

# Synod '24



## Record of Service – Rev Peter Sorensen

“I will make you fishers of men,” the children sang when I was eighteen months old, sitting in a stroller in my parents’ Sunday School class.

Mum and Dad dedicated me to the Lord from birth, but that moment is my first remembered awareness of God and first remembered experience of God’s calling. It became an underlying melody of life, overlaid with harmonies of childhood faith and mature commitment in youth, when I received Jesus the Messiah as my Saviour and Lord. It became a conversation repeated over years with Mum and Dad, the moment and music literally a song stuck in my head on the road-trip of Christian discipleship, ministry and mission.

The cross-road was God’s calling to the Uniting Church and then Ministry of the Word from 1992. An irresistible inner conviction from God confirmed by experience, reflection and various people, this calling was affirmed by the Church through Selection Panel in 2010, Presbytery-Synod in 2015 and Placements Committee in 2017, with ordination on 17 September that year in Wirrabara.

In the intervening years, I studied scripture, read widely and practised ministry wherever God opened doors inside and outside of the Uniting Church, while I reluctantly completed secular degrees to work where God was present, but not calling, in order to live.

Inside the Uniting Church, I worked part-time as a Project Officer: Research with the SA Synod Youth Ministry Unit in 1999, congregational youth worker with Salisbury Uniting Church in 2000, Wakefield Presbytery Youth Support Worker in 2003-2006, and pastor with Clare Uniting Church in 2014-2015, then the Flinders Congregations in 2016-2018.

But I also served voluntarily in congregational ministries as a musician, worship leader and preacher, as well as with children and youth; as an itinerant preacher in the Adelaide Metropolitan Area and on the Yorke Peninsula; and in chaplaincy, leadership and security for Uniting Church events including KCO, Kairos, Country Kairos, and NCYCs in 1995, 1999 and 2005. Continuing my family’s walk with first peoples since South Australia’s colonisation and my parents’ relationships with Ngarrindjeri particularly since an Easter camp at Raukkan in 1958, my parents and I were invited to work with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress to develop ministry with children and youth within the Kalparrin Community in Murray Bridge in 2006- 2011.

Outside the Uniting Church, I worked as a Mission Australia researcher in 1999, Centacare social worker in 1999-2000, school Pastoral Support Worker in 2008, and teacher and librarian for term

contracts in 2006-2010. But I also served voluntarily with Christian and community groups, in roles such as trainer with at-risk youth and young offenders at Wombat's Yoobelong Farm Youth Training Project in 1992, as a Tea Tree Gully Uniting Church representative on the Tea Tree Gully Youth Services Network in 1992-1994, coordinator's assistant and team member for Festival SA with Franklin Graham in 1997- 1998, and as a mission team member, pastor and co-director with Scripture Union in 1992-2005.

Life has been a patchwork quilt – panels of people and stories forming the whole, some panels coloured brighter in memory and meaning. Lay Preacher family members planting, building and growing churches. Grandparents loving neighbours with everything they had. Parents showing me Jesus in Sunday School and life. “Spiritual Grandfathers”, Colin and Harold with hearts for Jewish people. Love, belonging and contribution in the Long Riders Christian Motorcycle Club and Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, especially within the Ngarrindjeri nation and Kalparrin community. God's big picture Church lived through Scripture Union, larger than denominations yet partnering with local congregations, where every member has place, purpose, contribution and value in sharing the Gospel of Christ. Among the many, one panel still holds my mind's eye...

*I poke my head through the doorway, asking the man, “Is this the Festival office?” In quick spiritual discernment he says immediately, “Yes. We'll use you.” And with that, I become assistant to David Godby, Festival SA with Franklin Graham Coordinator....*

*Behind-the-scenes work done momentarily, I watch and pray from Football Park's edge as people pour from emptying stands to flood Festival SA's central stage, like Revelation's “great multitude” crying “Salvation belongs to our God.”*

Life has been a patchwork quilt, but the binding thread is God's call to be a “fisher of men.”

**Rev Peter Sorensen**

14 July 2024



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia