



Mission & Leadership Development Report

The mandate of the Mission & Leadership Development Board is 'To support the development of healthy missional churches, life-long disciples and effective leaders to bear witness to the good news of Jesus to the world.' The work of the MLD Board is distributed across several subcommittees: Formation Education and Discipleship, Public Theology and Mission, Leadership Development, and MLD Operations. In addition it has established a Centre for Aboriginal Spirituality as an act of covenanting. The MLD Board also has oversight of two large activities of the Synod of SA, namely, Mission Resourcing and Uniting College for Leadership & Theology. This long report provides an overview of the broad range of activities and responsibilities of the MLD ministry centre. Mission Resourcing will be providing its own report to the annual meeting of the Synod.

1. Introduction

The MLD Board was established by the November 2016 meeting of the Presbytery and Synod. Its current membership is as follows; Mrs Jan Trengove (Chairperson) with Synod appointed members Ms Susan Burt, Rev Nicholas Patselis, Rev Andrew Hogarth, Rev Anne Hewitt, Rev Lyn Leane and Ps Bindy Taylor. Ex-officio members of the MLD Board are the Executive Officer (Andrew Dutney), the General Secretary (Felicity Amery), the Moderator (Bronte Wilson) and the Mission Resourcing Team Leader (Mark Schultz). The Board is supported administratively by the Executive Officer's PA (Angela Santostefano).

The Board oversees a series of subcommittees to manage the range of work within the MLD ministry centre: MLD Operations, Formation Education and Discipleship, Public Theology and Mission, and Leadership Development.

2. MLD Subcommittees

2.1 MLD Operation Subcommittee

Membership:

Rev Prof Andrew Dutney (Chair)	Rev Mark Schultz
Rev Dr Christy Capper	Ms Rebecca Honey
Ms Diane Hughes	Mr Matthew Harbinson

The role of the MLD Operations Subcommittee is to provide for the effective, efficient operation of the MLD Ministry Centre. This includes responsibility for HR functions in liaison with Synod HR and setting up interview panels, budget preparation and oversight, faculty reviews, Outside Study Program requests and reports, facilities, relationship with the ACD and marketing. Recent activities and areas of focus have included: Approving and appointing the role of Business Development and Marketing Manager in Matthew Harbinson,

approving and appointing the role of Intern Year Co-ordinator in Stephanie Van Rossen and extending the appointment of Diane Hughes as interim Business manager. Work is currently in progress for the recruitment of a new MLD Finance and Administration Manager. Other recent areas of focus include conducting staff reviews for Rev Dr Christy Capper (Vice Principal and Director of Missiology) and Jessie Sanders (VET Co-ordinator), the ongoing process of ACD staff becoming UCLT staff, a review of the Outside Studies Program for faculty, liaison with the Synod Property Manager (Matt Wilson) regarding the installation of solar panels as well as ongoing maintenance and landscaping work at the Brooklyn Park site. The work has also included a revamp of the combined ACD and UCLT website as well as the creation of a prospectus for the College.

2.2 Formation, Education & Discipleship Subcommittee

Membership:

Rev Rebecca Purling (Chair, Wimala)	Rev Mark Schultz (Mission Resourcing)
Rev Prof Andrew Dutney (EO and Principal UCLT)	Rev Steph Tai (Generate)
Rev Dr Tim Hein (Director of Discipleship, UCLT)	Rev Nathan Whillas (Rural, Generate)
Rev Do Young Kim (CALD, Wimala)	Mr Max Howland (Lay Preachers, PoSSA)
Rev Wendy Prior (Chaplaincy, Wimala)	

To say that the last twelve months have been challenging would be an understatement! Moving to multiple Presbyteries and living through a pandemic have raised many questions and changes for the Formation, Education and Discipleship Sub-committee. However, we have continued to meet, discuss, plan and dream about the many ministry and mission areas of our portfolio.

There have been some changes and additions to our membership since our last report. We now have people representing all three presbyteries, rural and CALD communities, chaplaincy and the College. Rev Ashley Davis was a founding member of the FED. As he prepared for retirement we farewelled him, thanking him for his insight, experience and wisdom.

With the creation of multiple presbyteries, we have been using the UCA Regulations to differentiate the roles of Presbyteries and the Synod. It is clear that the Period of Discernment process belongs with the presbyteries. The Formation Panels are organised by the College, but from now the panel members will be primarily made up of people from the candidate's presbytery. The FED Subcommittee continues to receive reports from the Formation Panels about mid-course reviews and transition interviews (readiness for ordination).

The Selection Process has undergone a major review since mid-2019. Andrew Dutney has put a lot of time into reviewing the Regulations and has proposed a different process for assessing and accepting candidates for the specified ministries. As required by the Regulations, the Presbytery Applications Committees will do the primary work of discernment after receiving the several reports and meeting with the applicant. If the Presbytery discerns that the applicant is called to the Ministry of the Word or the Ministry of Deacon, it will make that recommendation in a report to the Synod Selection Panel. The Synod Selection Panel will receive the Presbytery's report along with all the other reports and references that the Presbytery collected in making its

discernment. The Selection Panel will arrange for psychological, medical and clearance reports to be added to the Presbytery's material. The Selection Panel will read and discuss all the reports, reviewing and reflecting on the work of the Presbytery before meeting with the applicant and determining the application. The new process no longer requires the retreat-style selection weekend. Instead the Panel can review applications as they are received from the Presbyteries and it has set aside several dates during the year to be available for interviewing applicants. We expect that this will expedite the application process.

The responsibility for the selection and training of Lay Preachers lies with the presbytery, but there is a hope that these responsibilities could be referred to a centralised committee. This is a work in progress. This year we have received a report of a Lay Preacher candidate who has completed the requirements and who was subsequently commissioned. We have also received the names of three candidates for Lay Preacher.

Over the last year we have received reports from UCAF, KCO, the Intergen Team, Chaplaincy and CALD ministries. All these ministry areas come under our oversight, we commend each team for their passion and creativity in leading the church in these diverse areas.

With Covid restricting travel it has been difficult to resource any regional training, however a resourcing event was recently held at Wudinna through the Generate Hub on Eyre Peninsula.

Rev Rebecca Purling

October 2020

2.3 Leadership Development Subcommittee

Membership:

Danica Patselis (Chair)	Craig Bailey
Scott Litchfield	Joshua Scherer
Cyrus Kung	Linda Driver
Andrew Dutney	Felicity Amery (Gen Sec)

2.3.1 LDS Team

The Committee has formed a team where our personal leadership experiences and the formation of leaders is discussed and studied together. We believe our meetings are an opportunity to share, workshop, reflect, contemplate and study leadership together and not just a "means to an end". This has been fruitful and enriching for all members and hopefully contributes to the Synod as we serve in our various capacities.

We have begun intentional conversations and a reading of a book "Healing Our Broken Humanity" as a team to broaden our understanding of Intercultural Leadership Development.

2.3.2 Uniting Leadership

Following the national Leadership Symposium in February there remains a continuing desire to collaborate nationally in this project and for future gatherings which are like the Symposium in nature.

The Queensland Synod is no longer in a position to contribute financially to Uniting Leadership, and we are exploring options for future gatherings. Funds were made available to complete the current Leading Teams training and sponsor participants in the National Executive Development course which is also now under way.

2.3.3 UAICC

Mark Schulz, on behalf of the LDS, has begun conversations with the UAICC staff members to explore ways in which the LDS can collaborate, listen and learn alongside the established and emerging leaders in the UAICC. This will be an ongoing opportunity to think about the diversity of leadership formation and the broadening of leadership development in our courses and offerings.

The LDS is encouraged by the work already being done by this at the College, Synod and in the Presbyteries and does not seek to create more work or an unnecessary burden for anyone involved. This is an opportunity for imagining ways to work together, listen and learn.

2.3.4 Gatherings

The LDS had hoped to have various in-person gatherings for leaders across the Synod to gather and reflect on the practice of leadership. These were intended to be highly practical, grounded in current experience and agile in content. Due to the uncertainty of the pandemic this has been on pause, but there is interest for potentially doing this next year.

2.3.5 Under 35's

A small group of the LDS met with Tim Littleford, informally, earlier in the year to listen and provide a brainstorming space for ideas on leadership formation with under 35's in the Synod. This is an area of ongoing interest to the Committee.

2.3.6 Leading Teams

The Second cohort of Leading Teams have now completed their training. This was a group selected from Queensland and South Australian Synods. The delivery has been mostly online through Zoom which was not ideal for the training, but did provide a practical training opportunity for leading in new contexts.

Scott Litchfield has initiated a follow up gathering with members of the first and second cohort who are interested in using the content for future training in the Synod of leaders and teams. Several members of both cohorts have strongly encouraged and affirmed this suggestion. This will most likely occur in 2021.

2.3.7 College Courses

The Introduction to Leadership Course progressed well with 8 lecturers working alongside Craig to deliver content which was mostly delivered via Zoom and online.

The Introduction Course didn't have the enrolments desired but created an ideal learning opportunity for future courses and developing online content for the students due to Covid-19.

The LDS also lectured in the Leadership VET course this term. This has been an invaluable experience in understanding the breadth and diversity of leadership formation pathways offered in the Synod.

A Higher Education Course was developed by Craig in liaison with Tanya Wittwer to meet the emerging and adaptive skills required of leaders during the Pandemic. This was a very successful and well attended course.

The National Executive Leadership Training Course has completed the first of three units (one entirely online) and will resume in 2021. 23 students representing all synods are participating in this course which is coordinated by Craig Bailey and Jenny Byrnes with Peter Kaldor and Sean Gilbert completing the teaching team.

2.3.8 Reflecting

The LDS are looking forward to the potential of restrictions being eased and a "new normal" in 2021 after a year of many things being put on hold. We have adapted to new ways of delivering leadership training and development online which has been a great opportunity to broaden the pathways in the leadership offerings.

We understand all we do as a collaboration with the Synod, Presbyteries, College and Agencies of the UCA and endeavour to work with these members as much as possible.

This will also be the conclusion of Danica Patselis' time on the LDS. She has enjoyed serving over the last 4 years on the Committee and is grateful for the opportunity to learn from such a wonderful group of people.

Danica Patselis

Nov 2020

2.4 Public Theology and Mission Subcommittee

Membership:

Sandy Boyce (Chair)	Vicky Balabanski
Andrew Dutney	Paul Goh
Cyrus Kung	Mark Schultz
Christy Capper	Christa Megaw
Tarlee Leonardis	Liellie McLaughlan
Tim Littleford	Alex Rodgers

The PTM sub-committee met 6 times during 2020. The Convener meets with the MR Team Leader, Rev Mark Schultz, prior to the meeting to discuss agenda priorities. The Convenor also meets regularly with Rev Dr Paul Goh, Justice & CALD Multicultural and Cross-Cultural Officer, and Tarlee Leondaris, International Mission and Covenanting Officer, to discuss their work priorities which in turn shapes the PTM agenda. Where possible, the Chairperson attends the committees that relate to the work of PTM (eg Covenanting, PROK and Philippines Support Group). The Chairperson is also Chair of the Refugee Advocacy Group, established in 2019. The work of PTM is broad, and at the same time requires attention to detail in some areas. The meetings never seem to be long enough for the amount of discussion and planning that needs to happen! The input of College faculty is greatly appreciated (Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski and Rev Dr Christy Capper) and the MR team (Rev Dr Paul Goh, Rev Mark Schultz, Tarlee Leonardis). Other members are Rev Liellie McLaughlin, Rev Christa Megaw, and Rev Cyrus Kung. A number of guests have resourced the meeting, included Sam Chan in relation to his ministry to 2nd Gen migrant Christians within UCA SA, and supporting 2nd Gen disciples and leaders who will lead the SA Synod to becoming a more organic multi-cultural church. Also, Rev Dr Dean Eland has been a guest to speak about the 'Love your Neighbour' project. PTM now has representatives appointed from each of the Presbyteries. The work of PTM is supported by Bev Freeman, who provides administrative support setting meeting dates in liaison with the Convener, takes minutes and circulates the finalised minutes. We are grateful for her good work!

The following points reflect some of the work, and challenges, for the PTM sub-committee. It is indicative rather than comprehensive, and highlights some but not all areas of PTM's work.

2.4.1 Highbury St Fund

The PTM has administrative responsibility for the Highbury St Fund (HSF), which provides funding 'for ministry and mission with culturally and linguistically diverse people to flourish in South Australia'. Promotion of the Highbury St Fund includes a flyer prepared for distribution to the 3 Presbyteries, and updated guidelines and timelines to make the application process consistent. A number of applications have been received in 2020 including:

2.4.2 Fijian National Conference, February 2020

SA hosted more than 300 people including the Presidents of both the UCA and Fijian church.

2.4.3 Burundi Community

funding to support attendance at the Refugee Alternatives Conference in Brisbane in Feb 2020. Andrew Clarke and Rev Liellie McLaughlin are supporting the congregation.

2.4.4 South Sudanese UC Pastor

The South Sudanese congregation are working on changing from voluntary Pastor Position to a paid position for Pastor Gak. An application was received for funding for Pastor Gak to undertake the Heritage, Theology

and Polity in the UCA (audit) course in February. Pastor Gak will be applying for Reception of Ministry into UCA and this course is a pre-requisite.

2.4.5 Applied Mindfulness training

Undertaken by Rev Cyrus Kung and Tansy Chen.

2.4.6 CALD Research Project

('Neighbourhood Initiative') coordinated by Rev Dr Paul Goh, in collaboration with 3 CALD Graduate Students and several volunteers. This project aims to develop an intercultural strategy for the next several years by obtaining data in 3 areas: 1) the extent of intercultural awareness; 2) intercultural activities in congregations; 3) specific ideas/ best practices to share with other congregations.

2.4.7 Mission Resourcing Priorities

(Justice (0.5), International Mission (0.5), Covenanting (0.5), CALD, Multicultural and Cross-cultural 0.5)

The two MR Officers report on activities in which they have been involved, usually via written reports. Tarlee is working on framing a new strategy for international mission. The time honoured practice of gathering people for seminars, forums and symposiums has been challenged by COVID19, but it has also provided a catalyst for using platforms like Zoom to host meetings and webinars with a focus on non-gathered ways to resource congregations. There is also an option to access resources at any time. Paul is working in a website as a repository where key documents and resources can be uploaded.

2.4.8 Public Theology

Public theology happens in a number of ways. It may involve statements and resources. It also aims to resource congregations to think through and respond to issues through a biblical and theological lens in order to understand and participate in public theology and matters of importance in the public arena. It is noted that the Effective Living Centre offers opportunities to explore social issues and theological context through the Seminary of the 3rd Age seminars: Re-thinking Faith in the 21st Century.

The Moderator has been invited to a PTM meeting to discuss ways of collaborating with PTM on issues of importance in the public arena and there is an open invitation for the Moderator to attend when he is able to do so. The MR Officers have also collaborated with the Moderator on submissions and letter writing.

2.4.9 Refugee Advocacy Group

This group meets several times each year to discuss matters in relation to advocacy, and includes members of PTM as well as others engaged with refugees in the community. Presentations and/or handouts have been made available at Presbytery meetings. We are also mindful of the practical work of many UCA people supporting refugees in 2020, when jobs have been lost due to COVID19, and visas changed meaning families have had to relocate with only short notice.

2.4.10 Partner Church Support Groups

Thought is being put into the role and relationship of Partner Church Support Groups. While the main focus of the partnership may be on solidarity, justice matters, reciprocal visits etc, there is also a need to audit the active partnerships that local congregations have with activities related to overseas churches and organisations. The PTM Convener has also developed a resource for the Partner Church Support Groups, particularly on reciprocal trips.

2.4.11 Environmental Action Group

The EAG has approached the PTM sub-committee to be in partnership, providing a more intentional link with the PTM and its work. This has been agreed to, and endorsed by the MLD Board. Environmental concerns clearly need to be given a high priority in the Synod and congregations.

Rev Sandy Boyce

2.5 Centre for Aboriginal Spirituality

The Centre for Aboriginal Spirituality was established in 2018 as a covenanting activity of the MLD Board. It was a response to the initiative of leaders of the UAICC in South Australia who have a vision for a dedicated resource that honours and nourishes Aboriginal Christian spirituality and theology for the sake of that reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation.

The Covenant (1994) includes the admission from the church:

“My people did not hear you when you shared your understanding and your Dreaming. In our zeal to share with you the Good News of Jesus Christ, we were closed to your spirituality and your wisdom.”

In the light of this, the Purpose of the Centre is:

To hear Aboriginal people share their understanding and Dreaming and to be open to Aboriginal spirituality and wisdom

This includes hearing the stories of Aboriginal spirituality since colonisation in 1788 and ‘encouraging the expression of Christian theology from the perspective of Aboriginal and Islander culture’ (Regulation 3.2.2 (d)).

The second First and Second Peoples’ Writers Retreat, planned to take place in Darwin in September, had to be postponed because of coronavirus restrictions. A workshop planned to take place at Nunyara in early December also had to be postponed because of tightened restrictions following the Parafield cluster. It has been rescheduled for March. However, there were two projects of great significance that could not be disrupted by the pandemic.

On the 2nd of November the ACD Council conferred the degree Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) on the Reverend Aunty Denise Champion. The nomination came from Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski on behalf of the Centre’s Governing Committee. I include the citation which I read at the conferral ceremony:

The Reverend Aunty Denise Champion is an internationally respected theologian author, teacher and speaker. A daughter of the Adnyamathanha Nation, she is the first South Australian Aboriginal woman to be ordained for ministry in the Uniting Church in Australia. For decades she has been a key leader in the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, within both the South Australian Regional Council and the National Council of Congress. She has exercised pastoral ministries at Port Augusta, Quorn and Salisbury North.

Aunty Denise is best known to the academy for her ground-breaking book Yarta-Wandatha: The Land is Speaking, the People are Speaking (2014) which showed the way the ancient wisdom of the Adnyamathanha Nation is a wisdom “full of God”. In this book she started a theological conversation that quickly went national, then ecumenical, then international. We wait with excitement for the publication of the new book she has recently completed.

Aunty Denise is an accomplished teacher, not only in formal settings like Uniting College or Augusta Park Primary School, but especially in the “classroom” that is Ikara–Flinders Ranges. She has taken several generations of theological students Walking on Country there, as well as many church and community leaders from all over Australia and the world. Walking on Country with Aunty Denise, you learn to listen to the land through the ancient stories of the Adnyamathanha Nation, as it tells its people who they are, where they’ve come from, how they are related to each other, how they should behave, and what they may hope for.

Aunty Denise is in great demand as a keynote speaker at events as diverse as the triennial National Council of Churches Forum (Melbourne 2013), the triennial Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia (Perth 2015), the Charles Sturt University Graduation (Sydney 2015), and the World Council of Churches Indigenous People ‘s Spirituality and Theology Conference (Darwin 2016). And her wise voice is sought out in innumerable consultations, symposia, workshops and meetings.

Aunty Denise is being honoured with this degree in recognition of her accomplishments as a Christian scholar and leader, and her life’s work in reconciliation, rural and remote advocacy, and inter-cultural dialogue. Her nomination for the award was accompanied by letters of support from an international panel of scholars and church leaders.

One church leader wrote, “[Aunty Denise] has offered a gentle but courageous example of leadership that has reminded the Uniting Church of the commitments it has made to relationships with First Peoples. Through her organisation of walks on country she has challenged people to really relate to this land and its people, and has contributed to reconciliation. She has been an important model for young leaders.”

Another church leader said, “Denise has been able to encourage other First Nations leaders to reflect from their own embodied ancient wisdom. She has mentored and encouraged a younger generation of First Nations Peoples to think, reflect and engage in a contextual way which has given value and meaning. Her work and the way she engages with others has been and continues to be, significantly important in the reconciliation movement, both within the Church and more widely the community.”

One scholar concluded, “[The ACD Council’s decision to confer this award on Aunty Denise is] a fitting recognition of her original, substantial and sustained contribution. Through her writing and education, Aunty Denise has made a significant contribution to theological education, initially in Australia and now in Aotearoa. This is testimony to the substantial contribution she has made in Adelaide, Australia and internationally. Her originality is clearly evident in the way her work has become a resource for further scholarship, providing indigenous hermeneutical resources to enable non-Western theological dialogue, indigenous scholar to indigenous scholar.”

Another scholar affirmed that, “Aunty Denise is a scholar looking to the horizon by reclaiming the ancient past of her peoples – a stance that makes her a thought-leader among First and Second Peoples in an Australian Church profoundly influenced by colonial missionary theology, and an important indigenous contributor internationally. Granting her a Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) would be a well-deserved honour for a deeply intelligent, wise, generous, and faith-full woman.”

The recommendation that Aunty Denise be awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity (Honoris Causa) was endorsed unanimously by the Adelaide College of Divinity Council.

The second project is the placement for an Aboriginal Theologian in Residence within the UCLT faculty. The concept of setting an Aboriginal theologian apart for a period of two years to be supported while they focus on their theological vision and work, with access to the support of the UCLT faculty and the resources of the College is an expression of the Centre’s purpose. The participation of the Theologian in Residence in the life of the College – formally and informally – is also a way of deepening the College community’s engagement in covenanting, and transforming its sense of what it means to know God and follow Jesus on Aboriginal land. The Synod Standing Committee appointed a Joint Nominating Committee to identify a suitable person and, if possible, bring a recommendation to the first meeting of Standing Committee in 2021.

Andrew Dutney, Executive Officer, MLD and UCLT Principal

3. Summary of Key Activities and Outcomes since November 2019

3.1 Period of Discernment Team

The final Period of Discernment meeting under the Presbytery and Synod of SA was held on 27 November 2019. In February 2020 a meeting was held with representatives from the newly formed presbyteries; Generate, Presbytery A (now Wimala) and Presbytery B (now Presbytery of Southern SA) to discuss the process for setting up their own PoD teams. The Synod restructure required that each presbytery would now have oversight of the Period of Discernment process within their presbytery and therefore needed to appoint a person and/or committee for this purpose. This is now well underway with the appointment of three new PoD Co-ordinators, Eloise Scherer (Generate), Sean Gilbert (PoSSA) and Ann Phillips (Wimala).

3.2 Lay Preachers Committee

The Ministry of Lay Preacher is one that receives formal support within the Regulations and Polity of the Uniting Church as a “Specified Ministry” for which the church sets required standards for the education and

formation of practitioners, and provides formal oversight. Such requirements testify to the importance and seriousness with which the Church regards the ministry of Lay Preacher.

3.2.1 Lay Preacher “Workforce”

In SA there are 161 active Accredited Lay Preachers, and 5 Candidates actively pursuing accreditation; three of these people have been received as Candidates during the last four months, and another application is pending. We are delighted to be able to welcome new candidates to the fold; we have also been delighted to commission a new Lay Preacher this year.

There are of course many, many more who preach, with varying degrees of regularity, while not holding formal accreditation. Lay Preachers’ Committee endeavours to offer support at various levels to all preachers, even as its official mandate relates just to Accredited Lay Preachers.

3.2.2 Pastoral Care and Assistance for Lay Preachers

Newsletters

LPC (Lay Preachers’ Committee) prepares and distributes two newsletters each year. They carry news of special celebrations and anniversaries of Lay Preachers, news of up-coming conferences and seminars, as well as items of import to lay preachers.

In 2020 we are celebrating the special anniversaries of: seven of our Lay Preachers, for years of service ranging from 40 to 70. We thank God for the dedication of these people to the work of lay preaching; we thank them for their work for God through the Church across these many years. The recognition and celebration of the work of these Lay Preachers was to take place in November – but that meeting of Synod has had to be deferred to February next year, due to COVID-19 restrictions.

The other significant activity of LPC is Lay Preachers’ Sunday. LP Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday in August each year (officially; or on a nearby date more convenient for any particular congregation). A liturgy and a set of preaching notes is produced related to the lectionary readings for the day. We encourage all congregations to mark the occasion, and are grateful to those who recognise the contribution of Lay Preachers to the life of the Church in this way.

3.2.3 Resources for Preaching and Worship

As mentioned above, the Lay Preachers’ Committee advertises and supports opportunities for continuing education that are provided by various people. Earlier this year several of us took part in the preaching seminars offered by CMLA (The Centre for Music, liturgy and the Arts). We wish to thank CMLA for running the sessions, and the people who provided the readings for us. News of resources such as these is shared with all lay preachers.

We also recognise with deep appreciation the seven lay people (and their leader) who undertook a local programme of study and preparation in the Goyder Ministry Area earlier this year. We are grateful to all those

involved for the commitment of time and energy to developing knowledge and skills in the craft of Lay Preaching.

The major national resource for 2020 was to be the National Conference for Lay Preachers, to be held on the Sunshine Coast from 31st July to 3rd August. This event also was deferred, and will be held in September next year. The theme is “Lay Preaching Unleashed”.

The National Conference is just one of many, many events, across the whole of our society, that have been cancelled or deferred when it now appears that they could have taken place; but of course decisions have to be taken at the time planning begins, and when there is a long lead time to prepare such events, inevitably some get caught up in changing circumstances.

3.2.4 Support for Congregations

A great need, which is not diminishing, is the need for small congregations, most but not all rural, to find people to preach and lead worship each week. The greater problem for rural congregations is to find people within reasonable travelling distance. Lay Preachers’ Committee has a small programme of support for congregations in this situation. We publicise the names of those congregations who particularly seek assistance for preaching and leading worship. We also provide contact details for Lay Preachers who might be interested in providing worship leadership for them. Generally the list of names is limited to those within 15-20 minutes’ driving time. We are mindful of privacy issues when responding to such requests, so provide only minimal information; it is then for each congregation to contact the people on the list supplied. A congregation that would like to be included in the either of these lists should make contact with the Chairperson of Lay Preachers’ Committee, who is a Lay Preacher representative to Synod.

3.2.5 Wider Relationships

Presbytery and Synod levels

Lay Preachers are granted representation at Presbytery level, and we are both grateful for and encouraged by such support.

The working relationship between Lay Preachers’ Committee and Presbytery and Synod bodies continues to evolve. This includes the possibility that Lay Preachers’ Committee may be brought into the Mission Resourcing work of the Synod – we see this as offering much potential benefit, at several levels, including access to further resources, raising the profile of Lay Preachers and providing encouragement for lay preacher practitioners to engage in continuing education and professional development. The conversation has some way to go yet.

National Lay Preachers’ Committee

We continue to have a close working relationship with the National Lay Preachers’ Committee – we are one of the Synods that fills its two representative places on NLPC. It also happens that the Chairperson of LPC in

SA is also the Chairperson of NLPC. Whatever else that might mean, it does mean that SA has good access to information about what is going on at the national level!

And that includes the National Conference mentioned above.

Max Howland

Chairperson/Secretary, Lay Preachers Committee

3.3 Synod Selection Panel

The Synod Selection Panel is one of the subcommittees of the Mission and Leadership Development Board (as per Regulation 3.7.4.3 (c) (iii) (3)). The panel consists of lay people and ministers (both Deacons and Ministers of the Word) and are appointed by the MLD Board along with Presbytery representatives. It meets with applicants who have applied to their presbyteries to candidate for ordained ministry in the Uniting Church. Applicants must have completed a Period of Discernment and also be approved and recommended to Selection Panel by their presbytery.

For some time the MLD Board and its FED Subcommittee have been reviewing the Synod's candidate process. In recent months, as it continued to work out the implications of the restructuring of the Synod and the reintroduction of multiple presbyteries, FED considered and agreed to a modified approach to candidate selection that reflected the significant emphasis the regulations place on the role of the presbyteries in the process. This approach included modifying the composition of the Synod Selection Panel and involved a change of focus in the way the panel fulfils its role.

FED made its recommendations to the MLD Board in March. The Board adopted those recommendations and reported them to the April meeting of the Synod Standing Committee. The resolution is:

1. *That in the Synod of SA the process for candidature for Minister be primarily the responsibility of the Presbyteries and be approached as an undertaking of spiritual discernment in community*
2. *For this purpose, in addition to appointing a person and/or a committee to oversee the Period of Discernment (2.3.1), the Presbyteries shall appoint an Applications Committee to fulfil the responsibilities of a Presbytery in the selection of Candidates for Ministry (2.3.2.3)*
3. *That in the Synod of SA the Selection Panel (2.3.2.4) shall determine the outcome of applications on the recommendation of the Presbytery, having confirmed that the Presbytery's process of discernment was sound and taking into account such other information as the Selection Panel has sought.*
4. *For this purpose the MLD Board shall appoint a Selection Panel comprised of*
 - *the PRC chairperson from each Presbytery (or their nominee),*
 - *the Principal of UCLT (or their nominee),*

- *and such other members as are necessary to ensure that the panel includes a minister of the Word, a Deacon, a lay person and a person qualified to interpret reports on psychological assessments.*
5. *In addition, the Presbytery of the applicant will appoint a representative to be a member of the selection panel for the purpose of dealing with that application.*

In progressing these changes, the MLD Board was mindful of the fact that the current Synod Selection Panel needed to be thanked and discharged. The changes were in no way a reflection on the quality of the existing Selection Panel and its members who had exercised their responsibilities faithfully and diligently. Unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown, the Board was unable to arrange a face to face gathering to personally thank the Panel. Instead individual letters of thanks were sent out.

The next step was to form a new Selection Panel and at the August meeting of the FED subcommittee several names were put forward to the MLD Board to consider and approach as a possible Chairperson for the Selection Panel. At the November meeting of the MLD Board, Rev Lynne Aird was affirmed as the new Chairperson of the Synod Selection Panel. Lynne brings wisdom, skills in spiritual discernment and a deep knowledge and love for the SA Synod of the UCA. We are very grateful to have her as chairperson. The first Selection Panel interviews under the new process took place on Friday 04 Dec with three applicants attending the panel.

The following chart summarises the number of candidates currently in the Core Phase and ordained ministers in Phase 3 of ministry formation.

Candidates in Core Phase 2	Ministry of the Word	5 (2 male, 3 female)
	Ministry of Deacon	4 (2 male, 2 female)
	Total	9 (4 male, 5 female)
	(Post Transitional)	
Phase 3	Ministry of the Word	8 (5 male, 3 female)
	Ministry of Deacon	2 (1 male, 1 female)
	Total	10 (6 male, 4 female)
	(moving to Phase 4 - Nov 20/Feb 21)	2 (male)

Average age of candidates in Core Phase 2 = 41

Average age by gender: Male = 38 female = 45

Median age of candidates = 43

4. Uniting College for Leadership & Theology

4.1 Staff Changes

UCLT has had some significant staff changes in 2020. The Academic Dean Assoc. Prof Liz Boase, resigned in order to take up a new opportunity at University of Divinity in Melbourne. In May 2020. Rev Assoc. Prof Matthew Anstey replaced Liz as the Academic Dean ACD, and Lecturer Biblical Studies UCLT.

Diane Hughes, the Interim Business Manager, departed to the UK in October to spend time with her mother and family. Diane is currently working remotely from England through to mid-January 2021 when her current contract expires. A Human Resources and Remuneration Committee (HRRC) process has been underway for several months to appoint a new Finance and Administration Manager. At the time of writing the position has not been advertised. UCLT hopes an appointment can be made early in 2021.

Dr Tanya Wittwer, Lecturer in Pastoral Care and Homiletics announced her retirement from teaching which will take effect at the end of 2021.

Another major change was that the Library Manager, Ana Grieve tendered her resignation to take up a position as Head Librarian at Prince Alfred College. She has been outstanding in her role and the library has become the warm heart of the college under her leadership. Although we are very sad to see her go, we wish her every success in her new job at PAC. As part of a plan to manage some UCLT budgeting issues, the Library Manager position vacated by Ana will not be filled.

At the time of writing, the Uniting College team is:

- Rev Professor Andrew Dutney, MLD Executive Officer and Principal of Uniting College
- Rev Dr Christy Capper, Vice Principal and Director of Missiology
- Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski, Director of Biblical Studies (New Testament)
- Associate Professor Matthew Anstey, Academic Dean and Lecturer in Biblical Studies (Old Testament)
- Mr Craig Bailey, Director of Leadership (0.8)
- Rev Dr Sean Gilbert, Lecturer in Ministry Practice (0.8)
- Mrs Jeannie Hagarty – Online Learning Administrator (0.4)
- Rev Dr Tim Hein, Director of Discipleship (0.5)
- Ms Diane Hughes, Acting Business Manager (0.2)
- Mrs Johanne Manning, Administration Officer (0.8)
- Dr Mauro Meruzzi, Post-graduate Coordinator (0.7)
- Mrs Angela Santostefano, PA to the Principal
- Ms Jessie Sanders, VET Coordinator (0.7)
- Mrs Karen Vanlint, Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Coordinator (0.3)
- Dr Tanya Wittwer, Lecturer in Pastoral Care and Homiletics (0.5)
- Mrs Anna Witty, Librarian, Adelaide Theological Library (0.8)
- Mr Ian Trenwith, Library Technician, Adelaide Theological Library (0.4)
- Mrs Evangeline McAllen, Events Coordinator (0.4)

4.2 Programs and Partnerships

UCLT continues to deliver a range of accredited educational programs, from VET to PhD and DMin, through our Higher Education Providers the Adelaide College of Divinity (ACD) and Flinders University. UCLT continues to provide an Intern Year experience for young adult Christians, overseen by Stephanie Van Rossen and Jessie Sanders. In addition, UCLT provides unaccredited educational programs for students undertaking the Certificate in Bible and Leadership in ESL, Code of Ethics training and attending the Discernment Retreat.

UCLT also continues to deliver teaching on the Gold Coast and Brisbane as part of arrangements with Newlife UC and to provide leadership training to the Uniting Church Queensland Synod, and, in partnership with Pilgrim College (Melbourne), the UCA's national Executive Leadership course.

UCLT is working closely with the Northern Synod and the WA Synod to deliver training for Lay Preachers and Pastors and to resource those synods for the formation of ordination candidates. It is significant that four of the UCA's six Synods now look to UCLT and the ACD to provide courses in theological education – the SA, WA, Northern and Queensland Synods.

UCLT continues to enjoy a partnership with Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Institute, a recently formed Russian Orthodox seminary, which allows them to teach ACD courses under UCLT oversight and mentoring.

Under the direction of the Academic Dean Matthew Anstey, the ACD is currently in the process of applying to TEQSA for Self Accrediting Authority. This project is running parallel to the ACD's application for Reaccreditation and will greatly benefit the ACD regardless of the outcome.

4.3 Supervision Course

In 2019 LOCCSA (Leaders of Christian Churches in South Australia) formed a committee to investigate the appropriate response to the recommendation of the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse regarding raising standards of professional supervision for ministers and priests. A consensus developed in that process that the appropriate standard for the training of such supervisors is Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) Level 8, that is, Graduate Certificate or Graduate Diploma. The Uniting Church's approved supervisor training course is non-accredited at this time. However, it is high quality and can be adapted quite easily for delivery as a Graduate Certificate/Diploma. In consultation with Diane Bury and Philip Gardner, who have coordinated the delivery of the UCA supervisors' course in SA, UCLT is preparing for the delivery of the course early in 2021 as an ACD Graduate Certificate in Ministry (Professional Supervision). Sean Gilbert (Lecturer in the Practice of Ministry) is coordinating this project with Craig Bailey (Director of Leadership).

4.4 Prison Ministry

The ACD has recently released a new Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology. It has been developed in close consultation with prison chaplains to be suitable for use by prisoners. That is, it will be delivered at an accessible learning level, exclusively print-based, and able to be completed successfully with very limited

learning support. The ACD has always had one or two prisoners doing courses by distance education but, with the move to increased online learning, those courses have been phased out. At the request of UCLT the ACD has now designed a stand-alone course specifically for prisoners. The enrolments have been very encouraging. At the time of writing there are thirteen students doing this course in various SA prisons – more prisoners than at any time previously enrolled with the ACD. The prison chaplains report further interest among prisoners and are pleased to offer this new dimension to their ministries. Prisoners receive RH White Scholarships through UCLT to cover their fees. The Certificate III has also been designed with remote and CALD students in mind.

The table below details the level of enrolments for 2020 showing the type of training that has occurred and the Effective Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) or to put it in other words, the equivalent number of full time students.

Type of Training	Courses	Semester 1 2020		Semester 2 2020	
		No of Individual Students	EFTSL	No of Individual Students	EFTSL
Higher Education	ACD - Ministry	90	20	82	18
Higher Education	Flinders Theology	62	9.33	31	5.8
VET	ACD - Cert IV	23	11.11	23	11.11
Unaccredited	Certificate in Bible & Leadership for ESL	4		0	
Unaccredited	Code of Ethics/ Leadership Formation Day	56	0	48	0
TOTAL		235	40.44	184	34.91

4.5 Faculty Activity

The UCLT Faculty is a rich resource for the church over and above the courses that they teach and supervise. They provide thought leadership for the Uniting Church in challenging times. For example, Tim Hein was a panel member for Pilgrim UC's recorded discussions on the impacts of COVID-19, Tanya Wittwer spoke on 'Recovery after Lockdown' at Port Phillip East Presbytery UCA in August and also assisted Craig Bailey in coordinating a Higher Education Certificate 6 week intensive in July on Leadership in Challenging Times. In February, Craig coordinated a Leadership Symposium on behalf of 'Uniting Leadership'. Presentations were made from a breadth of church leadership and the UL committee have now gathered a collection of stories/reflections on the theological framework supporting people's leadership in the time of the pandemic. They will be distributed in UC newspapers/magazines around the country.

Their leadership is sought beyond the Uniting Church too. For example, Tanya Wittwer frequently preaches at St Stephen's Lutheran Church and continues to provide leadership towards the ordination of both women and men in the LCA. She is also an external academic to the University of Divinity Undergraduate Certificate Development Panel and a member of Low Risk Assessment Panel for Flinders University Ethics and Biosafety.

Tim Hein was interviewed by Christianity Today with Dr Diane Langberg on her new book *Redeeming Power: Understanding Authority and Abuse in the Church*. Tim also launched Andrew Dutney's book *Angels in this Wilderness: Reflections on the journey of the Uniting Church in Australia*. and his speech was published in New Times.

They are actively engaged in resourcing the church locally too, accepting invitations to preach and to be speakers at local and interstate events. For example, Andrew Dutney presented at the Leadership and Theology Symposium held at Uniting College in February, was the keynote speaker at the WA School of Ministry in Perth in June and July. Andrew was also invited to speak at the National Lay Preachers Conference to be held on the Sunshine Coast in July/Aug however this has now been postponed to September 2021. Tim Hein participated in an online panel with Generate Presbytery on the topic of 'Renewal', Tanya Wittwer has preached numerous times this year at Bridgewater UC, Port Augusta UC and Strathalbyn UC, Jessie Sanders preaches regularly at Mitcham Hills UC and Christy Capper gave the Address at the Adelaide College of Divinity Graduation Celebration in November. Craig Bailey has continued, alongside Rev Dr Jenny Byrnes to coordinate the National Executive Development course with 23 participants from across all Synods. The first intensive was held in March, the second online in October and it is hoped that this cohort will complete the course by the end of 2021.

The faculty network widely in their discipline areas to ensure that the work they do represents the best in their fields of expertise. For example, Matthew Anstey initiated the creation of a new unit in the International Society of Biblical Literature, "Biblical Hebrew Language and Linguistics" which he co-chairs. After the cancellation of the meeting in Adelaide in July, planning is now underway for the UK meeting in 2021. Matthew also presented at the annual November meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) on the "Syllable Typology of Tiberian Hebrew". This would normally occur in the USA but was an online meeting this year. Vicky Balabanski also presented at the Annual SBL in November 2020 online forum. Tanya Wittwer attended the virtual Festival of Homiletics in May (originally planned to take place in Atlanta, Georgia). Sean Gilbert presented his paper "Beyond the Ellipses: an exploration into the constitutive and experiential nature of the language of faith" at the Australian Lutheran College's Research Forum in October.

The faculty are engaged in primary research projects of different kinds. For example, Tim Hein continues to progress with his PhD Thesis exploring Pneumatology in the Basis of Union, Both Christy Capper and Sean Gilbert completed their PhDs last year and graduated in early 2020. Sean received the Flinders University Vice Chancellors Award for Thesis Writing Excellence. Both Christy and Sean have been encouraged to publish their work. Vicky Balabanski's book *Colossians: An Earth Bible Commentary* was launched on March 15, just before lockdown. She has also published several other chapters and papers this year. Andrew Dutney launched his latest book *Angels in this Wilderness: Reflections on the journey of the Uniting Church in Australia* in March at Uniting College to a small gathering and a wider Zoom audience. Andrew's other publications this year include "The right thing to do: Australian religion and the 2017 same-sex marriage debate", in P.Babie and R.Sarre (eds), *Religion matters: The contemporary relevance of religion* (Singapore: Springer, 2020) 295-

311 and “Australia”, in Kenneth R Ross (ed.) *The Edinburgh Companions to Global Christianity. Vol.5 The Pacific*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, forthcoming).

Andrew Dutney, UCLT Principal

5. Adelaide Theological Library

5.1 Current Projects

We have a Planning Day every year. Our next one is scheduled for 27 October 2020. During this time we review the projects we completed this year, we revisit our vision, and set the projects for next year.

ATL is currently doing stock take in stages to tidy up records on Alma; this is something that has to be done every 3-4 years.

Most of the ACD theses in electronic format have been added to the library catalogue which means it can be accessed online.

5.2 Highlights and Completed Projects 2020

157 books were ordered for Semester 1 and 2 and essential texts placed in the High Demand Collection to support the teaching and research of the College. This year we focused on further developing specific subject areas for our collection: feminist, environmental, third world, African and Indigenous theology.

Our librarian Anna travelled with the ACD team to offer a library orientation session to our distance students in Queensland.

In collaboration with our teaching staff, ATL offered introductory information literacy sessions to all our first year students including our distance students in the first semester.

We created more space for students in the library by removing low usage items from the Main Collection and relocating 1000 books to the Compactus (Dewey 261-300). By rearranging the space, we created an inviting and comfortable area for students near the back of the collection where we placed a lounge to encourage interaction. This area has been very popular with students.

We also relocated high usage books (Dewey 300-999, subject areas including Aboriginal theology, sociology, education and Biblical languages) from the Compactus to the Main Library for easy access.

Online payment for library memberships and printing/photocopying has been implemented.

Two significant online resources have been added to our collection to better cater for our students who are studying online: *New Interpreter's Bible, a Commentary in Twelve Volumes* and *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion*.

During the lockdown (March to July) the library offered a “click and collect” service in addition to the existing services. Whilst the College was physically closed, 1,183 hard copy items have been borrowed by our library patrons. The combination of a robust online collection and an adaptable approach to offering excellent library services in a changing environment ensured that our patrons enjoyed a seamless service. This could have not been achieved without the support and trust of my immediate supervisor Andrew Dutney.

Ana Grieve

Library Manager

Rev Prof Andrew Dutney

Executive Officer, Mission & Leadership Development and Principal, UCLT

30 November 2020