

The Uniting Church in Australia
Synod of South Australia

New Times

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AI and the care of creation

Meet the Moderator-elect

Top hymns, songs & books

• THE VOICE OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN SA •
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Synod2026
The 42nd meeting of the Synod of South Australia









Reflecting on Synod 2026

> As Moderator, I left the meeting encouraged. Not because every question has been answered or every challenge resolved, but because I witnessed a Church that continues to trust God, to listen for the Spirit's voice and to seek the flourishing of our communities.

In reflecting upon the recent meeting of our Synod, I have a deep sense of gratitude. It was a privilege to share in worship, prayer, conversation, community building, discernment and decision making as we represented the life and witness of the Uniting Church in South Australia.

One of the great gifts of such meetings is that they remind us that we are not called to serve alone. We come from different congregations, organisations, schools and ministries, bringing diverse perspectives and experiences. Yet, as we gather in Christ, we seek to live out our commitment to love and serve, uniting in God's mission throughout our local communities, the wider church and world.

I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making the meeting such a positive experience. To the members of Synod who engaged thoughtfully, listened respectfully and spoke with both conviction and grace – thank you.

It was a privilege to have Rev Uncle Ken Sumner gently encouraging and challenging us in the opening worship, that we might 'journey on Country together' in a spirit of *Dadirri* – deep listening.

I am grateful for Rev Dr Seforosa Carroll's leadership of our Bible Studies, as she enabled us to reflect on joy-filled hospitality, with particular focus on the host/guest relationship.

It was also great to have Rev Dr Cathie Lambert preaching at the Celebration of Ministry Service, where we could honour many people, lay and ordained, who have responded to God's call upon their lives.

I am especially grateful for those whose ministry often goes without acknowledgement. Our worship leaders and musicians nurtured our spirits, and our chaplains offered the opportunity of safe space for those in need. The Synod staff, event organisers, minute secretaries, technical and audio-visual teams, first-aiders, volunteers, Uniting Technology, and Adelaide West UC teams worked tirelessly behind the scenes so that we could focus on the work before us. Their hospitality, professionalism and dedication were gifts to us all.

I offer my congratulations to Professor Ian Olver as Moderator-elect and look forward to working with him over the next two years leading up to his Installation in June 2028.

As Moderator, I left the meeting encouraged. Not because every question has been answered or every challenge resolved, but because I witnessed a Church that continues to trust God, to listen for the Spirit's voice and to seek the flourishing of our communities.

Thank you for your prayers, your service and your faithful participation. Together, may we continue to be a Church that is joyfully serious and seriously joyful as we follow Christ into the future God is preparing for us.

Peter

Rev Peter Morel
Moderator



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What it means to follow Jesus

One of the things that has fascinated me over the years is how different periods in the history of the church have had different expectations of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. It is not just history either – geography and sociology are factors. Political context is also important.

It is fascinating to see how the expectations for Christians have changed over the centuries. For long periods of the church's history, celibacy was seen as an ideal for leaders in the church. In the Protestant church, marriage became the expectation. In the nineteenth-century, abstinence from alcohol became important, due in large part to the damage that alcohol was doing to people's lives, especially women and children. And while drunkenness has always been frowned upon, other periods of the church were less anxious.

With the rise of what is often described as 'political populism' our expectations of what it means to follow Jesus have sharpened again. The era in which we live tends to divide people. Some leaders look to heighten conflict rather than seek understanding. There is increased rhetoric about immigration, refugees and First Peoples. In the United Kingdom and the United States some groups have sought to utilise Christianity for their own ends, for example, the put 'Christ back into Christmas' rallies in the UK in December last year. Tommy Robinson's far right views on migration, multiculturalism and Islam have persisted despite his reported conversion to Christianity.

Being a follower of Jesus in every era of the church includes prayer, Bible reading, worship and serving others. In our era I believe that hospitality is also critical. Paul encouraged his congregations to 'extend hospitality to strangers' (Romans 12:13), and hospitality has been central to discipleship in many contexts. Many monastic communities placed hospitality as a central practice. Hospitality is both an act of inviting people into your life and home and an attitude of making space for others in your heart and mind. Being willing to entertain and explore other ways of seeing the world before discerning the way forward.

I am writing this article for a number of reasons. One I have already stated is that this is a topic of genuine interest to me and it could easily have blown out beyond the word count. I am also keen for leaders in congregations to consider what being a follower of Jesus means in their context – what does a Christian look like in your neck of the woods? Similarly, you might embark on that exploration by thinking about what experiences, opportunities and practices would help grow the kind of disciples that our context is calling for, and God is inviting us to become. And I want to offer the suggestion that hospitality might be a critical practice in our times.

Rev Philip Gardner
General Secretary



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From the Editor

AI and the care of creation



Artificial Intelligence has moved from being a novelty to part of our everyday lives in just a few years. Many of us use it to search for information, draft letters and assignments, learn and translate languages, generate images, analyse our medical results and help us solve problems. Increasingly, AI shapes the news we read and the images we see.

Often, we use AI, or have it thrust upon us, without even realising it – when we search the web; when we use Siri or Google Asistant, spell-checkers or predictive text; when a social media algorithm decides what we do or don't see, or recommends people to follow; when our favourite online retailer helpfully suggests "you might also like …"; when Google Maps suggests a route, tells us our estimated arrival time or predicts traffic – AI is playing some role in all these things.

But in the media and online, commentators regularly point out potential dangers of AI. Some of them might sound sensationalist, and some, no doubt, worryingly plausible.

The genuine benefits

Of course, AI is already bringing many real benefits to all our lives. AI-assisted diagnostics are helping clinicians to detect cancers and diabetic eye disease earlier and more accurately. Climate researchers are able to analyse climate patterns and predict and mitigate against future catastrophic events. Assistive technologies built on AI are giving voice to people with disabilities and independence to the elderly.

In our church life, translation tools are opening up scripture, worship resources, and pastoral care to language communities who previously had none. AI is reducing the load on overworked volunteers – taking and transcribing minutes of meetings, creating the first pass of a newsletter, speeding up research for a sermon, summarising a lengthy report, or helping a small congregation produce well-thought-out documents on a shoestring budget.

At what cost?

But every one of those benefits is purchased with **electricity**, **water**, and **minerals** drawn from our finite planet, and the scale involved is growing rapidly. Data from the International Energy Agency (IEA) shows that data centres consumed over 500 TWh (Terawatt-hours) of electricity globally in 2025, a 17 percent increase on the previous year. To put that in perspective, it's about twice the annual electricity use of Australia or Spain.

A **data centre** is a secure digital warehouse containing many networked computers and storage drives. Depending on its purpose, it may range from a few servers in a large room to the Colossus 2 facility in Memphis, Tennessee which contains tens of thousands of servers spread over 100,000 m^2.

That's not all AI, of course. Other significant contributors include cloud computing, internet services, banking, and other digital infrastructure. According to the Australian Energy Market Operator (AEMO), Australian data centres used about 3% of electricity supplied through our National Electricity Market in 2025, with AI thought to be responsible for approximately a third of that.

The IEA predicts that global data centre usage will double by 2030, with AI being the fastest growing sector.

Water tells a similar story. Data centres cool their servers either with energy-hungry air conditioning or with water that evaporates and is lost to the local catchment – most large facilities use a mixture of the two. The water consumption of data centres in the US alone has tripled in a decade and is now estimated to be well over 60 billion litres of water a year. That's not counting the water used to generate the electricity in the first place. This water is generally drawn from the same rivers, aquifers, and reservoirs that supply farms and households.

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All AI isn't equal

When it comes to environmental impact, what you do with AI matters. Generating an image can use hundreds of times more energy than creating a simple block of text, and video creation thousands of times more. In other words, the more spectacular the AI output, the larger the impact on the planet.

This table summarises the relative costs of various AI activities, compared to a simple Google search. Bear in mind, of course, that a carefully worded AI search might give you a nuanced answer that replaces a number of simple searches.

Task	Relative energy use
Traditional Google search	1
AI search with a short answer	3 to 10
Generating 300 words of text	5 to 20
Generating an image	50 to 500
Generating an A4 church flyer	100 to 1,000
Generating a 20-second cute dog video	1,000 to 20,000
Generating a 1-minute 4K quality video	10,000 to 100,000

Source: CoPilot AI query.

What can we do day-to day?

As individual users, we have limited ability to influence AI companies and regulatory bodies, but churches, schools, NGOs, and denominational bodies are larger institutional customers. Collectively, we can influence behaviours and drive change.

1. Be an advocate

Spread the word to others in your church leadership, congregations and workplaces (subtly leave this article lying about, or share links to New Times online). As individuals and in our congregations, we already care for creation through daily habits such as recycling, composting, avoiding single-use plastics, ethical purchasing and energy auditing. The responsible use of AI also belongs on that list.

2. Think about whether you really need it

Sometimes a quick check of a reference, asking a human colleague, or your own memory can be just as fast and cost nothing.

3. Don't generate AI images or video and challenge those who do

Don't use generative AI when a photo from a congregation, one you take yourself or a stock photo is available. Perhaps a simpler design would serve the same purpose.

What are the AI industry and regulators doing?

Regulations and reporting mechanisms

This is a rapidly moving area, but at the moment there is no globally agreed, mandatory standard requiring AI companies to disclose their energy, water, carbon, and material footprints. Some countries require corporations to report environmental impact through Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) frameworks, but that isn't AI-specific.

There are positive things happening though:

- In June 2026, the UN Secretary-General launched an AI Environmental Transparency Initiative, calling on major AI companies to disclose their footprints of their systems and to commit to powering data centres with renewable energy by 2030.
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has produced detailed recommendations on measuring AI's environmental footprint and is encouraging common international approaches.
- The EU AI Act is introducing transparency requirements for high-risk systems.
- Technical bodies including the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) are actively drafting international standards to measure AI's energy and emissions consistently.
- The UK's new Sustainability Reporting Standards will require organisations to report on emissions, including cloud and AI use from 2027.
- Here in Australia, our own mandatory climate disclosure regime, AASB S2, already requires large companies to report their emissions across their full supply chain, with mid-sized companies to follow. The problem there is that AI firms are often small start-ups.

What are major AI companies doing?

It's a mixed bag.

Microsoft, Google, Amazon, IBM and Meta do publish extensive corporate sustainability reports but disclose varying levels of information about electricity use, renewable energy sourcing, and water consumption across their data centres. All these firms are reported to have become more transparent and more sophisticated in their reporting in recent years.

Despite improvements, AI leaders OpenAI and Anthropic, who have faced historical criticism for providing limited public disclosure about environmental impacts, are still reported to trail the field.

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4. Use fewer, better-thought-out prompts rather than many casual ones

Draft your thoughts first, then ask AI to refine rather than generate from nothing; this reduces the number of passes a model has to run.

5. Hold organisations and governments responsible

When making purchasing decisions, ask the software companies about their energy and water consumption. Write to your federal MPs and senators and share your concerns about the lack of mandatory reporting standards – historically, industries tend to be more transparent when they know that mandatory disclosure is coming.

Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is already part of everyday life, and its influence will only grow. The question is no longer *whether* we engage with AI, but *how*. The Uniting Church's *Vision for a Just Australia* imagines a society that cares for creation, acts for the common good, and takes seriously our responsibilities to one another and to future generations. Those values are just as relevant in the digital world.

Scripture reminds us to "estimate the cost" of our actions (Luke 14:28), and to remember that while many things may be possible, "not all things are beneficial" (1 Corinthians 10:23). We are repeatedly called upon to act with wisdom, justice and restraint. As the influence of AI grows, those virtues will become increasingly important.

The challenge before us is to use AI wisely and intentionally, speak honestly about its costs, and advocate for a future in which innovation always serves both humanity and the planet. In doing so, we continue the work to which the Church has always been called: seeking justice, caring for creation, and loving our neighbours, including those who will inherit the world we leave behind.

Clive

Clive Conway
Editor



It's not just about the environment

While the focus of this article is on the environmental impacts of AI, commentators point to several other major areas of concern:

Economic disruption and concentration of power

As increasing automation in industry has impacted the blue-collar workforce, so AI is predicted to cause widespread job displacement, particularly in administrative, creative and professional occupations. As well as the impact on individuals and families, this is likely to lead to greater global inequality and concentration of power and wealth.

Misinformation and its impact

AI can generate convincing misinformation, deepfake images, fake voices and automated propaganda. This brings the risk that people believe false information, but also that people stop believing real information and lose trust in governments, public institutions and journalism.

Security threats and the erosion of privacy

In the hands of bad actors, AI is already increasing the volume of phishing emails, identity theft and hacking of both corporate and government systems. AI is also making it easier to analyse vast amounts of personal information, track behaviour, predict preferences and even identify individuals.

Bias and unfair decisions

AI models learn from human-generated data. As a result, they can inherit social biases, normalise historical inequalities and cultural blind spots, and perpetuate gaps in representation. If used in areas such as recruitment, bank lending, policing or healthcare, such biases could amplify existing unfairness.

Education and loss of human agency

Some observers point to the dangers of excessive dependence on technology. If people increasingly rely on AI for thinking, writing, decision-making and relationships, important human capacities such as critical thinking, creativity and empathy could be eroded.

Poor decision-making

AI can produce answers that sound confident and authoritative, even when incorrect. If leaders or systems make decisions based on flawed recommendations, that could have widespread impact.

The AI takeover

A number of commentators also warn that highly advanced AI could one day become difficult to control, acting in ways that conflict with human values or interests.

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Bible translation with AI

By Clive Conway

For Altanir de Silva, a new journey began while he was literally unable to go anywhere. Having just endured surgery on a broken ankle, he was recovering at home and feeling like life was forcing him to stop and take stock: "I realised that this might be an opportunity to think about different things in my life".

At the time, Altanir was working at the Uniting Church in SA Synod office, as a developer in the IT Team.

Since he had always loved study and languages, Altanir decided to do another certification, this time in Artificial Intelligence (AI), looking at natural language processes, an aspect of AI that helps with translations, converting speech to text and text to speech. He began to wonder how he could apply this technology in a Christian context.

Altanir's research led him to connect with Wycliffe Bible Translators, an international organisation that works with churches to make the Bible accessible in local languages. Through Wycliffe, he befriended Lauren and Antonio who shared his passion for language, and they went on to become business partners in a new startup called the Atlas Innovation Collective, dedicating their spare time to using AI to bring connection to communities.

Altanir sees AI as particularly valuable for 'low-resource languages' – those for which there is little in the way of digital text, audio recordings or other sources. AI can convert speech to text, analyse language patterns and generate draft translations. In communities where language is primarily spoken rather than written, audio recordings can be used to help train language models. Over time, these language models can learn vocabulary, grammar and storytelling patterns, allowing them to assist translators in producing increasingly accurate drafts.



Altanir and Antonio with Aunty Denise, Aunty Cynthia and members of the Adnyamathanha community.

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The Adnyamathanha Community Project

Altanir became involved in the Adnyamathanha Community Project through conversations at Uniting College of Leadership and Theology. Rosemary Dewerse connected him with Aunty Denise Champion and others who were interested in language revitalisation and Bible translation. The project was already under discussion, and he was asked how AI might assist the process.

The first stage was not Bible translation itself, but a proof of concept. Working with stories written by Aunty Denise, the team used AI tools to create videos in Adnyamathanha language. In one example, Aunty Denise's voice was sampled and used to narrate the video.

To train the language model, Altanir relied on a small number of existing resources that included:

- The *Adnyamathanha Culture Guide and Language Book* by Terrence and Joise Coulthard. This 400-page book describes cultural practices, music and grammar and contains a two-way translation dictionary.
- Books written by Aunty Denise containing stories in Adnyamathanha, some with English translations.
- Feedback provided directly by native language speakers and community members.

Using these resources, the team began testing whether AI could generate Adnyamathanha text. Drafts were produced and reviewed by community members, including Aunty Denise. While there were still plenty of mistakes, the results showed enough promise to demonstrate that AI could provide usable first drafts that could then be corrected and improved by language experts.

How the process works

Altanir currently uses leading large language models (LLMs), including Anthropic's Claude, OpenAI's ChatGPT and Meta's Llama. The same task can be run through different models and the results compared. Community members then assess which translation is most accurate and culturally appropriate.

- **Existing language resources are used to train a model.**
- **The model generates draft translations.**
- **Community members review and correct the drafts.**
- **Corrections are fed back into the system.**
- **The model gradually improves over time.**

The AI acts as a tool to speed up the development of language resources and translation drafts. Human experts remain absolutely critical for ensuring linguistic, cultural and theological accuracy.

Beyond Bible translation

Although Bible translation is Altanir's central focus, he believes the broader significance of this work is the preservation of language and culture. Many Indigenous languages are endangered, with declining numbers of fluent speakers. By creating language resources, recording speech, generating text and building digital tools that younger generations can use, AI may help preserve and revitalise languages and cultures that are at risk of being lost.

"I think that language is connected to inclusion," Altanir says, "definitely my heart feels like I need to do something about that".

Altanir no longer works for the Synod, but remains just as committed to this project as ever: "This is something that I think God puts in my heart, and when God puts something in your heart, you have enough energy to move it forwards".

The World

- There are currently about **7,170** languages in the world.
- The entire Bible is available in about **800** languages.
- The New Testament is available in **1,800** additional languages.
- Portions of Scripture are available in a further **1,500** languages.

Source: Wycliffe Bible Translators and Wikipedia.

Australia

- Before colonisation more than **250** languages, and **800** dialects were spoken in Australia.
- More than **100** languages have already been lost. First Nations people sometimes refer to them as 'sleeping'.
- Around **123** are still spoken or remembered with more than **109** considered endangered.

Source: National Archives of Australia.

- The only Indigenous language that has a complete bible is **Kriol**, but that isn't really an Indigenous language. Instead, it arose out of different First Nations' interactions with English-speaking people – such languages are referred to as 'contact languages' and include pidgins and creoles.
- The New Testament exists in **15** Indigenous languages.
- **21** more languages have at least one book of the Bible.
- Another **26** languages currently have verses or partial chapters.

Source: Wycliffe Bible Translators and Wikipedia.

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Trusting the gifts that are already here

By Rev Peter R McDonald



You were surrounded by kites when you walked onto the property of Rosefield Uniting Church during this year's SALA exhibition – kites hanging from the fence, their tails fluttering in the breeze; kites suspended from the pergola, moving gently in the wind.

Then, as you entered the church building, you were greeted by massive, quilted kites hanging from the ceiling. These colourful creations, made with loving hands and decorated with beautiful shapes, colours and patterns, filled the worship space with life.

The church felt warmer. It felt loved. It felt welcoming. It is amazing how the addition of colour and shape can change the way a space feels.

Where did this begin? I arrived at Rosefield twelve months ago in June 2025, after twenty years at Uniting Communities. Accepting the call to Rosefield was a significant decision and has had a real impact on my life.

Not long after I arrived, Charlotte Trentor, the wise woman behind the *Let's Go Fly a Kite* art exhibition approached me. "Peter," she said, "I want to create an art exhibition that draws both our congregation and local people in its making. During SALA, I want people flowing through the worship space, and I'm going to do it with kites hanging from the ceiling".

I remember standing there thinking, "Well, that's a bit weird". It certainly was not part of any ministry training I had experienced. But after twenty years working in community services, I had

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learned something important – when someone brings an idea that seems a little unconventional, the first response does not need to be scepticism. The best response is curiosity.

Looking back, that was an important moment. It was a moment when I chose to trust the leadership already present in this congregation. I did not demand detailed plans. I did not ask exactly how it would be funded or managed. Those questions would come later.

In many ways Charlotte was testing me. She wanted to know what kind of leader I would be. Was I someone who needed every detail before moving forward? Or was I willing to trust creative people and allow an idea to take flight?

Of course, there are times when we need to ask what is wrong and what needs to be fixed. There is nothing inherently wrong with these questions. The problem comes when it becomes the predominant way of seeing the congregation and the world.

One of the primary tools in my ministry toolbox comes directly from my years at Uniting Communities. It is the belief that most people act in good faith, want to contribute and have something valuable to offer. They are thoughtful, capable, and motivated to make a difference.

If you accept this then the question to ask is "What is getting in the way?" The social work world often asks about barriers – what barriers are preventing people from contributing their gifts and talents?

When Charlotte shared her vision, my response was simple: "You seem excited about this," I said. "I am," she replied. "Then I look forward to seeing what happens. What do you need from me? Are there any barriers I can help remove?" Charlotte said she would come back to me and later she did.

For me this simple story captures one of the key lessons I brought from Uniting Communities to Rosefield.

In theological language, we are created in the image of God. There are forces, habits and patterns that prevent us from fully becoming who God calls us to be. We speak of these barriers as sin. The task of ministry, then, is not simply to identify problems as sins. It is to recognise gifts, nurture them, and help remove the barriers that prevent those gifts from flourishing.

- How do we become more fully who God calls us to be?
- How do we reveal the presence of God in our community?
- How do we use our skills, abilities, and passions to point towards the Kingdom of God?

As I look around at these beautiful kites filling our worship space, I am reminded that remarkable things happen when people are trusted, encouraged and given room to create.

Sometimes leadership is not about having all the answers, it is simply about helping people find the space to let their gifts fly.

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Meet the Moderator-elect Ian Olver



Congratulations to Professor Ian Olver on his election as the next Moderator, commencing in mid-2028. Clive Conway asked him a few questions.

Where did you grow up, and what was home like for you as a child?

I grew up in Melbourne. It was a very happy childhood. I had an identical twin brother for company and sharing childhood experiences. My mother stayed at home to care for us after her career as a nurse and my father lectured in chemistry at Melbourne University. Our paternal grandfather lived with us until we were 15 and I think it is fair to say that he liked spoiling his grandsons. We all initially worshipped at North Fitzroy Methodist church where I remember my grandfather being given an award for 70 years' service.

Who were the people from those early years – parents, teachers, or someone else – who most shaped the person you've become?

My parents were my greatest influences. My mother was an example of being selfless in loving and caring for others; she was a resilient woman with fascinating stories from her nursing days including serving in Borneo in World War 2. My father instilled in us the importance of education. He was interested in many different aspects of the world around him including exploring theology, but because he had very poor vision, he had little interest in sport. That was left to my grandfather who ignited my interest in football and cricket.

How have you understood God's call at various stages in your life, and what led you to accept nomination as Moderator-elect?

I have prayed about key decisions and when I have made the right choice, I feel a weight lifts from my shoulders. My nomination as Moderator-elect was a complete surprise. Right from the beginning of my time of discernment I simply accepted "Thy will be done" and I did not attempt lists of pros and cons. When I was elected, I found myself accepting the call with joy and a sense of fulfilment and a faith that God will provide for my needs in this role.

As an oncologist, you have walked alongside people facing some of life's hardest moments. How has that experience shaped your faith and understanding of God, and what has it taught you?

People cope with those moments in completely different ways and drawing on different resources, some including God, but it was important to meet people where they were. Having said that, what they responded to best was when they were approached with the attributes of God: compassion, graciousness, slowness to anger, love and faithfulness (Exodus 34:6).

What do you think the Uniting Church has to offer people who may never attend worship regularly?

The practical example by the Uniting Church of living out its ideals in social support programs and advocacy for the disadvantaged groups can be a powerful testimony for those who don't attend worship. Many congregations show caring by keeping some form of contact with those who attend irregularly.

How can the Church remain faithful to the gospel while engaging effectively with a rapidly changing society and world?

The church's strength is unity in the heart of Christ. Throughout the Bible the Gospel message remained the same while the world changed. When people have fallen from God's path, by God's grace they are able to return. We must communicate the message using all the new tools that are available to disseminate it widely. We must promote our message even if it brings us into conflict with powerful human institutions. However, we must be careful not to be too quick in judging individuals when our role is to bring them to God, who is the judge.

What do home and family look like today?

Jenny and I are now empty nesters and are enjoying planning our time together, particularly travel. We have three married sons. Scott is in Adelaide with two of our grandchildren, Chris in Seattle with the other two grandchildren and Rob in Melbourne. We love spending time with them and these days can videoconference

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between visits. My twin brother is also in Melbourne, and we find several opportunities to exchange visits.

If people were to look back at your term as Moderator in 2031, what would you hope they say was achieved during those years?

I hope that I succeed in the pastoral role, with church members across the state feeling valued and cared for. I will promote what unifies us rather than what divides us. I also want to make a strong contribution to advocating for the social reforms that we want to achieve. Currently we are focusing on gambling reform where we must convince those who profit from gambling, be they individuals or governments, that they are complicit in the damage to individuals, families and workplaces and they must take responsibility for the remedy. There is also the issue of violence in society which I believe has a root cause in the increasingly common practice of our leaders and others showing disrespect and vilifying those who disagree with them or are different, when a kinder approach would achieve greater success.

What gives you hope for the future of the Church?

However difficult the world appears, God remains in charge. The Jews were in exile in Babylon and had lost their temple and were at the depth of despair when they were reminded that God in God's time would restore their fortunes. So it is with us. Further encouragement comes from the enormous number of talented and faithful people we have throughout the church.

There are many young people who have never been inside a church and are sceptical about religion. What would you most like to tell them about faith, the Church, or the purpose of life?

I don't know that telling or presenting rational arguments to the sceptical would be of influence, but showing them people whose lives have been enriched, who are content and joyful because of their Christian faith is more likely to leave an impression, particularly if that is what they are seeking.

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The BIG Questions

What did you want to be when you were growing up?
A doctor. Tick!

What music might we find on your playlist during a long drive?
Mainly soundtracks from an eclectic range of musicals.

Favourite hymns and songs?
Favourite hymns would be Charles Wesley's conversion hymn "And can it be" and "When I survey the wondrous cross" for its lesson on humility.

There are many songs that I like but, in the song, "The Goodness of God" a line jumped out at me in my discernment for the Moderator nomination and that was "All my life you have been faithful" which was not only true but demanded only one response.

Favourite films
One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest for its wonderful character portrayals.

2001: A Space Odyssey – one of the first of a favourite genre of mine; science fiction films.

And a more modern film – *Conclave.*

Favourite TV Comedy
I would probably go right back to British comedy like *The Two Ronnies.*

What is your favourite way to spend a completely free Saturday?
What is a completely free Saturday?

Which historical figure would you most like to have dinner with, and why?
Jesus, because I have so many questions.

What's your favourite cuisine?
Over the years, probably Italian.

What skill or hobby do people tend to be surprised to learn you have?
I have run both the New York and Melbourne marathons.

You are stranded on a desert island. Which three items do you hope wash ashore?
A waterproof satellite phone in working order, and I probably won't need anything else.

What is the most unusual item currently sitting on your desk?
A piece of shrapnel from WW1.

If you could swap jobs with anyone for a day, who would it be?
Donald Trump. Where would I start?

Does pineapple belong on a pizza? (because we're not afraid of controversy here at *New Times*!)
Absolutely not. Save it for dessert!



FUTURE CHURCH CONFERENCE

By Susy Plein

THE FUTURE OF THE CHURCH

EXPLORING CLIMATE JUSTICE, EMBODIED SPIRITUALITY, AI & THE WORLD WE MUST FACE WITH WISDOM AND COURAGE



How would you finish this sentence? "The future church is ..."

This was the challenge for attendees at the third annual Future Church Conference, held at Parramatta Town Hall on Thursday 28th May. Led by the team behind the *Spiritual Misfits* podcast and supported by the NSW Synod's Uniting Mission and Education agency, this ecumenical and progressive gathering is a chance to engage in good community and fellowship, to hear thought-provoking speakers, and to listen deeply to God and each other in dreaming of a future church that is anti-racist, trauma-informed, gender-equal, LGBTQIA+ inclusive, trans, intersectional, climate-conscious, and remembering of the poor. Past conference speakers include Rev Radhika Sukymar-White, Rev Jo Inkpin, Common Grace National Director Gershon Nimbalker, and Jarred McKenna, co-founder of the First Home Project

Until this year, the conference has only been available for in-person attendance in Sydney, which is a big commitment for a one-day event halfway across the country! But this year registrants were given the option to attend remotely via annexe locations in Toowoomba, Cairns, Canberra, Melbourne, Central Victoria and Adelaide.

This year's conference was well attended, with 100+ in Parramatta and 40+ at the annexes. The Adelaide annexe had the largest annexe attendance, with more than 20 people joining us for at least part of the day, and we are so grateful for the support and expertise of the Mission Resourcing and UC Fellowship and Mission Support (UCFAMS) teams.

The day conference had discussion and presentations on deep listening, the language we use for God, how to make sense of AI, and what it means to be edge-walkers. We were blessed through the day by the wisdom of Uncle Ray Minniecon,

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Tanya Riches, Sally Douglas, Simon Buckingham-Shum, Karina Kraminski and Joel Hollier. The evening panel was "A World on Fire: Intersectionality & Climate Justice" – we heard from Will Small, Sally Douglas, Simon Buckingham-Shum, Joel McKerrow, and Joel Hollier. Creative moments were sprinkled throughout the day, with musical reflections by Matt Roberts, Michael Meaco, Josh Gibbons, Tash Holmes, and Mikali Anagnostis, and poetry by Will Small and Joel McKerrow. We also spent a moment of silence remembering Rev Jione Havea, who was slated to lead the evening panel but passed away suddenly just weeks earlier.

Annexe locations were encouraged to 'make it their own', so the Adelaide facilitation team from Queer Collective (ministry candidates Emelia Haskey, Nina Luscombe and myself, Period of Discernment student Rachel Bills, and Rev Richard Telfer) met at Yarthu-Apinthi at 7 am (coffees in hand) to set up a safe, comfortable, accessible, and inclusive space. This included:

- nametags with space for pronouns
- offering a variety of seating options, colouring and fidgets.
- preparing custom-made tote bags and notebooks as a gift to our attendees.
- providing plenty of refreshments throughout the day, including lunch and dinner.
- arranging a merchandise stand with some books available for purchase, including some written by conference presenters, many of which are now also available from the Adelaide Theological Library.
- having local worship during the day (led by Susy and Maddie Vawser)



- regular moments of considering the question "the future church is…" by writing down our thoughts on paper to stick on the whiteboard, for a visual representation of our reflections
- opportunity for attendees to add to a 'recommended resources' list, which was collated and distributed after the event.

We are incredibly grateful for Mission Resourcing's support in the lead-up to the event, as well as their technical support on the day provided by Charlotte Vawser and Melissa Neumann. It was also great to see staff and faculty at Yarthu-Apinthi popping in and out throughout the day. The overwhelming feedback has been that it was a meaningful and enjoyable day of thought-provoking sessions, inspiring worship and ministry moments, and heartfelt conversation and discussion about how the church can faithfully love and care for God's creation here in the Adelaide context, now and into the future.

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Walking with Jesus: A reflection from Tacloban

By Rev Cyrus Kung

Mission Activator, Mission Resourcing
Church Engagement Manager, Uniting World

In late May 2026, I sat in a room in Tacloban City, humid air pressing through the windows, and listened to Filipino theologians speak about what it means to follow Jesus in their context. I was there with Rev Phillip Gardener (General Secretary, SA Synod) and Sureka Goringe (Director of Uniting World) as guests of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines (UCCP), attending their 13th Quadrennial General Assembly, representing the Uniting Church in Australia as an ecumenical visitor, a learner, and if I'm honest, someone who arrived with more questions than answers.

Tacloban is a city that knows something about resilience. Those who remember Typhoon Hainan in 2013 will remember the city's name spoken in the same breath as devastation and loss. To sit there, more than a decade later, among Filipino Christians full of faith and fire – that in itself was a kind of sermon.

The Assembly gathered under a theme both simple and demanding in equal measure: "Walking with Jesus: Journeying with the Anawim".

Anawim is a Hebrew word worth sitting with. It means the bowed-down ones, the poor, the humble, the marginalised, those who have nothing left to lean on except God. In the Psalms they cry out and are heard. In Mary's *Magnificat* they are the ones God lifts while the proud are scattered. And in Jesus, the Word made flesh, God doesn't send a message to the *Anawim* from a safe distance – God becomes one of them; enters the story from the bottom; chooses the manger over the palace, the outcast over the powerful, the margins over the centre.

What struck me most in that assembly room was not the theology itself – much of it I had encountered before in books –

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> Walking with Jesus, I learned in Tacloban, is not a metaphor for a comfortable spiritual life. It is a direction – a choice, made again and again, about which way to face, which table to sit at, whose voices to amplify, whose dignity to defend.

but hearing it spoken by people for whom it isn't academic. For the UCCP, *Anawim* is not a concept to be studied but a posture to be lived and journeyed with. Those gathered in Tacloban weren't reflecting on poverty from a comfortable distance. They were reflecting from within it, finding in the story of Jesus not a gentle inspiration but a living, breathing reason to keep going.

I found myself thinking about the communities we walk alongside here in South Australia, the newly arrived, the isolated, the ones for whom Sunday morning is the one place they feel truly seen. Different context, same gospel. The same Jesus who moved toward the least, the last, and the lost calls us to do the same.

Walking with Jesus, I learned in Tacloban, is not a metaphor for a comfortable spiritual life. It is a direction – a choice, made again and again, about which way to face, which table to sit at, whose voices to amplify, whose dignity to defend.

Our UCCP sisters and brothers are walking that road with remarkable courage and deep conviction. Their faith is a gift to the wider Church. For those who support our work through Uniting World, I want to say simply, *it matters* – the partnership matters, the solidarity matters.

We may be far away but we are walking the same road, following the same Jesus, toward the same dream – a world where the hungry are filled, the bowed-down are lifted up, and no one is left behind.

That is worth journeying with.

This reflection first appeared in UCFAMS' Together *Magazine.*



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Introducing the Synod Standing Committee



Rhanee Lester

Where do you worship?

I am often between communities but my main places of worship are on Adnyamathanha Yarta and the UAICC Port Augusta Faith Community.

What's your current role in the congregation and elsewhere in the Church or associated entities?

- Pastor, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
- National Assembly
- Deputy Chairperson, UAICC SA Regional Council
- Student at Uniting College for Leadership and Theology.

Why did you want to join the Synod Standing Committee?

Nothing about us without us – there is a visible lack of Aboriginal presence and leadership across all levels of governance within the Uniting Church in SA, and I'm committed to helping change that. I want to ensure the voices of Australia's First Peoples are not only present, but centred, respected, and shaping the decisions that affect our communities. My intention is to contribute to real structural change – moving beyond inclusion that can often be seen as symbolic or tokenistic toward a Synod where Aboriginal leadership is embedded, expected, and influential at every level. Australia's First Peoples carry deep cultural knowledge, lived experience, and spiritual insight, and these must continue to inform the direction of the Church as the new generation of leaders starts to emerge. Being part of Synod Standing Committee is one way I can help make sure that happens.

What are you looking forward to on SSC?

I am looking forward to re-engaging with the wider Uniting Church's governance and leadership processes. I look forward to highlighting the lived experiences of members from the UAICC Port Augusta and surrounding communities, to ensure that the Church is responding in a timely and effective manner to some of Australia's most vulnerable communities.

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

From the Aboriginal perspective of being a member of the Port Augusta Faith Community for the majority of my life, the Uniting Church in SA is facing several key issues. There is still a lack of representation in Aboriginal leadership and decision-making power, which leaves many of our people feeling unheard and silenced. Regional and remote community ministries remain under-resourced, making it hard for communities like ours to sustain a space that nurtures the next generation of Aboriginal leadership in ministry, worship and pastoral support. If we in the Uniting Church are serious about living out reconciliation in practice, we need Cultural Safety embedded in our governance, ministry and everyday church life.

My final thought is that the Church must stay connected to the real pressures our families face, from racism to poverty; housing insecurity; the cost-of-living crisis; and the ongoing impacts colonisation has on our Indigenous communities not just in Australia but around the world. Addressing these issues will require all of us to be called into a deep commitment, with shared decision-making power and an intentional space for grace where genuine relationships can grow, people from all walks of life can come together and families can thrive into blossoming communities.

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In May 2026, a group representing the SA Synod went to South Korea to share in relationship with our partner church, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, Iksan Presbytery. The group included Rev Benji Callen, Rev Jenni Hughes, Rev Elissa Inglis, Rev Do Young Kim (who served as translator for the group), Cathy and Rev Lawrie Linggood (Chair of the PROK partnership group), Gill and Rev Peter Morel (Moderator), Rev Ann Phillips, Jordan Sumner and Sean Weetra (representing the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress).

Thank you to the Mission Op Shop at Woodville for supporting this visit and their ongoing support of international partnerships. It is this generosity that enables such relationships and experiences.

Thanks to Sean Weetra for sharing with us this reflection that he wrote immediately after his return.



Visit to South Korea May 2026

By Sean Weetra

This morning I returned home to Australia after an incredible journey to South Korea, and my heart is full of gratitude.

I have been fortunate to share this experience with my Uncle Jordan and other Uniting Church friends who have been a constant source of support, encouragement and friendship throughout our time together. The memories we created, the conversations we shared and the relationships we strengthened will stay with me for many years to come.

As an Aboriginal man from Ngarrindjeri, Kaurna and Narungga Country, I travelled carrying the stories, values and responsibilities entrusted to me by my Ancestors. One of the greatest gifts of this journey was being reminded that relationships are at the heart of who we are as human beings. Across different cultures, languages and experiences, people long for the same things: belonging, dignity, respect, justice and peace.

Throughout our time in South Korea, we experienced extraordinary generosity and hospitality. We shared meals, stories, music, worship and laughter with people who welcomed us into their homes and communities. Despite language barriers, we discovered that kindness needs no translation.

In these moments, I was reminded that God is present among us, and that Jesus walks with us in our encounters with one another. Christ was not distant on this journey, but alive in the hospitality shared, the friendships formed, and the love expressed across cultures and boundaries. It became something we lived and experienced each day.

This journey also reminded me that the work of truth telling, justice and reconciliation is a shared responsibility. The gates of justice may not always open easily, but when people choose compassion over division and understanding over fear, liberation and freedom will always find a way forward.

Today I stand once again on the traditional lands of the Kaurna people with a humbled heart. I am grateful for the friendships formed, the lessons learned and the generosity shown to us throughout our journey.

Kamsahamnida (감사합니다), South Korea. Thank you for your warmth, friendship and hospitality.

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Hottest 100 Books!

By Rev Dr Tim Hein

The Triple J Hottest 100 poll of listeners' favourite songs of the year has become an Australian annual tradition. It's a bit of a cultural phenomenon, even for people who don't listen to Triple J.

Every now and then, of course, it branches into polling favourite songs of all time. This is when we all see that the 90s were truly the greatest decade of musical history! *[Behind only the 60s, 70s and 80s – Ed]*

"But what about books?" I once heard the General Secretary Phil Gardner ask. Good question. And suddenly an idea struck that could possibly solve a long-standing dilemma facing our ordination candidates.

For as long as anyone can remember, during the Phase 2 of their formation process, Candidates for Minister of the Word or Deacon have received an annual book allowance to enable them to start building a library of resources that they need for their ministry. The big question they always face is, which books to buy? They seek out the views of those around them, including UCLT staff, friends, mentors and online lists. I can't tell you how many times I've been asked for recommendations, especially for books that have stood the test of time, books that every Minister must read.

So, we decided to run a poll amongst current and retired South Australian Ministers, asking them, "Which books on ministry and theology, would you recommend to an ordination candidate?" It seemed such a list would be beneficial not only to ordination candidates, but also other UCLT students, as well as current Ministers and, in fact, most people in the life of the church.

The nomination phase resulted in 228 different books. These were then placed in second survey and sent out again. This time the current and retired Ministers could vote as many times as they wished for all the books on the list they would recommend. We tallied the results, put them in order, and there we have it: the Hottest 100 Books!

> Every Christian will find a feast here, not only ordination candidates. Books that are insightful, wise, challenging, as well as useful in the craft of ministry.

It's a fascinating list comprising a wide range of topics related to faith and ministry. Three of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's books appear, with two in the top five! The 10-volume New Interpreters Commentary Series is high on the list, demonstrating its usefulness, well above the NIV Application Commentary Series.

Australian books feature strongly, and specifically books written by authors in the Uniting Church, including Denise Champion's *Yarta Wandatha* and *Anaditj*, and Andrew Dutney's popular reflection on the Basis of Union, *Where Did the Joy Come From?* as well as his longer study *Manifesto for Renewal: The Shaping of a New Church*.

Interestingly, several books by authors who have withdrawn or been excluded from ministry for unethical behaviour or misconduct also still made the list. Readers should exercise discernment in deciding which authors and books they wish to engage with. It should also be noted that Philip Yancey's recent public confessions, which led to his retirement from public ministry and writing, came after the list was compiled.

Every Christian will find a feast here, not only ordination candidates. Books that are insightful, wise, challenging, as well as useful in the craft of ministry.

And while part of the enjoyment of the project is debating the order in which they appear (and the tragedy of what books are missing) there's a question absolutely everyone wants to ask: What's number one?

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1. **The Wounded Healer: Ministry in Contemporary Society**
   Henri Nouwen
2. **The Cost of Discipleship**
   Dietrich Bonhoeffer
3. **Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth**
   Richard Foster
4. **Life Together**
   Dietrich Bonhoeffer
5. **What Is So Amazing About Grace?**
   Philip Yancey
6. **The New Interpreters Bible Commentary Series (Ten Volume Set)**
7. **Where did the Joy Come From? Revisiting the Basis of Union**
   Andrew Dutney
8. **Surprised by Hope: Rethinking Heaven, the Resurrection, and the Mission of the Church**
   NT Wright
9. **Mere Christianity**
   CS Lewis
10. **The Prophetic Imagination**
    Walter Brueggemann
11. **Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission**
    David Bosch
12. **Yarta Wandatha**
    Denise Champion
13. **Understanding Sexual Abuse: A Guide for Ministry Leaders & Survivors**
    Tim Hein
14. **The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction**
    Eugene Peterson
15. **Boundaries: When To Say Yes, How To Say No To Take Control Of Your Life**
    Henry Cloud and John Townsend
16. **The Wild Goose Big Book of Worship Resources**
    The Iona Community
17. **Dare to Lead: Brave Work. Tough Conversations. Whole Hearts.**
    Brené Brown
18. **Foolishness to the Greeks: The Gospel and Western Culture**
    Lesslie Newbigin
19. **The Purpose Driven Church: Growth Without Compromising Your Message And Mission**
    Rick Warren
20. **The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and the World**
    Peter Scazzero
21. **The Crucified God: The Cross of Christ as the Foundation and Criticism of Christian Theology**
    Jurgen Moltmann
22. **Being Clergy, Staying Human: Taking Our Stand in the River**
    Dorothy McRae
23. **Falling Upward: A Spirituality for the Two Halves of Life**
    Richard Rohr
24. **The Prodigal God: Recovering the Heart of the Christian Faith**
    Timothy Keller
25. **Seven Habits of Highly Effective People: Powerful Lessons in Personal Change**
    Steven Covey
26. **The Journal of John Wesley**
    John Wesley
27. **Exclusion and Embrace: A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation**
    Miroslav Volf
28. **The Cross of Christ**
    John Stott
29. **Manifesto for Renewal: The Shaping of a New Church**
    Andrew Dutney
30. **Humilitas: A Lost Key to Life, Love, and Leadership**
    John Dickson
31. **Anaditj**
    Denise Champion
32. **Paul: A Biography**
    NT Wright
33. **The Historical Jesus in Context**
    Amy-Jill Levine, Dale C Allison Jr, and John Dominic Crossan (Eds)
34. **The Practice of the Presence of God**
    Brother Lawrence
35. **The Politics of Jesus**
    John Howard Yoder
36. **The Divine Conspiracy: Rediscovering Our Hidden Life in God**
    Dallas Willard
37. **Emotionally Healthy Discipleship: Moving from Shallow Christianity to Deep Transformation**
    Peter Scazzero
38. **Ordering your Private World**
    Gordon MacDonald
39. **The Imitation of Christ**
    Thomas a Kempis
40. **Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City**
    Timothy Keller
41. **A New Beginning for Pastors and Congregations**
    Kennon Callahan
42. **The Last Week: What The Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Final Days In Jerusalem**
    Marcus Borg
43. **Theology for Pilgrims: Selected theological documents of the Uniting Church in Australia**
    Rob Bos and Geoff Thompson
44. **Deep And Wide: Creating Churches Unchurched People Love to Attend**
    Andy Stanley
45. **Unmasking Male Depression: Recognize the Root Cause to Many Problem Behaviours Such as Anger, Resentment, Abusiveness, Silence and Sexual Compulsions**
    Arch Hart
46. **The Pastor: A Memoir**
    Eugene Peterson
47. **The Gospel According to John**
    Leon Morris
48. **Metaphorical Theology: Models of God In Religious Language**
    Sally McFague
49. **A Resilient Life: You Can Move Ahead No Matter What**
    Gordon MacDonald
50. **Servant Leadership: A Journey into the Nature of Legitimate Power and Greatness**
    Robert Greenleaf

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51. **Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Highly Missional People**
Michael Frost

52. **God Was in Christ: An Essay on the Incarnation and the Atonement**
D M Baillie

53. **Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels**
Kenneth Bailey

54. **Hope in Times of Fear: The Resurrection and the Meaning of Easter**
Timothy Keller

55. **Courageous Leadership**
Bill Hybels

56. **Mission Is the Shape of Water: Learning From the Past to Inform Our Role in the World Today**
Michael Frost

57. **Unity and Diversity in the New Testament: An Inquiry Into the Character of Earliest Christianity**
James DG Dunn

58. **Renovation of the Heart in Daily Practice**
Dallas Willard

59. **Spiritual Leadership: Principles of Excellence For Every Believer**
J Oswald Sanders

60. **Social Science Commentary on the Gospel of John**
Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh

61. **Gaining By Losing: Why the Future Belongs to Churches That Send**
JD Greear

62. **Inspired: Slaying Giants, Walking On Water, And Loving The Bible Again**
Rachel Held Evans

63. **Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit**
Denis Edwards

64. **People Skill: How to Assert Yourself, Listen to Others, and Resolve Conflicts**
Robert Bolton

65. **The Rule of St Benedict**
St Benedict

66. **Synopsis of the Four Gospels**
Kurt Aland

67. **The NIV Application Commentary Series**

68. **You Are What You Love: The Spiritual Power of Habit**
James KA Smith

69. **Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation**
James KA Smith

70. **The Craft of Sermon Construction**
WE Sangster

71. **The Reason for God: Belief in an age of Skepticism**
Timothy Keller

72. **Pastor: The Theology and Practice of Ordained Ministry**
William Willimon

73. **Resurrecting the Person: Friendship and the Care of People with Mental Health Problems**
John Swinton

74. **A Dictionary of Christian Theology**
Alan Richardson

75. **Live No Lies: Recognize and Resist the Three Enemies That Sabotage Your Peace**
John Mark Comer

76. **Man's Need and God's Action**
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

77. **Confessions**
St Augustine

78. **Worship, Community and the Triune God of Grace**
J B Torrance

79. **Challenges of Christian Leadership: Practical Wisdom for Leaders, Interwoven with the Author's Advice**
John Stott

80. **Abide in Christ**
Andrew Murray

81. **The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership: Follow Them and People Will Follow You**
John Maxwell

82. **The Advantage: Why Organizational Health Trumps Everything Else in Business**
Patrick Lencioni

83. **Leading Change**
John Kotter

84. **She Who Is: The Mystery of God in Feminist Theological Discourse**
Elizabeth Johnson

85. **The Hauerwas Reader**
Stanley Hauerwas

86. **Transforming a People of God**
Denham Grierson

87. **Christianity Rediscovered: An Epistle from the Masai**
Vincent J Donovan

88. **Deliverance to the Captives**
Karl Barth

89. **How People Grow: What the Bible Reveals About Personal Growth**
Henry Cloud and John Townsend

90. **Incarnation: The Person and Life of Christ**
Thomas F Torrance

91. **Atonement: The Person and Work of Christ**
Thomas F Torrance

92. **The Lord of the Rings**
JRR Tolkien

93. **The Good and Beautiful God: Falling in Love with the God Jesus Knows**
James Bryan Smith

94. **On the Road with Saint Augustine: A Real-World Spirituality for Restless Hearts**
James KA Smith

95. **The Craft of Sermon Illustration**
WE Sangster

96. **Anatomy of a Revived Church: Seven Findings of How Congregations Avoided Death**
Thom S Rainer

97. **The Crucifixion of Ministry: Surrendering Our Ambitions to the Service of Christ**
Andrew Purves

98. **The Cross of Jesus**
Leon Morris

99. **The Oxford Annotated Bible**
Bruce M Metzger

100. **Dynamics of Spiritual Life: An Evangelical Theology of Renewal**
Richard Lovelace

Download the complete list as a PDF

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20 Years of Ecumenism in Wudinna

By Judy Barns

In June 2026, Wudinna Uniting Church and the Wudinna Lutheran Congregation celebrated the 20th Anniversary of their 'Memorandum of Understanding'. This document, which now also includes the local Anglican congregation, formed an agreement for the two denominations to work and worship together.

The original June 2006 agreement was jointly signed by the SA/NT District President of the Lutheran Church at the time, Pastor Robert Voigt, and Reverend Graham Vawser, the then Moderator of the Uniting Church in SA. It was a significant moment, a first, not just for Wudinna, but in the whole Christian church in Australia.

A worship service to mark the occasion was held in the Wudinna Lutheran Church on Sunday 21 June at 10 am, led by Pastor Brian Keller and assisted by the Reverend Nathan Whillas, Leader of the Eyre Peninsula Hub of Generate Presbytery. A pooled lunch with warm fellowship followed the special service.

Pastor Brian shared the Gospel reading about the greatest commandment being to love the Lord your God with all your heart and to love your neighbour as yourself. When we focus on Jesus Christ, we are a witness to one another and others, showing God's love to our community and further afield.

Twenty years on, by uniting together as one body of Christ, each community has grown to more fully realise that we are all children of God. Even though they came from different congregations they are now one family growing, loving and learning from each other. There have been a few hurdles along the way but with a positive attitude and lots of willingness to change we have come to enjoy each other's worship styles and company.





Top: *Members of the original congregation, along with Pastor Brian Keller, his wife Elaine and Rev Nathan Whillas.*

Back: Kerry Jericho, Judy Barns, Wes Jericho, Jan Jericho, Roger Scholz, Sandy Jericho, Neville Jericho, Marcia Jericho.

Middle: Margaret Sampson, Lyd Klante, Jean Kammermann, Ella Scholz, Rosemary Lymn, Kerry Waters, Helen Scholz, Elaine Keller.

Front: Claire Olsen, Pastor Brian Keller, Rev Nathan Whillas.

Bottom: *Pastor Brian Keller and Rev Nathan Whillas.*

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Peg's extraordinary 100-year journey

Known for her entertaining stories, kind heart and quick wit, Resthaven Marion resident Mrs Margaret (Peg) Davis celebrated her 100th birthday on 28 July.

Peg was born in Kent, England, the eldest of four children. When she was four years old, the family moved to Scotland, and it was there, in the countryside between Stirling and Edinburgh, that she spent her formative years.

"I love Scotland," Peg says. "I loved the village where we lived – the waterfalls, the scenery, the beautiful picnic places. I loved it very much, even though the weather was wild!"

Education was highly valued in Peg's family, and after school she attended Kilsyth Academy, where she trained in typing and shorthand to become a stenographer. She secured a position at Beardmore in Glasgow, where she worked in a large office for five years. "I loved the job," Peg says. "It was a big factory, and I loved being amongst so many people."

World War II broke out around this time, and Peg recalls hearing the German bombers as they regularly bombed Edinburgh. "We would hear the explosions," Peg says. "At work, we all contributed two shillings each week to support injured servicemen returning home. I remember we organised a dance for the soldiers at one point. It was very confronting to see these young men, some of whom had lost limbs."

When Peg was 17, her father died suddenly of a heart attack. "We were all very shocked," Peg says.

In an effort to help the family, the owner of the factory where her father had worked came to the family's home and offered Peg a position. "I took it, but it was a mistake," Peg says. "I much preferred my other role. It was the unhappiest time."

Not long after this, Peg became better acquainted with Armour Davis. One of the "13 Davis brothers" from her local area, Armour had served in the war and Peg had seen him occasionally while he was home on leave.

One day he invited her to a soccer match in Glasgow and she agreed. "It was the first time I had been to a game like that," Peg says, "and I was amazed by how many people were there in the crowd". *[Crowds at Ibrox Park were regularly 80,000 to 100,000 and once exceeded 118,000 – Ed.]*

Their relationship grew, and the couple were married in 1946. To ring in the celebrations, a couple of days before the wedding, local boys borrowed a farmer's wheelbarrow, sat the bride and groom inside, and wheeled them through the village while ringing a cowbell and singing *I've Got a Lassie*. "The noise!" Peg says. "It was good fun!"

Coming to Australia

Before his death, Peg's father had long spoken of moving to Australia. "My mother felt it was the right thing to do for the family, and to honour his wishes," Peg says. "They moved out and settled in Brisbane."

Peg, newly married and with two children, talked it over with Armour. "Armour had always wanted to come to Australia, so we booked our tickets on the ship and moved."

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Armour and Margaret 'Peg' Davis in Glasgow



Mrs and Mr Davis of Adelaide, Australia

The voyage to Australia brought its own memorable moments. "Our youngest son at the time was still in nappies," Peg says. "One day, after I had washed them out, I hung the nappies up to dry. The next thing, the wind came up and blew them all out over the Indian Ocean," Peg laughs. "It was such a sight!"

Arriving in Brisbane and reuniting with her family, Peg remembers the shock of the warmer climate. "It was stinking hot when we arrived in Australia," she says. "It was summer, and it was temperatures I had never experienced before!"

The family lived in Brisbane for two years before moving to Adelaide, where they settled in Sturt in 1952. Armour, a boilermaker by trade, began working at the Chrysler factory (later Mitsubishi). Their third son was born in 1954.

Church life

Faith and community became central to Peg's life in Australia. Living opposite the Sturt Methodist Church, she and Armour quickly became active members. Peg served as church treasurer, supported fellowship groups and helped with countless church activities while raising their three sons.

The church closed in 1972 and was acquired by the Highways Department. Peg, Armour, and the majority of the congregation, moved to the Marion Church. Here, Peg joined the sewing group, helping to make curtains for the newly planned Resthaven Marion residential home, which opened in 1974. She moved into the aged care home in 2015.

When Armour sadly passed away in 1995, Peg scattered his ashes in the Marion Uniting Church garden. "Sometimes I'll go and have a quiet chat with him," Peg says. "'Hello Armour,' I'll say. It's nice."

Art and reading

Peg's practical skills extended well beyond the church. Having learned to sew from a young age, she made many of her own clothes and garments for the family.

Later in life, she discovered another creative outlet in china painting. "It was a skill I picked up quickly," Peg says. "I found it to be a very relaxing and enjoyable activity". Many of her beautifully painted pieces have since been given to her children, although one treasured work still stands proudly in the corner of her room.

Another lifelong enjoyment has been reading. As Peg's eyesight has faded (she is now legally blind), audiobooks have enabled her to continue one of her favourite pastimes. "I love M.C. Beaton," Peg says. "Her stories are set in the Cotswolds, which I love. I also enjoy her Hamish Macbeth series, which is, of course, Scottish. I've always liked reading. It's something I've settled down to more in my later years."

Today, Peg's family includes seven grandchildren and a growing number of great-grandchildren.

As she celebrates her century, she has only one wish. "I don't want a lot of fuss," Peg says. "Just a quiet celebration with family."

Happy 100th birthday, Peg! We hope you enjoyed your celebration, and that there was just the right amount of fuss!

Article provided by Resthaven.

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A focus on youth justice

By Peter Murchland and Mark Waters

Learn about the Justice Reform Initiative

On Sunday 14 June about 50 people gathered at the Church of the Trinity to discuss reframing youth justice issues so that we can slow the rate of young people (particularly young Aboriginal people) being incarcerated.

Led by the SA Allies Network, the forum demonstrated the participation of local Uniting Churches in this movement, including Church of the Trinity, Christ Church Wayville, Unley Uniting Church, Rosefield Uniting Church, Pilgrim Uniting Church and Blackwood Uniting Church. This is also consistent with the Synod24 resolution to advocate for raising the age of criminal responsibility in South Australia from 10 to 14 years old.

The forum was one of three aimed at briefing the community, First Nations leaders and politicians on the issues and options available to South Australia, and a precursor to the **Reintegration Puzzle Conference** which was held in Adelaide on June 24 and 25.

Key speakers at the forum were Hannah March, Campaign Advisor for the Justice Reform Initiative and David Washington, Executive Director, The Don Dunstan Foundation. Their main messages were encapsulated in the theme – *No Child in Jail*. Participants learnt about the background to the national Justice Reform Initiative (see QR Code to the left), the current position in South Australia, and about the Reintegration Puzzle Conference.

David Washington explained the involvement of The Don Dunstan Foundation. The Foundation has given priority to youth justice in the context of their longstanding commitment to First Nations justice, reflecting one of the priority areas that South Australians inherit as part of the legacy left by Don Dunstan.

The subsequent Reintegration Puzzle Conference explored the lived experience of youth and adult incarceration and the subsequent challenges of re-integration into society. Four overseas speakers outlined how various community-based, therapeutic models, rather than punitive models of youth justice, are in operation in Hawaii, New York, Spain and Scotland. For example, the Diagrama Foundation's operations in Spain achieve a youth recidivism rate of between 15% and 20% compared to rates in Australia exceeding 80%.

It is said that locking up children ends up creating better criminals. There have to be different solutions such as justice reinvestment into education, family support and early intervention programs, and culturally appropriate community-led initiatives.

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Ways to engage

- To find out more about these issues, or to find ways in which you might engage, please email Peter Murchland at info@unleyallies.org.
- To subscribe to regular emails about youth justice, and be informed about reading resources, send an email to info@unleyallies.org with the subject 'Youth Justice'.

Food for thought (2024/25 data)

A total of 345 children and young people were jailed at Adelaide Youth Detention Centre	14% of admissions were between the ages of 10 and 13
53% of children and young people jailed were Aboriginal	An Aboriginal child is roughly twenty-five times more likely to be jailed than a non-Aboriginal child
There were no children in jail in Scotland, as of September 2024	







Synod2026
The 42nd meeting of the Synod of South Australia









Celebrating UnitingCare Copper Triangle volunteers

By Debbie Terrett



Volunteers serve in many capacities. Some are bakers, caterers, singers, gardeners, drivers or preachers. There are those who care for people by visiting, listening, welcoming, checking in and praying. Others assist in the smooth running of programs by leading and planning or by handling background tasks such as administrative or banking duties.

To mark National Volunteer Week 2026 (18–24 May), UnitingCare Copper Triangle (UCCT) hosted a special service on Sunday 17 May at Kadina Uniting Church. We recognised, celebrated and gave thanks for the volunteers who willingly and selflessly share their time and talents to support others.

During the service, Jan Trengove from Clare shared a message reminding us that volunteers serve from the heart. Their work isn't done for recognition, nor for accolades or praise, but rather with genuine commitment to others – readily, enthusiastically and cheerfully.

While all volunteers were acknowledged and celebrated during the service, three were specially recognised for 20+ years of service to the local community.

Judith Barker, as Christmas Gift Appeal Coordinator, is our gift-giving guru. Judith inherited this role from her mother, Brenda, and has been in charge for over 25 years. Throughout the year, she amasses an Aladdin's cave of amazing gifts ready to be given to families in need nominated by UnitingCare and local schools.

In late November each year, Judith takes over the church hall for at least a week, setting up packing stations equipped with wrapping paper, twirling ribbon and sticky tape. She sorts through her gift collection and carefully selects appropriate presents for nominated children. Her invaluable wrapping team then lovingly prepares each gift. Last year they provided for 319 recipients (with many receiving three gifts each!).

Judith has devoted a significant portion of her time to this appeal, even taking personal leave to ensure the gift program operates efficiently and effectively. Hundreds of families and children have had smiles on their faces on Christmas Day thanks to Judith's long-term leadership and commitment.

Our cooking queen **Heather Miller** has coordinated Pancake Day since 2006. She starts planning early, recruits helpers, advertises extensively and trains people to cook delicious, fluffy pancakes. In Heather's capable hands, the day runs like clockwork.

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Volunteer award recipients Heather Miller, Kylie Mildwaters and Judith Barker cutting the 'heart of service' cake.

> Their work isn't done for recognition, nor for accolades or praise, but rather with genuine commitment to others – readily, enthusiastically and cheerfully.

Heather's team has raised at least $1,000 each year for the past 20 years. UCCT uses this as their operating budget line for maintenance, vermin eradication, trailer checks, tyre replacement and more. As UCCT relies wholly on fundraising and donations to operate, Heather's willingness to serve has made a difference to countless locals who have benefitted from these services.

Kylie Mildwaters is our Christmas Hamper Program Coordinator and a shopper extraordinaire. She liaises with supermarkets and local stores and keeps an eye out for bargains, ensuring the money generously donated by the community and the UnitingCare SA emergency relief funding is used most effectively. At times her house resembles a supermarket, with boxes lining passageways and rooms!

As the need has doubled in the last five years, Kylie and her team have risen to the occasion and ensured supply for all. On hamper packing day, they recruit family and friends to lend a hand. Cars and trailers loaded with goods make multiple trips, and within a couple hours everything is efficiently packed.

Last year's program supplied hampers to 167 families, including 290 adults and 191 children. $14,000 of funding was used to purchase the groceries and generous vouchers that filled these hampers. Kylie's volunteering and leadership over the past 20 years has ensured that hundreds of families, couples and single people have had a dignified meal on Christmas Day.

Moss Potter, the inaugural Chairperson of UnitingCare Copper Triangle, presented Judith, Kylie and Heather with certificates of acknowledgement and appreciation. Following the service, all attendees enjoyed a morning tea of cupcakes with heart embellishments, in recognition of these volunteers who exemplify what it means to serve from the heart.

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Society of Biblical Literature International Meeting 2026



From July 5–9, the 2026 International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature was held in Adelaide. We talked to Rev Dr Peter Trudinger about the event.

Will you unpack the name of the meeting for us?

It's quite a mouthful, isn't it? We shorten it to the initials, the IM of the SBL. The Society of Biblical Literature is the oldest and largest learned society devoted to the critical investigation of the Bible from a variety of academic disciplines and is based in North America.

The SBL runs several meetings each year: a national meeting in the USA with attendance about 8,000; regional meetings in the USA and an International Meeting in a city outside of the USA. The venue for the IM moves around the world – Rome, Edinburgh, Riga, Pretoria are some of the places where it has been held. The last meeting in Australia was in Melbourne in 1992. The host city gets to showcase what's going on in biblical studies in their country and region. It's a great boost for local scholars and those who might not be in a position to afford a trip to the US for an annual meeting. And, of course, it contributes to the economy of the city it is held in.

How did it come to be held in Adelaide?

Back in 2013, Prof Norm Habel said to me "The only time the IM has been in Australia was 1992 in Melbourne. Let's try to get it to Adelaide". That began a long journey for us. Australia, and Adelaide, were well known overseas as the home of the Earth Bible project. Norm was a major force in this. He and I had been running the Ecological Hermeneutics Unit of the SBL, so we had credibility in the organisation. We took the suggestion to the SBL who agreed to it and an IM was scheduled for 2020. Well, we all know what happened to international travel in 2020. We had a conference all ready to go, then in March, the plug was pulled.

And then?

Conferences like this are organised years in advance. We tried again for 2026 and, despite a war disrupting travel, the IM happened!

So you and Norm Habel organised the meeting?

Oh no! It's too big a job for the two of us. The SBL is geared up for the meeting with standard topics and registration processes, and a local team then adds local flavour. We had an ecumenical team in Adelaide, with representatives from the UCA, Anglican, Catholic and Lutheran denominations, along with people from Alpha Crucis college and the Bible College of SA. Adelaide University came on board as the venue, thanks to the support of Prof Paul Babie.

The SBL also partners with local organisations for the IM. In our case, that included Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Studies (ANZATS), Australian Catholic Biblical Association (ACBA), Australian Catholic Theological Association (ACTA), Oceania Biblical Studies Association (OBSA) and University of Divinity (UD).

The teamwork does not stop there. The IM is an opportunity to encourage local scholars. SBL has a standard suite of topical units for the IM, areas like the Gospels or the Prophets. We added themes relevant to our region: Ecological Hermeneutics, First Nations (Indigenous) interpretation, Moana Interpretation (from Pasifika scholars), and more. Our local topics did not merely showcase scholarly work in our corner of the globe but offered approaches and discussions that you would not find anywhere else in the world. That was made possible by contributions from people all over our region, including Pacific Islands, Myanmar, India and Taiwan.

South Australia also came on board with a grant from the Premier which enabled us to offer a Smoking Ceremony, a Welcome to Country, a didgeridoo demonstration, Australian music and a reception at the end of the meeting.

Do you think the meeting was a success?

Yes. All the feedback we have received has been extremely positive. I think this was the best IM ever! But I am a little biased.

What's next?

In the short term, there has been a boost to biblical scholars in our region. In the longer term, hopefully, we will have another meeting in Australia in the next decade. And perhaps try to do something a bit different such as a meeting in the outback, say in Alice Springs!

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Vicky Balabanski recognised the life and contributions to scholarship of Dr Norman Habel.



Rev Prof Bart Bruehler, Rev Peter Morel and Rev Prof Vicky Balabanski at the Opening Reception.

A resounding success!

By Rev Prof Vicky Balabanski

Around 500 scholars of the Bible – lecturers, postgraduate students and members of several Australian biblical and theological associations – came together for this exciting gathering. It brought participants from many parts of the world, particularly the Asia-Pacific region, and gave emerging scholars as well as experienced ones the chance to present their research.

The 1992 SBL International Meeting in Melbourne was a much smaller gathering and more monocultural. This time the voices of scholars from various groups – Pasifika, Asia, as well as Indigenous scholars were more prominent and confident, taking their place in the diverse streams of biblical interpretation. There were up to twelve parallel sessions running at any one time, and there was plenty of scope for lively discussion. Contextual, ecological, decolonising and many other ways of interpreting biblical texts were presented. This shows how the Bible is now being interpreted not just using European approaches anymore, but using many different cultural lenses, which opens up new insights.

Professor Amy-Jill Levine, a renowned Jewish New Testament scholar from the USA, made herself available to give various public talks alongside the conference. She spoke at three UCA venues about 'Jesus the Jewish Storyteller: The Messages of the Parables in His Time and Ours'; 'How Understanding Jesus and Paul Means Understanding Jewish Practice and Belief' and 'Jesus and Judaism: Why the Connection Matters'. At a time when Australia is wrestling with antisemitism, Amy-Jill's brilliant, funny and incisive contribution opened up new ways of seeing for many.

Because the conference coincided with the *Illuminate* festival, participants enjoyed a delightfully busy and family-friendly experience of North Terrace, and of Adelaide more generally. Adelaide University, Elder Hall, the National Wine Centre, Scots Church and the Adelaide Town Hall hosted various events, and



Adelaide's own Lumina Vocal Ensemble performed Australian music by First and Second Peoples.

the sunny winter weather was perfect for getting around. The Governor spoke at the Opening Ceremony in Kaurna language and paid her respects to the Indigenous custodian, Cliffy Wilson, who had welcomed us through a Smoking Ceremony. A substantial grant from the Department of Premier and Cabinet enabled the Indigenous cultural experiences at the conference, as well as Lumina Vocal Ensemble performing some breathtaking Australian music. It is really good to see the value of a biblical conference being affirmed in these many ways.

The lasting significance of such a conference tends to lie in the ongoing connections that are formed between scholars, who then keep in touch with one another. Research can feel lonely at times, and one wonders whether the articles and books one writes are of interest to anyone else. At a conference like this, you meet many people whom you've only encountered before through their written work, and it's a pleasure and encouragement to chat and exchange email addresses.

For me the highlights were speaking at the Opening Ceremony, presenting a paper, interviewing two famous Australian New Testament scholars – Professors Dorothy Lee and Brendan Byrne – and launching my new book. After the many months – indeed years! – of preparation, I am delighted to say that the SBL International Meeting 2026 in Adelaide was a resounding success!

Poll

Vote for your favourite Hymns and Worship songs

Thanks to everyone who has nominated their favourite hymns and worship songs. We've had a great deal of fun collating your submissions and coming up with two shortlists, and now it's time for you to vote for your favourites.

We hope that these lists give you some ideas for your own worship, and maybe bring back some fond memories.

Scan to listen

We've assembled YouTube playlists of all the hymns and songs. Scan the QR Codes below to listen to them on your phone:

Top 20 Hymns

Top 20 Songs

Pick your top 3 hymns

My Top 3		Tune	Music reference
☐	And can it be that I should gain	Sagina	TiS 209
☐	Be still my soul: the Lord is on your side	Finlandia	TiS 123
☐	Be thou my vision	Slane	TiS 547
☐	Christ is made the sure foundation	Westminster Abbey	TIS 432
☐	Come down, O love divine	Down Ampney	TiS 398
☐	Dear Father, Lord of humankind	Repton	TiS 598
☐	Forth in the name, O Lord, I go	Song 34	TiS 571
☐	Guide me O thou great Redeemer	Cwm Rhondda	TiS 569
☐	Holy, Holy, Holy	NICEA	TiS 132
☐	O Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder (How great Thou art)	How great Thou art	A&M 546 United Methodist Hymnal 77
☐	Immortal, Invisible	St Denio	TiS 143
☐	It is well with my soul	Ville du Havre	United Methodist Hymnal 377
☐	Lord of all hopefulness, Lord of all joy	Slane	TiS 613
☐	My song is love unknown	Love Unknown	TiS 341
☐	Praise my soul the king of heaven	PRAISE, MY SOUL	TiS 134
☐	Tell out my soul	Woodlands	TiS 161
☐	The Church's one foundation	Aurelia	TiS 457
☐	Thine be the glory	Maccabaeus	AHB 303 TiS 380
☐	To God be the glory	To God be the Glory	TiS 147
☐	When I survey the wondrous cross	Rockingham	TiS 342

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The rules

1. You can pick up to **3 favourites in each category.**
2. Try to make your choices based on the hymn or song itself, rather than the performance, production or video.

Scan to vote

5 ways to vote

- **On your computer**: Pick your 3 favourites using the form at https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/MjJJXAV9w3
- **On your phone**: Scan the QR code above and complete the form
- **By email (1)**: Write your 3 selections on this page then photograph or scan the page and email it to us at engagement@sa.uca.org.au
- **By email (2)**: Just put your 3 selections into an email and send it to engagement@sa.uca.org.au
- **By Australia Post**: Photocopy the page, mark your 3 selections, then post it to us at New Times, L2/212 Pirie Street, Adelaide SA 5000.

Pick your top 3 songs

My Top 3		By
☐	10,000 Reasons (Bless the Lord, O my soul)	Matt Redman
☐	Awesome God	Rich Mullins
☐	Be still for the presence of the Lord	David Evans
☐	Come as you are	Deirdre Brown
☐	For everyone born, a place at the table	Shirley Murray and Brian Mann
☐	For you, deep stillness	Julie Perrin and Robin Mann
☐	Goodness of God	Jenn Johnson, Brian Johnson, Ed Cash, Ben Fielding and Jason Ingram
☐	Here I am, Lord	Dan Schutte
☐	How deep the Father's love for us	Stuart Townend
☐	How great is our God	Chris Tomlin
☐	I Am Carried	Geoff Bullock
☐	In Christ Alone	Keith Getty and Stuart Townend
☐	Lord let me see	Ross Langmead
☐	Make me a channel of your peace	Sebastian Temple
☐	May our lives and our prayers be one	Paul Somerville
☐	There is a Redeemer	Melody Green
☐	This Is The Day	Les Garrett
☐	Worthy is the Lamb	Darlene Zschech
☐	Yet not I but through Christ in me	Jonny Robinson, Rich Thompson and Michael Farren
☐	You are my hiding place	Selah

QUICK BITES

International Organist Series at Pilgrim Uniting Church

Pilgrim Uniting Church recently concluded its 2026 International Organist Series with a recital by Benjamin Sheen (UK) on **9 August**.

Pilgrim has hosted visiting organists regularly over the past three decades. Earlier this year, they welcomed Vincent Dubois (France), Holly Broadbent (Perth) and Martin Setchell (UK/NZ). They also enjoyed a visit from Sydney organist David Drury, who performed a live improvised soundtrack to the 1922 silent film Nosferatu at a screening in July.





Dr Amy-Jill Levine lecture

During her visit to Adelaide in **July**, Dr Amy-Jill Levine gave a thought-provoking lecture at the **SA Synod office** on 'Jesus and Judaism: Why the Connection Matters'. Dr Levine is a distinguished contemporary scholar working at the intersection of Jewish and New Testament studies.



Let Loose Art Workshop

On **Saturday 4 July**, the Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts ran a relaxed art workshop at **Rosefield Uniting Church**. Participants enjoyed experimenting with charcoal and pen drawing, led by artist Karan Hudson, and shared good food and conversation.



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

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SALA Festival

A number of Uniting Churches took part in this year's SALA Festival (**1–31 August**), showcasing the work of talented local artists. Exhibitions included 'Time & Tide' at **Willunga Uniting Church**, 'Let's Go Fly a Kite' at **Rosefield Uniting Church**, 'Light and Wonder' at **Bridgewater Uniting Church**, '153 Fish' at **Port Adelaide Uniting Church's** Teeny-weeny Gallerini, and the L'Arche Adelaide exhibition at **Pilgrim Uniting Church**.





Trishaw rides in Bonython Park

Residents of **Resthaven Westbourne Park** recently enjoyed a cycling experience with a difference – taking to the paths of Bonython Park in volunteer-driven 'trishaws'.

The initiative, run through *Cycling Without Age*, saw four residents hop aboard the specially designed trishaws for a relaxed half-hour ride around the park, followed by morning tea. Along the way, volunteer drivers shared commentary about local landmarks, birdlife, and the surrounding environment.

"I used to ride my bike to school each day," reflected Mrs Rosemary Miatke. "The whole thing was magic. The volunteers explained the names of the birds and pointed out the places in the city as we rode past."

Rosemary would happily recommend the experience to others: "Please go. Even if it is a last-minute invitation, drop everything to go".



Walk a Mile in My Boots

Early in the morning on **7 August**, some of the team from **UnitingCare SA** and the **SA Synod office** (including special four-legged guest Biscuit!) joined more than 3,000 people in Victoria Park to 'Walk a Mile in My Boots'.

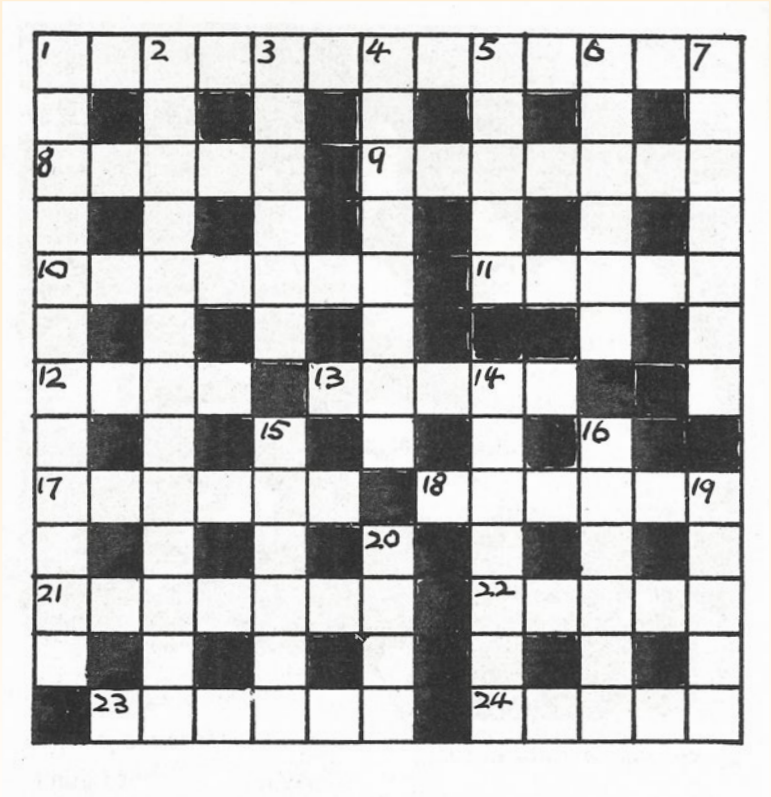
The event was part of a fundraising campaign supporting the work of Hutt Street Centre, which



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FROM THE VAULT

New Times



From New Times, November 1982

View the solutions to the crossword

ACROSS

1. What name is given to those Christians whose church, following the principles of John Calvin, is governed by elders, all (including ministers) of equal rank?
8. Which island in New York Harbour served for over 50 years as an important immigration centre?
9. Which noun means both shade and a sense of injury?
10. Which Red Indian word for "great chief" is used in the USA to describe one who in politics holds himself aloof from party?
11. "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man ... you" (New Testament: the First Epistle General of John).
12. Which London art gallery houses the Turner Bequest?
13. What is the strip of leather on which a razor is sharpened?
17. Which adjective, originally meaning "of Spring" is applied by the Church to the period between Ash Wednesday and Easter Eve?
18. "The voice of the Lord breaketh the ..." (Old Testament: the Book of Psalms).
21. Which Englishman of the 16th century gave his name to an economic law which asserts that bad money tends to drive out good money from circulation?
22. To which country belonged the writer and educationist Rabindraeth Tagore?
23. What are the narrow ecclesiastical scarves which hang over the shoulders and down to the knees?
24. What is the sacred book of Islam?

DOWN

1. Which Greek-based word means the theory relating to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit?
2. What term is used by historians to describe the radical philosophy which dominated the intellectual life of Europe, particularly France, during the 18th century?
3. Which provincial Spanish language is known to its speakers as "Eskuara"?
4. "So he (Mr. Valiant-for-Truth) "passed over and all the ... sounded for him on the other side." (J. Bunyan: Pilgrim's Progress).
5. Which Czech word for "word" is now used universally to signify an automaton in human form?
6. Which Victorian town bears the same name as a mountain mass in Turkey of special significance in the Old Testament?
7. Which disciple became the first Christian martyr?
14. What do South Australians call the monument to Captain Flinders erected at the summit of Mt. Lofty?
15. Which Hebrew name, meaning "House of God" was given by Jacob to the place where he set up a stone altar after dreaming of the ladder between heaven and earth?
16. "Had Cain been Scot, God would have changed his doom; / Not forced him .., but confined him home/" (J. Cleveland: "The Rebel Scot").
19. What term refers to both the eggs of fish and the mycelium of fungi?
20. The utterance of which herdsmen of Tekoa are preserved in the Old Testament?

From 'Not the New Times', December 1989

Wait list for organ transplants

THE Synod has begun a register in which churches agree to donate their organs to other congregations when they die. However, the scheme's co-ordinator, Mr A. Tremolo, says it has had a slow start.

"We have a waiting list of churches in grave need of a new organ, and quite a few dying churches, but very few willing to part with their organs," he said.

In a recent incident, one congregation almost died on a Sunday morning due to organ failure, and survived only after an emergency dash by rescue teams with a donor organ from a funeral chapel.

"We pulled out all the stops," Mr Tremolo said. "That congregation is now off the critical list, and is adjusting well to the change."

It is unknown whether recipient churches will suffer any long-term side effects from organ rejection, or if alternatives could help prolong organ life, such as the installation of pace-makers.

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

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Placements News

Placements Finalised as at 10 September 2026

Grant Pearson (MOP) as Synod Chaplaincy and Professional Standards Manager from 1 August 2026

Barry Kurston (MOP) as Chaplain at CAHLN (RAH) 0.5FTE from 1 September 2026

Isaac Prior (Deacon) to CityView UC 0.7FTE, as Community Minister from 1 August 2026

Karla Tanti (MOP) as Chaplain at Resthaven, Clare 0.4FTE from 1 August 2026

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

PROFILES AVAILABLE

Generate Presbytery

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

Presbytery of Southern SA

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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***

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