

Record of Service – Rev Ian Dow

In December 2004 Ian Dow concluded his core education for ministry. At that time candidates were not ordained as they entered their first placement but instead had an intern year prior to ordination. For these exiting candidates, Parkin Wesley College recognised their transition into ministry by presenting them with a candle. Ian's candle has travelled with him to his various ministry placements and been a sign of the light of Christ during devotions, been melted by the heat until it leans like the tower in Pisa, been scorned by those who don't like candles and loved by those who do, been dropped and damaged, knocked and nicked, scuffed and scarred; and more than that – been a reminder even in the hardest times that there were people who thought that Ian had something to offer in service of Jesus and his church. It still burns hot and bright. Much like Ian, it lets what little light it has point people to the enormous light of the world that is found in Jesus.

Early Faith Experiences

Ian's parents, Glen and Jennifer Dow, were foundation members of the church plant which became Panorama Presbyterian Church. They recall meeting at first in the McComb's front room before there was anything more than a vision, and rejoicing when they had so many members in attendance that they ran out of communion cups! Ian grew up in the love and nurture of this community. He remembers Sunday School lessons with Mr David McKenzie and Mrs Pat Ellis and youth group led by Christine McKenzie. Unfortunately, despite their best efforts, nothing of Christian faith stuck. (Or maybe it did, deep in the back-blocks of his memory, ready for reawakening when Jesus called.) He spent years in wilful sin and self-centredness.

Ian was introduced to Jesus by Nick Hawkes in the cottage beside Brooklyn Park Uniting Church and entered into a mind-blowing life-change. Repentance is sometimes described as a U-turn, and that is exactly what happened to Ian. Every ambition changed, every relationship recalibrated, every dream refocussed to include the way of Christ. Following Confirmation in the Uniting Church tradition by Rev John Mauviel, and an experience of baptism in the Holy Spirit, Ian first heard the murmur of calling into full-time Christian ministry. But he knew there was a call to learn and grow and serve as a lay member of the church before pursuing this.

In 1986 Ian married Margaret. They lived in Port Augusta for all of the 90's where Ian taught high school. They were nurtured in faith in a small Baptist Fellowship (learning much about the strengths of the Uniting tradition...and also something of our liabilities), and then Willsden Uniting Church where Rev Rod James mentored Ian's development as preacher, elder, youth leader and faith-sharer.

Call to Ministry

Ian and Margaret accepted an invitation to join a Scripture Union Family Mission team, and it was through this that Ian learned that he could tell stories of Jesus in a way people could enjoy, understand and respond to. They felt called to pioneer Port Augusta Holiday Happening, through

which Ian honed team leadership skills and they shared the good news of Jesus with hundreds of children and their families. At about this time the Holy Spirit seemed to say that it was time to apply to be a candidate student at theological college. A year had to be filled before the Dow family could afford to move to Adelaide and full-time study, which Ian filled with a furniture construction course (on the advice of Rev Harold D’Arcy Wood who said, “After all, carpentry was the only formal qualification Jesus ever had, so why not you?”).

Training as a Candidate for Ordination

Theological education at Parkin Wesley College and the Adelaide College of Divinity was a wonderful and enlightening experience. Sharing classes with Catholic and Anglican students, along with Orthodox, Baptist (and even the odd atheist) was enriching. It was the height of the liberal/progressive versus evangelical/conservative debates and battles, and Ian recalls that academic staff never required students to agree with their opinions but always respected and encouraged them to rigorously seek God’s truth. Ian remembers with fond appreciation the comment on one of his papers: “I disagree with everything you have concluded, but I cannot fault your logic.” Seems as though everyone was doing their best to love Jesus! The advice to, “Tell the best story of Jesus you know, the best you can,” has been Ian’s touchstone ever since. During this time Ian had opportunity to serve in supply at Brooklyn Park Uniting Church and as acting chaplain at Westminster School.

Details of Ordination

“Ian Stuart Dow was duly ordained by prayer and the laying on of hands as a Minister of the Word by the Presbytery of Frome at Tumby Bay on 19th June 2005.” The Fellowship of the Tumby Bay Uniting Church put on a ripping supper. Outstanding country hospitality!

Details of Placements

Tumby Bay and Districts Uniting Churches 2004–2007

Naracoorte Uniting Church 2008–2016

Regional Minister, Presbytery and Synod of SA 2018–20

Presbytery Minister, Presbytery of Southern SA 2021–2024

Ian tried to give his best to each placement and the people therein. He thanks God for whatever was fruitful, and asks forgiveness for whatever was detrimental. May the Lord be with you.

Retirement

When Ian’s last placement concluded he had no intention to retire, hoping that there was further contribution he could make to the Kingdom of God and the Uniting Church. No such placement has eventuated so it’s time to retire and serve Jesus in other ways. Ian says, “When I prayed, I am no longer my own but yours. Put me to what you will, place me with whom you will...Let me be put to work for you or set aside for you, I accepted and expected praise and criticism, doing and suffering, fullness and emptiness...but I never expected being set aside. For Christ, as the prayer says. But here we are. And if in his grace Jesus has used me, then it is in his grace that I be set aside. God is good.”

Ian and Margaret continue their faith journey with Seeds Kurralta Park.

Rev Ian Dow

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25 April 2026