



Uniting Church SA Historical Society

1. Executive Summary

2020 has been a challenging year for the Uniting Church SA Historical Society as it has been for all parts of the Uniting Church. The lockdowns and restrictions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have necessitated major curtailment of our program of public events, and have limited our capacity to keep the History Centre open and to provide research assistance to enquirers. We are grateful to our part-time staff members, Rosemary Hocking and Leanne Davis for their preparedness to work from home during lockdowns which ensured that some archival and research activities could continue, and that our newsletter could be published as usual. We are grateful too to our History Centre co-managers, Gaye Brown and Val Canty, and to a core of other volunteers, who have kept the centre open whenever it was safe to do so, and kept abreast of ongoing projects and new enquiries. The Executive and Council have continued to work productively throughout the year, holding meetings via Zoom, and embarking on some new projects to be pursued in 2021.

2. Introduction

In the past 12 months the Society has maintained its educational program, encouraged churches to record their past experiences by publishing and sharing stories of discipleship and documenting the faith and resilience of local congregations. We continue to seek to be good stewards of our considerable financial resources and to support those with a passion for recording, sharing and preserving records and memorabilia.

2.1 Council

The Society is governed by an elected Council that meets bi-monthly. Current Executive Officers are Dr Judith Rafferty (President), Rev David Houston (Vice-President), Darryl Dyson (Secretary), and Robert Backhouse (Treasurer).

Other Council members are Rev Dr Jonathan Barker, Gaye Brown, Val Canty, Rev Dr Brian Chalmers, Glenys Edwards Rev. Dr Dean Eland, Judy Eland, Rev Bill Harris, and Dr Don Hopgood.

2.2 History Centre

The Society's office is located at the UC History Centre, 44a East Ave, Black Forest, SA 5035, and is open to the public on Wednesday afternoons from 1.00 until 4.00pm, except during the summer break from mid-December until the end of January. The History Centre is managed by volunteer co-managers, Val Canty and Gaye Brown, and they and other volunteers assist with enquiries, and work on specific projects.

Contact details are:

Ph: 8297 8472

Email: manager@ucsahistory.org.au

Website: historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au

Join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/UCAHistoricalSocietySA

2.3 Staff

Our part-time Administrative Officer (3 hours /week), Leanne Davis, continues to assist with the Society's administrative workload, especially in relation to newsletter production, membership records and maintenance of our website and Facebook pages.

Leanne can be contacted at office@ucsahistory.org.au

Our part-time (15 hours/week) Historical Records Officer, Rosemary Hocking, continues with sorting and cataloguing incoming material, stock taking, liaising with the Synod Historical Records Officer (Malcolm Wilson), developing processes whereby congregations can be better informed about what they should be doing about archival matters, providing specialised internet searching for some volunteers engaged on special projects, and maintaining a weekly backup of all documents on the shared drive and of everything on co-manager Val Canty's computer.

Rosemary has also been in conversation with the Librarian at the Uniting Church's Camden Theological Library, NSW, about the UCSAHS's participation in the Assembly's digitisation program, 'Illuminate'. Executive has endorsed a proposal that our society encourage the inclusion of SA material in this national resource, beginning with the digitisation of our collection of annual historical lectures. This is being seen as a pilot project which we hope will lead to further involvement in 'Illuminate'.

Rosemary can be contacted at records@ucsahistory.org.au

2.4 Newsletter

Guest editors from among the Council members have ensured that the Society's newsletter, *Uniting History SA*, which is available to all members via e-mail or in hard copy, is published quarterly.

3. Summary of Key Activities and Outcomes since November 2019

3.1 Uniting Church National History Society

Judith Raftery continues as secretary of the national society.

3.2 Improvements at the History Centre

Solar panels were installed on the History Centre roof in August. The Historical Society is pleased to be part of the move towards reducing dependence on non-renewable energy sources for the sake of the global environment. We have also been pleased to note the immediate reduction in our power bills.

The Property Development Committee, after consulting with Council members, staff and volunteers, is steering a process of refurbishing and developing the History Centre in order to make best use of our space

and resources and to enhance our capacity to meet the Society's objectives. Preliminary discussions have been held with an experienced architect who is a committed Uniting Church member.

3.3 Public Meetings held in 2020

Sunday 8 March, 2pm: An afternoon of historical reflection and future visions at 'U City', Franklin St, (where Maughan Church used to be) with staff from Uniting Communities and representatives of the faith community meeting there.

Because of COVID-19 all public meetings planned for the rest of the year had to be postponed, and, barring further restrictions, will form part of our program for 2021.

3.4 Public Meetings planned for 2021

Friday 19 March, 7pm: Developments in Modern Christian Music and Hymnody from the 1960s to 2020. Key contributors to these developments will share their insights and there will be opportunities for singing and enjoying some of their music.

Venue: Church of the Trinity, Goodwood Rd.

Sunday 16 May, 2pm: Our special SA History Festival event: lecture by Dr Meredith Lake, author of the prize-winning book, *The Bible in Australia: a cultural history*. Venue: St John's Anglican Church, Halifax Street, Adelaide

Sunday 27 June, 2pm: AGM, followed by historical exploration of a suburban church and its community.

Venue: Morialta Uniting Church, Chapel St, Magill

Sunday 22 August, 2pm: Reconciliation among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Australians within the Uniting Church. This will include reflection on the history of the UAICC in SA. Venue: TBA

Sunday 24 October, 2pm: The Rise and Demise of Sunday Schools. An expert panel will explore the history of Sunday Schools in the UCA and predecessor denominations.

Venue: TBA

4. Forward Thinking

Oral History: keeping our stories alive

The Historical Society is planning to embark on a significant oral history project in 2021. We will be recruiting people keen to undergo some training as interviewers and others keen to be interviewed about their lives, roles, experiences in the Uniting church and/or its predecessor denominations. This will add to our already substantial collection of material about individual church folk – ordained and lay – and ensure that their

stories are heard and preserved. Please contact the History Centre to register your interest in being an interviewer or an interviewee.

5. Your Involvement in the Historical Society

We are always happy to recruit new members and to have current members become more actively involved in our public events, as well as in the conferences and other activities of the Uniting Church National History Society. In addition, volunteers are always welcome at the History Centre to assist with the sorting, indexing and storing of important church records or to work on special projects. Please

Contact us to find out more.

Dr Judith Raftery

President

Darryl Dyson

Secretary

30 November 2020