



The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

# New Times

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THE VOICE OF THE  
UNITING CHURCH IN SA  
**FREE**



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### Cover details:

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### Editor:

Bridget Ransome

Advertising: Engagement Team

Design: Alex Gatley / Azi Parvandar

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### For editorial enquiries:

Phone: (08) 8236 4249

Email: engagement@sa.uca.org.au

Mail: The Editor, New Times

GPO Box 2145

Adelaide SA 5001

### For advertising bookings:

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The Uniting Church in Australia  
Synod of South Australia

Synod of South Australia  
Level 2, 212 Pirie St, Adelaide  
Phone: (08) 8236 4200  
Fax: (08) 8236 4201  
Country callers: 1300 766 956



sa.uca.org.au

# From the Editor

I love this time of the year – when the landscape starts to change, and we are presented with nature's array of colours. This is brought home more to me as I live in the Adelaide Hills and I can see the start of a profusion of Autumn shades, and drifting leaves (albeit the days are becoming a bit shorter and there is a definite chill in the air!).

Autumn for the ancient Celts was the midpoint between the Autumn Equinox and Winter Solstice, the end of one cycle and the beginning of another – a new one.

I find it a time to reflect on and to celebrate what the previous year's cycle has brought. Being a descendent of Celtic Irish lineage, I have always embraced the connection to the seasons' cycles, and in particular Autumn.

I remember whilst studying poetry at university I even wrote a poem at that time called 'Autumn will come.' It is a time of creativity for me, and for celebrating days lived, and for living fully in the time we still have.

This theme appears to have also emerged in this 'Autumn' edition of New Times. The many anniversaries occurring at this time, and as the Moderator has indicated, yes, it is important to acknowledge the milestone and to celebrate it, but to know that there is more to come. Rosemary Dewerse's article also resonates as she speaks of creation being 'God's oldest voice in this land, speaking about the spiritual realm and how to live in right relationship with one another and our environment.'

I hope you too will enjoy this time of year, and this issue of New Times.

**Bridget Ransome**

Executive Officer Engagement

# Message from the Moderator



As the Moderator I have been invited, in the last 10 months, to quite a few anniversary events.

Late last year I joined with the Henley Fulham congregations for the 100 years of the building/140 years of the congregation anniversary of the Temple Church. I have also recently participated in the 75th anniversary of Nunyara and look forward to the 160th anniversary of the Brighton congregation.

At the end of May, Rev Philip Gardner (General Secretary) will be preaching at the 180th celebrations in the Strathalbyn Congregation. There are two other significant anniversaries to be celebrated prior to the meeting of our National Assembly in July, being the 15th anniversary of the Preamble of our Constitution and the 30th anniversary of the Covenant between the Uniting Church and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress.

“whilst we are giving thanks for the past, we are challenged to keep imagining a future as we re-commit ourselves to the work to which God has called.

With each of these anniversaries, there is significant attention given to what has happened in the journey thus far. These are great occasions to honour the work and ministry of our forebears and celebrate the current faithful witness of individuals and local communities. These are also opportunities to acknowledge and give thanks to God for inspiration, guidance, and provision in so many ways.

An anniversary is a celebratory moment; however, it is not the end of the story. It marks a point in time that, whilst we are giving thanks for the past, we are challenged to keep imagining a future as we re-commit ourselves to the work to which God has called.

At the same time, this may also be a time for confession and acknowledgement of where we have not lived out God's call to exercise and grow our ministries of justice and reconciliation. Perhaps we might take time to reflect on what we have achieved whilst being mindful of the road that still lies ahead.

For each community celebrating an anniversary, I pray God's Joy-filled blessings. At the same time, I pray for a renewed commitment to God's purposes, in which individuals and communities experience love and acceptance in the reconciling ministry of the Risen Jesus Christ, the cornerstone of our faith.

Blessings,

**Peter Morel**  
Moderator

# Five marks of Mission

Care for country

Transforming social structures

Tending in acts of mercy

Maturing faith formation

Sharing of faith

## From the General Secretary

Rev Philip Gardner

Last year the Mission and Leadership Development Board commissioned a review of the mission resourcing needs of the Synod of SA. This consultation was led by Steve, Lynne and Kayli Taylor from New Zealand, who you may remember from their ministry here at the College. The rather long report was summarised and made available late last year.

In the report Steve talked about the 'Five Marks of Mission', a model initially developed in the Anglican Communion but which has gained wider acceptance among other traditions.

The marks usually start with proclamation of the gospel. When the five marks are shortened for alliterative purposes, this then ends up being 'tell' which may not reflect the holistic model that the five marks is seeking to share. Steve shared a version of the five marks changing the language slightly to reflect the *Basis of Union*, but he also reversed the order so that proclamation comes last. Thus, the list now reads this way:

- Care for country that walks with First Peoples and treasures land and water
- Transforming of social structures, including the church as an organisation
- Tending in acts of mercy
- Maturing faith formation
- Sharing of faith in culturally appropriate and creative ways.<sup>1</sup>

This reversal makes clear that two of the key issues for Australian Christians seeking to follow the way of Jesus is creation care and reconciliation with First Peoples. It still assumes the place of proclamation, of sharing the good news but it comes as a result of the interest of others rather than something that is imposed upon them. It reflects well 1 Peter 3:15, 'Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.' (NIV)

The way that the five marks of mission have been framed here are an invitation to us to live as followers of Jesus, who by their commitment to walk alongside people who are vulnerable, doing so gently and compassionately serving our neighbours and living out the peace and reconciliation Jesus won for us on the cross. By doing so we hope to provoke interest in the 'hope that is in us.' We 'surprise the world' by our practices and the quality of our lives as Michael Frost wrote about.<sup>2</sup>

I commend the five marks of mission to you as an aid to reflect on your mission as a community and as an individual follower of Jesus. Especially helpful, I think in the way it has been framed for us in the report.

### References

Steve Taylor, Kayli Taylor and Lynne Taylor, 'Review of Missional Needs and Opportunities: In the Uniting Church Australia – South Australia' (AngelWings Ltd; 2023) p. 9.

Michael Frost, 'Surprise the World: The Five Habits of Missional People' (NavPress: 2015).

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# Disabled and Anointed Jesus

By Rev Peter McDonald

What are congregations to make of the way our society is changing its understanding of disability? What may the church learn from the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disabilities? Where might a theological conversation about the Disabled and Anointed Jesus take us?

The recent Commissioning Service of Rev Prof Bart Bruehler at Westbourne Park Uniting Church on 19th March 2024 included a panel discussion as part of the response to Bart's address.

Hosted by Rev Peter McDonald, panel members Anna Wilson, Bruce Ind and Mark Waters joined with Bart to explore the intersection of disability and ministry.

The panel discussed the power of inclusive language, the barriers and opportunities which confront people with disabilities. Seeing beyond steps and ramps to the many more access barriers that we are yet to work on.

The panel invited church leaders to work at hearing from the kaleidoscope of ideas and experiences of our members. Bart invited us to be pastorally attentive to the needs of our community members. We have particular ways of doing things or patterns that we are accustomed to that are maybe easy for most. And then for others, they don't fit into those patterns very well or they are not accommodated by that mode of doing things. And that takes both some extra attentiveness to speak to someone, hear them and to be able to adapt, which can be challenging if it's unfamiliar to us. But the attentiveness is first ...

Rev Peter McDonald, Mark Waters, Rev Prof Bart Bruehler, Anna Wilson, Bruce Ind

The panel had no doubt that the church had in the past sought to improve participation for all our members, but that work is not yet finished.

Some of our churches are very word, language and hearing focused. Where someone with a cognitive disability will be more likely to connect with symbol, music, colour or relationships. Working out what works for all our people is an important part of our leadership in the community.

Bruce Ind concluded by reminding us that the church does a pretty good job most of the time but we need to stay attentive to those in the room and also those who we may not see because they find our worship approach too challenging or overwhelming.

Be aware of your congregation and who is in the room. Being aware of our own people and accommodating visitors as important, is critical.

The Q&A panel session is available to view on the Synod website at this link: <https://sa.uca.org.au/synod-disability-taskforce/>

Rev Prof Bart Bruehler's sermon delivered at the Commissioning Service is also available to view at this link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h7vrKdEnHcl>

Rev Bruehler's book, 'Holding Hands with Pascal: Following Christ with a Special Needs Child,' is available at this link: <https://www.amazon.com.au/Holding-Hands-Pascal-Following-Special/dp/1625641702>

# Shout for Joy

By Rev Lynne Aird

Shout for Joy is a friendly and welcoming monthly worship service for people living with intellectual disabilities, their family, friends and support workers. It has joy, worship, prayer and some chaos! One never knows quite what will happen on any given night.

After faithfully hosting this service for 30 years, Brooklyn Park Church of Christ approached us about continuing this ministry. We attended a few services at Brooklyn Park, sought Church Council approval, formed a team, designed a logo, networked, and wrote Shout for Joy songs.

In March 2022 we held our first Shout for Joy at Adelaide West. We planned the service, set up and held our breath to see if anyone would come. And come they did! We had a few quiet nights at the beginning, but this service continues to grow and provides an important safe spiritual place for people living with intellectual disabilities. This is their service.

We have lively singing, prayer, a think spot, laughter and fun. During the singing, several microphones are available for anyone to help lead. There are instruments and twirl ribbons for all. An open prayer time with a roving microphone is a special time. A prayer board has been developed so all can pray.

Adding a new service in a church can be a challenge – finding a team, planning and preparing. But this service has been a joy – an important ministry that has just flowed with enthusiasm, prayer and ideas.

We have a highly competent and enthusiastic team that keeps showing up, including some working or studying in disability and a



“... this service continues to grow and provides an important safe spiritual place for people living with intellectual disabilities. This is their service.”

few from Brooklyn Park. All have a passion to make a difference in the lives of those who are often overlooked in society.

In 2023, we held a *Disco & Hat Party* on a Saturday night – with hats, a DJ, disco ball and glow sticks, it was fun for all, including the support workers and the team.

Sometimes it is easy to leave ministries for other organisations and their expertise. In congregational life, mission and ministry take many forms and following the call of God is participating in God’s mission for all people. Shout for Joy is that, it has a theology of inclusion, worship and joy, is an expression of discipleship, and simply turning up to see what God is up to.

*Shout for Joy services are held every second Tuesday of the month at Adelaide West Uniting Church, Brooklyn Park.*



# Rev Geoff Hurst inducted to St Andrew's UC Glenelg

Rev Geoff Hurst was warmly welcomed by the St Andrew's by the Sea Uniting Church congregation on a sunny Sunday afternoon on 3rd March.

Among the congregation at the Induction Service for a new Minister of the Word in Glenelg were parishioners of other Uniting Churches where Geoff had served, and Geoff's sisters who confided they were 'bribed to attend by the offer of cake.' Attendance pleasingly outstripped the numbers of Orders of Service printed!

The service was led by Rev Peter McDonald and the sermon was delivered by Rev Dr Les Underwood. Les spoke about the tension between protecting staff versus serving the community, and the need for balance. In response to his welcome, Geoff shared his 'mixture of feelings.' First is his gratitude to William Parker – for whom 2 stained glass windows in St Andrew's are dedicated – for creating a space for generosity and encouragement to thrive, and to the Glenelg congregation for keeping the faith alive for 176 years. Second is his 'confusion' on meeting a homeless man who had bedded down close to the church doors, and his feelings of not wanting to contribute to dependencies in the cycle of poverty yet also feeling that he hadn't helped in the way of St Paul and Jesus.

Both Les's and Geoff's messages resonated with the congregation, especially that of not holding so tightly to the past that we lose sight of the way forward and to always trust in God.

A special afternoon tea followed, where Geoff amply paid his bribes with a fabulous repast baked by volunteer Helen!

*(L-R) Rev Ian Dow, Rev Peter McDonald, Rev Geoff Hurst, Rev Dr Les Underwood, Kate Spyker, Hamish Probert*



*(L-R) Vivi Boucher, Carole Wiles, Jenny Hurst, Rev Geoff Hurst, Anne Bennett, Rod Boucher*



# Renewed life of the church

By Tim Littleford

What if there was a way to reverse the decline in the Uniting Church in South Australia and bring about a renewed life that used what most (but not all!) congregations or faith communities regardless of size have? Some Christian people and a building.

No I'm not suggesting starting an op shop or a new service, I'm not even suggesting partnering with other churches and migrant faith communities to see new communities worship in those buildings (although that's a great idea).

I'm suggesting starting a Prayer Room. That's it.

You can start a Prayer Room anywhere - an office, an old Sunday school room, a broom closet. It doesn't have to be big, but it needs to be dedicated and set apart for prayer. The gift of those who have gone before us is a plethora of property that exists solely for the mission of God in a community. Chances are your church has space.

But what would setting apart an office or a closet do for your church? It could change everything.

The renewed life of the church is the work of Jesus Christ. Paragraph 4 of the *Basis of Union* says that Christ is the one who 'rules and renews the Church'. Renewal is the work of God and not something we can manufacture with technical solutions like great programs, the right worship style, online church, more staffing, more

'education' or more of the same. We need the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into our communities. Which means we need to contend in prayer.

Jesus says in Luke 11: 9 - 13

'And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!'

**We need the Holy Spirit to breathe new life into our communities. Which means we need to contend in prayer.**

The implication, of course, is that there is no greater gift that God can give than his own presence - and isn't that what we all need more of? Surely there is no church in existence who would say 'we've had quite enough of your presence thanks God'. The Church exists in response to and because of the action of God. But responsibility sits with us to ask, to seek, to knock, to pray - and to pray as a whole church, not just the 'professional Christians.' Why God chooses to collaborate with us in the form of prayer to see the

## A Prayer Room becomes an engine room for Mission – as a Church community begins to intercede and contend in prayer for people to come to faith in Jesus, for the Kingdom of God to break out ...

Kingdom of God break out amongst us is a great mystery or perhaps wisdom above our understanding, but nevertheless, history shows us that to see the Spirit breathe new life into the church, God's people must pray.

So why bother with a prayer room? Can't people pray at home? They sure can: the great renewal in the Hebrides in Scotland was prayed in by an 82 and an 84 year old who's physical health restricted them from attending Sunday Worship.

But can I ask for a moment of honesty ... do we actually pray? Home is filled with distractions of what has to be done and what may never be done, prayer at home depends solely on the desire or healthy habits of the individual – but what if that desire or habit is not in place?

A Prayer Room is an initiative accomplished together, a commitment as a community to contend in prayer for a future for your Church that does not rely on desire or the existence of a habit.

A Prayer Room disciples a community in how to pray. As each person takes a turn in the prayer room, perhaps they leave a Bible passage on the wall, perhaps a word of encouragement, perhaps even a prophetic word. What does that do to the person who comes after them?

A Prayer Room becomes an engine room for Mission – as a Church community begins to intercede and contend in prayer for people to come to faith in Jesus, for the Kingdom of God to break out, for the justice of God to flow to the deep injustices that exists within every community, that, perhaps, is just the beginning of what God might do.

*Where could you start?*

Thank the Lord, someone has already created all the resources you would need. 24/7 Prayer has so many helpful and thought provoking resources on their website at this link:

<https://www.24-7prayer.com/prayer-room/ernational>

You could begin as Outpost Uniting Church in McLaren Vale did recently, holding a one-off 24 hour prayer meeting on a Saturday.

You could begin by asking your church to commit to spending 1 hour a week in the prayer room – at whatever time works for them.

You could decide to cover your church in 24/7 prayer for a whole month – it is more possible than you might think.

The point is not the prayer room, it's just a fantastic vehicle from which to get going. The point is that you start and that we as the Uniting Church need to pray if we are to have new life.

'How much more' Jesus says 'will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him.' Come Holy Spirit. We need you.





**CELEBRATION**  
**140**  
 1884 - 2024  
**ECHUNGA UNITING CHURCH**

**ECHUNGA UNITING CHURCH**  
 Family Sunday Services 9:45am  
 (Online streaming from 10am)

*All Welcome*

**MINISTER**  
 Rev. Matthew Carratt  
 0438 856 167  
 echunga.ucasa.org.au

# Echunga Celebrates 140th Anniversary

**CELEBRATION**  
**140**  
 1884 - 2024  
**ECHUNGA UNITING CHURCH**



On February 24th and 25th Echunga Uniting Church celebrated 140 years since the laying of the foundation stone for the current church building. Over 400 people engaged in a weekend of activities including a historical display, celebration dinner and worship service.

The church building had undergone some recent renovations including a new roof, repair to stonework and update of interior décor. This and neighbouring Wandean Hall were open during the Saturday afternoon with many members of the community passing through to view photos and articles, as well as a spectacular floral display in the chapel.

Saturday evening saw 200 guests gather for a celebration dinner in the Echunga Memorial Institute, complete with birthday cake. Josh Teague MP was in attendance.

The celebration service on Sunday morning was also attended by over 200 people who gathered inside the church and overflow areas, with others connecting via livestream. Guests included Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson and Mr Rod Bunten, previous Minister Rev Lawrie Linggood, and many returned church members.

The service included an overview of church history, a powerful testimony from Steve Schiller, and the hymn *This Stone In Faith O Lord We Lay* which was sung at the laying of the foundation stone on February 26th, 1884. Current Minister Rev Matthew Carratt shared a brief gospel message focussed on the faithfulness of God through changing seasons.

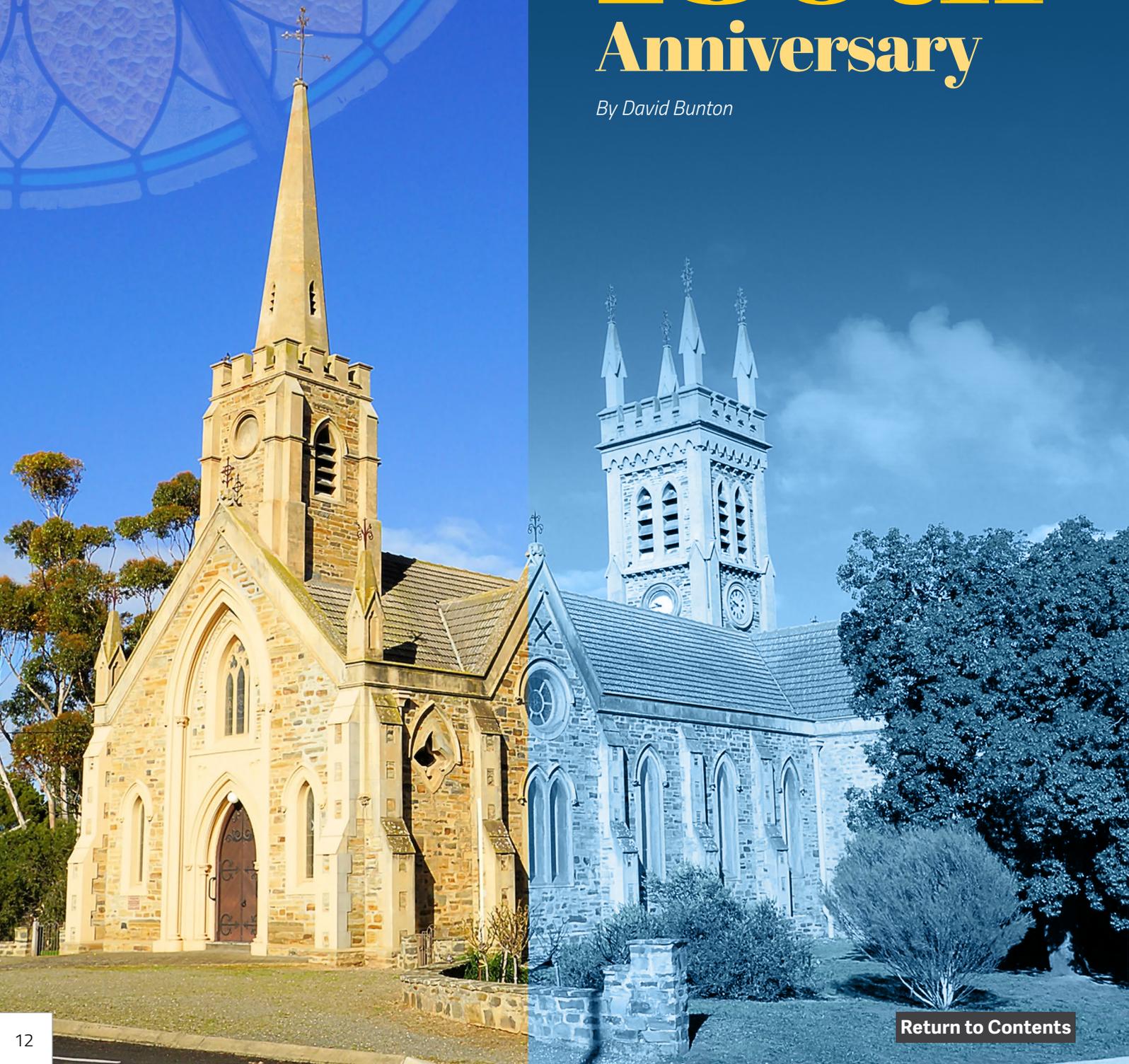
Morning tea and a sausage sizzle lunch were then enjoyed in the church garden before Steve led an opportunity for healing prayer in the church. The whole weekend was a great encouragement to both guests and the regular members who had pooled their energy and creativity together. Through continued support of the local community including providing spaces to connect, Echunga Uniting Church looks forward to a strong and fruitful next season.





# Strathalbyn Congregation's 180th Anniversary

*By David Bunton*



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The congregation of Strathalbyn Uniting Church is celebrating 180 years since the first church on the site in 1844. On Sunday 26th May there will be a worship service with the Governor of South Australia, Her Excellency the Honourable Frances Adamson AC attending and Rev Philip Gardner, Synod General Secretary, preaching. This will be followed by a history display and refreshments.

Donations will go towards the restoration of our St Andrews building (1848), the oldest remaining Presbyterian church building in the state, now Uniting. (The first two in Adelaide were demolished some years after their congregations moved to larger churches.)

When the congregation first heard that full restoration of the building would cost \$1.8 million (in 2020 prices), some reactions were that 'a church is people, not buildings', and that this was beyond us. We decided to take a month to consider our mission in the community, then reconvene. The resulting unanimous view was that we couldn't walk away, that engaging with the community to restore a much-loved landmark (the clock tower and spire are on the town logo) was part of our mission!

The front door of the church had been closed since loose masonry was found at the top of the spire during a structural survey. We raised the money in a month to make it safe, plans and approvals took 9 months, and we were able to reopen for Christmas 2021, and launch a series of fundraising concerts, starting with harpist soprano Emma Horwood, then the Adelaide Baroque Orchestra.

Heritage building costs however have escalated with some quotes tripling. We have so far raised over \$275,000 from donations, bequests, events and grants and have started the works. Our current target is another \$1 million to complete the roof and gutters and hopefully the front spire and masonry. The clock tower will probably cost a similar amount, then the interior of the church.

At the same time, we are determined that this will not hinder our congregational life. We have started setting money aside to employ a minister again, and offerings and numbers at worship have been growing.



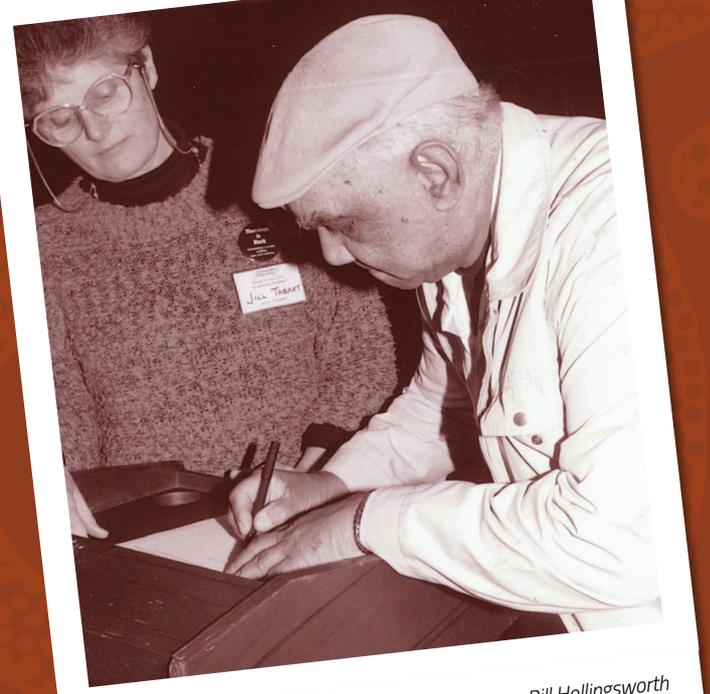


# 30th Anniversary of the Covenant

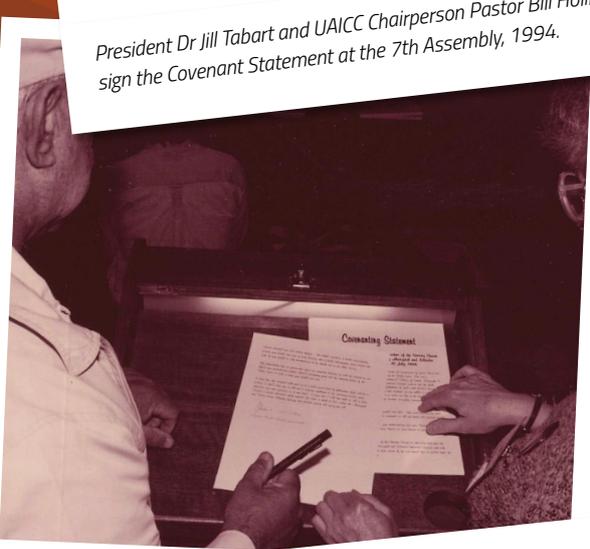
**Chairperson, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander  
Christian Congress Pastor Bill Hollingsworth:**

“We pray that God will guide you together with us in developing a covenant to walk together practically so that the words of your statement may become a tangible expression of His justice and love for all creation. We ask you to remember this covenant by remembering that our land is now also sustaining your people by God's grace.

“Because it is pleasing to God to love one another, and it is our commitment to do so, we invite you on behalf of Congress members to develop a new relationship by entering into the struggle of those issues that presently are the cause of continuing injustice resulting in broken relationships.



President Dr Jill Tabart and UAICC Chairperson Pastor Bill Hollingsworth sign the Covenant Statement at the 7th Assembly, 1994.



“ I apologise on behalf of the Assembly for all those wrongs done knowingly or unknowingly to your people by the Church and seek your forgiveness. I ask you to help us discover ways to make amends.

# 30 Anniversary of Covenant



“ It is our desire to work in solidarity with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress for the advancement of God's kingdom of justice and righteousness in this land...



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President, Uniting Church in Australia,  
Dr Jill Tabart:

Extracts from the Poster extracts from the original  
Covenanting Statement 7th Assembly, 10th July 1994

# 10th Anniversary of the Covenant

I pray that this covenant will unite us  
in a multi-racial bond of fellowship  
which will be a witness to God's love  
for us all and a constant challenge to  
the continuing racism which oppresses  
you and separates us in this land.



# Lessons From Earth

By Dr Rosemary Dewerse

This year, so far, I have done a lot of walking on the weekends. I don't own a car so getting about takes time. Often, I head to the coast and walk kilometres along the shoreline, barefoot, paddling. Where I come from, Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori recognise such a space as 'wheiao', a thin, sacred and liminal space where worlds touch, in this case the sea and the shore. The pre-dawn is another, a space so often when babies are born and elders die – life touching the divine.

I didn't grow up quite so intentional in my walking. The seminal movie of my childhood was Richard Attenborough's 'Gandhi.' My mum took us to see it when I was twelve and it scored a deep underlining in my being of the importance of a commitment to human flourishing, which I've been passionate about ever since. I traumatised my own children at a similar age, but that movie was 'Albatross' by Chris Jordan, an elegy to the beauty of the Albatross and the deep tragedy of plastic in our oceans literally choking the life out of their chicks.

Sitting with, listening to, and learning from Indigenous elders I have come to understand that human flourishing is only possible when the whole earth community flourishes. Because each ecosystem is different, however, flourishing will have a unique local flavour to it. This insight is something the church community I am part of is being renewed by, through an approach called Regenerative Practice. It invites us to listen deeply for patterns in the geology, ecology, Indigenous, neighbourhood and faith stories of our place to discern how we might effectively participate with the Spirit of God in locally resonant ways to support flourishing.<sup>1</sup>

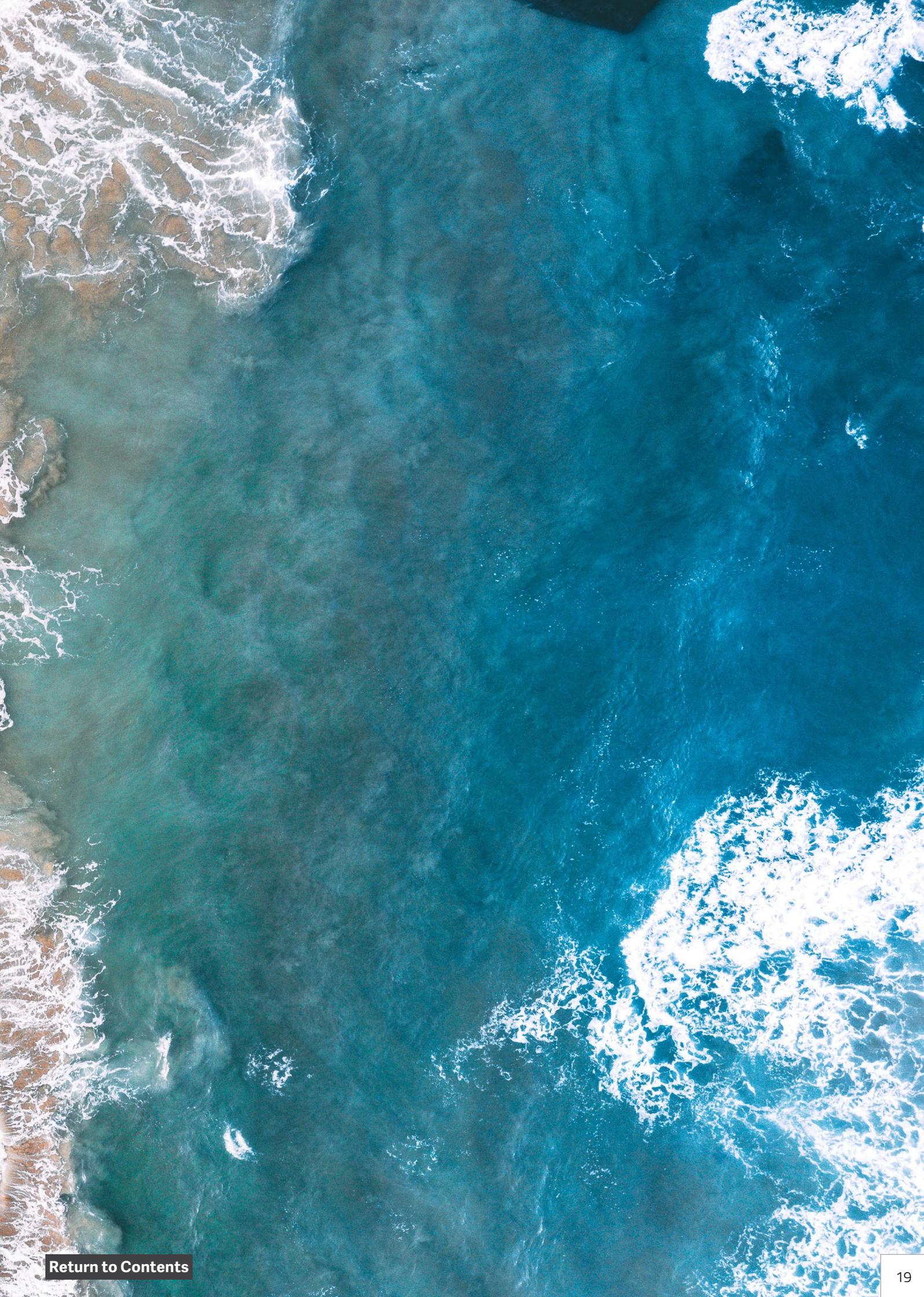
“Sitting with, listening to, and learning from Indigenous elders I have come to understand that human flourishing is only possible when the whole earth community flourishes.”

It can take a lot of practice to get beyond the static we humans create to listen to what Creator through creation is teaching us. First Peoples have learned from these lessons for thousands of years, as the Preamble to our Uniting Church Constitution recognises.

Auntie Denise Champion says that creation is God's oldest voice in this land, speaking about the spiritual realm and how to live in right relationship with one another and our environment. The question is, how well are we listening?

<sup>1</sup> Rosemary Dewerse, Roxanne Haines, Stu McGregor, "Regenerative Development as a Pathway for Church Renewal," *Ecclesial Futures* 4.2 (2023), <https://ecclesialfutures.org/article/view/17944/20304>

Dr Rosemary Dewerse is the Academic Dean and Research Coordinator at Uniting College for Leadership and Theology. She also teaches on the Professional Doctorate for the University of Divinity. She works with Auntie Denise Champion in publishing her wisdom, is grateful for deep conversation with Uncle Ken Sumner, and values connections with UAICC in SA.



# Welcome to Church Online

By Dr Craig Mitchell

Each week of the year, a small team meets in a tiny room at Adelaide West Uniting Church to record *Church Online*, a 35-minute worship service that people can join anywhere, anytime. Rather than being seen as a 'balcony experience' where people are spectators to a church's 'live' worship, *Church Online* is treated as a worshipping community in its own right.

'When COVID lockdown began in early 2022, church needed to continue. We were committed to not having a break. But at that stage, our focus was on people who were already attending Sunday services. Now *Church Online* is a key aspect of mission, a digital church plant. We have people join from Whyalla, Strathalbyn and Broken Hill. They see us as their church,' said Rev Lynne Aird.

In the COVID era, churches across the world have dipped or dived into online ministry and mission. At times, technical issues can become a predominant concern. Questions about purpose, participation and practices of faith are more challenging. Are we speaking to ourselves or others? What does 'community' mean online?

Many decades ago, when the telephone and then the television were first introduced, the first users couldn't believe that the voices or images that they received were real. Anyone for a fake moon landing? In the Internet era, a similar credibility gap exists, but on the side of churches who don't see online participants as having real experiences of church or faith. Speaking to an unknown audience requires a shift in assumptions.



'We recognise that some people know nothing about the Bible. We never say "as you know," says Lynne. 'Any Christian terms are explained as they are used – in songs, prayers and the message. We work on expressing a public theology.'

Research prior to COVID was that online relationships often supplement face-to-face meetings - either building upon them or leading to them. A key question is how to offer *hybrid or blended* discipleship pathways that allow for digital and face-to-face options. This requires intentionality about creating a faith-forming community of disciples that extends beyond the worship service into daily relationships and habits.

The Centre for Music, Liturgy and the Arts (CMLA) is hosting a series of conversations about being a digital church, including site visits and an online learning community to explore key issues. Lynne Aird is keen to be part of this conversation. The first gathering is on Thursday 16th May, 7.30-9.00pm. For information visit [cmla.org.au](http://cmla.org.au).

The Adelaide West UC Youtube Channel is located at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCRQw1BcAoYORl002WK34UNw>



# A Multi-Generational Gathering

On Sunday 3rd of March 2024, the community of Seeds Uniting Church prayerfully came together for a morning service held at St John's Grammar School (Secondary Campus) in Belair for a time of worship and fellowship, followed by a sausage sizzle lunch.

This service combined their Aberfoyle Park and Kurralta Park congregations, along with online viewers, youth and young adults, young families and seniors, to make up a multi-generational and diverse community of worshippers.

They spent the morning together in shared worship and fellowship, celebrating all that God is doing and continues to do within their church family and local communities.

With many people congregating together in one space, one location and at one time, it gave them a space to connect with those in the wider church they often don't see, and to celebrate God's goodness as a church in a unified way.

All in attendance were encouraged by the large scale of corporate worship and the feeling of togetherness on a broader scale than what they are used to on a regular Sunday morning or meeting together. The presence of local MP Erin Thompson also added to the significance of the occasion.

Through this time together, the Seeds community were able to incorporate the induction of Rev Naomi Duke into her role of Associate Pastor at Seeds Uniting Church (Aberfoyle Park), a moment that was marked with gratitude and excitement, welcoming Naomi in a unique and significant way. Seeds would like to say thank you to Rev Scott Button for facilitating this induction.

This event served as a powerful reminder to all of the strength found in a multi-generational community founded on faith and fellowship, as the Seeds community seeks to continue 'bringing people to Jesus and being transformed into His passionate disciples.'





# The Rise of Girl's Participation in SA Church Basketball

There has certainly been a noticeable shift on Saturday afternoons in the South Australian Church Basketball Association (SACBA) community competition Junior Grades – and it's becoming more apparent. More girls than they've seen before wanting to play basketball over the summer.

Emmaus Christian College has had a natural growth in this area according to Sports Co-Curricular Coordinator Jason Roberts – a known face around the South Australian Christian Schools Association competitions (SACSA).

Emmaus has been in the SACBA competition for a few years originally joining to continue what had been happening in SACSA in a weekly domestic program.

'Emmaus joined the SACBA Competition to give our young people an opportunity to compete in a domestic program that has the additional benefit of expectations on behaviours and sportsmanship,' said Jason.

'Students have developed a strong foundation through the weekly games. The consistent and repetitive activities week on week have allowed them to improve and enjoy their games at a faster rate.'

The growth of the girl's teams particularly at Emmaus has been apparent for all to see inspiring girls to pick up basketball – it has opened the door for future growth of the girl's and women's teams in the competition at a community grassroots level.

'Having the all-girls teams has been fantastic and has really grown a community of girls who are now giving so many more sports a go. We equally encourage all sports here at Emmaus, but it is exciting to see the freedom that the girls have found in basketball, to attack and defend without restrictions.'

Along with the Association, Jason is encouraging those looking to get involved in the exciting next chapter of SACBA as the Association draws its focus to provide better opportunities for female players across its community competition and district pathways with the *SA Church Stars*. Having all-girls competitions has many benefits from not only a participation aspect but also a social and encouragement standpoint.



“Having the all-girls teams has been fantastic and has really grown a community of girls who are now giving so many more sports a go.”

'The biggest benefit that we have found is the community that has been forged among the girls. We have seen that no matter the age group, the girls support and encourage each other as they work towards a common goal to play the best they can - at times this has been a positive observation to many an onlooker.'

SACBA is inviting interested women and girls to come and play for churches, schools, and community groups to participate in a longstanding organisation that values Community, Faith and

Basketball. Commencing in 1950 and continuing today - SA Church Basketball has a rich history and an exciting future ahead playing a role in Basketball South Australia's Female Participation Strategy.

Ways to get involved include introductory basketball programs and camps, the opportunity to become an official and playing juniors or seniors in the SA Church Basketball Community competition. The competition has multiple venue locations across metropolitan Adelaide on Saturday afternoons and Tuesday nights. There is also the opportunity to become a player or coach for SA Church Basketball's district club, the Stars, who participate in the Basketball SA district competition.

SA Church Basketball is about 'more than basketball' and encourages the spirit of community and teamwork. For more information and to get involved, visit [www.sachurchbasketball.com.au](http://www.sachurchbasketball.com.au)





# Helping Hand on the benefits of trauma-aware care

Everyone's life experience is unique. It impacts their needs, expectations, and behaviours as they age. Childhood trauma has an enduring impact.

Helping Hand recognises that people who identify as Forgotten Australians and Care Leavers have significant challenges as they face the possibility of aged care. They represent the 500,000 children who were placed into institutional and out-of-home care in Australia in the last century. Many of them experienced significant physical and emotional trauma and fear the aged care environment for reasons such as aversion to authority, lack of trust, and reinstitutionalisation.

In 2019, the Commonwealth Government funded *The Real Care The Second Time Around Forgotten Australians Project*, which has been developed with Forgotten Australians by Helping Hand, in partnership with Relationships Australia SA and Flinders University.

Since the project's inception, various training and resources relating to trauma have been created. These include an e-learning program which provides an introduction to understanding the impacts of childhood trauma for people now entering aged care, and numerous documents designed to assist Forgotten Australians navigate their future and for aged care providers to support them.

*Glenda and Hariz during filming of the new training program, Sensitive intake conversations in the aged care sector, Engaging with older people from a background of trauma.*

**Helping Hand's training and resources are free and available via the website**

<https://www.helpinghand.org.au/about-us/diversity-inclusion/forgotten-australians/>  
or by calling 1300 653 600.

Helping Hand is also trialling embedding trauma training across a number of aged care sites nationwide through a Community of Practice in the UnitingCare Network. They will develop a toolkit for future implementation at the conclusion of the trials and make this accessible to colleagues across the sector.

Working in partnership with Relationships Australia SA, with advice from those with lived experience of trauma, they have developed additional training that will support people working in aged care to navigate crucial intake conversations – both intentional and spontaneous.

Understanding individual situations and knowing how to respond is an important part of delivering quality aged care. The new Aged Care Act and Strengthened Standards are set to embrace on this person-centred approach.

For instance, the Department of Health and Aged Care has said that the new Aged Care Act will 'put the rights and needs of older people at the centre of the aged care system.' The draft of the Strengthened Standards stipulates that providers must understand and value the older person, including their identity, culture, ability, diversity, beliefs and life experiences and has a focus on trauma-aware and healing-informed care.

# Yet in the Dark Streets Shining

## A Palestinian Story of Hope and Resilience in Bethlehem

Bishara Awad and Mercy Aiken

### Book Review

By Avril Hannah-Jones

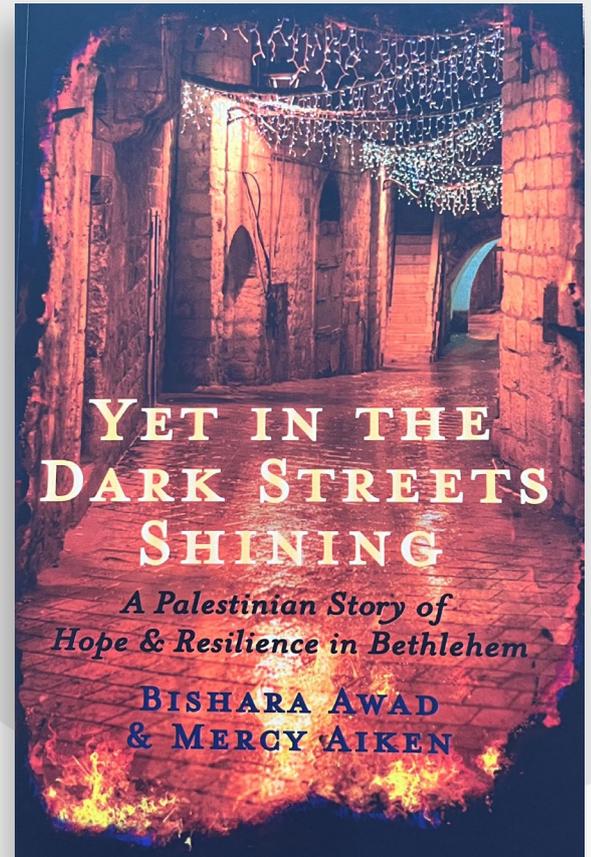
This story of the family of Elias Awad, descended from Maronite Christians, and his wife Huda Kuttab, born into a Greek Orthodox family but supported by evangelical Protestant missionaries after the death of her father, gives human faces to Palestinian statistics.

Bishara Awad, founder of the Bethlehem Bible College, was born on the day World War II began. He was eight when an Israeli sniper shot his father during the violence that Jewish Israelis call the War of Independence and Palestinians call the Nakba, the Catastrophe. After Elias' death the Awad family fled their home in West Jerusalem, assuming that it was only for a little time. Seventy-six years later they are still unable to return.

Parts of this story are profoundly hard to read while watching the destruction of Gaza. Bishara has a lyrical description of falling in love with his wife Salwa there, in a rich agricultural land filled with groves of citrus and other fruit trees, where flowers climbed on buildings and jasmine scented the air.

Since his saintly mother forgave her husband's killers, Bishara pretended to do the same. 'Wanting to be a good Christian, I would spend the first half of my life unconscious of my anger, putting a smile on my face that would hide my wound even from myself.'

It took years for Bishara to recognise his own rage, his hatred of Israelis, and his deep sorrow that the world's Christians ignored the oppression of Palestinians. Only after acknowledging the truth of



his trauma was Bishara able to experience the compassion of Christ for both Palestinians and Jewish Israelis. Daily Bishara now chooses to forgive, to look into the darkness with hope and love, desiring God's best for Palestinians and Israelis alike.

Bishara writes that there are three issues that make it difficult for western Christians to listen to Palestinians: guilt over Christian antisemitism; belief in Israel as an ally of the West; and, most potently, Christian Zionism, the belief that the State of Israel is the fulfillment of prophecy and a harbinger of the eschaton. Of the three, it is probably the first that keeps members of the Uniting Church silent on the question of Palestine. Bishara's story makes it clear that western Christians must not assuage our own guilt at the expense of Palestinians.

Parts of this story are profoundly hard to read while watching the destruction of Gaza. Bishara has a lyrical description of falling in love with his wife Salwa there, in a rich agricultural land filled with groves of citrus and other fruit trees, where flowers climbed on buildings and jasmine scented the air. Bishara's description of his family's situation during the Nakba mirrors the images we now see of Gazans desperately seeking safety in Rafah. Most members of the Awad family now live overseas; will this happen to today's internally displaced Gazans?

Bishara ends his book with a plea to Christians around the world to help Palestinians work for justice, to help end the suffering of both Palestinian and Israeli people. Will we have the courage to do so?



# Restoring faith in humanity in Manna Hill

Wayne and his parents Betty and Monty have been living in one of Australia's smallest towns, Manna Hill, once a railway town and now with a total population of only six.

Living so remotely for so long, the family had been self-sufficient, but their lives changed when Monty became ill. Betty became his full-time carer, and Wayne had to juggle his business and support of his parents.

'I was so overwhelmed. I didn't know where to start to make a dent in all the work. I was so disappointed in myself that I couldn't give my parents the support they needed on my own,' said Wayne.

Frontier Services Bush Chaplain Sunny, based in the Parkin-Sturt area, had visited Betty's family a couple of times.

'Once when I arrived, Betty was standing on a rusty ladder to paint the room,' said Sunny. 'She told me of her dreams to build an access ramp for Monty and her plans for the house. I knew, even if she could find workers to come to Manna Hill, it would be prohibitively expensive.'

Sunny knew they needed the help of Frontier Services. He offered to organise a group of Outback Links volunteers to come to Manna Hill to help. The family was hesitant, feeling that they should be able to push on and do things themselves, but eventually, they came to see things in a new light.

'... [they] genuinely find joy in the experience. In declining their offer, we'd be depriving them of that joy,' said Wayne.

He was right. One volunteer shared, 'From the first day of work, I felt the spirit singing within me. I knew this was where I needed to be.'



Over the course of a week, fifteen volunteers cleaned, put in new floors, painted walls and ceilings, fixed windows, and built a carport. Most importantly, they built an access ramp for Monty. In the evenings, they gathered to have dinner, share stories, and build friendships.

By the end of the week, the house was transformed; the hopelessness and defeat that had haunted Wayne for years was replaced with progress, motivation, and faith in humanity.

'If complete strangers could come out to our remote town just to help improve our lives, what other wonderful things could happen?' said Wayne.

'It was an experience that restored my faith in humanity and made me realise there are some pretty amazing people in the world.'

**Frontier Services supports people living in remote Australia. For more than 110 years, it has provided Aussies living on the land with much needed practical, emotional, and spiritual support. Please donate to Frontier Services today, visit: <https://frontierservices.org/donate/>**



## Celebration of 100 years

### Welland Methodist and Croydon Park Uniting Church

310 Torrens Road, Croydon Park 5008

18th August 2024 at 2.00pm

Moderator Rev Peter Morel will attend this important celebration.

An invitation is extended to the past descendants and family members of the Sunday School and Congregational life.

Afternoon tea will be provided.

For further information please contact:  
Mrs Jean Chinca phone (08) 8445 8117 or  
Mrs Bettie Rundle (08) 8346 3778



*"The work the Outback Links volunteers completed needed doing for two decades. My words fail to explain the emotions of this wonderful experience."*

- Wayne (right) Manna Hill, South Australia



[frontierservices.org/donate](https://frontierservices.org/donate)

Help Bush Chaplains and Outback Links volunteers continue to provide practical, pastoral, and spiritual support to people living in rural and remote Australia.

**Please donate \$20, \$50, or \$100 today.**



[frontierservices.org](https://frontierservices.org) 1300 787 247

## Expression of Interest for the Presbytery of Southern SA Chairperson (POSSA)

Remuneration: 0.4 FTE (2 days per week) three year term from Nov 2025.

We are seeking someone who:

- Can encourage and support the Presbytery in our vision, mission, and values
- Has leadership skills and experience in conflict resolution
- Will oversee the liturgical life of the Presbytery
- Can work independently and collaboratively
- Has a commitment to the polity and ethos of the UCA.

Is there a member of your congregation who fits some of the above and with some support could fulfill the role of the Chair?

The Presbytery of Southern SA Joint Nominating Committee are taking expressions of interest and recommendations, to bring one name forward to the November 2024 AGM. The successful person will be Chairperson elect from November 2024.

Open to all confirmed members of the UCA (Lay and Ordained).

For further information and a position description, please contact:

**Jenny Esots**  
Secretary  
Presbytery of Southern SA  
M 0481 006 696  
E [southern.secretary@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:southern.secretary@sa.uca.org.au)



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388 Montague Road PARA VISTA

Saturday, 20 July 2024

Marion Bowling Club  
262 Sturt Road MARION

Both meetings – 5:30 pm for 6.00 pm start – Cost: \$30

GUEST SPEAKERS:

**Mark Osborne** TRANSLATION SPECIALIST IN ASIA



TOPICS

- Serving in a restricted environment.
- Challenges of a translation project.
- We sow seeds; God gives the harvest.
- God directing the translation pathway.

**Peter Mazumder** GEN. SEC., BIBLE STUDENTS FELLOWSHIP OF BANGLADESH



TOPIC

- Celebrate the completion of four New Testaments in Bangladesh.

For more information or to book your seat go online:



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Why not come with friends, colleagues, or congregation members to begin this important thinking together? Study for credit, out of passion and interest, or as continuing education.

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# Placements News

## Placements finalised as at 15<sup>th</sup> April 2024

Rev Montaz Ali (Associating Evangelical Churches of Wales) to Dernancourt 0.7FTE from 1 August 2024

Rev Richard Telfer to Church of the Trinity UC from 1 July 2024

Travis Turner (MOP) to Clare UC from 1 June 2024

**Advertised Placements:** Please see Positions Vacant on the Synod website for more details.

Professional Standards Officer, 0.5FTE Placements and Safe Church Closing date 27 April 2024 at 5.00pm

## Vacant placements

The following is the list of vacant (or soon to be vacant) approved placements:

### PROFILES AVAILABLE

#### Generate Presbytery

Ceduna UC (0.6)

County Jervois Parish UC

*Cowell UC, Cleve UC, Driver River UC*

Goolwa UC

Naracoorte UC

Seeds UC Generation Pastor (0.8)

Western Eyre Uniting Parish

*Cummins UC, Lock UC, Yeelanna UC*

#### Presbytery of Southern SA

Blackwood UC

Glengowrie UC (0.5)

Seacliff UC from 1 August 2024

South West Fleurieu (0.4-0.5)

## Wimala Presbytery

Kimba UC (0.5)

Morialta UC

Payneham Road UC (0.5)

### PROFILES NOT YET AVAILABLE

#### Generate Presbytery

Echunga UC from July 2024

Flinders (0.6)

*Booloroo Centre UC, Booloroo Whim UC, Melrose UC, Wirrabara UC, Wilmington UC*

Kangaroo Island Linked Congregations from January 2025

Port Augusta UC (0.5)

#### Presbytery of Southern SA

Rosefield UC

Vermont Fijian UC

*For more information about placements, please visit [sa.uca.org.au](http://sa.uca.org.au)*

#### **Deadline for the *New Times* Winter edition 2024:**

Friday, 5th July 2024

ISSN 0726-2612

*New Times* is the voice of Uniting Church in SA. Published bi-monthly, February through November, *New Times* represents the breadth, diversity and vision of Uniting Church members in South Australia. Articles and advertising do not necessarily reflect the views of the *New Times* Editorial team.



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Synod of South Australia