role of Moderator moving forward, I see it as a role grounded deeply in the gospel of Jesus Christ. The good news of Jesus shapes my faith, my understanding of leadership, and my vision for the Church. It is a gospel of grace, hope, reconciliation, and renewal, calling us to love God and neighbour and to participate in God's ongoing work in the world. In a time of uncertainty and change, I believe this gospel must remain central to who we are and how we lead.

I recognise that the Uniting Church in South Australia is facing a significant season of transition. Through my experience across congregational, presbytery, and Synod life, I am aware of the impact of strategic processes such as the Mission and Property Strategy. Decisions regarding buildings, sustainability, and congregational futures are reshaping our landscape. These realities can bring grief, anxiety, and difficult discernment. As Moderator, I would seek to lead with honesty, compassion, and clear communication, creating space for lament while encouraging the Church to remember its identity as a pilgrim people, always on the way toward God's promised future.

At the same time, I see substantial opportunity for renewal. We are being invited to reflect not only on where we gather but who we are as a missional Church. I believe we must be open to nurturing diverse and creative expressions of church life alongside traditional worship and discipleship. This will require courage, imagination, and a willingness to examine structures, governance, and practices that may hinder faithful adaptation. In the role of Moderator, I would seek to help the Church discern how we remain deeply grounded in the gospel while responding creatively and faithfully to the realities of our time.

I am also conscious of the challenges surrounding leadership formation. With an ageing ministry cohort, fewer people entering formation, and pressures facing theological education, we must intentionally discern, encourage, and equip future leaders. I believe the Church has an opportunity to strengthen pathways into ministry and leadership while trusting that God continues to call people into witness and service. Supporting this discernment and formation would be an important aspect of my leadership.



Beyond the internal life of the Church, I see the Moderator's role as helping guide our engagement with key societal issues. Reconciliation and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples remain vital priorities. I believe the Church is called to continue truth-telling, deepen relationships, and live out our Covenant commitments with integrity. In a society marked by increasing division, nationalism, and fear of the 'other', I believe we are called to stand alongside people of diverse cultures and faiths, affirming the dignity and worth of every person.

I am also mindful of the growing pressures of economic inequality, loneliness, mental health challenges, and uncertainty about the future. Through my ministry experiences, I have seen the increasing need for both practical support and genuine human connection. I believe the Church must continue to be a place of authentic belonging, practical compassion and hope, offering care without judgement or transactional expectations.

My approach to leadership is grounded in integrity, relationships, and what I often describe as 'ministering from the middle'. I value the diversity of the Uniting Church and recognise the importance of listening across differences, fostering understanding, and helping people move forward together despite complexity or disagreement.

If called to serve as Moderator, I would seek to lead with hope, humility, and courage. I would aim to help the Church faithfully navigate change while remaining centred on the gospel of Jesus Christ – holding together grief and possibility, tradition and innovation, pastoral care and prophetic witness, as we continue our calling to worship, witness, and serve in God's world.

Prof Ian Olver AM

Moderator Nominee

I am optimistic about the future of the Uniting Church in South Australia. Yes, we could do with a revival, but we do not have to start from scratch. There are already great examples of successful church plants and mergers which have led congregations into more vibrant worship and positive futures. Moderators, guided by the Holy Spirit, encourage those processes. Also, chairing the Mission Leadership and Development Board over a few years, I am excited about the reports of the energy of our youth events, liaisons with other states, and the strength of our emerging young leaders. These are not just the leaders of the future but are available to be engaged now to add their perspective to our growth. The Mission Resourcing activators report funding innovative projects in congregations, and we must harness the skills of talented individuals across our congregations.

What excites me about the role of Moderator is the pastoral nature of that role and visiting congregations all over the state, listening to their progress and responding to unmet needs. As a lay preacher, that is what I particularly value both in Adelaide and rural congregations, such as Southwest Fleurieu.

Our Church has the most profound message: that the way to living full lives is following the example of Christ. Christ is our motivation for serving others, particularly First Nations people and those marginalised by society because of cultural diversity or personal isolation. However strong this message, we must add to traditional communication methods modern marketing practices that will engage current families and generations. Similarly, we need to strengthen and better promote our education opportunities for candidates for Ministers of the Word, Deacons and lay members.

For the Church, our challenge is to remain unified. This does not mean that we will use the same liturgy or interpret the scriptures in the same way, but we must maintain unity in the heart for Christ. This strengthens us as brothers and sisters in Christ and makes us more effective in advocating for, and showing by example, how people should treat each other. This counters a world with too many examples of unprincipled



individualism and often vindictive behaviours towards opponents.

After a meaningful time of discernment about accepting the nomination to serve in the role of Moderator, what I offer is to blend skills from my secular roles with those of a lifetime involvement with the Uniting Church across three states. I have continuing roles in preaching and pastoral care in my congregation at Burnside City, as well as knowledge of the wider church from chairing the Adelaide College of Divinity Council and the Mission Leadership and Development Board. I have chaired ethics committees in both Synod and nationally at NHMRC. As a Medical Oncologist I counselled people at times of great vulnerability. I treated First Nations people both in Adelaide and Alice Springs and they collaborated in research into how best to communicate. Being CEO of Cancer Council Australia showed me the value of marketing and gave me practical experience with fundraising, advocacy to governments and public education through the media. Chairing boards of the Sax Institute and National Breast Cancer Centre was a lesson in managing complex organisations with multiple stakeholders. University roles demonstrated the importance of education. I believe these are all relevant backgrounds for the Moderator's role.

Finally, I am greatly encouraged by the strengths of the other nominees, and I simply pray that in discerning who may be best suited to the next Moderator role, "Thy will be done".

Rev Rebecca Purling

Moderator Nominee



Many years ago, when I was one of the younger members of Synod, I was invited to be part of a panel discussing the future of the Church in 2020 and beyond. I don't remember the names of the other panel members or what we said, but I do know that the Uniting Church in SA has always taken seriously the need to reflect on our life and structures, and the many ways we can share the good news of Jesus, his ministry and mission, in our neighbourhoods and our state.

A lot has happened since I was a fresh-faced member of that Synod meeting. I have served as a youth worker in two local churches and engaged in Presbytery and Synod youth ministries. I have enrolled in (and completed) various courses at Uniting College (and their predecessors) including completing a Master of Ministry exploring how op shops can be missional activities.

After my ordination in 2001, I have served in three different placements (Belair/Blackwood, Broadview and Campbelltown). Each place has brought many joys and some challenges, and each has formed me into the person and minister that I am today. Alongside my ministry in local churches, I have served on various committees and councils of the Church. I have attended Assembly and was a member of an Assembly commission. For our Synod, I have chaired and been a member of various committees, review teams and Joint Nominating Committees. I am currently the Chairperson of the Wimala PRC.

Outside of the Uniting Church I am currently a member of a Cemetery Board, an Ethics Committee and the Padre at the local RSL Sub-Branch. It has been an honour to help lead the ANZAC Dawn service at 'The Gums' and the Remembrance Day Service for the last few years.

The Uniting Church's emphasis on every member ministry, our interconnected councils and our vision and courage to try new forms of ministry and mission continue to excite, sustain and challenge me. But deep divisions over theology and practice amongst the members of Christ's Church sadden me.

It is a long time since I sat on the panel during that Synod meeting, sharing my vision and hopes for the church, and a

lot has changed in the intervening years. Communication has become faster and more accessible; the rise of influencers and AI has challenged our understanding of 'truth' and has created deep divisions in our society and the world. We have lived through a pandemic of disease which heightened the pandemic of loneliness that continues to spread.

When Jesus began his ministry, he gathered around him a group of disciples, a close group of followers who travelled with him, who witnessed his miracles of healing and challenges to injustice and exclusion. After Jesus' death and resurrection these close followers formed communities of believers. Together they discussed theology and mission, they shared resources and welcomed the lost and lonely.

The Church continues to be a place of community and support. We offer people community and connection, a place to reflect on life and death, and together we serve each other and the world. My hope for the Uniting Church is that we can continue to support each other, despite our differences, share the gospel in word and deed, and continue to work for justice and peace in our neighbourhoods and the world.

I am honoured to have been nominated to be the next Moderator of the UCA in SA. If elected, I look forward to visiting local churches, celebrating with our agencies and continuing to dream and inspire others to dream, as my younger self did at that Synod meeting long ago.

Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll

Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll is an Australian Fiji-born Rotuman theologian who spent her formative years in Lautoka, on the Western side of Viti Levu in Fiji.

Sef is currently Acting Principal, Academic Dean and Lecturer in Cross-Cultural Ministry and Theology at the United Theological College (UTC), School of Theology, Charles Sturt University, Australia.

As an interdisciplinary theologian, Sef's research falls within the categories of public, contextual, and practical theologies, with Migration, Home, and Hospitality as key themes.

Before joining UTC, Sef was the Programme Executive for Mission, Mission from the Margins with the World Council of Churches based in Geneva, Switzerland. Prior to that, Sef worked with UnitingWorld as a theological researcher (on climate and gender) and the Church Partnerships Manager (Pacific), facilitating church relationships in Australia and the Pacific.

Sef is a great believer in the powerful role theology can play in bringing about transformative change.

"I look forward to leading the Bible studies at the Synod of South Australia," Sef said. "I will be exploring the nexus between hospitality and joy using Romans 12: 9–20 and the story of Rahab in Joshua 2 as guiding texts."

"I hope the Bible studies will inspire us afresh to the joyful, subversive, and transformative nature of hospitality and its implications for discipleship, mission, and witness."



At Synod 2026, Sef will be leading Bible studies on Friday and Saturday morning.

She will also be presenting a Pre-Synod Special Lecture on the topic *God on the Move: How Migration is Changing the Way We Learn, Believe and Belong* in the Awaken Adelaide series on Wednesday 24 June from 6 pm to 8 pm at Yarthu-Apinthi/Uniting College for Leadership and Theology.

Rev Stu Cameron

Rev Stu Cameron is a leading advocate for social justice and gambling reform.

As CEO and Superintendent of Wesley Mission since 2021, he has led one of Australia's largest and most diverse not-for-profit organisations, supporting people through services spanning housing and homelessness, mental health, disability, suicide prevention, aged care and family support. Stu also oversees Wesley Mission's eight churches and is leading a bold church-planting strategy that has already seen two new churches pioneered in 2026.

Ordained at Coromandel Valley Uniting Church in 2004, Stu then served for almost 15 years as Lead Minister of Newlife Church in Southeast Queensland, where he led successful church planting initiatives and extensive community outreach. Drawing on pastoral leadership and a background in accounting, he brings a distinctive perspective to tackling some of Australia's most pressing social challenges.

Born and bred in South Australia, Stu came to faith while attending Naracoorte Uniting Church and led and served in lay capacities at Coromandel Valley and Happy Valley, before managing NCYC 1995 (Adelaide) and NCYC 1997 (Tasmania). Stu served as General Secretary of the South Australian Synod from 2000 to 2006.

Stu was a member of the NSW Government's Independent Panel for Gambling Reform and is a passionate communicator on the intersection of faith, justice and public life.

At the South Australian Synod, he will explore gambling reform as both a public policy challenge and a broader call for the Church to engage courageously with issues of justice as an essential expression of the good news of Jesus.

"Coming back to South Australia always feels like coming home. It was here my faith flickered to life, and where I learned that the gospel should always be shared in Word and deed. Our evangelical history, heritage and identity is always expressed best when with urgency we seek to make disciples, and at the same time passionately pursue justice."

Gambling reform is not simply a policy discussion; it's a gospel issue. It is about people, families and communities. I am looking forward to a conversation about how the Church can respond with courage, conviction and faith in seeking desperately needed reform of a misery-making industry."



On 7 pm on Friday 26 June (the Friday night of Synod) Stu will be presenting a public forum at Adelaide West Uniting Church on the topic *The Whole Gospel: Evangelism, Justice and the Mission of God: Good News and Gambling Reform*. All are welcome.

Stu will also be leading a Synod Working Group on gambling reform on Saturday 27 June.

An interview with Cathie Lambert

Rev Dr Cathie Lambert started in her new role as Director of Pastoral Theology & Ministry Practice at Uniting College for Leadership & Theology in February. Clive Conway asked her to share a bit more about her journey and passions, and how she sees her role. Welcome, Cathie!

Tell us about your life journey that led you to faith.

I grew up in the Methodist Church in England before my family emigrated to Australia. On arriving in Perth, we began attending the local Uniting Church. My family were involved in the life of the church at many levels and at a young age I was involved in music ministry, teaching Sunday School and leading in Girls' Brigade. With our extended family overseas, the church were our family and a large part of our life.

So, faith has always been part of my life but, of course, it has grown and changed. As a teen and young adult, I attended Easter Camps, NCYCs, Synod youth worship, and About FACE. All these experiences shaped and formed my faith. I met my husband, Guy, through the Church and after we married, we spent two years living in Tonga as part of the Volunteer in Mission Program of the Uniting Church. During this time, I was in my Period of Discernment (POD) and contemplating what life might look like after our time overseas. I describe my POD as my Jonah period where I constantly ran away from where God was nudging me. Eventually, I let go of my resistance and became a Candidate for the Minister of the Word. In many ways this felt like the beginning of my faith journey. There have been so many significant moments, people and internal shifts since this time that have continued to develop my faith.

If you hadn't gone into ministry and academia, what career might you have followed?

Before my Period of Discernment, I was a high school teacher. I taught science, maths and physical education. I was teaching at a Uniting Church school and was asked to consider teaching Faith and Values as my major subject. I told the Subject



Coordinator I would need to study some theology to do this well and that is how my theological studies began. I loved it! It soon took over my life, and I left teaching to study full time.

More recently, when I embarked on completing my PhD, I had no intention of entering academia or teaching theology at university level. I have always been an avid learner, and I needed to take a break from ministry. The doctoral study met both needs. It was not until I was near completion and was asked to help teach a unit with my supervisor that I realised how much I loved the teaching space. And so, I guess, I have come back to my first option in many ways. I always felt a calling to teaching and now I have rediscovered this within the Church context.

What excites you about your new role, and what do you hope to achieve?

There is a lot that excites me about this role. I enjoy working with Candidates for Ministry as they engage with their formation. This is a vulnerable time of learning and growing and I am looking forward to walking alongside the candidates as we create community together. Phase 2 Formation is such an important time to develop relationships and collegiality that will help sustain and support lifelong ministry practice.

I am also keen to see the *Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Care* begin in Semester 2. This course has been developed specifically for those working in chaplaincy roles. Working with experienced chaplains to offer these units to those engaged in meaningful ministry in a variety of contexts will be a great privilege.

One of the immense joys I have discovered in teaching pastoral theology is witnessing the creative results of learning. For example, in second semester I am teaching the unit *Faith in a Fractured World*. I am keen to see how individuals, and possibly groups from congregations, respond to the existential issues facing our world. I look forward to seeing creative liturgies, innovative events, transformative moments, and fresh approaches to pastorally caring for our communities as they navigate this troubled world.

What do I hope to achieve? Only to bring my best self to this role and continue learning myself. If my classes, my leadership and my presence can mirror the love of Christ and encourage people to expand their understanding of God, I will rest knowing I have participated in God's ministry in this place.

What things drive and motivate you? What are you passionate about?

I love being in God's creation! We have a plot of land in the Hills of Perth that has a winter creek and is surrounded by bush. I love sitting still on the little bridge we have built and listening to the frogs, the birds and the babbling water. A lot of my big God moments have happened in the natural world, including my decision to candidate for ministry. This is my prayerful space where I feel particularly connected to God.

I am also passionate about finding creative ways to express faith. I have grown to love art, poetry, dance and ritual as meaningful ways of connecting with God. I enjoy walking alongside people as they discover their own unique ways of expression. As a spiritual director, one of my greatest delights is companioning people on their journey and witnessing the joys and struggles in their faith lives. I particularly love musical theatre. I think the greatest honour would be to have your life strung together as a series of songs displaying the ups and the downs.

I have many passions, but I will share just one more. I am extremely passionate about creating safe places for people to learn and grow in their spiritual life. In my own research and spiritual direction practice I have seen, all too often, the results of spiritual abuse and the misuse of power. I am continually challenged to examine my own practices and language to create safe places for all people to share and contribute within communities.

If you would like more information about the courses at UCLT, please email info@unitingcollege.edu.au.

The *Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Care* starts in **August 2026**.

The unit *Faith in a Fractured World* commences in the last week of **July 2026**.



The Moderator, Rev Peter Morel, blesses Cathie at her induction.

What have been a couple of major life highlights, at work or outside work?

The most significant highlights would be those moments that formed my family. This year my husband and I will celebrate 30 years of marriage. Guy is my soul mate and the person who grounds me when I get a little excited about how much I think I can achieve. The birth of our two children, who are now both young adults, are also highlights. Seeing them grow and create their own lives is a great joy in my life.

A more recent highlight was the completion of my doctorate. For me, this was far more than just gaining a qualification – the process was transformational. I found my voice, my passion, courage and confidence. I studied how contemporary women on the edge of the church responded to the lives and works of the Beguine mystics from the 13th century. As I listened to the stories of women centuries removed from one another, I discovered my own story and was empowered to live into it more fully.

At Synod 2026, Cathie will be preaching at the Celebration of Ministry service.

Letters to the Editor



Send your letters to:

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

Dear Editor,

In the March *New Times*, both the Moderator and the Editor have referred to favourite hymns. Growing up in Churches of Christ tradition, it was after 1978 when we started worshipping at Kingston SE Uniting Church that I first came to sing one of my favourite hymns. Remarkable words of Henry Burton, from *There's a light upon the mountains* – “but his angels here are human, not the shining hosts above; for the drumbeats of his army are the heart beats of our love”.

These words were the centrepiece of a banner inspired by ‘Angel’, Mrs Norma Keyte and made by women at the Kingston Uniting Church. So your article Angels project had special significance. Many years ago, Kingston UC had a twinning arrangement with Woodville Uniting Church. This relationship meant reciprocal visits to Kingston and Woodville. Later I had friends who attended Woodville UC and more recently the late Rev Eric Kirkham has been our special visiting preacher. I wonder if any of the pictured Angels remember those special weekends. They are treasured memories for my husband and me.

From a very interested reader and now contributor!

Christine Parker

P.S. I would love to see a close-up photo of some angels, human and knitted!



Thanks so much for those memories, Christine. We've included a couple more pictures of the knitted angels for you that show a bit more detail.

I agree, There's a light upon the mountains is indeed a rousing and inspirational hymn – every word rings with passion and energy. – Clive

Dear Clive

Well done on your work with the *New Times*. I too have always loved the song *My Song is Love Unknown* and appreciated your words about it.

Thanks.

Anne Chase.

Tell us your favourite hymns and worship songs

We've had so much correspondence about hymns, that we've decided to run a poll. We're inviting you to tell us your favourite hymn or worship song and, optionally (in 50 words or less), why you like it. We'll assemble a **Top 20** list and then put it to a vote.

Send your responses to engagement@sa.uca.org.au with the subject: **My favourite hymn or song.**

Seeking the welfare of the city

Justice advocacy after the 2026 state election

By Rev Dr Paul Goh

Mission Activator, Mission Resourcing Team

.....
This reflection was originally presented to the April meeting of the Justice, Mission and Theology Subcommittee of the Mission and Leadership Development Board as part of its Justice Watch session.

The South Australian election held on 21 March 2026 has reshaped the context in which justice advocacy now takes place across our state. For churches, agencies, and communities committed to public witness, the election result is not simply a political development – it is part of the environment in which we seek to live faithfully, speak courageously, and work for the flourishing of all.

The Labor Government was returned with a historically strong majority in the House of Assembly, giving the government significant capacity to progress legislation and policy priorities. For those engaged in advocacy, this means working with a government that holds both a clear electoral mandate and considerable political confidence.

At the same time, the composition of the Legislative Council crossbench introduces a more complex parliamentary dynamic. One Nation has secured representation, while the Greens have strengthened their presence alongside a number of independents from across the political spectrum. In practical terms, this means the crossbench is likely to play a decisive role in shaping contested legislation over the coming parliamentary term.

This complexity presents challenges, but also opportunities. It creates openings for engagement on issues aligned with the Church's longstanding commitments to justice, dignity, reconciliation, and the common good.

Three themes dominated the election campaign and are likely to shape political debate over the next four years: housing affordability and cost-of-living pressures; the pace and justice dimensions of the energy transition; and concerns around community safety. These issues are not abstract policy questions. They are realities affecting people across our congregations, schools, agencies, and neighbourhoods.

The possibility of a Human Rights Act for South Australia remains a live prospect, with potential support from the Greens and some independents. At the same time, Aboriginal justice issues – including the *Raise the Age* campaign – may face stronger political resistance within a climate where law-and-order narratives continue to carry weight.

For the Church, these developments invite both strategic reflection and theological clarity.

A strong government is not necessarily a just government. Electoral success does not remove the Church's responsibility to speak with integrity, compassion, and courage. The Uniting Church's advocacy remains non-partisan, but it must never become uncritical. We affirm policies that contribute to the flourishing of all people, while also speaking honestly when public decisions fall short of justice and dignity, particularly for those who are most vulnerable.

The election also reminds us that the crossbench is not merely a political variable to be managed, but a relational space to be engaged. Effective advocacy in this parliamentary term will require careful, respectful, and differentiated engagement across a wide spectrum of political voices – especially where there is shared concern for human rights, social equity, climate responsibility, and community wellbeing.

Importantly, the anxiety evident throughout the election campaign is not only political – it is deeply pastoral. Housing stress, financial insecurity, social fragmentation, and distrust of institutions are lived realities for many people. The Church encounters these realities every day through congregational life, community services, chaplaincy, and neighbourhood relationships.

Our public advocacy emerges not simply from policy analysis, but from proximity to people. We speak because we are present.

In this context, several priorities emerge for the Church's justice engagement:

- engaging government through both constructive partnership and prophetic accountability
- building respectful relationships across the Legislative Council crossbench
- grounding advocacy in attentive listening to the lived realities of communities experiencing pressure and exclusion.

The prophet Jeremiah's words to the exiles remain instructive for the Church today: "Seek the welfare of the city ... for in its welfare you will find your welfare" (Jeremiah 29:7). This is not merely political advice – it is a theological orientation that reminds us that our public witness is part of our discipleship and mission.

The 2026 South Australian election has clarified the terrain before us: a confident executive government, a complex crossbench, and communities carrying significant social and economic pressures. It is a demanding context. Yet it is precisely in such contexts that the Church's vocation to faithful, hopeful, and courageous engagement becomes most visible.

Justice Watch, a designated session within meetings of the Justice, Mission and Theology Subcommittee of the MLDB, seeks to sustain that vision – grounded in faith, attentive to context, and committed to the flourishing of all people and the whole creation.

QUICK BITES

Rev Beth Seaman's retirement

Rev Beth Seaman conducted a final service at **Marion Uniting Church** on **Sunday 17 May** to mark her retirement from ministry. Beth has also served as Pastoral Relations Committee Chairperson for the Presbytery of Southern SA.

Thank you, Beth, for your years of devoted service, and every blessing for the future!



[More photos](#)

State Youth Conference

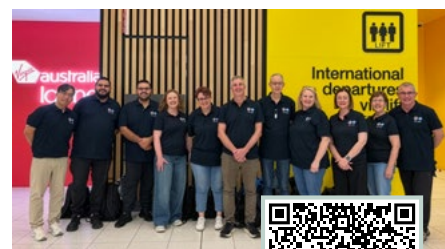
Over 400 young people from churches across South Australia gathered at **Seeds Uniting Church** on **Friday 22 May** for SYC Worship Night. The evening included worship, games, and teaching, with an excellent message from Billy Hogarth from Gardens Church. It was inspiring to see so many young people respond to the gospel – please keep the youth of South Australia in your prayers!



Iksan Presbytery visit

In **May**, representatives from our Synod visited the **Iksan Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK)**, with whom we have a long-standing partnership going back more than 30 years.

During their trip our group attended the PROK Presbytery meeting, prayed for peace in the Korean Demilitarized Zone, spent time with host families, visited local churches, explored South Korean history at the Independence Hall and Jeonju Hanok Village, and enjoyed lots of delicious food!



[More photos](#)

Rev Shelley Alexander's induction

Congratulations to Rev Shelley Alexander, who was inducted as the new Minister at **The Vines Uniting Church, Woodcroft** on **Saturday 18 April**. Marty Rosenberg officiated at the service, and Rev Ruthmary Bond was guest preacher.



[More photos](#)

The First Nations World of Connections event

On **Sunday 17 May**, **Unley Uniting Church** hosted a History Festival event organised by Unley Allies with First Nations People.

The afternoon began with a screening of the documentary *Iain and Allen: Full Circle*, which follows Iain Seymour's journey to discovering his biological family, and his brother Allen's advocacy for reconciliation and Stolen Generations education.

The program also included reflections from Jonathan and Janeen Barker on their personal connection with the late Kimberley elder David Mowaljarlai.



[More photos](#)

New church formed at Elizabeth Grove

A special service on **Sunday 24 May** celebrated the merging of the existing Elizabeth Grove UC and the International Pentecostal Prophetic Church (IPPC) faith community to form a 'new' **Elizabeth Grove Uniting Church**. Wimala Presbytery Chairperson Rev Dianne Holden preached at the service.

Congratulations and sincere thanks to everyone who made this exciting partnership possible!



[More photos](#)

United Church of Christ in the Philippines conference

General Secretary Rev Philip Gardner travelled to Tacloban City in **May** for the Quadrennial Conference of the **United Church of Christ in the Philippines**. He was joined by Sureka Gorringer (National Director of UnitingWorld) and Rev Cyrus Kung (who works with Mission Resourcing in SA and with UnitingWorld as Church Engagement Manager).

The conference gathered together 600 delegates from across the Philippines, with a focus on 'Walking with Jesus: Journeying with the Anawim' (a Hebrew word referring to the poor and marginalised). It opened with a powerful worship service featuring music, dancing, and storytelling from the history of the UCCP.

Our delegates also enjoyed meeting with UCCP leaders over dinner, visiting a communal farm, and touring the city of Tacloban.



[More photos](#)

Harmony Week picnic

Members of **Morialta Uniting Church** recently partnered with the Adelaide Dawoodi Bohras community to organise a vibrant multicultural community event. The gathering on **Sunday 22 March** celebrated both Harmony Week (16–22 March) and Eid al Fitr (20 March), highlighting an ongoing interfaith relationship between Morialta Uniting Church members and an Islamic group that utilises the worship space and other church facilities. Ramadan and Lent coincided this year, which provided an opportunity to express friendly curiosity, cooperation and mutual esteem between Muslims and Christians.

An atmosphere of openness and goodwill contributed to the success of the celebration, making it a memorable occasion for everyone involved. Attendees from both faith groups and from the wider community enjoyed fellowship, food and craft stalls, and excellent weather.



[More photos](#)

Adare Uniting Church's 70th anniversary

This year, **Adare Uniting Church** in Victor Harbor is celebrating 70 years of faith, love, and community. They are marking this anniversary at a service on **Sunday 26 July** at 9.30 am, at which Moderator Rev Peter Morel will preach. There will be a community meal to follow at the Adare Conference Centre. All past members and friends are invited to attend.

For more information about this event and to register for the lunch, contact the church office at 8552 8377.

A lighter and less formal celebration will take place on Sunday 27 September at 2 pm. This event will celebrate the moments that shaped Adare through music, song and stories, followed by afternoon tea and 'The Great Adare Bake Off'.

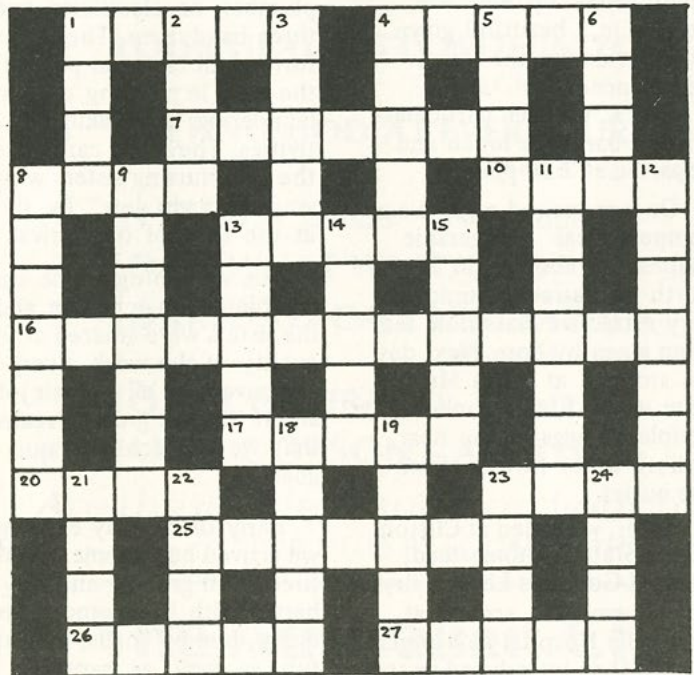


Help us stay connected by sending your brief news items and accompanying photographs to engagement@sa.uca.org.au

FROM THE VAULT

New Times

From New Times, October 1982



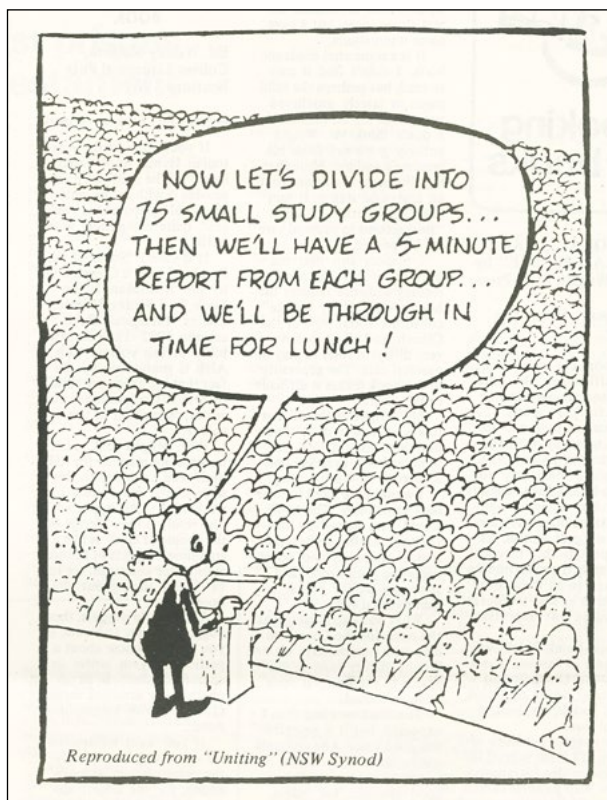
ACROSS

- 1 Son of Reu (Gen. 11: 20).
- 4 The shepherd knows it by name (Jn. 10).
- 7 Conversations with God.
- 8 Vantage-point for Zacchaeus (Lk. 19).
- 10 Silicate of magnesia.
- 13 One of Paul's workers (Philemon 24).
- 16 Roman governor.
- 17 Hemp.
- 20 She went with her mother-in-law.
- 23 Jacob loved Leah... then Rachel (Gen. 29-31).
- 25 Suppose.
- 26 Heard by the older brother (Lk. 15:25).
- 27 Go in.

DOWN

- 1 Sign for the wise?
- 2 Ready to harvest (Jn. 4:35).
- 3 Attribute of the Word (Jn. 1:14).
- 4 Solomon met its queen.
- 5 Home of the wise?
- 6 Man of Tarsus.
- 8 The devil.
- 9 Be that way! (Rev. 3:19).
- 11 Goddess of Sidon (1 Kg. 11:5).
- 12 Jesse sent them to the Israelite commander (1 Sam. 17:18).
- 13 Removes moisture.
- 14 Hero of the exodus.
- 15 Yet.
- 18 His name meant laughter (Gen. 21:1-7).
- 19 Get up.
- 21 Goes with the Thummin (Ex. 28:30).
- 22 Clouts.
- 23 Season of penitence.
- 24 Rouse.

From New Times, April 1983



View the
solutions
to the
crossword

Uniting Church Schools

Have Faith in Education

The independent schools associated with the Uniting Church Synod of SA provide education for around 6,000 students from Early Learning to Year 12. They offer a variety of learning environments, world-class facilities and high academic standards.

Students are valued and cared for, and faith diversity is respected. The story, values and practices of the Christian faith are expressed with integrity to nurture young lives for sound learning, faith, compassion and service.



Annesley Junior School
28 Rose Terrace
Wayville 5034
08 8422 2288
www.annesley.sa.edu.au

Pedare Christian College
12-30 Surrey Farm Drive
Golden Grove 5125
08 8280 1700
www.pedarecc.sa.edu.au

Pilgrim School
2 Campus Drive
Aberfoyle Park 5159
08 8270 3033
www.pilgrim.sa.edu.au

Prince Alfred College
PO Box 571
Kent Town 5071
08 8334 1200
www.pac.edu.au

Scotch College
Carruth Road
Torrens Park 5062
08 8274 4333
www.scotch.sa.edu.au

Seymour College
546 Portrush Road
Glen Osmond 5064
08 8303 9000
www.seymour.sa.edu.au

Westminster School
1-23 Alison Avenue
Marion 5043
08 8276 0276
www.westminster.sa.edu.au

5.20%_{pa}

for 11 months term investment
(minimum \$1,000) as at 5 June 2026



ucinvest

Let your money work for you.
Invest in your tomorrow while
enjoying market returns.

☎ 1300 274 151

🌐 ucinvest.com.au

Invest **Smarter**, Invest **Ethically**, Invest **Confidently** with UC Invest

Speak to One of Our Friendly Investor Relations Team Members Today!

\$45 MILLION IN GRANTS TO THE UNITING CHURCH OVER 20 YEARS • ENJOY IN-HOUSE CUSTOMER SERVICE

Uniting Church SA Investment Fund Ltd ACN 620 095 472 AFSL 501022 ('the Fund') is a public company, limited by guarantee and registered under the Corporations Act 2001. The Fund exists for the charitable purpose of advancing religion by supporting the mission of the Uniting Church in Australia. The Fund holds an Australian Financial Services licence (AFSL) number 501022 authorising it to deal in, and provide general financial product advice in relation to, securities (which include debentures) and non-cash payment products. It also operates under an instrument made by ASIC the effect of which is to exempt it from the requirement to comply with Parts 6D.2 and 6D.3 of the Corporations Act 2001 in relation to offers to issue debentures (ASIC Corporations (Charitable Investment Fundraising) Instrument 2016/813). Our Charitable Investment Fundraiser Identification Statement provides more information and explains how investment funds are used to support the charitable purposes of the Fund. Our AFS Licence does not authorise us to provide personal advice. Before acquiring any product or service of UC Invest you should read our Product Disclosure Statement (PDS) and consider the appropriateness of the product or service having regard to your particular objectives, financial situation and needs. The Fund is not prudentially supervised by the Australian Prudential Regulation Authority. Therefore, an investor in the Fund will not receive the benefit of the financial claims scheme or depositor protection provisions of the Banking Act 1959. Investments in the Fund are intended to be a means for investors to support the charitable purposes of the Fund. The Fund is required by law to advise investors that investments in it are only intended to attract investors whose primary purpose for making their investment is to support the charitable purposes of the Fund, that investors may be unable to get some or all of their money back when they expect or at all, that investments are not subject to the usual protections for investors under the Corporations Act 2001 or regulation by the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC), and that the investment is not comparable to investments with banks, finance companies or fund managers.

All interest rates are quoted per annum and are subject to change without notice. Check www.ucinvest.com.au for the latest rates.



Study with the Uniting Church's college

Areas of study include Bible, Leadership, Theology, Church History, Community Ministry, Ministry Practice and more!

Study for credit towards a course of study or for personal interest.

Online and on-campus learning.



Enquire today

📞 08 8416 8420

✉ info@unitingcollege.edu.au

CLASSIFIED

MORIALTA CHARITABLE TRUST FUND

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



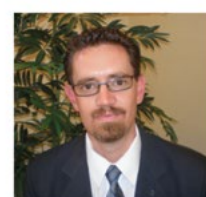
IVAN BUTLER
Family Funeral Directors

8261 8211

All hours

www.ivanbutlerfunerals.com.au
enquiries@ivanbutlerfunerals.com.au

26 OG Road Klemzig SA 5087



Geoff Lewis
General Manager



Return to Contents



**ELECTRATECH
SERVICES**

**All aspects of Electrical, Data, and
Audio Visual Systems**

Installation
Repairs
Upgrades

Advice
Training
Hire

0449 144 432

enquiries@electratechservices.com.au

Electrical Licence: PGE 222918



Adare
Uniting Venues SA

Adare Camp & Caravan Park

Victor Harbor
Holiday Accommodation

Discounts for UCA Ministers and Members

www.unitingvenuesa.org.au/adare

08 8552 1657



Placements News

Placements Finalised as at 14 April 2026

No Placements finalised in March

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

PROFILES AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

Balhannah UC (0.6–1.0)

Ceduna UC (0.6)

Flinders (0.4–0.6)

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

Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations (0.8)

Lighthouse UC, Port Pirie

Port Augusta (0.4)

Presbytery of Southern SA

City View UC, Community Minister (0.7)

Wimala Presbytery

Goyder Ministry Area (0.5)

*Clements Gap UC, Hallett UC, Jamestown UC, Orroroo UC,
Whyte Yarcowie UC*

Wesley UC Kent Town (0.5)

For more information about placements,

please visit sa.uca.org.au/placements/placements-vacant-and-finalised

ISSN 0726-2612

New Times is the voice of Uniting Church in SA. Published quarterly, it represents the breadth, diversity and vision of Uniting Church members in South Australia. Articles and advertising do not necessarily reflect the views of the *New Times* Editorial Team or the Synod of South Australia.

Return to Contents



The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia