

Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (UCLT)

1. Introduction

This report provides an overview and update of the broad range of activities and responsibilities of the MLD ministry centre specific to the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (UCLT).

2. UCLT Executive Summary

I have been in the role of Principal of UCLT since August 2022, and since 2024 I have also worked as EO of UCLT alongside Rev. Jennifer Hughes (EO MR). All of our current faculty have been appointed during my time as Principal; they are a great team. In 2025 we commenced a process of strategic planning for the College and are now articulating our purpose within the wider Synod plan as 'Educating for the reconciliation and renewal of the world God loves'.

2.1 Overview since Synod Report 2024

In my last Synod Report (2024), I set out three emphases of my work:

1. Seeking to discern opportunities for new initiatives and collaborations;
2. Professional development of faculty and staff, which also has a bearing on student support and wellbeing.
3. The prayer and worshipping life of the UCLT/MR community.

These continue to be central to my approach to the leadership of the College. To these I would add a fourth emphasis, the desire to ensure a robust and sustainable future for the College.

Regarding the first emphasis on new initiatives and collaborations, the last year has seen the establishment of the Assembly's Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership (CTFL), of which I am a member. The Commission is seeking to establish ways to promote further cooperation between the UCA Theological Colleges while valuing the distinctives of each Synod. This is a key forum for fostering initiatives and collaborations across the UCA, and we are fortunate to have the chair of that Commission on our faculty, Rev. Dr Cathie Lambert. The work of the Commission is still in its early stages. One of our tasks is to seek to discern a single Higher Education Provider that will meet the needs of all UCA Colleges, and we are actively progressing this process. The landscape of Christian Higher Education is changing rapidly across Australia and across denominations, and so the work of the Commission is welcome and timely.

I am reaching out to the other UCA Colleges as opportunities arise. I was invited to preach at the opening of the Pilgrim College academic year and the induction of their new Head of School, Professor Kylie Crabbe, in February this year. On this occasion I preached on the question of 'Why study theology?'. The different Colleges have different strengths, and we want to lean into this as a regular part of our work.

I have also been active in seeking collaborations with other ecumenical Colleges in the University of Divinity, particularly those located in SA. We have fee sharing agreements with Australian Lutheran College and St Barnabas College, that enable us to have a robust model of working together.

I contribute to the new initiatives and collaborations within the University of Divinity more broadly by serving on the University Executive, the University Future Scenarios group and the UD Promotions committee.

There is of course more to be done in this space, particularly where it comes to providing low-cost high quality non-accredited educational opportunities for the Synod. I welcome ideas and recommendations that can lead to new ways of serving God in this Synod and beyond, whether they be via existing awards or other pathways, such as micro-credentials. Our faculty are already accepting invitations for regional teaching, as set out in the following reports. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas.

In the area of professional development, the faculty and staff have undertaken the Mental Health First Aid course led by Mark Dickens. This is a particular pressure point in the post-Covid era across our society, and higher education is a place where these pressures can be felt. The course was very well received and prompted some helpful discussion around mental health and wellbeing. Some of the team have also undertaken training in the field of neurodivergence and higher education – both from a student support angle and in terms of teaching practice. AI continues to be a challenge in Higher Education, and alongside the work being done within the University of Divinity on this, we have implemented a policy this semester that asks students who choose to use AI to keep a record of the prompts they use and submit them with their written assessment. We also encourage other forms of assessment, including creative work and oral assessments.

UCLT will be contributing to the Spiritual Care conference – Spirit, Story and Self: Shaping the Future of Professional Spiritual Care – immediately prior to this Synod Meeting, as this is a key area of Cathie Lambert's work and expertise. The new unit she is offering called 'Exploring Spirituality' is also proving to be a welcome addition to our offerings.

The prayer and worshipping life of the College continues to be central to who we are. The reality of having classes online synchronously and asynchronously, often with the majority of students opting to attend this way rather than face to face, means that the gatherings are smaller. So you are always welcome to join us at 8.45am for morning prayer, and at lunchtimes on Wednesday for prayer and Bible reflection.

As I write, I am still surrounded by boxes from our recent move, the so-called 'Great Office Swap'. Faculty and staff of UCLT have moved downstairs at Yarthu-Apinthi, and Mission Resourcing have moved upstairs. This means that UCLT, with its faculty of five and two administration staff, can now attend to the work of the place downstairs, and Mission Resourcing staff can make use of the twelve offices upstairs. As this new configuration beds in, we believe that this will mutually benefit each part of this ministry centre.

A robust and sustainable College is part of the new Strategic Plan that we will be discussing and discerning at this Synod Meeting. There are many aspects to this: first of all, a small but excellent and

cohesive faculty and staff team, willing and able to pitch in. In late 2025 one administrative position (the Student Services Office) was made redundant, the Director of Leadership position (0.5 FTE) was put on hold, and in March 2026 we farewelled Marie-Ann Ellis as our Finance and Administration Officer. Jeff Jones has kindly made himself available one day a week in this interim period as we finalize what should belong to the new person in the finance and business aspect of the MLDB. Because we no longer have someone on reception and general duties, the smaller (and nimble!) team is managing the day-to-day work of the student, hospitality and administrative work. This is in part why the move downstairs was necessary.

The Yarthu-Apinthi campus of the Synod continues to serve us well, not only as a College campus and the site of Mission Resourcing, but also as a hub for other church events such as this Synod Meeting. Like all re-purposed older buildings, it benefits from regular upkeep, and the renovation is also now ten years old. A small property advisory committee oversees these needs.

Regarding the 'sustainable' aspect of the College, we value the three sources of funding that make our work possible: the legacy funds (primarily R.H. White and Parkin Trust), the contribution from the Mission and Service fund and the income generated by student fees. There will be a new R.H. White Fund working group, comprised of the Chair of Resources, the past Chair of Resources, the EO MR and the EO UCLT, to work on the most effective ways to deploy the R.H. White legacy.

Since 2024, predicting the student fee income has become more challenging, as the cost of living and other factors have led to the majority of students enrolling in only one unit per semester rather than a full-time load (three or four units per semester). This is also true for candidates. So while student numbers ('head-count') continues to be fairly stable, and the number of candidates is fairly good (currently 16), the income based on single unit enrolments is not as strong as in the past. The agreement that we have with the University of Divinity as our Higher Education Provider means that we receive 76% of that income, not the full amount as we did with the Adelaide College of Divinity. These factors mean that there continues to be budget challenges. We work together with Resources to find sustainable ways to provide accredited and non-accredited educational offerings to support the mission and ministry of the Synod.

I am proud of what the UCLT team manages with a high compliance load, a changing and often challenging environment and reduced resources. We have been listening, reflecting and innovating. There is of course more to be done. In this final year of my contract as Principal, I trust that God will continue to shape this part of the Kingdom towards 'educating for the reconciliation and renewal of the world God loves.'

3. Candidates and Formation

3.1 Candidates

The number of Phase 2 Candidates for Ministry in South Australia is now 16. There are 4 more Synod Selection Panels scheduled for the remainder of 2026 with hopes that more Candidates are progressed.

A breakdown of the current Candidates is as follows:

Ministry Type	Total #	Male	Female
Ministry of the Word	14	7	7
Ministry of Deacon	2	2	-

3.2 Formation Panels

Oversight of the formation of Candidates continues to be provided through the Formation Panels. Panels meet three times each year with Candidates in Phase 2 and, on alternate Panel days, with ministers in Phase 3. These meetings provide a structured opportunity to review progress in formation and to attend to matters arising within the candidate's ministry, study and overall formation.

Each Formation Panel is comprised of four experienced ministry agents. For Generate candidates, Panel members are drawn from the candidate's own Presbytery. For candidates associated with Wimala and the Presbytery of Southern South Australia, Panel members are drawn from across the three Presbyteries. This composition reflects the shared responsibility of the Presbyteries for the formation of ministry candidates.

Academic advice to the Formation Panels is provided by the Principal, in consultation with the Registrar and the Academic Dean.

3.3 Leadership Formation

Leadership Formation Days continue to be held monthly on Mondays eight times per year. The Candidates are expected to attend, and other categories of ministry agents are also invited: Ministry of Pastor, Period of Discernment, Admission of Ministers from other denominations, as well as some support people and additional ministry agents who have time to attend and support the learning community.

Rev Dr Cathie Lambert commenced in her role of Director of Director of Pastoral Theology & Ministry Practice in January 2026, and part of her scope of responsibilities are the Leadership Formation Days.

4. UCLT Faculty and Staff

The Faculty of UCLT is now made up of a team of five highly qualified and skilled educators:

- Dr Rosemary Dewerse as the Academic Dean and Research Coordinator;
- Rev. Professor Bart Bruehler, as Director of Biblical Studies;
- Dr Toar Hutagalung, as Director of Theology and Church History
- Rev. Dr Cathie Lambert, as Director of Pastoral Theology and Ministry Practice
- Rev. Professor Vicky Balabanski, as the Principal and Executive Officer of UCLT.

Those who have known the College over the years will be aware that we are a much smaller team than ten years ago, where we had a faculty of twelve. We therefore do rely on skilled adjunct lecturers to assist us, some of whom are also part of the Mission Resourcing team (Rev. Jenni Hughes, Rev. Scott Litchfield).

The Synod Standing Committee endorsed the (re-)appointment of a Director of Leadership (0.5 FTE) in 2025 after the departure of Rev. Dr Tim Hein from that role, but that appointment has been deferred due to budgetary constraints.

4.1 Staff Overview

The staff of Uniting College, also highly skilled and hardworking, are also fewer than in the past:

- Lynda Leitner, Registrar (0.8 FTE)
- Mary McGuinness, EA to the Principal (0.8 FTE)

The role of Student Services Officer, held by Sue Arthur, was made redundant in December 2025.

The Adelaide Theological Library (ATL) is now staffed by two professional and hardworking part-time librarians:

- Anna Witty (0.7 FTE)
- Charmaine Burton (0.4 FTE)

We are privileged to be served by each of these people, who share the vision of ‘Educating for the reconciliation and renewal of the world God loves.’

The Finance and Administration Manager, Marie-Ann Ellis, concluded her work with us on March 13, 2026, and we are currently in the process of revising that position description and advertising for a Business Manager (Finance and Development). In this interim period, we are grateful to Jeff Jones, who has kindly agreed to assist us in a casual role (0.2 FTE) while we manage this transition and seek the right person for that position.

5. Faculty Reports

5.1 Executive Officer/Principal, Uniting College for Leadership and Theology – Rev Prof Vicky Balabanski

In addition to my regular work as EO and Principal of the College, I had the privilege of taking Outside Study Leave in semester 2 2025.

It began with an international conference, the 79th General Meeting of the SNTS (Society of New Testament Studies, Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas) in Regensburg, Germany, from 5 – 9 August 2025. I am currently a Committee Member and Trustee of the Society, which involved arriving early and participating in various organizational meetings. It was a very successful conference and gave me opportunity to meet with scholars from around the world and participate in seminars. I have been invited to give a paper in the God in the New Testament seminar in Durham, 2026, which will also be the conclusion of my leadership roles in the Society.

I prepared a paper in the Ecological Hermeneutics section of the Annual Society of Biblical Literature (Boston) entitled: ‘Engaging with the Challenge of Wainwright’s Eco-Rhetorical Method.’ It was presented by colleague Peter Trudinger on my behalf. It was well received, and there are discussions about having this paper published in a collection honouring Elaine Wainwright.

I received an invitation to give a keynote presentation at a conference jointly organized by the Australian Association of Mission Studies (AAMS) and the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) on 2-3 October 2025 at the St Paschal's campus in Box Hill. The theme for the mission conference was *Missio Dei: An Ecumenical Conversation*. This was an in-person two-day event bringing together academics, missiologists, and mission practitioners from Australia and beyond engaging in an ecumenical conversation towards awareness, sharing, and practice of being a missionary church.

The title of my presentation was: *The Missio Dei according to Colossians 1:9-23*. It was published in the Australian Journal of Mission Studies.

I was approached by the General Editor of the ATF Press, Hilary Reagan, to contribute a volume to their Scholars Collection, to be ready to launch in mid-2026. I accepted the invitation and identified 15 essays which are now shaped into a volume with the title *Reading with Earth: Essays on Creation and Colossians*. I am now at the stage of working on the proofs, and hope that it will be launched at the international meeting of the SBL to be held in Adelaide in July.

In addition to these projects, I decided to attend three other important meetings:

1. The Renew Resourcing Event organized by MR (October 17-18). This was a significant time in the life of the Synod in SA, and as someone in a leadership position in this Synod, it was a meeting I wanted to experience and participate in.
2. The University of Divinity Future Scenarios Meeting. This was a two-day in person meeting in November in Melbourne, following on from a series of meetings that I had been part of, to discuss the challenges facing the UD as a HEP and discern ways to address the challenges.
3. The Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership had a two-day meeting in Sydney (November 9-11). Again, this is an important part of my work as Principal of UCLT and it was a significant time of networking and progressing the work of Act2.

I would like to express my thanks to the MLD Board and the UCA Synod of SA for the privilege of taking OSL. It was a time of refreshment and scholarly endeavor, and I return to my role as EO/Principal with new insights and energy.

5.2 Academic Dean, Research Coordinator, Mission Research and Resourcing - Dr Rosemary Dewerse

The last year and a half, the following academic responsibilities have been undertaken:

- Leading the strategic refresh of the UCLT curriculum, alongside semester-by-semester review of the work of our lecturers in the design of assessment and unit guides.
- Putting Support Plans in place for students, as well as personally being on call to respond to those struggling to complete assessment and/or navigating life and health issues. This involves working closely with the Registrar and Head Librarian, as well as teaching staff.
- Processing cross-credit applications, withdrawals, and other tasks in academic quality.
- Established with Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion and Uncle Ken Sumner two Indigenous unit offerings at UCLT, including brokering with the UAICC Regional Committee and the University of Divinity an increased unit fee to fund immersion costs and reimburse First Peoples at professorial rates.

- Chairing (and now Minutes Secretary) of the UCLT Academic Committee, for which I prepare all papers, including regular statistical reporting on enrolments and units delivered, and action follow-up.
- Line managing 4 professional staff (Student Services and Library) until May 2025 through fortnightly one-on-ones, annual reviews and other concerns – since then the Registrar only.
- Mentoring and moderating adjunct faculty who have appropriate experience but not the necessary academic qualifications (as per the University expectations).
- External member on the St Francis College (Brisbane) Academic Committee and the UD School of Professional Practice Academic Awards Committee.
- Member of the University's Academic Board, Academic Dean's Forum, Research Strategy Committee, Research Grants Committee.
- Chaired the University's course review panel for the Graduate Certificate in Leadership.
- Member of a University working group reviewing the Assessment Policy.
- Completed a 3-year term as a Deputy Chair of Examiners, approving Masters' level thesis proposals and moderating examiners' reports to establish the final grade. I have been appointed for a second term. (This earns money from the UD for UCLT).
- Co-ordinated the hosting of the University's 2025 and 2026 Teaching and Learning Conference and Research Day Adelaide hub, with the assistance of the UCLT team.
- Led the book launch of a book I edited that featured the work of three people I work with or have supervised: Rev Dr Aunty Denise Champion, Dr Labhaoise Upton (PhD graduate Flinders University), and Rev Cyrus Kung (Masters graduate). *Location-Shaped Theologies: First and Second Generation Wisdom*.

There has been no formal investigation required into Academic Integrity since my last report.

I have made it my goal in recent months to be developing and/or delegating to the Directors so they take more responsibility for academic processes concerning the areas in which they teach.

Teaching responsibilities:

- Co-teaching Yarta Wandatha and Kungan Kaldowinyeri. Alongside class website design, online teaching and marking of assessment, I organise many of the logistics for these trips and am the main driver.
- Teaching two units for the University's Doctor of Professional Practice (DPP) – Research Methods and Writing a Thesis Proposal in 2025/2026. In 2025 these classes included a total of 22 doctoral students; in 2026, 19. I have also covered marking for colleagues in other units. This work earns money for UCLT.
- Teaching several individual units with students, including the DMin Community Research Portfolio, 3 (DPP) candidates with Uncle Ken exploring Indigenous spirituality (including Rev Charissa Suli), and others at undergraduate level.
- Led a workshop for Awaken Adelaide.
- Supervising 3 Masters' thesis students, 2 DMin students, 1 DPP student, 2 PhD students, with 2-3 more doctoral coming onboard mid-2026. Again, this earns money from the UD for UCLT.

- Have had one Masters' student complete with a Distinction, with two more being examined in June 2026, as well as one DMin student complete with acclaim from the international examiners in Dec 2025.
- Supported Rev Charissa Suli in submitting two pieces of work for publication (thesis and article).
- Examined one Masters of Research thesis for Charles Darwin University, one PhD for Otago University, three Masters' theses for the University of Divinity.

0.2FTE of my role is dedicated to Covenanting work. This includes co-teaching and co-publishing with Rev Dr Denise Champion and Uncle Ken Sumner, engaging in the Covenanting Committee, supporting the Adnyamathanha Bible project, and continuing to build relationships.

Since our last Synod I have had the following published:

- Transcribed and/or collated the UAICC contribution to the UCA 50th Anniversary book. Ken Sumner with Alison Overeem, Ayla and Grace Williams from UAICC Lutruwita (Tasmania), Denise Champion, and Stuart McMillan, "Gathered by Fire, Bound by Faith: The Sovereign Vision of Congress."
- Fay Pouesi, Rosemary Dewerse, Suzanne Graham, Tillie Lima and Robin E. Dibble, "Tikanga (cultural practice and protocols), Wairuatanga (spirituality) and Whanonga pono (values) – core elements in an Indigenous team ethic of trauma-informed care," for a *Special Indigenous Issue of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy* 47.1 (March 2026): 1-6.
- Robin E. Dibble and Rosemary Dewerse, "Oranga Harakeke: An Indigenous framework for therapeutic engagement," for a *Special Indigenous Issue of the Australian and New Zealand Journal of Family Therapy*, 46.4 (October 2025).
- Rosemary Dewerse, "Yarta Wandatha" *New Times* (Sept 2025): 6-10, and an article in 2026 on the UN Peace Summit – see below.
- Rosemary Dewerse, Denise Champion, Ken Sumner, "Alter-Narratives: Indigenous Elders Reflect," *Uniting Church Studies* 27.1 (June 2025): 69-77.
- Rosemary Dewerse (ed.) *Location-shaped Theologies* (Adelaide: ATF Press, 2024).
- Rosemary Dewerse, Ken Sumner, Julie Martin, Melissa Neumann, Max Kowalick, Gillian Powis and Daniel Phan, "Kungan Kaldowinyeri: Listening to Creation and to Story on Kukabrak Ngarrindjeri Yarluwe Ruwe," *Uniting Church Studies* 26.2 (Dec 2024): 19-30.

I am waiting (March 2026) to hear whether an article I submitted to *Uniting Church Studies* entitled "Covenanting Conversions" will be accepted.

I have begun working on a book with Faye Pouesi on her work in Black Rain (healing intergenerational trauma) at the request of practitioners and organisations in Aotearoa NZ.

In terms of Professional Development, in 2025 in my own time I completed a NZ-based course in what it means to be a person of the Treaty (engaging honorably with First Peoples). In work-time I undertook First Aid Training as well as training in working with neuro-divergent students. In 2026 I am training in a Graduate Certificate in Professional Supervision with the University of Divinity.

I was invited to nominate a student to attend the United Nations 5th Global Peace Summit in Bangkok in January 2026. Emelia Haskey was accepted and I was invited to accompany her. It was a remarkable opportunity, attending with 500 people from 60 different countries and listening to active peace-builders who have personally survived war and genocide, I was grateful to have my conference fee funded by FAMS.

I have been given the honour, with Uncle Ken Sumner, of co-presenting the inaugural Rev Dr Michelle Cook lecture 1 October 2026. I will attend the NRCC Congress gathering beforehand and assist with Bible studies at the Northern Synod afterward.

I am very grateful for the opportunity to return home to Aotearoa NZ once a term to reconnect with my family and my home church (Cityside – one of the world's longest surviving 'Emerging' churches). I am also committed to quietly supporting the sense of vocation of students and graduates in their ministry contexts. Alongside all this I live in Christie Walk, an urban eco-community in the CBD and am invested in interacting with and learning from my neighbours who are a remarkable group of activists from many walks of life and spiritualities.

5.3 Director of Biblical Studies – Prof Bart Bruehler

I am grateful to say that the past year and a half has been a time of settling into Australia, my role at UCLT, and my connection to the larger community of the UCA. I was able to teach classes that were more familiar to me, and I made connections across the Synod by guest preaching and offering seminars/workshops with some of the regional churches. I was recently approved to be accepted as a Deacon in the UCA, and I look forward to deepening those connections. I also had more time and space to dedicate to scholarly work. I thank God for this fruitful time. Please see the listing of activities below.

Director of Biblical Studies Responsibilities at UCLT

- Coordinating all biblical studies units offered at UCLT. This has included partnering with other local colleges and seeking to recruit adjuncts when needed.
- Coordinating the internal and external moderation of assessment since the second half of 2025.
- Redeveloped all our biblical studies unit records. They had reached the end of their three-year approval period.
- Line managing the library staff (2 persons) and one of the college staff (May 2025-__).
- Mentored a research student through the successful completion of a minor thesis.
- I was temporarily the interim course coordinator for the Graduate Certificate in Leadership.
- I was temporarily on the Synod Grants Committee.

Units Taught in the past 18 months

- Synoptic Studies (semester 2 2024)
- Pentateuch (semester 2 2024)
- Biblical Hermeneutics for Mission and Ministry (semester 2 2024 and semester 1 2025)
- The Gospel of John and the Johannine Letters (semester 1 2025)

- Exploring the New Testament (semester 1 2025 and 2026)
- Exploring the Old Testament (semester 2 2025)
- Advanced New Testament Interpretation (semester 1 2026)
- Advanced Old Testament Interpretation (semester 1 2026)

Professional Development

- Audited the Uniting Church History, Theology, and Polity unit taught by Deidre Palmer (semester 2 2025)
- Attended the University of Divinity's Teaching Development Day (June 2025)
- Mental Health First Aid Training (February 2026)
- Auditing Yarta Wandatha unit taught by Aunty Denise Champion and Rosemary Dewerse (semester 1 2026)

Guest Preaching at the following churches: Westbourne Park Uniting Church (my family's home congregation), Mitcham Hills Uniting Church, Christ Uniting Church Wayville, Maitland Uniting Church, Sunset Rock Uniting Church, Port Lincoln Uniting Church, Unley Uniting Church.

Church and Outreach Presentations

- Seminar on the Gospel of Luke. Yorke Peninsula Regional Mission Gathering. February 15, 2025.
- "How to Preach from Scripture." Eyre Peninsula Hub of Generate Presbytery Lay Preacher Training. September 27, 2025.
- Guest Speaker for the Coromandel Valley Uniting Church Winter Retreat. July 26-27, 2025.
- "How Should We Read the Bible." Workshop for Veta Morphus Youth Retreat. Mylor, SA. February 27, 2026.
- Seminar on the Gospel of Matthew. Yorke Peninsula Regional Mission Gathering. March 7, 2026.
- "Ministry and Mission in Luke 10." Session with the Awaken Adelaide cohort (twice)
- I have maintained an ongoing radio spot with Life FM called "Beyond Belief" that airs fortnightly on Thursday evenings.

Broader Synod Involvement

- Member of the Justice, Mission, and Theology subcommittee of the MLDB.
- Member of the Disability Advisory Committee
- Attending Generate Presbytery Meetings
- In February of 2025, after a season of development and discernment, I was approved to transfer my ordination and become a Deacon in the UCA in the Synod of SA.

Academic Publications and Presentations

- "What is Jesus Feeling in Mark 1,41?: Reconsidering the Evidence." *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovaniensis* 100 (2024): 213–30.
- "Jesus Christ and the Trajectories of Purity." *Canadian-American Theological Review* 13 (2024): 54–71.

- “The Johanninification of the Nicene Creed.” Paper presented at the annual ANZATS Conference. Melbourne, Victoria. July 3, 2025.
- “Proximity and Power: Sensing the Nearness of Places, Periods, and Persons in the Bible.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. San Diego, CA. November 24, 2024.
- “The Range of Rejoicing in Luke-Acts: Exploring the Precision and Power of Luke’s Positive Emotion Terminology,” *Journal for the Study of the New Testament* 48 (2025): 733–59. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/0142064X251362507>.
- “The Presence, Nature, Cause, and Result of Jesus’s Anger in Mark 1:40–45.” *Harvard Theological Review* 118 (2025): 640–64. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0017816025100965>.
- “Afraid, Amazed, and Astonished: Emotion at the Limits of Appraisal in the Synoptic Gospels.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature. Boston, MA. November 22, 2025 and at the Center for Gospels and Acts Research Meeting (online). February 17, 2026.

Other Academic Activities

- Planning committee for the International Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature in Adelaide (July 5-9, 2026).
- Committee member for the Panel on Undergraduate Ministry and Theology Award Modification with the University of Divinity.
- Co-editor for the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity Commentary Series
- Co-chair for the Rhetoric of Religious Antiquity group in the Society of Biblical Literature

5.4 Director of Pastoral Theology & Ministry Practice - Rev Dr Cathie Lambert

I commenced my role as Director of Pastoral Theology and Ministry Practice at the start of January 2026. My previous role was with the Uniting Church in Western Australia as the Formation and Learning Culture Co-ordinator. I was also the Program Director for Dayspring in Perth which runs courses for credit through UCLT in the areas of Spirituality and Spiritual Direction. I write this report with only three months in my new role.

The responsibilities of the Director of Pastoral Theology and Ministry Practice include:

- Teaching in areas of Pastoral Theology and Ministry Practice, including Supervised Theological Field Education
- Overseeing and equipping adjunct lecturers teaching within the area
- Supervising Higher Degree Research students in the area
- Co-ordinating Leadership Formation Days
- Offering formational and teaching/preaching opportunities at congregational, Presbytery, Synod or Assembly levels of the Uniting Church in Australia

Teaching and Formation responsibilities:

- Semester One 2026 – The Art of Preaching

- Semester One 2026 – Exploring Spirituality
- Preparing new unit for Semester Two 2026 – Faith in a Fractured World
- Consulting and collaborating with colleagues in chaplaincy roles to offer a new Graduate Certificate in Spiritual Care (commencing Semester Two 2026).
- Preparing a session for Toar Hutagalung's unit on *The Beguines and the Trinity*.
- Reviewing units that require approval after reaching expiry date.
- On the supervisory team for a PhD candidate.
- External reader for three Doctor of Professional Practice confirmation panels (February and March 2026)
- Examination of Minor Thesis (February 2026)
- Preparation of Semester One 2026 Leadership Formation Days, including opening two days to the wider church.

Professional Development

- Neurodiversity and Higher Education Workshop (March 2026)
- Currently completing a Fast Track Course to enable me to become a primary supervisor for HDR students.

Upcoming Church and Outreach Presentations

- Guest speaker for Awaken Adelaide – May 2026
- Presentation of Code of Ethics training – upcoming
- Preaching at Celebration of Ministry Service – Synod 2026

Broader Uniting Church Involvement:

- Chairperson of the Assembly Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership which is progressing the work from Stream B of the Act2 Project.
- Member of the Specified Ministries Development Subcommittee of MLDB
- Participant in the Uniting Church Phase 2 Formators and Deans community of practice discussions.
- Part of L3 team writing creative liturgy resources.
- Occasional writer for *With Love to the World* – last offering in Lent 2025.

Academic Publications and Presentations:

- *Modern Australian Liturgies* (Garratt Publishing, 2025). Co-edited with Michelle Eastwood and Tracy McEwan (Garratt's 2025 Book of the Year)
- "When Stories Collide: A Relationship Between Women Centuries Apart", in *Tending to Stories in Feminist Theologies: Interdisciplinary renderings of faith, hope and love* (Routledge, 2025).
- *Dissident Women, Beguines, and the Quest for Spiritual Authority* (Routledge, 2024). (An adaptation of my PhD thesis and finalist in the ANZATS Emerging Scholar Book Prize 2025)
- I am currently writing a chapter on spirituality for an upcoming publication for the fiftieth anniversary of the Uniting Church.

- I am currently working on a book proposal for an accessible book introducing people to the beguine mystics.

Other Academic Activities:

- Currently part of a review team examining the University of Divinity courses in the areas of spiritual direction and spirituality.
- President of the Australian Network for Spiritual Direction.
- Occasional review of articles submitted to the Colloquium and Uniting Church Studies journals.
- Remain part of the Dayspring staff team especially in relation to UCLT and ensuring the accredited courses meet the necessary requirements.

5.5 Director of Theology and Church History - Dr Toar Hutagalung

It has been three years since I first came to teach at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology (UCLT) at Yarthu-Apinthi on 17 July 2023 as a full-time (1.0 FTE). As my title says, I have been teaching units around theology and Christian history, both for undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Initially, I came alone with a 400 temporary working visa for the first semester. Only when my 482 working visa was approved at the beginning of December 2023 could my wife, Sondang, come and join me. However, this 482 expires in December 2027. This led the Synod to give a four-year contract until around the same date as my visa expiration. Since the 482 visa cannot be extended, I need to pursue the 186 Transition (TRT) visa, which is a visa for permanent residency. Based on the rules of the government, I can start applying for 186 after working two years with a 482 visa. I am truly grateful that the South Australian Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia, along with Rev. Prof. Dr. Vicky Balabanski as the Principal of the UCLT have been supporting me in this process. Due to this, I am in the process of faculty review, with Rev. Ruthmary Bond as my support person. Hopefully, the review goes smoothly and a new contract can be extended. God willing, my 186 visa will be lodged before the middle of May 2026 to envision it being granted by the end of the year. If so, I am required by the visa policy to work with UCLT for a minimum of two years after the visa is granted, which explains why the faculty review is done early. As for my work, the details are as follows:

Teaching

I would start by addressing that there were correspondence students who had to take my classes because they were incarcerated. Most of them did very well considering their limited access to academic books. The units were varied, from Beginning with Jesus, which is an introduction to theology, Christian History A and B, as well as other introductory-level units. For these students, their time frame is different from that of the regular students. Therefore, there is no fixed semester for them. This type of unit continues to this day.

In semester 2, 2024, I solo-taught the Introduction to Christian Mission unit, and I co-taught God the Trinity unit with Rev. Dr. Sean Gilbert. For the former unit, the students were not that many in contrast to the latter. Both, however, were doing really well in their work. I also enjoyed working together with Sean, which motivated me to invite him again for one of the sessions in the Trinity class this semester 1, 2026.

In semester 1, 2025, I taught Beginning with Jesus and Christian History A, while in semester 2, I taught Christian History B. While I loved teaching these classes, I had to admit that the low number of students, especially on Beginning with Jesus at that time, was not encouraging. I only had one auditing student, although the student had a very enthusiastic energy in learning, which indeed made me so passionate to keep teaching until the end. Christian History students were also very good. In fact, I nominated the final work of one of the students, Rev. Elissa Inglis, in the Christian History B unit on Pietism and Indigenous theology for the Geoff Barnes Memorial Prize competition. She then won the competition with a \$250 prize. Her work is displayed in the Uniting Church History Society newsletter as well.

This semester 1, 2026, I am teaching three units, which I consider the fullest teaching work so far. I am teaching God the Trinity unit, as I did two years ago with Sean, and two others are considered new units. Essentials of Christian Faith is an introductory unit that serves as a replacement for the Beginning with Jesus unit. The only difference is that by doing it this way, I can teach an overview of theology to the first-year level students, and focus on the life and work of Christ for the Christology unit next semester, including integrating the Doctrine of Salvation unit (which was taught in semester 2, 2023) in this unit. With one student who is new to the Christian faith in the class, I see this class is very relevant to her, as well as to the others who are already Christians but learning new things. The last one is the Asian and Pasifika Theologies unit. As a brand-new unit, this manages to take the interest of eight students, where seven of them are of Asian descent, and among the seven, only two are returning students. The other five are new students. In addition to the regular teaching, I undertook the following work.

Besides teaching, as a director, I am also responsible for supporting the adjunct faculty who might need assistance in their teaching. So, I also assisted Dr. Deidre Palmer in facilitating her class on Heritage, Theology, and Polity of the UCA in semester 2, 2025.

Presentations

On 31st July to August 1st 2024, I was invited to participate in a workshop at the United Theological College in North Parramatta, NSW, where it leads to the writing of a book chapter: “Dreaming the ‘Glory Be’: A Placial Eschatology.” In *Oceanic Theological Resources for World Christianity*, edited by Seforosa Carroll, Garry Deverell, and Sathianathan Clarke, published by Oxford University Press or Routledge. The final essay would be compiled by the end of March 2026.

After publishing my first book, *Toward an Embodied Decolonial Pneumatology: Dishoming Space* with Bloomsbury Publishing (formerly Lexington Books), I had a chance to launch it on 13th September. I had a chance to invite Prof. Dr. Nancy Bedford as the responder, who was also on my dissertation committee, and Prof. Dr. Anne Joh, my former advisor, to join online from the United States.

On 25th October 2024, I was also given a chance to lead the Bible Study for the Synod Meeting.

On 1st July 2025, I presented my paper at the ANZATS Conference celebrating the 1700 years of Nicea council. My presentation titled “The Skin as an Icon of the Incarnate” took place at Pilgrim Theological College in Melbourne, VIC.

Within the cohort of the theology group at the University of Divinity, I presented a research paper on “Bahasa Makanan: A Postcolonial Theology of Food.” This took place on 22nd October 2025 online through Zoom.

Participating in a celebration of the *Dies Natalis* (the anniversary) of Satya Wacana Christian University in Indonesia, I was asked to be one of the speakers, presenting on “The Animating Language: A Theological Reflection of Affect in Indigenous Language against Dehumanisation.” This took place on 10th March online through Zoom.

On 24th October, I participated in the PreachFest with a theme on the *Ancient Futures*. My presentation titled “Abiding Place to Dream: Christ Remains with Us!”

This coming 30th April 2026, I am asked to be a responder for an international speaker (*TBA*) at the Awaken Adelaide event, organized by Paul Goh and Cyrus Kung, which will touch on the interreligious theme.

Research and Publications

After my presentation at the Preamble Conference on 8 July 2024, I was invited to publish the article “In One Breath: Partaking in the Communion of the Spirit and Creation” in the *Uniting Church Studies*, vol 26, no. 2 (December 2024).

Meanwhile, my previous presentation in the ANZATS conference back on 1 July 2024, titled “Towards A Decolonial Eco-Theology: An Asian Contrapuntal Reading of Eco-Justice,” is now being finalised for the *ANZATS Colloquium*, aimed for the May 2026 issue.

I also finished writing two more chapters, for which I have signed contracts. First is “The Sanctifying Breath: Reimagining the Decolonial Spirit” in *Constructive Christian Theology from a Postcolonial Perspective*, edited by Eleazar Fernandez, published by London: T&T Clark. The second is “Imagining an Emerging Space of Asian Autobiographical Theology,” in Asian Theological Institute 20th Anniversary, edited by Tat-siong Benny Liew, published by Palgrave Macmillan. Both of them are to be printed and circulated by November 2026.

Meanwhile, I am sending two final drafts to be published, perhaps next year. First is “Views from Outside the UCA,” in *The UCA: A History for the Future*, edited by Judith Raftery and William Emilsen, to be published by Wakefield Press. Second is “Dreaming the ‘Glory Be’: A Placial Eschatology,” in *Oceanic Theological Resources for World Christianity*, edited by Seforosa Carroll, Garry Deverell, and Sathanathan Clarke, to be published by either Oxford University Press or Routledge.

Besides researching and publishing, I was also part of the Peer-Blind Reviewer for the Indonesian Journal of Theology, the Uniting Church Studies, the ANZATS Colloquium, and other publishers.

In terms of devotional work, I also contributed to *With Love to the World* for the Advent edition in 2025 and “Bible Study on Psalm 82,” written for the *Asian Ecumenical Youth Assembly-2026 Bible Study Book*, edited by John Paul Devakumar, published by the Christian Conference of Asia, 2026.

Ministries

In addition to scholarly work, I have accepted various preaching, speaking, and task group engagements. I have been preaching for the Indonesian Christian Fellowship in Adelaide and Bethel International Church in Adelaide (Indonesian community). I also preached at various UCA churches, such as in Unley Uniting Church and later on in Para Vista Uniting Church and Christ Church Uniting. Every second Sunday of the month, I serve as the pianist for Broadview Uniting Church, where I am a member.

On 4th October 2025, I was appointed as the Chair/Convener of the Continuing Witness Task Group, which will give a report for the national assembly meeting in 2027. Because of that, I was also asked to lead a Leadership Formation Day (LFD) in Western Australia (through Zoom online) on 11th March 2026 and another LFD session in South Australia on 1st June 2026.

In other times, I am also involved in the Justice, Mission, and Theology subcommittee, which meets every month at Yarthu-Apinthi, addressing various social justice issues.

6 UCLT Registrar - Lynda Leitner

June 2004 – Present

I have been employed with UCLT since June 2004, initially working in Student Services at the Adelaide College of Divinity (ACD), and later serving as Executive Officer of ACD until December 2022. I currently hold the role of Registrar, with responsibility for overseeing Student Services and supporting the academic and administrative functions of the College.

In this role, I work closely with the Academic Dean to ensure the delivery of high-quality higher education and comprehensive student support services. I play a key role in maintaining compliance with institutional and regulatory requirements while contributing to the overall student experience.

Key Responsibilities:

- Managing initial enquiries from prospective students and providing course advice
- Processing admissions, enrolments, and credit/status applications
- Maintaining student records and producing statistical reports
- Ensuring compliance with University of Divinity policies and procedures
- Supporting student welfare, including coordination of support plans
- Timetabling and scheduling academic units
- Coordinating marketing activities and maintaining the UCLT website
- Planning and managing events, including catering (internal and external)
- Liaising with education departments and external stakeholders
- Collaborating with the Office of the Vice-Chancellor, University of Divinity
- Supporting prison chaplaincy programs for incarcerated students
- Assisting with graduation events and ceremonies
- Contributing to workplace health and safety (WHS) initiatives
- Providing First Aid and Mental Health First Aid support

- Assisting with facilities and building maintenance coordination

Committees & Leadership:

- Student Services Committee, University of Divinity (Deputy Chair)
- Academic Committee
- WHS Site Group

Professional Development:

- Diploma of Marketing (in progress)
- First Aid Certification
- Mental Health First Aid
- Accidental Counsellor Training

7. Adelaide Theological Library – Head Librarian Anna Witty

The Adelaide Theological Library (ATL) has continued to provide a quality service for students, staff and community patrons in 2025. It is one of fourteen libraries that participate in the University of Divinity (UD) Library Hub. This arrangement creates numerous resource benefits for the Uniting College of Theology and Leadership (UCTL) students, staff and the ATL Community Borrowers.

Library profile in 2025

- The ALT has over 67,725 books in the collection
- Students and staff have access to over 192,250 eBooks and access to 32 databases supporting further research via the UD Hub
- ATL loaned out 1,441 books
- In addition to students we have 44 Community Borrowers

Activities 2025

Two Collection Development projects were undertaken in 2025:

- Librarians worked on updating and preserving the ATL Hymn Book Collection. This collection has over 822 items with some dating back to the 1800s. It includes Australian and International hymnals representing many denominations and musical genres. The collection includes rare books and modern Christian music. Some preservation activities were completed on the rare and older items.
- The second project identified and highlighted books in the collection written by First Nation Authors. Over 150 books were found in the ATL. These items can now be easily identified on the catalogue and within the library by patrons.

Program changes

- FLEX, a free and essential copyright compliance program for institutions ended in November 2025. Replacement estimates were between \$8-11,000 a cost many institutions were unable

to pay. After negotiations, the UD agreed to pay for the cost of TALIS Aspire a new copyright compliance program for all libraries within the Hub. TALIS will be live for library use from Semester 2 2026. The ATL played an active role in this development.

- The ATL participated in a trial of the OCLC Worldshare Interlibrary Loan program and filled 77 Interlibrary loans for staff and students in 2025. The program enables all Libraries using the OCLC catalogue to share resources within Australia and internationally for free or a minimal cost. The cost for ILLs book loans can start at \$32 per item. The success of the trial has seen the UD pay for the involvement of all participating Library Hub libraries for 2026.

Staffing

- Alexandra Roger, 0.5 FTE Librarian resigned in May 2025.
- Charmaine Burton Librarian was employed at the end of August 2025 on a 0.4 FTE basis.
- Anna Witty has continued as the Head Librarian 0.7 FTE

Rev Prof Vicky Balabanski, Principal, Executive Officer, Uniting College for Leadership and Theology
13 May 2026

