

# Synod '24



## Generate Presbytery Report

In June 2024 Generate Presbytery celebrated 5 years. 5 years of Congregations, Faith Communities, Ministers, MOP's, and Lay Leaders not only serving in their own congregations, but generously extending their time, gifts and experience to enrich the ministry of others. 5 years of walking alongside churches planting and churches closing. 5 years of striving to support the health of Ministers and Pastors. 5 years of gathering, resourcing and championing evangelism and discipleship in congregations. 5 years of supporting and encouraging leadership development. 5 years of praying together, supporting each other, equipping, organising and reorganising ourselves, to see renewed vibrant congregations.

There is still so much to do in this adventure of joy, but even over recent months we have seen some beautiful fruit emerge. Stories of baptisms and lives changed by Jesus from so many churches. People coming to faith. Churches praying for a new start and an increase in those committing themselves to walk the Renewal Pathway. And a swell of people feeling called to ministry through the Period of Discernment.

### 1. Strategic Priorities

Generate is formed around four key foci; Seeing people come to faith, growing passionate disciples, raising courageous leaders, and planting and renewing churches. This is what we hold before us in decision making and focus on in our resourcing and presbytery meetings.

#### 1.1 2023-2024 Planned

2023 saw the instigation of our two-year strategic plan. This included three areas of strategic priority which, from feedback gathered from the presbytery, the Generate Standing Committee discerned would be important for us as we worked to pursue our four key priorities. They were:



Initiating  
**Networking**  
Opportunities



Innovative  
**Solutions to**  
**ongoing**  
**Problems**



Instilling  
**Hope**

Much of this has been engaged with well. Extended breaks at presbytery meetings have allowed for more relational time. By the time of this reading we will have held two pastors retreats. Our Hubs have gathered for both relationship and equipping. We paid for Ministers and Pastors to complete the Working Genius Assessment and have explored ongoing challenges, while looking for creative solutions. We have been conscious of attending to bright spots and congregations doing well, as well as those who face challenges and need additional care. We have worked to identify and mitigate barriers to joining the Renewal Pathway. And we have continued to share stories of hope and transformation from across the presbytery.

## 1.2 Emergent

As the Generate Standing Committee reviewed our Strategic Planning Progress, it was clear that the presbytery had also engaged in unplanned strategic work that had emerged during this period. The 2023 Synod meetings invitation for presbyteries to engage in the Synod Strategic Planning (Mission and Property) Working Group work has been one of these significant opportunities. With financial support of the Synod (offered to all presbyteries) we were able to employ Rev Dr Graham Humphris for a 10 week project in late 2023. Graham was able to bring his knowledge of Generate's congregations and strategic thinking to articulate how we can engage congregations at their unique stages in considering their next steps in missional viability. This work has been a tremendous resource to us as we consider how to help congregations in their mission. 2024 has given the opportunity for the GSC to explore these next steps and also seen us work with the Synod in a number of areas of planning. This includes the employment of a Building and Legacy Officer in a shared Presbytery and Synod role, who will support congregations find their next steps when they are unable to remain in their buildings.

Additionally, the Presbytery is engaged in conversations about the impact of retirements and need for future Ministry Agents as well as strategic thinking around Church Planting and development of Church Planters.

We have appreciated the good relationship and collaboration with the Synod and other Presbyteries around much of this work.

## 2. Presbytery Meetings

Our intention at any Presbytery gathering is for people to walk away feeling more excited, equipped and empowered about the ministry God has for them, wherever God has them. This continued through our presbytery over the last year.

### 2.1 2023

In November 2023 we meet at Coro UC around the theme of Dare to Speak, concluding our 'Dare' year. We heard from Rev Dr Tim Hein, shared our testimonies in small groups, heard stories from around the presbytery, worshipped and enjoyed great food together. We were beautifully hosted by

Coro Uniting for the day. The afternoon allowed us time to engage with the Act2 project from Assembly in small groups and hold our business session.

## 2.2 2024

Due to the timing of Propel Conference, Assembly and Synod this year our Presbytery meetings looked rather different. In February/March we held a presbytery meeting in our 5 hubs. Each Hub was resourced by input from Rev Pablo Nunez around “The One Thing” and challenged to consider what “One Thing” they could do. Generate supported Hope Valley Church as we hosted the Propel Conference in May around the theme of “Commissioned”. This included participants from across the UCA and we were deeply encouraged by input from Jossy Chocko, CEO of Empart and Clare Steele the CEO of Compassion. The presbytery then met in July online following the 17<sup>th</sup> Assembly. We not only processed our Synod membership, but heard updates and encouragements from across the presbytery.

## 3. Pastors Retreat

As part of our priority of Initiating Networking Opportunities we also held our first Pastors Retreat at Hahndorf in August 2023. With the theme of Dare to Lead we had two days, one night, of community, conversations and connecting with God and each other. Over 60 pastors and ministers from every Hub gathered which is around 75% of our total Pastors and Ministers. It was an incredible time and deeply appreciated by those who attended.

In September we will gather again for our 2024 Pastors Retreat. With the theme By Example and guest speaker Tina Waldron from Evangelism in Australia, we will explore not only how to build faith sharing and discipleship in our congregations, but consider afresh how we as disciples, are sharing our own faith. With stories, laughter and community time coming together we pray this will be a wonderful time of encouragement and refreshment for our Ministers and Pastors.

## 4. Congregations

Since the last Synod meeting Generate has walked with Penola, Melrose and Kapunda congregations as they have decided to close. Port Germein also decided to close rather than become a faith community as previously planned. This can be a difficult journey for congregations. There is a grief and sadness when a local community of faith closes. Generate continues to pray for and support our congregations as they walk this road and are committed to holding the mission they have faithfully stewarded until God births something new.

In September 2023 Paracombe Uniting Church made the decision to join Generate Presbytery.

This year has also seen the launch of a new Church Plant: Encounter Henley. Encounter Henley has been planted by Encounter Prospect which was planted only 6 years before. It is wonderful to see generational planting occurring. The launch was held at Woodville Uniting Church and was an awesome celebration of a new community in the Western Suburbs of Adelaide. We deeply appreciate the hospitality of Woodville UC in hosting the launch and Grange Uniting for their ongoing sharing of their worship space with this new Faith Community.

## 5. Staff

A significant portion of the work of the presbytery is undertaken by volunteers giving their time to serve on committees, conduct reviews, support neighbouring congregations, coach, mentor, brainstorm, speak and more. Leaders across Generate continue to use their gifts to build up the wider church both at a Presbytery and Synod level. This participation is supported by key staff. Generate has 12 staff all of which are part-time contributing in specific areas, alongside other ministry or work. Since June 2023 the following staff changes have occurred.

### 5.1 PRC Chairperson

Early 2024 we farewelled Rev Naomi Duke who had served as PRC Chairperson for 2 years. Naomi took up a placement at Seed Uniting Church. We were very grateful for the experience of Rev Jonathan Button who took on a supply role before we the eventual appointment of Martyn Smith to the role mid 2024. Martyn has a wealth of experience in leadership and management beyond the church as well as strong history of engagement in local Church Council, preaching, Presbytery and Synod.

### 5.2 Building Legacy Officer

Through exploring the Property Building Review and Missional Viability work it became clear that there are a number of congregations who were struggling to maintain their buildings. Some of these are at critical point. Noting that the journey and most appropriate outcome for congregations in these cases is varied we were able to collaborate with the Synod on creating a Building Legacy Officer role. Martyn Smith has been appointed to this role and is working with congregations to explore their future. This is a project role and we look forward to seeing how this will grow and change overtime.

### 5.3 Treasurer

Given Martyn's new roles a PRC Chair and Building Legacy Officer it was no longer possible for him to continue as the Generate Treasurer. We thank Martyn for his time in the role and contribution to the leadership of the Presbytery in this way. With joy we appointed Mrs Karen Taylor to this role in August, 2024.

## 6. Leadership Pipeline

Generate has a key focus on Raising Courageous Leaders. The Generate Leadership Pipeline was established to oversee the Period of Discernment (PoD), support Candidates, facilitate Ministry of Pastor competencies and provide opportunities for ongoing leadership development support. Over the past year we celebrated 21 people who are doing or have completed the PoD supported by 19 active mentors. With great joy we are looking forward to the Ordination of Tim Littleford in August 2024 and were thrilled to welcome two new candidates in Jethro Buxton and Denis Msema. We have a total of 9 candidates with several PoD participants on the journey through the PoD and applications panels.

Under Rev Andrew Hogarth's leadership the Leadership Pipeline has also supported strong mentoring and supervision for Ordained and MOP's throughout the presbytery.

The Leadership Pipeline assists the growth of leaders through leading oneself, leading others, leading leaders and leading communities. It is wonderful to see the investment of the presbytery in this space over the past few years bearing fruit.

## 7. Renewal and Church Planting

### 7.1 Renewal Pathway

Similarly, the commitment of the presbytery to Renewing Congregations has grown in impact this year. We now have 7 congregations currently doing Renewal Pathway another 4 are exploring doing the process. The Renewal Pathway provides a coach (or utilises a local ministry agent) to support a small group of members from a congregation over a period of time. It explores emotional, spiritual and structural health of a community in the midst of praying together and equipping. 1 congregation has concluded the coaching portion. As we look to expand on this work the Renewal Director Rev Barry Littleford, is developing devotionals for church councils around evangelism and discipleship and a other complimentary resources. We also encourage churches to consider Building a Discipling Culture and have had 8 churches completing or engaged in that training so far.

The renewal pathway has also been drawn upon by congregations and leaders outside of Generate and outside the UCA.

### 7.2 Church Planting

We are excited to see several congregations considering Church Planting in the next couple of years. This is a real need across the life of the Synod, and we know that the time, energy, financial and personal cost to congregations who plant a faith community is significant. We are working on pathways for developing Church Planters and are working with the Synod in consideration of locations with missional need.

Similarly, we are exploring what planting, replanting or revitalisation in rural and regional centres could look like. We want to see healthy thriving churches across the presbytery, not just in urban areas.

## 8. Looking to the Future

The next season in the life of the presbytery will be shaped by our commitment to healthy congregations. Supporting congregations through the Renewal Pathway and other resources to become healthier and grow. Seeing new church planters developed and new churches planted. Supporting congregations to end well. Seeing congregations that are thriving able to continue and expand.

There is so much to give praise to God for throughout the life of Generate. We are so grateful for story after story of Christ at work and pray with deep desire and conviction that more is to come.

**Rev Stephanie Tai**

*Executive Officer (Secretary), Generate Presbytery*

**Rev Scott Button**

*Chairperson, Generate Presbytery*

16 August 2024



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia