



## Placements and Safe Church Report

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Earlier this year, in collaboration with the other team members, I wrote a description of the work undertaken by the Placements and Safe Church Team. This was intended as a summary to help potential new team members understand the scope of our work. It was an interesting exercise. I share it below to give a sense of our work, some of the information might be repeated later in the report.

There are two key areas of focus for the Placements and Safe Church Team. One is to work collaboratively with other Synod Ministry Centres, the Presbyteries and entities associated with the Synod of South Australia for the placement of ministry agents in congregations, chaplaincies and other forms of mission and service. The other focus is resourcing presbyteries and congregations to ensure the safety of people in the life of our communities, especially children and other vulnerable people. Placements and Safe Church participates in networks nationally and ecumenically to help facilitate fulfilling their mandate.

More specifically the Placements and Safe Church Team (P&SC) has oversight of the following areas:

- **Placements Committee:** A regular meeting of representatives from the presbyteries, and appointments from the Synod Standing Committee, to reflect on ministry in the South Australian Synod and place ministry agents in vacant placements. The P&SC Team host the placements meetings, set the agenda and provide the necessary resources for the meeting. This includes maintaining the files, documents and protocols that help undergird the work.
- **Chaplaincy:** The P&SC Team has particular responsibility for the ministry of chaplains. This includes liaising with entities associated with the UCA, government agencies and Local Health Networks. The team is also active in encouraging ecumenical co-operation in chaplaincy.
- **Well Being of Ministry Agents:** In collaboration with the presbyteries the P&SC works towards ensuring that we have healthy and effective ministry agents. This includes an ongoing interest in professional development, including a role in the oversight of professional pastoral supervision, and continuing education, offering counsel when required and overseeing with Secretariat the Ministers Benefit Fund (MBF). The MBF is similar to Workcover but provides greater flexibility for the church in working with ministers and congregations.
- **Ministry of Pastor:** In co-operation with the presbyteries the P&SC helps facilitate the Ministry of Pastor, their placement and formation. A particular focus for the P&SC, along with Uniting College, is the resourcing and assessing of the Core Competencies.

- Development of Safe Church Training, policies and theological resources: The P&SC Team oversee the development of and engagement with Safe Church Training Materials. These include “Through their Eyes” Mandatory Reporting Training, “Called to Care” more general safe church training, Code of Ethics refreshers, and National Safe Church programmes.
- Overseeing Safe Church Practices: P&SC Team work with local congregations and presbyteries to strengthen safe church practices to protect children and vulnerable people in our communities. We use the acronym “STAR” to describe these practices.
  - **S**creening: is completed by all appointed leaders
  - **T**rainin g : Relevant participation for those in roles of responsibility
  - **A**dopt: announce polices & posters
  - **R**esponse: reporting – audit, review.
- Complaints, National Redress and Historic Abuse: On behalf of the Synod the P&SC Team respond to Requests for Information (RFI’s) from the National Redress Scheme in a timely manner. The P&SC Team maintain the files for National Redress as well the files of historic abuse.  
The P&SC Team works with the Presbyteries to oversee the complaints processes of the church, the team has oversight of the Committees for Discipline on behalf of the Synod. The P&SC Team collaborates with national bodies, other synods and presbyteries to oversee these processes, develop policies and resources, and educate ministers and other leaders about their responsibilities. These include informing congregational members of safe church matters and informing synod about processes and concerns. The Synod Safe Church Committee is convened and equipped by the P&SC Team.
- Disaster Recovery Ministries: The Team includes the Disaster Recovery Officer and team members work collaboratively with the officer to help the facilitation of this work, especially in times of declared disaster.

## 2. PLACEMENTS

You will find a summary of Placements Committee decisions as an appendix to this report. (Appendix 3)

The Placements and Safe Church administrators have been reporting annually on the changes regarding the number and Full Time Equivalence (FTE) of placements for the last few years. While there continues to be a similar number of placements, the FTE of those placements has been dropping over the last decade in particular. It is hard to discern the impact of COVID on placements. Initially there was a significant slow-down, partly because it was difficult to conduct the placements process and also because ministers recommitted themselves to their current congregations in the midst of the “pastoral emergency”. We are back to normal in terms of placements but the amount of movement seems slower than usual. We are also

surprised at some full time placements which are not attracting more interest. The other factor that we are uncertain of is the impact of the new presbytery structure on placements. While we all might have opinions, and I have as many as anyone, we have little statistical information as yet on whether people will be willing to move across presbyteries readily.

## 2.2 Chaplaincy

Covid continues to have an impact on all our chaplaincies. For example, our prison chaplain Suzanne Foley has often been restricted from being on site and needed to find other ways to support prisoners and families. This has been challenging and exhausting work for her.

Similarly, organising reviews for chaplains has been difficult with Covid. Not least because visitors have been restricted from visiting sites.

Aged care chaplains and hospital chaplains have been asked to take limited annual leave for much of the last two years. The organisations for whom they work have required them to be available, since often family and visitors have not been allowed on site. Therefore the role of the chaplains in providing some onsite support has been crucial – and so their annual leave has been curtailed and as a result they are understandably weary.

Continuing to negotiate with organisations to whom we provide chaplaincy in hospital and aged care settings has taken considerable time and energy in the last year. For example, Eldercare has restructured their chaplaincy, this has meant a reduction in chaplaincy hours available and chaplains are now needing to work across multiple sites.

We currently have:

- 10 hospital chaplains
- 1 prison chaplain
- 1 University chaplain
- 16 aged care chaplains
- Opportunity for a disability chaplain later in the year

## 2.3 New Corrections Role

One of the challenging activities we undertook last year was putting in a tender for responsibility of the Advisor Faith Engagement/Chaplain Correctional Services. We would not have managed this without Peter Hollister's experience and expertise in government tender processes.

We were successful in winning the tender and at the time of writing are engaged in the appointment process. We will hopefully have completed the process by the time of Synod.

## 3. SAFE CHURCH

### 3.1 STAR

When we were preparing to acknowledge congregations for their participation in the annual audit there was conversation about awarding “stars” to congregations for their commitment (or otherwise) to the Safe Church practices. The possibility of such an action provoked some strong debate. Eventually the debate was circumvented by Linda Vinall, who was able to make STAR into a helpful acronym for recalling our work. This also became the basis for a poster acknowledging participation in the audit.

**STAR** Congregations will ensure that:

- **S**creening: Completed by all appointed leaders
- **T**raining: Relevant participation for those in roles of responsibility
- **A**dopt: Announce policies & posters
- **R**esponse: Complete yearly audit

Hopefully you have seen the posters in a prominent place in your church building. You might also find the STAR acronym helpful when sharing Safe Church information with your church council or congregation. We have used it as the basis for the agenda for a Safe Church Meeting.

### 3.2 Screening

The State Government legislated that the Working with Children Check would be the key screening from July 2019. Depending on people’s roles there are also the Working with Vulnerable Persons check and the Probity check. We assist individuals with obtaining these checks. This can be time consuming and I am grateful for the service that Linda Vinall offers to congregations and leaders.

There has been a recent and helpful change in the process where the Department of Human Services now indicates if there is a likely to be a hold up in the process for an individual. This does not mean that they will not receive a positive check but that it is a more complex than usual screening. (The individual is often aware that this might be a possibility before they start.)

At a recent meeting of the Safe Church Committee we discussed the process when a “Prohibited” response is received. The process is below. This process is easier if prior contact is made with the Synod Placements and Safe Church Team because we can then think through how we will respond if a prohibited response is received. People who receive prohibited responses are normally aware that they might be an issue even if they think that the reasons are unfair or unjust. We have had more people report to us that they might get a negative response than have received one, by some margin.

**No Prior Contact**

1. The person and UCA Screening Services are informed of the decision by DHS and contact is made by EO Placements and Safe Church.
2. In that initial phone call their options are discussed.
  - a. Appeal the decision.
  - b. Choose not to be in leadership in the congregation.
  - c. (Leave the congregation).
  - d. They are told that a key leader will need to be informed.
    - i. Permission sought to contact them or
    - ii. Permission granted for them to do the contacting with agreed time line.
  - e. Consultation with key parties (this can include EO Placements and Safe Church, General Secretary, Presbytery representative, minister of congregation and/or Church Council Chair) about way forward. Including decision about whether Person of Concern Agreement is appropriate in this case.
  - f. Report made to Safe Church Executive on negative finding and decisions made.

**Prior Contact**

Similar decisions as above are made, but options, processes and parties to be involved can be canvassed prior to application.

**3.3 Audit**

One of the responses of the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse is to audit denominations on the improvements that they are making to child safety. This audit is completed by the National Safe Church Unit on behalf of the Assembly based on information supplied from each of the synods. The Placements and Safe Church Team conduct an annual Safe Church Audit of our congregations. We are very grateful to the three presbyteries who did a fine job in encouraging participation from their congregations. In 2021 we had a significant increase in participation.

We find the audit helpful in a range of ways. For a start it is a great reminder to congregational leaders of their responsibilities regarding Safe Church Practice. Following the audit we always get an increase in requests for Screening and for Safe Church resources. The audit also helps us ascertain where the gaps in our communication are and where improved communication is needed.

Appendix 1 is a summary of last year's audit report which Linda shared with the presbyteries.

### 3.4 National Safe Church Unit (NSCU)

The Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse in its submission to the Uniting Church said that we needed to act as a national church and not a federation of synods. Of course it would be helpful if he had said similar things to the governments, federal and state. One of the instruments that helps in our response to this injunction is the National Safe Church Unit. The Unit led by Rev John Cox, with Nina McKenzie developing policy and with Erin Black working on projects part time helps the synods respond to national safe church policies from the government and encourages national collaboration on national projects.

There was a recent review of the NSCU which affirmed their value for the church nationally. It is likely that there will only be increased need for collaboration nationally in the future. Some of the policies and issues raised in the rest of this report are a direct result of collaboration overseen by the NSCU.

### 3.5 Redress

The Federal Government as part of the response to the Royal Commission on Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse developed a National Redress Scheme. The scheme started in July 2018 and will run for ten years. To visit their website <https://www.nationalredress.gov.au/>.

People who experienced institutional child sexual abuse are able to apply to National Redress Scheme. They may apply for financial redress, an apology and a direct personal response in a face to face encounter or through a letter. The National Redress Scheme send Requests for Information (RFI) to UCA Redress Limited the national body set up by the Uniting Church to “respond to, and provide support for, children and vulnerable persons who have suffered abuse at the hands of the Uniting Church or its institutions”. <https://ucaredress.org.au/> UCA Redress then sends the RFI to the appropriate synod to complete the request for information form. If it is an organisation associated with the Uniting Church we would pass it on to that organisation, with the offer of assistance when appropriate. For congregations, the EO of Placements and Safe Church would normally follow up seeking information from files, historical records and people who may have had connections with the congregation at the time. We do not determine any outcome but provide information for National Redress, where decisions are made based on information received, on the balance of probabilities, in a trauma informed, survivor focussed way.

There have been six new RFI's since our meeting Synod in March last year. Up until October 2021 there had been 25 RFI's (That information thanks to special report Sarah Lim, National Director UCA Redress provided for Standing Committee.)

### 3.6 Training

Within this synod we currently offer two focused training sessions to educate and raise awareness around legislative requirements and best practice processes for ensuring we are maintaining a “safe church”. Although, during 2020 and 2021, the ability to deliver training and the willingness for people to attend proved challenging.

We have recommenced the State Government approved, “**Through their Eyes: Safe Environments for Children and Young People**” (better known as reporting Child Abuse & Neglect) has recommenced with sessions conducted at Nunyara for Uniting Venue Staff, as well as, Port Lincoln and recently in the Riverland. Sessions are being offered at Murray Bridge and Naracoorte in the near future. City locations are being confirmed as arrangements are settled.

**Called to Care:** awareness session for church councils & leaders is our Safe Church initiative which covers a number of best practices and policy explorations. Sessions have been delivered at Port Lincoln & Berri with more upcoming sessions confirmed.

Dates and booking links to attend sessions can be found via the calendar on the Safe Church Website <https://safechurch.ucasa.org.au/>.

### 3.7 Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice 2021/22

In the light of events early in 2021 where there was a good deal of conversation in the media regarding sexual harassment and bullying we decided that we would develop a Code of Ethics Refresher around this topic. We invited a wide range of people to respond to the broad question, “Given the current conversation about power, bullying and harassment in our community, what would you like ministers and leaders to know and practice?” We had four brave people who filmed a response to this question and we were able to include the videos in our presentation. These responses significantly improved our sessions.

In contrast to the previous cycle, all the early sessions were done on Zoom and we had held a number of sessions before conducting a session face to face. Holding sessions on both Zoom and face to face continues to be a challenge and a rich learning experience. Generally we have had positive feedback on this round of the Code of Ethics.

I am also grateful that I have been able to participate in the full Code of Ethics introductory course led by Rev Dr Sean Gilbert. This is a great opportunity to meet with some new ministry leaders and experience their initial engagement with the Code of Ethics that helps us develop our refresher training.

### 3.8 Supervision

Supervision of ministers has been an addition to my role in the last year. Since our re-structuring to multiple presbyteries the direct supervision of ministers is now the responsibility of the respective presbyteries. At the synod level my role is largely keeping our list of qualified supervisors up to date and making it available to ministers and presbyteries as requested. A course is currently being offered at UCLT in Professional Pastoral Supervision with the intention being in the future it will be required for all new supervisors of our ministry agents. (Wendy Prior)

### 3.9 Persons of Concern

One of the national conversations in which we have participated has been about Persons of Concern. Persons of Concern are people who have been accused, are going through the courts or have been found guilty of child sexual abuse. The conversation seeks to develop consistent policies across the synods, develop resources for use by synods, presbyteries and congregations, and to learn from each other's experience to develop best practice.

As a denomination we do not have a blanket policy regarding persons of concern but deal with matters on a case by case basis. Normally, the Executive Officer will meet with appropriate congregational leadership to discuss the way forward, the possibility of a safety agreement and the ongoing monitoring of the person of concern. Leaders from the presbytery will also have a significant role in supporting the congregation and helping them discern the way forward.

It is of the utmost importance that as soon as you are aware that you are dealing with a person of concern in the life of your congregation that you let the Synod know.

We continue to work nationally on developing resources. It is hoped that a module will be developed to help train congregational monitors for persons of concern.

### 3.10 Communication

Our communications have been improved thanks to the assistance of the Engagement Team. This has included regular articles (not so regular this year) for New Times Online, as well as, feature articles in the February New Times.

We have also been developing our website. This has proved very helpful for Code of Ethics Training and other events.

We continue to develop posters and other information to strengthen the Child Safe messages. Hopefully you have been receiving yours and displaying them. We were particularly happy with our “STAR” poster recognising those congregation who participated in the audit.

### 3.11 a) Complaints

There is a proposal going to Assembly to review the Discipline Regulations. This is an important move from the Assembly Standing Committee and the General Secretaries. It gives us a chance to ensure that the complaints procedures of the church reflect best practice. Furthermore it gives us a chance to look at current practice and to either modify practice in the light of the regulations or modify the regulations to bring them into line with current practice.

We are grateful to the people who are willing to serve on the Committees of Discipline for the Synod of South Australia. We are also grateful when we don't have to use them. One of the continuing goals for these committees is their education and skill development. This will need to be a focus in the second half of 2022.

It is worth noting that we are moving towards seeing the members of the committees as a pool rather than rigidly attached to one committee or another. These has been forced on us by necessity. We are a small synod so managing potential conflicts of interest can be difficult, so being able to draw from one of the other committees can be helpful. (Synods also draw on each other's committees when necessary.) Sometimes it is a matter of expertise needed, and at other times a particular presbytery may need to be represented on a panel, and it is easier to call on someone from one of the other committees.

It is important that congregation members are aware that they have options when they feel that they have been mistreated in the life of the congregation. Whilst some claims might be vexatious the presbytery PRC's and the Placements and Safe Church Team are prepared to help congregational leaders work through the issues and find helpful processes.

### b) Respectful Communities

I don't expect you all to remember, but last Synod meeting a proposal was passed under the heading of “Respectful Communities”. The proposal included developing a bylaw to help clarify how we might use the regulations relating to the discipline of lay people. This has now been passed by the Synod Standing Committee. We trust that it might bring some encouragement to Church Councils as they work through the difficult processes that occur when complaints are made against members of their congregation. The bylaw is below along with some links to other helpful resources on the Synod Website. We also encourage Church Councils to ensure that they are familiar with the Called to Care materials and at least some leaders have recently attended a course. The resources

include a very helpful piece on “Managing Challenging Behaviours”, in other words the people with difficult behaviours, often with tales of trauma that lay behind their behaviour, which sadly many congregations have to deal with.

<https://sa.uca.org.au/safechurch/policies-and-documents>

I would also remind you that this tension basic to the Christian life between grace, welcome and hospitality on the one hand, and the life of and growth in discipleship on the other. In our team we are fond of the phrase, which I think is from Church Consultant Roy Oswald, “that this is not a problem to be solved but a polarity to be managed”. Part of the management in this case is being clear about expectations for members of a congregation, how conflicts will be resolved, how communication will be respectful, and so on. Although we are happy to suggest further reading the Sermon on the Mount and Paul’s letters are a good place to start.

This is also a reminder that Safe Church matters are about the mission of the Church. Unhealthy Christian communities undercut our witness to the coming reign of God. That is why Paul agonises over the foibles of the Corinthian communities. So please give some attention to healthy discipleship processes in the life of your congregation.

**Please remember the following:**

- S** – Keep your **screenings** up to date
- T** – Ensure that key leaders have appropriate **training**.
- A** – **Adopt** and Review your Safe Church Policy.
- R** – Please **respond** to our annual audit.

If you have potential Persons of Concern in your congregation please contact us.

Please communicate about safe church policies including complaints to congregational leaders and members.

Clarify expectations of membership and provide appropriate education to grow healthy communities of disciples.

Thanks for all that you do!

**APPENDIX 1**

The 2021 Safe Church Audit was sent out to Congregations with the questions available for congregations to consider before completing the online responses. It was still evident that some didn't read that communication and started a response and gave up part way and or came back for another or multiple attempts

The question were built around the STAR pillars along with the messaging that

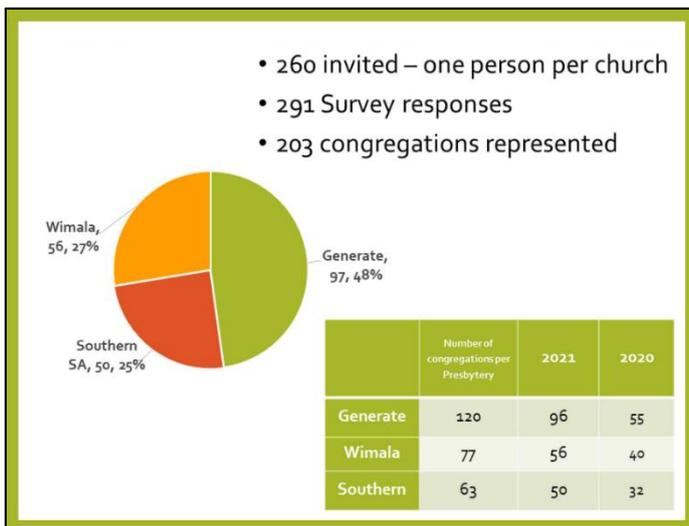
STAR Congregations will ensure that:

- Screening: is completed by all appointed leaders
- Training : Relevant participation for those in roles of responsibility
- Adopt: announce polices & posters
- Response: reporting – audit, review.

The invitation to complete was sent out in early June with a Closing date 26th July – extended to early August. Communication was sent to Safe Church contacts, & another, usually the secretary or chair. In some cases congregations have no defined officer and email in the central database.

Ministers were also sent a copy.

Audit questions were distributed to allow congregations to gather the answers before completing the survey. Many found the questions before hand helpful!



Increase in response from 2020.

78% of all congregations responded.

80% of the Generate Congregations

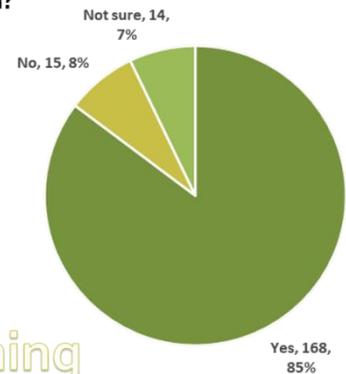
73% of Wimala and 79% of Southern

Messaging is happening but is it being followed up with actual results?

There are still many congregations / church councils who have individuals who do not have active screenings

*From 1 July 2020, all appointed leaders\* are required to have at a minimum the "Working with Children Check" screening (WWCC).*

**Is this message being conveyed to those within your congregation?**

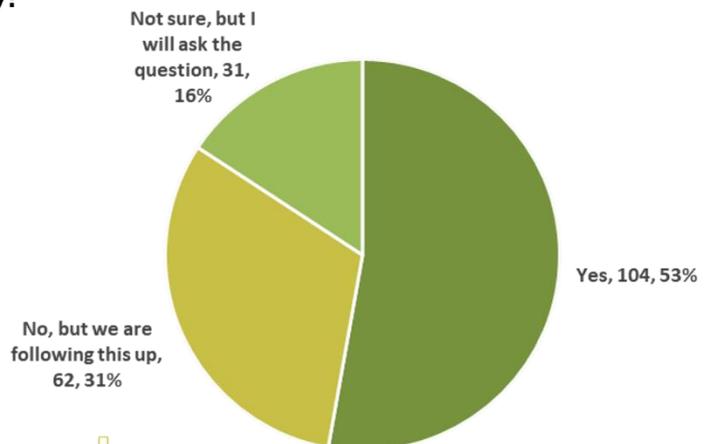


Screening

In the Synod Screening records system we have over 8000 screenings– some people have more than one!

However there are a number of congregations where we have no record of any Screenings or at the minimum of one person associated with the congregation.

**Are all leaders appropriately screened in accordance with the new requirements as outlined in the Duty of Care Policy?**



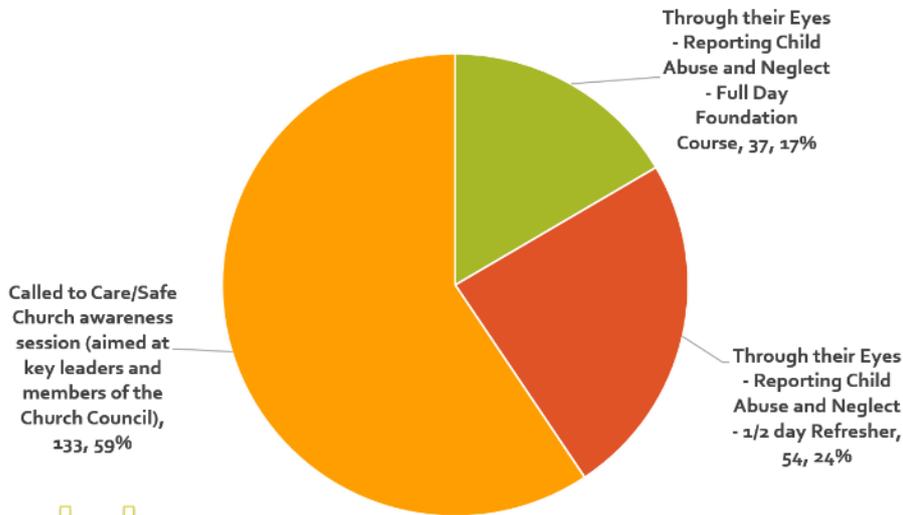
Screening

The challenges of planning and people committing to training dates has seen a number of potential sessions this past year not occur.

While some dates had to be cancelled due to Covid Restrictions, or lack of numbers. To make a session worthwhile there is a minimum number needed.

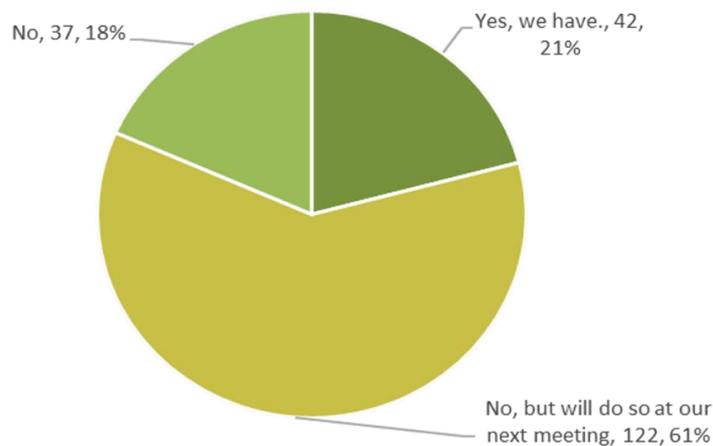
Training has resumed in the past few months with more being planned for the rest of 2022

**What Safe Church training support do the leaders of your congregation need?**



# Training

**Has UCA SA Duty of Care Policy been reviewed, endorsed and minuted by your Church Council this year?**



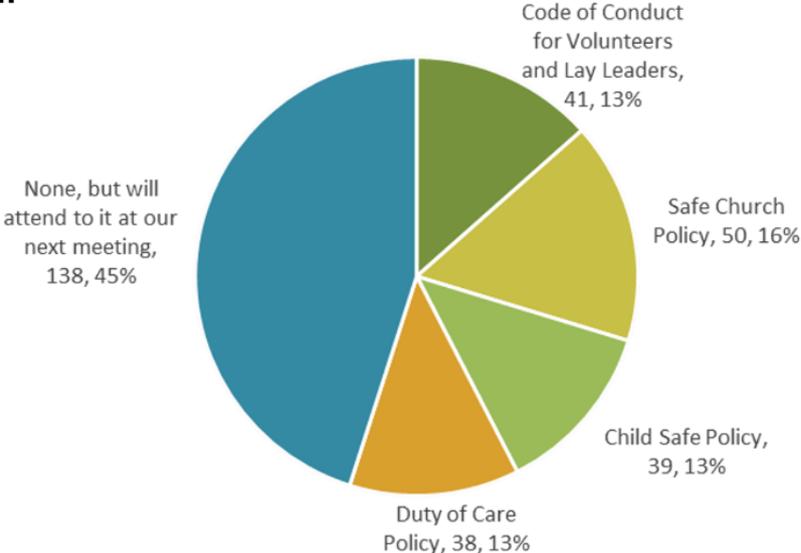
# Adopt & Announce

This question was asked to gauge the awareness of the Safe Church policies – especially the Duty of Care Policy as it relates to the requirement for screening of individuals in roles of responsibility.

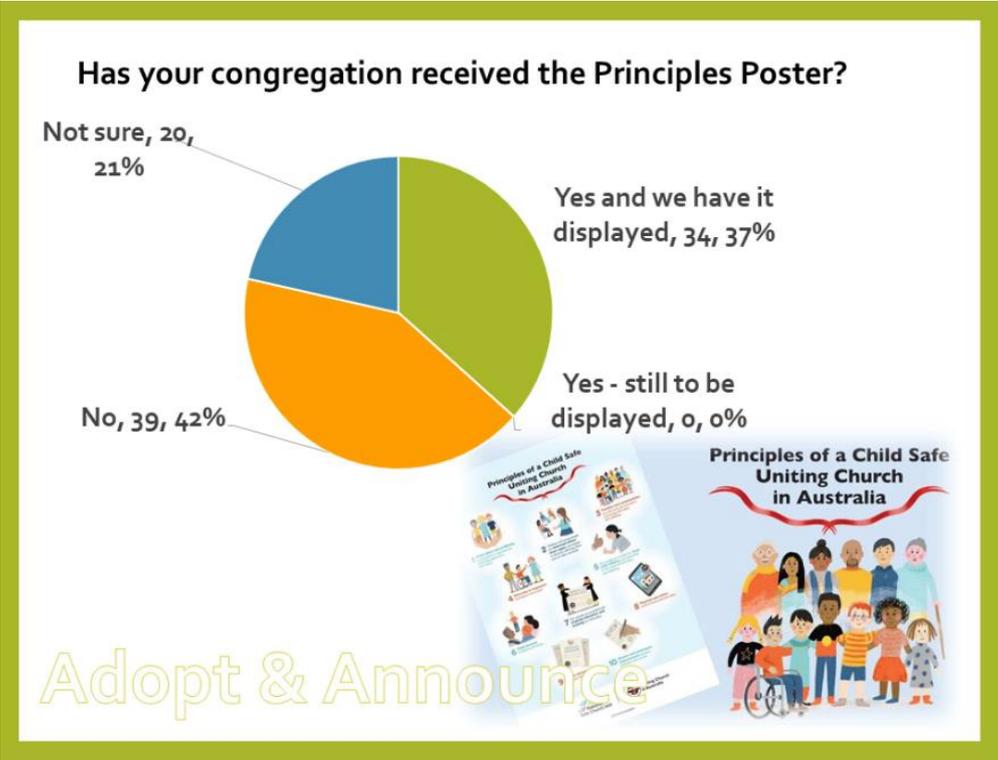
Again as part of the raising awareness to Church councils, the following question seeks to understand who was aware of these Safe Church policies

Church councils should be aware of them and refresh themselves of these annually, but perhaps not all at one meeting!

**Which of the following Safe Church policies/documents has your Church Council reviewed and re-endorsed for 2021?**



# Adopt & Announce

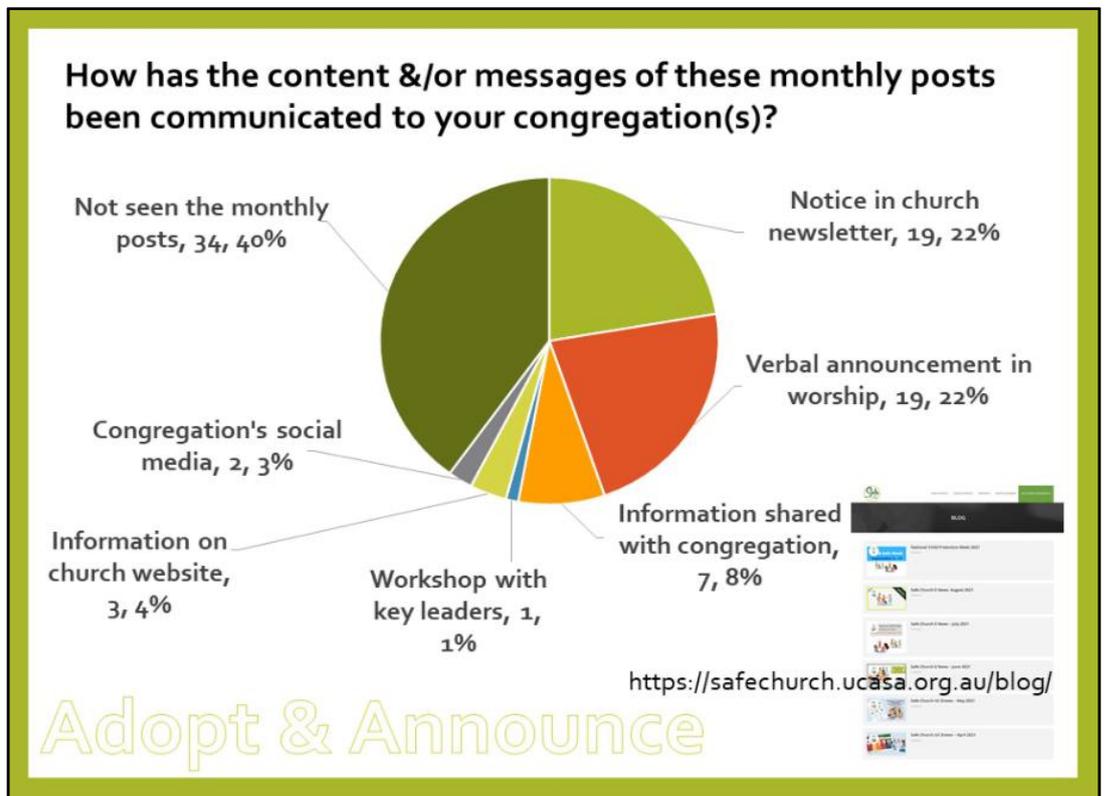


This poster was distributed via Presbytery and Synod meetings in the last 12 months

# Adopt & Announce

Communicating the messages from New Times and UC E News helps to keep an awareness of being a Safe Church for All!

We also send important information to the Safe Church Congregation liaison.



***This will be an annual audit so note in your diaries for June 2022!***

Linda Vinall

Called to Care Training and Development Officer

[calledtocare@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:calledtocare@sa.uca.org.au)

## APPENDIX 2

### Respectful Communities By-Law

#### Scope and Authorities

These by-laws are intended to be read in conjunction with Regulations 5:1.1 to 5.2.5 and 3.3.3 which deal with the discipline of members and congregational officers respectively. They seek to clarify and strengthen the authority of a presbytery and the synod in the discipline of members and officers of a congregation.

The by-laws allow Church Councils to seek assistance from the PRC of their Presbytery to help them fulfil their responsibilities for the discipline of members and officers. Further the by-laws give similar opportunities for the presbyteries to seek assistance from Synod SA ministry centres to help them in fulfilling their responsibilities for the discipline of members and officers of congregations. These by-laws are best read in the light of supporting documents. These include the Regulations, Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice, Code of Ethics for Lay Preachers, Code of Conduct for Volunteers and Lay Leaders. The “Called to Care Training and Resource Manual” has many helpful resources and links to policies of the Synod and the Assembly.

**The regulations are most helpful when dealing with members and congregational officers. In many of our congregations there can be a significant number of active people who are not members. One way to respond to this is for Church Councils to regularly review their membership rolls and actively encourage people to commit to membership in their congregation. When non-members prove difficult in the life of a congregation, a Church Council in consultation with a Presbytery PRC, might find helpful ways of dealing with their behaviour. Consultation is important before acting to impose discipline on anyone in the life of a congregation.**

It is important to remember that delay in informing your presbytery and/or Synod may heighten conflict and make resolution more difficult.

#### Discipline of Members, Adherents and Regular Attenders

1. In fulfilling their responsibilities for the discipline of members Church Councils should inform and seek guidance from their Presbytery Liaison person and Placements and Safe Church Team prior to any formal action.
2. After due consultation with Presbytery leaders the Church Council may delegate their authority to the Presbytery PRC for the discipline of members and adherents, on a case by case basis.

3. The reasons for this delegation may include:
  - i. Conflicts of interest for local leadership;
  - ii. The situation is beyond the capacity of local leadership;
  - iii. Concerns over worsening conflict.
4. For similar reasons to the above presbyteries may delegate their authority to the General Secretary or their delegate.
- 5.

#### **Discipline of Officers**

1. We note Regulation 3.3.3. (d) that a Church Council may refer matters of the discipline of officers to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC).
2. A PRC may, after appropriate consultation, refer such matters to the General Secretary of their delegate.
3. A PRC on receiving a written complaint regarding the behaviour of a congregational officer or having been made aware of concerns from multiple sources may determine to make their own investigation. In such matters they have the right to seek assistance or delegate responsibility to the General Secretary or their delegate.
- 4.

#### **Oversight of Synod**

The Synod of SA reserves the right to review discipline matters that has the potential to put at risk the mission of the Church, and/or has implications for the Synod or the UCA SA Property Trust.

#### **Awareness of Cross Cultural Issues**

In working with these by-laws it is important to be informed by commitments and values of the Uniting Church expressed in the Covenant Relationship with First Peoples and the “Uniting Church is a Multicultural Church” statement of 1985. In particular we draw attention to paragraph 1.8 of the Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice:

The Uniting Church is a multi-cultural church and as such is made up of faith communities from across many different cultural backgrounds. Each culture has its own unique expression of community and relationships. which need to be borne in mind when overseeing the behaviour of ministers. In ministry with people from diverse cultural backgrounds these unique expressions form an important part of the intimate community which is formed and inform how Ministers expresses their ministry

And also from paragraph 3.5 (vii) dealing with professionalism:, noting that ministers conducting their ministry in a professional manner includes:

being sensitive to the needs of, and ways of relating to, people from any different cultures with whom they have contact including being aware of one's own inherent cultural bias.

## **Regulations: 5.1.1 to 5.2.5**

### 5. CHURCH DISCIPLINE

#### 5.1 DEFINITIONS

5.1.1 In this Part 5 of the Regulations unless the context or subject matter otherwise indicates:

Complainant means the person who is making a complaint;

Complaint means a complaint about the conduct, teaching or ministry of a Minister;

Minister means a Minister as defined in Paragraph 3 of the Constitution, and also includes a Community Minister, Lay Pastor, Youth Worker, Pastor, Synod Secretary, Moderator, Assembly General Secretary, President, Presbytery Minister and a minister of another denomination serving in a placement;

Pastoral Relations Committee means the Pastoral Relations Committee of the Presbytery;

Respondent means a Minister against whom a complaint has been made;

Standing Committee means the Standing Committee of the Synod.

#### DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH

5.1.2 Discipline in the Church is the exercise of spiritual authority with a view to honouring Christ the Head of the Church and ensuring the spiritual well-being of its members.

#### BY WHOM EXERCISED

5.1.3 Discipline is to be exercised by:

- (a) The Church Council on behalf of the Congregation in the case of members or adherents, except in the case of allegations of sexual misconduct;
- (b) The Presbytery when a Presbytery determines a Church Council has not adequately dealt with a discipline matter in relation to a member or adherent of the Congregation;
- (c) The Presbytery upon a request of a Church Council if the Church Council considers it is not able to deal with a concern due to a member's or adherent's involvement in the Congregation;
- (d) The Presbytery and Synod in the case of Ministers.

## 5.2 THE DISCIPLINE OF MEMBERS

### PASTORAL CARE OF MEMBERS

#### 5.2.1 (a) In cases where:

- (i) in the opinion of the Church Council, any member of the Church appears to disregard the privileges and obligations of membership or to disregard the discipline of the Church; or
  - (ii) a formal complaint has been received about a member by a member of the Church Council; the Council shall endeavour by visitation and pastoral counsel to restore the relationship of the member to the life of the Church.
- (b) Any member who declines to renew a satisfactory relationship with the life of the Church shall be advised of the possibility that the name of that member may be removed from the membership roll and shall be given opportunity either in person or in writing to make a submission on the matter to the Church Council.
- (c) Should that member be a member of the Church Council, and that member declines to renew a satisfactory relationship with the life of the Church subsequent to visitation and pastoral counsel in accordance with Regulation 5.2.1 (a) that member may be requested by the Church Council to resign his or her position to that body and cease all responsibilities associated with that position prior to a decision being made regarding removal of the name of that member from the membership roll.

### SUSPENSION OR TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP

#### 5.2.2 Where the Church Council has determined that the member has failed to respond to the pastoral care and invitation to renew a satisfactory relationship with the life of the Church, the Church Council may:

- (a) suspend the rights and privileges of membership; or
- (b) remove the name of the member from the membership roll.

The member shall be notified in writing of any such action.

### RIGHT OF APPEAL

#### 5.2.3 (a) A person whose membership rights and privileges have been suspended or whose name has been removed from the membership roll, may within one month after receipt of the notification in writing require reconsideration by the Church Council. If not satisfied with the outcome of such reconsideration as notified in writing, the person may within one month after receipt of the notification, appeal to the Presbytery by notice in writing. The Presbytery, either itself or by a committee appointed for the purpose, shall determine the matter.

There shall be no right of further appeal.

The person concerned may make a submission personally or in writing to the body considering the matter.

- (b) In the event of an appeal of a member being sustained the member's name shall be returned to the roll of members and the suspension removed forthwith.

#### RESTORATION OF MEMBERSHIP

- 5.2.4 (a) A person whose name has been removed from the roll of a Congregation pursuant to Regulations may have it reinstated by a decision of the Church Council.
- (b) A person whose name has been removed from a membership roll of a Congregation for disciplinary reasons shall not be enrolled as a member of any other Congregation without the prior knowledge of and advice from the council which is responsible for the maintenance of the roll from which the person's name was removed.

#### ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL MISCONDUCT AGAINST MEMBERS OR ADHERENTS

- 5.2.5 (a) Where a complaint of sexual misconduct is made against a member or adherent the Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct shall apply, to the exclusion of the process outlined in Regulation 5.2.1.
- (b) The Policies for the Prevention of Sexual Misconduct are binding documents of the Church and require that allegations of sexual misconduct against members and adherents of the Church be dealt with as sensitively and expeditiously as possible. When an allegation is made in the manner prescribed in the relevant Policy. The Presbytery and the Church Council shall ensure that the relevant policy is adhered to

### **Regulation 3.3.3**

#### TERMINATION OF OFFICE OF ELDER AND CHURCH COUNCILLOR

- 3.3.3
- (a) An Elder and a Church Councillor respectively shall relinquish office in the Congregation and cease to be recognised if he or she:
    - (i) resigns from the particular office by notice in writing to the secretary of the Congregation;
    - (ii) declines to carry out the responsibilities of the particular office; or
    - (iii) transfers membership to another Congregation.
  - (b) If in the opinion of the Church Council an Elder or Church Councillor is no longer:
    - (i) conforming to the standards of a member of the Church; or
    - (ii) complying with its discipline (in circumstances other than in Regulation 3.3.3(d)); or
    - (iii) carrying out the responsibilities of the particular office, the Church Council may recommend to a meeting of the Congregation that the Elder or Church Councillor be removed from office and the Elder or Church Councillor shall be removed from office if the recommendation is supported by a determination of a meeting of the Congregation.
  - (c) An Elder or Church Councillor who is removed from office by a decision of the congregation, shall have a right of appeal to the Presbytery. The decision of the Presbytery to confirm removal or re-instate the Elder or Church Councillor shall be final.
  - (d) If in the opinion of the Church Council there are concerns about the behaviour of an Elder or Church Councillor whether in person or through cyber bullying (with reference to paragraph 1.6 of the Manual for Meetings) the Church Council may refer the matter to the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee to determine if the Elder or Church Councillor shall be removed from office. The decision of the Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee shall be final.

## Appendix 3

As at 27 April 2022

<b>Placements/Appointments Made (since January 2021)</b>		
<b>Congregational Placements/Appointments</b>		
<b>(Note titles are listed as at the time the placement/appointment was made)</b>		
<b>Generate Presbytery</b>		
Bordertown Parish	Kym Diment (MOP)	1 May 2022
Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations (0.7)	Conrad Tickner (MOP)	1 January 2022
Port Augusta UC (0.8)	Rev Leanne Osborn	1 January 2022
Seeds UC, Associate Pastor	Rev Nick Patselis	1 January 2022
<b>Presbytery of Southern SA</b>		
Adelaide West UC Associate Pastor (0.5)	Rev Craig Schultz, (CoC)	20 July 2021
Noarlunga UC (2 <sup>nd</sup> Placement)	Rev Ian Hunter	14 June 2021
Rosefield UC	Richard Telfer (Ordinand)	7 June 2021
Willunga UC (0.4)	Rev Leanne Jenki	1 October 2021
<b>Wimala Presbytery</b>		
Modbury UC (0.5)	Rev Geoff Tiller	1 May 2022
Scots UC (Community Connections & Development) (0.6)	Rev Jill Lienert	1 August 2021
Semaphore UC (0.5)	Rev Frances Bartholomeusz	1 May 2022
<b>Presbytery Placements/Appointments</b>		
<b>Generate Presbytery</b>		
Adelaide and North Hub Leader (0.2)	Rev Peter Riggs	1 November 2021
Leadership Pipeline Director (0.4)	Rev Andrew Hogarth	1 June 2021
Renewal Director (0.2)	Rev Barry Littleford	1 January 2022

Chairperson PRC (0.4)	Rev Naomi Duke	1 January 2022
<b>Presbytery of Southern SA</b>		
Presbytery Minister	Rev Ian Dow	1 April 2021
<b>Wimala Presbytery</b>		
Regional Coordinator (0.2)	Leanne Davis (MOP)	1 January 2022
Regional Coordinator (0.4)	Rev Paul Turley	1 April 2022
<b>Synod Placements/Appointments</b>		
Aboriginal Theologian in Residence within the faculty of UCLT (2yr term) (0.4)	Rev Denise Champion (Deacon)	27 April 2021
Chaplain, Annesley College	Rev Peter Morton	1 January 2021
Chaplain, Correctional Services (0.4)	Suzanne Foley	1 March 2021
Chaplain, Prince Alfred College (0.7) 2 <sup>nd</sup> placement	Andrew Kieselbach (MOP)	16 May 2022
Chaplain (0.2) Resthaven Port Elliot	Louise Townend (Anglican Lay)	1 March 2021
Chaplain (0.2) Resthaven Westbourne Park	Rev Frances Bartlett	15 February 2021
Chaplain SAHLN (0.4)	Robert Cartridge (MOP)	1 February 2021
Chaplain SAHLN (0.6)	Rev Sarah Williamson	1 March 2021
Chaplaincy and Supervision Manager (0.6)	Rev Wendy Prior	1 April 2021
Eldercare Trowbridge House 0.2FTE	Chelsea Size (MOP)	1 October 2021
Executive Officer, MLD (0.7)	Rev Dr Tim Hein	1 April 2021
Helping Hand Aged Care/ Helping Hand Congregation	Rev Paul Hodgson (CoC)	1 September 2021
Disaster and Recovery Worker (0.5) (12-month appointment)	Rev Mark Dickens	1 January 2021
Principal, UCLT	Rev Dr Vicky Balabanski	1 August 2022
Resthaven, Craigmore Coordinating Chaplain	Rev Samson Asirvatham (Anglican) (0.3)	1 September 2021

Spiritual Care Chaplain CAHLN (0.4)	Rev Jesse Size	1 September 2021
Spiritual Care Chaplain CAHLN (0.6)	Mandy Harvey (MOP)	1 September 2021
<b>Intentional Interim Ministry</b>		
Yorke Peninsula Restructure Intentional Interim Minister (0.4)	Rev Phil Marshall	1 November 2021
<b>Ministers Transferring to and from other Synods</b>		
<b>From</b> the Synod of South Australia		
Rev Mark Boyce (Deacon) to the Synod of Victoria/Tasmania from 17 May 2021		
Rev Coral Smith to Synod of Western Australia from 1 July 2021		
Rev Sandra Boyce, Deacon to Synod of Victoria/Tasmania from 18 April 2022.		
<b>To</b> the Synod of South Australia		
Rev Marion Millin (Deacon), Retired Minister from Synod of Western Australia from 1 January 2021		
Rev Julianne Parker (Retired Minister) from the Synod of Victoria/Tasmania from 1 March 2021		
Rev Leanne Osborn from the Synod of Queensland from 1 January 2022		
Rev Alan Williams, Defence Force Chaplain from the Synod of Queensland from 1 January 2022		
Rev John Candy (Retired Minister) from the Synod of Queensland from 1 January 2022		
<b>New Approved Placements</b>		
Scots UC – Community, Connections and Development position (0.4)		
Leadership Pipeline Director (0.4) - Generate		
Yorke Peninsula Restructure (0.6) Intentional Interim Minister from 1 September 2021		
Renewal Director (0.2) - Generate		
Associate Pastor (0.5) at Adelaide West UC from 19 November 2021		
<b>Leave of Absence</b>		
Rev Andrew Diprose 28 Feb 2022 to 30 April 2022 Regulation 2.6.1 (c)		
<b>Active Service</b>		
Rev Douglas Monaghan - Seconded to the Church of Scotland 1 December 2021 to 30 April 2023 [Reg. 2.6.1(b) ii]		

Rev Liellie McLaughlin - Coordinating physiotherapist at the Brian Burdekin Medical (working with Homeless) [Reg.2.6.1 (b) iv]			
<b>Minister Retiring/Retired 2021/2022</b>			
Rev Sandra Webb	04/06/21	Rev Gayle McClimont	01/08/21
Rev Ian Clarkson	13/06/21	Rev Kaye Colliver	13/03/22
Rev Trevor Whitney	30/06/21	Rev Rod Dyson	21/04/22

### Contracts, Supply Agreements and Placements Support

<b>December 2020 to May 2022 (18 months)</b>	
Supply Agreements and Variations*	82
Synod Calls to a Placement*	14
Presbytery Calls to a Placement*	7
Congregation Calls to a Placement*	13
Extensions and Variations to a Placement*	115
Ministry of Pastor Contracts, Extensions and Variations (Placement – 137; non-Placement 22)	159
Total	390

Footnote: \* Non Ministry of Pastor

27 Ministers have taken Long Service Leave or cashed out some Long Service Leave entitlement.

The Removals Fund has supported the relocation of 8 Ministers.

Placement position PT, FT, Ordained, Lay at July 2021

Information is available on request for all years from 2012

SA Placements @ July 2021	Jan 1999	Oct 2012	June 2016	June 2019	Sept 2020	July 2021
Total number of Placement positions	213	221	205	213 (147.75 FTE)	214 (147.70 FTE)	208 (143.84 FTE)
Total Number of people in Placement positions	198	193	182	167 (131.35 FTE)	170 (136.40 FTE)	160 (126.94 FTE)
Vacant Placement positions <sup>^</sup>	15	8	16	26 (16.4 FTE)	22 (11.30 FTE)	26 (16.9 FTE)
Full Time Positions	199	134	106	95	82	79
Vacant F/T Positions <sup>^</sup>	15	5	6	9	4	8
Ordained*	175	118	90	78	70	64
Lay+	9	11	10	8	8	7
Total	184	129	100	86	78	71
Part Time Positions <sup>^^</sup>	14	87	99	118 (52.75FTE)	132 (65.70 FTE)	129 (64.84 FTE)
Vacant P/T Positions <sup>^</sup>	0	3	10	17 (7.4 FTE)	18 (7.30 FTE)	18 (8.9 FTE)
Ordained*	14	41	62	61 (34.25 FTE)	63 (41.55 FTE)	65 (42.0 FTE)
Lay+	0	23	20	20 (11.1 FTE)	29 (16.85 FTE)	24 (13.94 FTE)
Total	14	64	82	81 (45.35 FTE)	92 (58.40 FTE)	89 (55.94 FTE)

Notes:

(+) From "Listing of Pastoral Charges"

(<sup>^</sup>) Vacant positions: this definition is based on Placement Committee Minutes and is subject to determining whether any "supply" is longer term or shorter term i.e. excludes medium – longer term supply from definition of being "vacant"; (Listing of Pastoral Charges August 2020 as a base)

(<sup>^^</sup>) There exist more P/T positions than P/T people (19 ordained +3 lay P/T people in more than 1 position)

NB as a reflection of changes to the governance structure of the SA Synod over the last couple of years, with re-establishing multi-Presbyteries, there are 9 people in placements that also have part-time Presbytery positions – hence a number of "full-time" Ministry people in congregations have become "part-time" to accommodate their respective Presbytery position.