



Wimala Presbytery Report

Wimala Presbytery's 77 congregations are located within state borders to the north, west and east of South Australia, while the southern edge runs from Gulf St Vincent at Henley Beach through the city and across the hills north of Mannum to meet the Victorian state border.

Central to Wimala Presbytery's ministry is to **Gather** as the community of Christ, to **Connect** with God and with each other, and to **Go in the power of the Spirit** to be witnesses to God's love, foster discipleship, and engage in acts of outreach and works for justice, peace, reconciliation and the renewal of creation.

Over the past 12 months Wimala Presbytery has continued to develop its structures and mission plan although much of this work continued to be slow due to disruptions with the covid pandemic and the restrictions that it has caused. However, for many, if not for most of our churches and congregations, the pandemic has given us cause to stop and reflect on who we are, what we are doing and how we are doing it. Most importantly it has caused some to reflect on who we are doing it for. Questions like the missional use of property, how we are engaging with our local communities, what resources we need for the next ten years and what we can leave behind, have all been relevant, timely and needed.

1. Presbytery Meetings

Overview of March 13 Presbytery Meeting

Sixty five (65) people participated in person on the day, 54 Presbytery members and 11 guests. In addition, 16 people participated via Zoom, fourteen (14) Presbytery members and 2 guests.

On Saturday March 13, it was good to gather again both in person and online for our Wimala Presbytery meeting at Morialta Uniting Church. We began the morning in our (mostly) Regional groups, sharing together our missional and ministry stories and in encouraging each other in our journeys as congregations and ministry agents. It was a valuable time of fellowship and continuing to get to know each other more deeply as members of the Wimala Presbytery.

Gathering in worship was the next key aspect of the day. We gratefully thank Morialta Uniting Church and Rev Bob Hutchinson for hosting us, keeping us COVID safe, leading us in worship and sharing the Word with us. We are grateful to those who were involved in worship through music and song.

As we emerge from the boundaries COVID set for us and acknowledge the physical breadth of our Presbytery, it is necessary to accept that an online presence for our gatherings is likely to continue well into our future. We want to thank Uniting Technology for supporting our meeting with the gifts of sound and projection and also for working tirelessly to ensure we could connect seamlessly with those who met with us via Zoom. Your work was amazing!

A variety of electives were held throughout the morning and we thank those who gave of their time to share with us in this space. Feedback was enormously positive on both presenters and their sharing of those areas of church life and ministry they are passionate about.

The business session was relatively brief, with reports being accepted from the Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Pastoral Relations Committee. An update was also given about the introduction of placements for Regional Co-ordinators.

A ballot had been held throughout the morning and we also then spent time commissioning those who were newly elected to roles and committees. This time was led by the General Secretary.

The Presbytery also farewelled and recognised the service of Christine Secombe as Secretary of the Presbytery over the previous year.

Gathering together is one of our key objectives as a Presbytery and to do so was a true blessing!



Images: People gather at March 13 Presbytery Meeting

Overview of October 30 Presbytery Meeting

Seventy four (74) people participated in person on the day, 65 in person and 9 via zoom online. Of these, 60 were presbytery members and 19 were guests.

The meeting opened at 9.30 am with acknowledgement of country and a quiet, contemplative worship time conducted by Leanne Davis. We then moved in to Regional Clusters to catch up with each other, and to discuss some highs and lows of the current times in our churches. After morning tea, Jennifer Hughes shared with us some Advent Resources available from the CMLA website and Linda Vinall shared some positive survey results from the Safe Church Audit. Paul Goh's update on mapping intercultural neighbourhoods in SA challenged us all to engage inter-culturally with those in our CALD communities in our Presbytery. Our chairperson also challenged us all to start to think about one-off projects within Wimala presbytery that could grow the church, encourage and connect with people and raise new leaders. By far the most exciting news of the meeting, was the introduction of two ordinands. Chelsea Size and Ann Phillips whom were both later ordained in November.

2. Standing Committee

In 2021, the Standing Committee comprised Trevor Phillips (Chairperson), Carol Lang (Secretary), Richard Idzikowski (Treasurer), Bruce Ind, Peter Trudinger, Dianne Holden, June Ladner and Leanne Davis. We continued to meet on the first and third Wednesday every month. Our meetings largely took place via zoom, which enabled members to attend safely from wherever they were located across the region. In general, but not always, the first meeting of the month focused on missional, pastoral and visioning aspects of our work and the second received reports and carries out the business of the Presbytery.

The executive officers of the Presbytery all continued to meet regularly with Officers of the Presbytery of Southern South Australia, Generate Presbytery, and Synod Leaders. These meetings continue to be very worthwhile as they allow us to learn a lot from each other and to share resources and ideas that enable us all to better undertake the mission and purposes assigned to us under the new structure.

There have been essential administrative tasks for Standing Committee to attend to including work on improving administrative processes, updating databases, documentation and preparing and implementing exit declaration forms for presbytery committee members amongst other things. A contact audit of Presbytery Contacts was started in Dec 2021 and continues into the current year.

Some of the ongoing discussion topics picked up in our dedicated planning and visioning meetings included issues and planning ideas related to improving communication strategies, implementation of UC Governance Training, Leadership Development, pondering the possible formation of a specific committee for processing complaints and managing any disciplinary matters.

A strategic planning meeting was held on 25 November at Athelstone Uniting Church for all members of the Presbytery Standing, Pastoral Relations and Property Committees. This was a very successful afternoon to talk and to start thinking about priorities and plans for 2022.

In December 2021 we appointed our two new regional coordinators, Leanne Davis (Outer Metro East) and Rev Paul Turley (Metro and Outer Metro West) who will both start in 2022. We look forward to hearing more from them as they settle in to their new roles this year and in the words of Rebecca Purling, we “hope that they are able to keep in touch with the grassroots of the presbytery in ways the volunteer members of the presbytery committees are unable to”.

Standing Committee hosted a Christmas Get-together for Wimala Ministry Agents at the Vine Inn, in the Barossa in December. This was a wonderful time of fellowship and sharing together. Standing Committee plans to host similar events for our ministry agents in 2022.

2.1 Communication

Our newsletter has continued to provide updates from the Standing Committee, information about Presbytery meetings periodically and to advertise various missional and other activities of the church.

2.2 Finance

Though we had held high expectations for 2021, it was another year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic which impacted our abilities to gather in traditional ways.

The 2021 budget was set based on an improvement in the COVID-19 situation, however with ever changing restrictions due to subsequent waves, meeting virtually was still commonplace for Standing Committee. Plans to meet face to face with each other and with retired ministers, current ministry agents and other committees took hold and occurred where it was possible. Therefore, the majority of meetings in 2021 were held via video conferencing, whilst some minimal approved travel by representatives of the Wimala Presbytery as required was undertaken, most travel costs incurred related to PRC and Property matters.

The work to source 3 new 0.2FTE Regional Coordinators commenced following endorsement from the Presbytery. Advertising for the roles took place over a prolonged period, a JNC was formed and positions have recently been filled. It was expected that these placements would have started in 2021, the budgeted funds covered in 2021 now contributing to our resources for future mission work.

A new Presbytery Secretary was welcomed following the March 2021 presbytery meeting, who continued the work and placement status of the outgoing Secretary. A new mobile phone and credit card was provided to support the work and duties carried out by the Presbytery Secretary.

Standing Committee in May 2021 endorsed the investment of \$280,000 into a UC Invest fixed term account; this has generated \$2,450 by the end of December 2021, and will mature in April 2022.

With this reasonable investment, Wimala Presbytery has drafted a Funding Application process for member congregations and faith communities to request limited funding support for mission based projects that will benefit their community, the Presbytery and the wider Church.

Thus, following its second year in operation, still during the global pandemic, Wimala Presbytery will commence 2022 with equity to the value of \$431,145.85, with an approved 2022 budget returning an operating surplus of \$11,254. Limited funds will be available to be used for mission and resourcing programs to be established by the Wimala Presbytery to address the needs and aspirations of its member congregations and faith communities.

2.3 Committees

Pastoral Relations Committee

The Pastoral Relations Committee comprised Rebecca Purling (Chair), Bob Hutchinson (resigned May), Cate Baker, Paul Schmelzkopf, Christine Secombe, Alan Biglow, Marian Wicks, Geoff Tiller and Jeff Dart (co-opted July). The committee takes very seriously their mandate to give pastoral oversight to ministry agents and congregations and always keep all the congregations and ministry agents in our presbytery in their thoughts and prayers.

The PRC was kept busy with consultations, placements processes, supporting congregations and ministers who are experiencing challenges and organising supply ministry. At their meetings they receive, and process reports from congregations, and from other committees and functions of the Synod.

In 2021, Wimala Presbytery and the UAICC welcomed Rev Mark Kickett into the Uniting Church; Mark trained as a Baptist pastor but has been working with the Congress for several years. Mark is a member in the Henley-Fulham congregation. It was a great celebration held at the first Synod Expo at Adelaide West UC.

They held two morning teas for retired ministers who are part of our Presbytery. The retired ministers have really enjoyed getting together, catching up with colleagues and reminiscing, and hearing about the wider Uniting Church.

The PRC were absolutely delighted to celebrate the ordinations of Ann Phillips (Minister of the Word) and Chelsea Size (Deacon) in October and November. Paul Hodgson was inducted as Chaplain at Helping Hand.

The PRC has made significant progress towards welcoming the IPPC as a 'faith community', with the next step to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Property Committee

The Property Committee comprised Malcolm Wilson and John Arthur and between them, they certainly had a very busy year processing Property Matters for our Presbytery!

The long list of congregations supported through property matters in 2021 included Jerusalem, Bute, Arthurton and Urania, Brentwood, Carrieton, Windsor, Burra (Manse), Cross Roads, Yorketown, Gulnare, Nurioopta, Cudlee Creek, Hawker, Port Adelaide, Hamley Bridge (Plains Community Churches), Western Links, Modbury, Broadview, Clayton Wesley, Angaston, Semaphore, Elizabeth Grove and Elizabeth North Uniting Churches.

Property matters ranged from the exploring of options to helping congregations work through building compliance issues, property damage and organising repairs to site development proposals and the sale of properties and later utilisation of sale proceeds.

Wider Church

Wimala Presbytery members continued to support the wider church by serving in a variety of ways. For example, Rebecca Purling, Marian Wicks and Christine Secombe (alternate) represented Wimala on the Synod Placement Committee. Whilst Malcolm Wilson and Trevor Phillips served on the Synod Property Committee and Synod Church Planting Team, respectively. Our representatives on the Synod Pastor Appointment and Competency Assessment Team were Sandy Webb and Linda Driver. Peter Gunn and Brian Hern served on the UC SA Foundation Grants Committee. Alex Rodgers represented Wimala on the Public Theology and Mission Subcommittee of the Mission and Leadership Development Board.

3. Congregations

In 2021, we recognised the closure of congregations at Yorketown, Houghton-Paracombe, Carrieton and Urania. In joyful news, we were able to recognise a new congregation at Paracombe.

Over 2021, the International Prophetic Pentecostal Congregation worked towards becoming a Faith Community of the Uniting Church in Australia and we are excited to announce that this community was formally recognised by the Standing Committee at our Feb 2022 meeting!

4. Looking Ahead

In the later part of 2021, Presbytery began to look at ways that we could support our congregations to engage with God's mission to the communities in which they are based. In 2022, we will also be investigating how and where we may be able to plant new congregations and what programs and services we may be able to develop to further God's kingdom. We will be continuing to review our structures to ensure we can continue to support the churches within our Presbytery as best as we can.

Dr Carol Lang

Wimala Presbytery Secretary