

Record of Service – Rev Malcolm Rawlings

I was born the youngest of eight sons to Alfred & Rita Rawlings, both ministers within The Salvation Army tradition of the Church. Growing up in that hectic manse household meant that life was always focused upon church, practical assistance of the needy and the salvation of the world. As a young child the constant moving house and communities every couple of years through, South Australia, Victoria & Tasmania gave me an awareness of the diversity of communities and encouraged me to rely upon God as the constant connecting point in my life's journey.

My first remembered experience of answered prayer was being rescued from a near drowning incident in the Torrens River as a young child. As I was struggling to float in the river I prayed for help and a log rose to the surface from beneath me and I held on to it until I could be rescued.

Whilst I had had an awareness of God from an early age, it was in my late teens that I felt a call to ordained ministry within The Salvation Army. I had grown to understand there was a journey of faith, initially becoming a Christian, moving on to be a church member, recognizing your gifts and talents and using these in roles of leadership within church community, then responding to God's prompt to be a minister, and eventually to be a missionary.

I was attending the local Salvation Army church in Ulverstone, a small town on the Northwest coast of Tasmania, none of the various churches in that town had sufficient numbers to make a functioning youth group, so a number of young people from at least 10 different denominations met in someone's house mid-week, these discussions and interactions encouraged me to see the commonality of our faith rather than our doctrinal and liturgical differences. I chose to follow God's prompting for service within the church framework I grew up in, yet recognizing the universality of people's understanding of the good news of Jesus.

After attending training in Melbourne my wife, Lesley, and I became Salvation Army Officers in 1979. Over the next 12 years we served in various placements, firstly in a boys' home in Adelaide, then a church plant in Western Melbourne, next a country church in Hamilton, Victoria, and lastly as missionaries in Taipei, Taiwan.

During our time in Hamilton, I went on a weekend retreat to discern where God was leading us in missionary service, after prayer and reflection I discerned a call to work with the Chinese community which led to us being appointed as ministers in a church in Taiwan.

During the 6 years we were overseas I led the local church community guiding their faith in Jesus and encouraging them in owning a Taiwanese expression of church not simply following the patterns of western Christianity. Our ministry enabled 3 couples to enter theological training for ministry within the church, and I developed a friendship ministry with a local Chinese deaf community.

In 1990 our family returned to Australia, and following a prompt from the Holy Spirit to step out of ordained ministry, I worked in the hospitality industry in the Barossa Valley and Victor Harbor. Over

this period of 10 years, I was involved in local church communities; a small house church within the Barossa and a Uniting Church in the Fleurieu Peninsula.

In 2000 during an Emmaus Camp weekend, once again I felt a call from the Holy Spirit to reenter ordained ministry, and I began studying at Parkin Wesley College.

Whilst studying at college I was again exposed to a broad ecumenical experience with students and teachers from a variety of denominations. There was also a rich tapestry of differences within the faith understanding of the Uniting Church students. I found this deepened my own faith, and I grew in my acceptance and understanding of how diversity can empower the body of Christ. As well as study, I was involved in a placement at Prospect Rd & Islington Uniting Church and a 9-month placement at Seacliff Uniting Church. I was ordained as a Uniting Church Minister in 2006.

I was involved in ministry at Henley Fulham Uniting Church for 14 years and Brighton Uniting Church for 6 years.

Whilst at Henley Fulham, alongside Sunday worship and pastoral ministry I was engaged in Christmas & Easter activities for the local schools, Good Friday Ecumenical services with Christian Art Shows in Henley Square Shopping Centre. I helped organize and sustain a monthly social dinner gathering with people with disabilities at the church and this developed into a pre-dinner church service for their friends and families.

I have served the Church creatively, pastorally, a great preacher, teacher and listener.

I have worked imaginatively with children, (KCO & local church Fun days, Messy Church). I offered pastoral care and support to fellow theological students and staff at Parkin Wesley College as part time chaplain.

I was involved with the Kairos Prison Ministry for several years, helping at many 4-day retreats at Mobilong Prison, and practically supporting the Kairos Outside women's ministry.

I have enjoyed and encouraged people to open our awareness of the body in our faith journey, using opportunities to see God within us each engaging all our senses. I have frequently challenged people to respond and play in faith, connecting worship with interactive body activities.

I attended a Men's Rites of Passage Camp in Brisbane in 2008 which was life changing, strengthening my awareness of God's love and how masculine spirituality has often been overlooked and misunderstood. I have since facilitated a small Men's group here in Adelaide, meeting monthly and having a yearly retreat. I have encouraged men to gather sitting in silence, quiet reflection and honest sharing of our journey and spirituality.

During my time at Brighton Uniting Church, I was involved in frequent prayer and meditation meetings, encouraging us all to deepen our relationship with God.

I worked with several local churches in regular weekly free community lunches, a yearly Palm Sunday procession from Brighton Jetty to the Church for worship.

I have always been involved in local community activities. My passions are storytelling, Godly Play, InterPlay, Men's groups and community connections. I sought to discover where God was already

engaged in people's lives and encourage them to discover the Divine presence within. I have always encouraged our communities to explore worship, looking beyond the format of furniture and be open to challenging thinking spaces.

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22 May 2026