

## Record of Service – Rev Dr Trevor Whitney



I migrated to Australia from England, with my family, at the age of three, in 1959. Whilst my childhood wasn't particularly religious I was christened / baptized in England, and at the age of 16, confirmed at the St Matthew's Anglican Church, Marryatville, in Adelaide.

I began my working life as a primary school teacher at Tea Tree Gully in the late 70s. Out of a desire to discern a longer-term vocational direction, I moved on from teaching and discerned a call to the Ministry of the Word in the United Church SA, whilst working as a part-time youth worker at the Dulwich-Rose Park United Parish. I trained for the ministry at Parkin-Wesley Theological College, Wayville, from 1982-86. It was during this time that I met and married Lyn.

I was ordained in December 1986, immediately prior to moving with Lyn, and our first child Lauren, to my first placement at Port Augusta. We were there from 1987-90. Our second child, Joel, arrived during our final year there. The first year there was spent working in a team relationship with Rev John Watt. One of the highlights of my time there was being keenly involved in the initiation and development of a community clothing and bookshop on the site of the then Willsden United Church. At a community level I became pastorally involved at aged care and nursing home facilities. I also built insightful friendships with members of the local indigenous community. At a presbytery level I coordinated social justice activities.

We moved to my second placement at Gawler in 1991 and remained there till 2000. During this time I was responsible for the Tod St congregation in the centre of town. Much of the time was spent in team ministry with colleagues Revs Nellie van Dyk and Richard Carter where we developed a strong emphasis on community ministry, such as UCare which was significantly Richard's initiative. I found this community ministry focus afforded me a strong affirmation of the importance of the church embodying the incarnate Christ who is there for those who live at the margins of societies, as well as the institutional church's life. Another enriching experience was the opportunity to work on various ecumenical roles. This included a longstanding Christian education role at Roseworthy PS, as well as some early committee work with a Christian bookshop developed through UCare, established in the centre of Gawler. Pastoral ministry in the town's various aged care and nursing home facilities, as well as at the town's hospital, were also a feature. At a presbytery level I participated for several years on the Pastoral Relations Committee.

At a Synod level, in the 1990s I served a term on the Synod Selection Committee, followed by terms on the Synod Sexual Complaints Committee in the early 2000's, along with a term as a representative on International Mission's Korean working group.

It was also in 1997 that I chose to undertake a seven month church / clergy swap with a United Reform church congregation in Blacon, Chester, north-west England. While I undertook full pastoral responsibility for this congregation, my family and I settled into life in this working class community. There was a strong emphasis in the congregation on pastoral support and ecumenical cooperation. It was a most enriching time in the country of my birth.

Out of a desire to develop a more deeply focused pastoral ministry with marginalized people at the fringe of, or beyond, the reach of the institutional church, I was deeply grateful to UnitingCare for being appointed to the new Synod role of Disabilities Ministry Chaplain in 2001. The main areas of ministry involved:

- Institutional Ministry – including pastoral care, worship, advocacy and teaching at Minda and Highgate Park, both institutions for people with disabilities.
- Resourcing – developing resources, leading disability workshops, and publishing a regular disability newsletter for distribution to UCA, SA congregations, and beyond.
- Ecumenical Ministry – particularly various ecumenical resourcing activities organised through the South Australian Council of Churches Disability Advisory Committee; and the opportunity to develop a faith-based L'Arche Adelaide community, where community homes are developed between people with and without intellectual disability, living together in a mutuality of relationship.

I've found the opportunity to exercise a pastoral role alongside people with disability an immensely nurturing experience which has challenged previously held values and theological suppositions. Faith has become more deeply human and incarnational, and God has become more unequivocally a figure of immeasurably inclusive love. Amen.

Whilst the last 20 years exercising a disability ministry, concluding mid-2021, has been deeply rewarding, it became immensely busy and congested when I chose, in 2004, to undertake eight years of part-time PhD study (what was I thinking?), which involved qualitative research focusing on the development of liberating models of pastoral relationship with people with intellectual disability who live in institutions for people with disability. With this rewarding study successfully completed in 2012, whilst still exercising a part-time disability role, I undertook four years of part-time pastoral teaching at the Uniting College of Leadership & Theology where I was able to focus on teaching Chaplaincy and Pastoral Care. This rewarding experience enabled me to revisit the teaching role which is where I commenced my working life. A pleasing sense of symmetry!

I concluded my ministry in the UCA with four years of part-time aged care chaplaincy at Resthaven, Craigmore (2018-21), where it proved instructive to exercise a pastoral role amidst the depths of the emerging Covid pandemic.

Thanks to God and God's church for an immensely challenging but nurturing and rewarding journey.

Thanks to family and friends for tolerance, love and alternative life perspectives. 😊