



Presbytery of Southern SA Report

The Presbytery of Southern SA was formally constituted at the Synod meeting in November, 2019 and the first meeting of the Presbytery was held immediately after that gathering. The Standing Committee in turn met immediately after the meeting of the Presbytery.

The Standing Committee met twice more in December, and its first meeting for 2020 was on the 2 January, at 8.30 am. That pace of work has been sustained for most of 2020, with Standing Committee meeting twice in most months with many meetings, wholly or in part, by ZOOM.

Other committees and teams within the Presbytery have also begun their work.

1. A year of Significant Achievement

It has been a very busy time but also extremely productive. We have in many ways constructed a Presbytery from scratch, making along the way all the policy decisions that have resulted in all the essential administrative arrangements being in place for the Presbytery to function as it needs to.

- Standing Committee (which conducts the business of Presbytery between Presbytery meetings) has operated from the start.
- **Pastoral Relations Committee** (which as its name suggests oversees all the many pastoral oversight aspects of church life) became a Presbytery function in June. Members of PRC have begun the work of supporting congregations and ministers, especially where placements become vacant and with congregations that do not have a minister in placement. This has included approvals for Lay People to preside at the Sacraments.
- We have the policies and procedures in place to provide care and oversight for Candidates for ordination and PoD students.
- And we have drawn up the rules for membership of the Presbytery, membership and operations of Standing Committee, and membership of PRC.
- We have worked on position descriptions for a presbytery minister and administrative support person. Having received approval to the placement of a presbytery minister we have been able to appoint Rev Ian Dow in supply while we seek a permanent appointment.

Given that most of the members of Standing Committee are in full-time or near-full-time employment, that seems to us to be a very significant achievement.

2. Congregations

At the end of 2020, the Presbytery of Southern SA has 56 congregations; there are 54 ordained people in placement (31 in congregations, 8 in chaplaincy, 9 in Synod or Uniting College placements, and 6 people

with part-time placements in, for example, a congregation and a chaplaincy); there will also be 10 lay people in placement (2 with congregations, 3 in Synod placements and 5 in chaplaincy).

- Placement processes for eight congregations have kept us busy. They have been completed for Unley (Rev Alison Whish), Bridgewater (Rev Scott Litchfield), Seaford (Rev Anne Butler) and SW Fleurieu (Pastor Shelley Alexander). SW Fleurieu consists of the congregations of Yankalilla, Delamere and Range Road, and is a cross-Presbytery placement: Yankalilla in Southern SA, Delamere and Range Rd in Generate.
- Placement processes are in place for Rosefield, Adare and a second placement at Noarlunga.
- *Supply Ministry was endorsed for Adare, Rosefield and Hare Street.*
- Sadly we will have seen the closures of Inman Valley, Myponga and Littlehampton congregations. These formal closures are the final stages of a reality that has been developing or already in place for a number of years.
- The experience of the congregations of the Presbytery during this year is as varied as the number of congregations.
 - Some have resumed worship in a manner close to how things used to be “BC” (Before COVID).
 - Some continue to offer live-streamed worship of the on-site worship
 - Congregations continue to make contact via their digital presence with people who we have long thought would not normally come anywhere near a church building.
 - Some small congregations, especially rural and relatively isolated, exercise an influence in their local community that appears to be far beyond what their physical size would suggest. As a Presbytery we are most grateful for the mission and witness that is provided by these communities of the Body of Christ.

3. Other Ministries

We are richly blessed by the large number of ministers and pastors who are members of our Presbytery in non-congregational placement. As a Presbytery we work with the chaplaincy manager and others to offer support for these ministers, and in turn enjoy and value their participation in the wider life of the Presbytery. We have participated in the commissioning of Olly Ponsonby at Eldercare Seaford and a conclusion of placement for Leanne Jenski as coordinating chaplain at FMC.

In all these areas of ministry we have been served and led by our key officers:

Chairperson	Rev Diane Bury (Placement, 0.2 FTE)
Secretary	Max Howland
Treasurer	Di Russell
Chairperson PRC	Rev Lawrie Linggood
Presbytery Minister	Rev Ian Dow (Supply, formerly Region Minister) (Placement, 1.0 FTE)

4. Candidates and Ordinations

There were two ordinations in 2020:

- Rev Haydn Lush’s ordination was held during the Presbytery meeting on 12 September.

- Cyrus Kung was ordained on Sunday 29 November.

They were joyful occasions for all involved, although a smaller event than desired due to COVID-safe limitations.

There are currently four candidates in the Presbytery.

5. Meetings of the Presbytery

There have been two meetings of the Presbytery in 2020: 13 March at Mount Barker (Dunn Memorial), and 12 September at Adelaide West. We had begun planning for a meeting on 5 December at Newland Memorial, Victor Harbor, but with COVID-safe practice in mind we decided that the safety of our people would have a higher priority than getting business done, and the meeting did not go ahead. The first two were joyful and productive occasions, due in no small measure to the efforts of a small army of people each time who carried out all the preparation and logistics to make things work, including to meet COVID-safe guidelines. We were pleased to have opportunity to hear the stories of some congregations in plenary at Mt Barker and in cluster groups at Adelaide West. This is an aspect of our presbytery meetings that we hope to build on.

6. Cluster Groups

Member congregations of the Presbytery are divided into five cluster groups: four geographical and one for bigger multi-staff congregations. Standing Committee started the year thinking there might be three regional groupings, and meetings, and perhaps quite a number of small cluster groups; but at the first Presbytery meeting in March, it was immediately obvious that there was a high level of interest in the clusters, so that is what we have retained. Inevitably, perhaps, some of the cluster groups are more active than others – not least because people are already busy. It remains to be seen how Cluster activity develops.

7. Summary

In summary, we heard a wide range of stories about what congregations did for worship and pastoral care while they were not able to meet in person. Congregations big and small, city and rural, engaged with video worship, whether pre-recorded or live via Zoom and similar. Newsletters and magazines took on extra significance (and size), as did intentional care via phone calls.

It has been a challenging time – we believe that by the grace of God we have managed things well, perhaps better than we had dared hope. Now the task is to take what we have learned from this experience and build on it for our future life. We give thanks to God for the committed people who have helped us navigate the challenges of church life, especially since COVID-19 hit us in mid-March, and pray for continuing discernment and wisdom in the time that lies ahead.

Max Howland

Secretary

Presbytery of Southern SA