



Viewpoint

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Online at canberraregion.unitingchurch.org.au - Viewpoint replaces our former magazine, Perspective



VIEW from the Chair

by John Williams and Vanessa Crimmins
Canberra Region Presbytery Co-chairs

It has been a rich privilege this year to visit congregations stretched across Country, Coast and Capital where we found moments of deep fellowship and encouragement and witnessed grounds for much hope.

We saw congregations and faith communities large and very small living out their discipleship as followers of Jesus and people of the way. This means we saw the wonderful, the joyful but also the painful and the distressing. Our congregations are authentic in their journey.

Consequently while we have engaged with lament, distressing conflict and disappointments these hard issues have been faced and overcome. We see new ways and new futures planned, nurtured and now bearing new fruit.

Reason to rejoice

We rejoice as we celebrate the ordination of **Keith Robinson** and anticipate that of **Daniel Mossfield** in December. We reflect on many wonderful occasions as Ministers and Deacons are commissioned and inducted, as new placements are filled and lay preachers recognised in our congregations. This year saw many new ministry agents in placement and long term supply.

Bushfire Chaplaincy We rejoice in supply ministries bringing healing, encouragement and renewal. A bushfire chaplaincy was commissioned in partnership with our Anglican communities in Tathra and congregations in Cooma, Bega and Crookwell have been resourced to offer drought relief into their communities.

With help from Uniting we see Monty's consolidate in Narooma, breakfast programs in City Uniting, Cooma and Goulburn strengthened and a new Pantry and Laundry/Bathrooms being established and refurbished in Eden and Batemans Bay, all to foster more effective engagement and service.

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Waterholes

Often small groups are doing great stuff, perhaps becoming like waterholes which nourish and sustain us, calling to life those who are weak and weary, providing a place of nurture and refreshment in hope and joy, and to those with the strength and knowledge, a place which draws us together into authentic community.

Vigils and prayer support We have gathered as congregations for vigils, walked together to Parliament House to signal support for getting #KidsOffNauru and contributed to a national day of prayers for our Parliament.

Community engagement There is so much more in our experiences which we could highlight, but in all we see evidence that as a Pilgrim people we are on the journey engaging with communities in a diversity of ways and seeking to be safe places, perhaps waterholes, that nurture and refresh as well as a places for transformative, reconciling fellowships.

Being the body of Christ

We give thanks for the faithfulness, commitment and courage of our lay and ordained leadership as we face up to the challenges of finding effective ways to be the body of Christ in our secular society. We must continually seek ways to be in our communities and find mission that brings transformation to both the individual and community.

The Uniting Church is not a comfortable pew. It is a place of change and challenge as it lives out our call to be a welcoming, inclusive and culturally diverse community of faith. How do we articulate and together build a practice and culture that fosters living our call to love one another genuinely across our diversity?

The Pathways gatherings across Presbytery taught us that most congregations as well as our leadership struggle with language to describe who we are and how we tell our UCA story as disciples of Jesus the Christ into secular society. It's a totally new era. Old frameworks have gone.

Ministers' Retreat At our ministers' Galong retreat in October, we pondered and examined how we find language and action so as to be able, as Paul was, to speak our truth to the "Greeks" in our societal setting.



Left: [Community Pantry](#) - a "waterhole" built by Eden congregation.

WATERHOLES It was at the commissioning of Co-Chairs at Parramatta Nepean Presbytery in August 2018 that John Williams heard Katelyn Stevenson make reference

in her sermon to a story about waterholes shared by Synod Moderator, Rev Simon Hansford. Simon had contrasted the construction of fences and walls in the country to keep animals safe and cared for, with the construction of waterholes, saying, "*When life and water are nearby, the animals are never tempted to stray too far for it is life which calls them back.*"

Facing hard issues

In our last 12 months we have seen disciples in congregations find ways to address the hard issues they faced.

Build trusted relationships It began with building trusted relationships, praying and reflecting together, sharing spirituality, worship, sacraments, fellowship and food. Our observation is that out of this grew discernment, wisdom and actions so that from little things big things started to grow.

Is not this similar to what our early disciples did to build the church as described in [Acts Chapter 2](#)?

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common.

They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved."

Let God bless what we have. It seems clear that teaching and conduct, faith and practice, believing and doing are bound together. So as we give focus to the fundamentals, as did the early church, we also suggest we first look at what we have, let God bless it...and know it will be more than sufficient for our need.

Jesus will appear Secondly when things are uncertain and when we feel afraid...overwhelmed and feel alone... know from the story in [John 6](#) that Jesus will appear...just as he did to the disciples out in their boat in the dark and in a storm...you can expect the same...signals and signs that behold He is with you... meeting you in Galilee as he promised.

John and Vanessa, Presbytery Co-Chairs

A farewell letter from Vanessa



Dear Friends

This is a brief note to express my thanks and share a couple of reflections after four years with the Presbytery.

I want to pay tribute to John Williams who took on the role of CoChair. John has worked extremely hard with a dedication and passion few possess. I am grateful for his thoughtful support and keeping me in the loop; it is a pleasure to work with him.

His work at Bega and Tathra in particular has blessed many I know. We are very fortunate he could take up the work in the Secretariat so quickly and also travel so widely to meet with you wherever possible. My thanks and gratitude to Carolyn, Janise, Kevin, Geoff and Doug Taylor.

To all those committed people who serve this church in a voluntary capacity as office bearers on councils in congregations of all sizes, Presbytery committees, Synod boards and committees or who attend Assembly or Synod meetings, I thank you on behalf of all the people in this Canberra Region Presbytery for your tireless work and admirable perseverance. We would not function without you.

Prayer

I thank with all my heart everyone who has held me in their prayers over the past two years. During difficult times, your prayers have lifted me like a tsunami from very deep waters to put me safely back on shore.

Please do not underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer is not a hope thrown up to God but an intentional conversation of faith and trust and it changes things. Age, ethnicity, gender, strength of faith, background or experience matter not at all. Prayer bears fruit and the most delicious fruit is the relationship with God that grows through conversation and trust.

Which brings me to my most happy place.

Joy

When overwhelmed, I asked God for joy. I asked with expectation.

There would be times when it would bubble up within, sometimes actually fizz in my spirit, and no matter what was going on I experienced untrammelled joy which would bring a smile to my face and a total change of disposition. Joy can override one's most negative feelings or mindset. Joy is a simple uncomplicated emotion and sometimes that is all we need.

Social Justice

I want to pay tribute to the social justice work of our church at Assembly, Synod and Presbytery levels, particularly on the matter of asylum seekers and the call for a Treaty.

I am very grateful to have represented the Uniting Church at ecumenical gatherings or Parliamentary events because we know who we are and what we stand for and are seen by other denominations as lacking fear. What a tribute.

Our active faith-filled Social Justice Group, convened by Evan Mann, invites everyone to participate and bring forth issues for consideration. The commitment to justice for the First Peoples and the plight of asylum seekers remains.

My personal belief that The Assembly should move from Sydney to Canberra to further facilitate our representation on issues of justice to the Parliament will I hope come to pass. Irrepressible optimism perhaps.

Same Gender Marriage

I know the recent decision on same gender marriage has caused concern for many. The issue caused me to reflect and question which led me to the issue of consistency of the church on some teaching.

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Consider the issue of adultery for example where old and new testament teaching is clear, including its place in the ten commandments.

Yet we seem to have reached an accommodation for those who have remarried while their spouse was alive and little is said about it.

As for our LGBQTI+ sisters and brothers however, it seems the focus remains on the old testament teaching. Given we are all made in God's image I must ask these questions:

1. Are we being consistent if we manage our way around the old and new testament teaching on adultery and remarriage but not same gender marriage?
2. Does Jesus' commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength and our neighbour as ourselves, which sums up all the law and the prophets, direct our position on same gender marriage?

God knows what we are going through. He knows the hearts of all those good people who voted differently and why. May His love characterise our church and may His will be done.

Editorial: Change and waterholes

Congregations have already been notified of changes in Presbytery Office. And of course change can be unsettling.



So as I was putting together this Viewpoint, I was grateful to find there was much to encourage and sustain, which is in keeping with the idea of the waterhole to which our CoChairs draw attention on page two.

I was prompted to look further and discovered the analogy began with a farming story where, in caring for animals, constructing waterholes minimised the need for walls and fences. So as well as offering sustenance there was a certain freedom.

In applying this to Viewpoint - thank you for your depth of wisdom and insight - the sharing of stories and experience which enable a magazine to become a ministry of Jesus - a waterhole.

Carolyn McAllister

As one who remarried, aware of the teaching on adultery, I know that I live in a state of perpetual grace.

If only

There are two things in particular which I regret having not had the chance to do as Chair and they are these:

- to formally ask forgiveness of the elders of the First Peoples within the border of this Presbytery for the appropriation of their land and the blood shed at the hands of Second Peoples. I believe seeking forgiveness is fundamental to finding a true way forward. We have much to learn from the grace and patience of our First People let alone the practical matters of how to live in harmony with this land and hear God in all of His creation. The call for a Treaty must not be ignored.
- to visit all congregations and faith communities and wash the feet of the people who have quietly and often without notice served God through any number of ways known only to Him, themselves and perhaps a few others. I am sorry I could not do this.

We have the divine food of God's love and Jesus' example to offer. The daily decision to love, be courageous, be kind, reach out in compassion and die to self, as Jesus taught us, brings hope and a bright light into the world.

It has been such a privilege to work with you. I shall miss seeing you so much but do hope our paths will continue to cross. May the Lord bless you all with His exuberant joy which is our strength.

Vanessa Crimmins, Presbytery Co-Chair

Viewpoint - next issue



Viewpoint articles and contributions to the *Glimpses of Presbytery* page are due **mid- Feb 2019** in time for the March Presbytery meeting. Send to Editor, Carolyn McAllister - viewpoint@cruc.org.au Enquiries: Rev Kevin Dilks at Presbytery Office 0400 361 468 kevin@cruc.org.au

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Helping us tell our story well



Rev Dr Sarah Agnew has served as one of the Ministers at [Canberra Central Parish](#) since January 2018. Sarah has particular skills as a storyteller and poet and as a teacher and facilitator of workshops. In this article Sarah reflects on life after her doctoral studies in the Bible and Storytelling.

In 2014 I moved to Scotland for PhD studies at the University of Edinburgh. I wanted to examine my practice of biblical storytelling, for I thought I may find in it something of value for the church.

I had observed in surveys a dissatisfaction among church goers with the reading of the Bible aloud in gathered worship. It seems to be the most boring, least engaging moment of the whole service for many people.

In our protestant tradition in particular, which holds the proclamation of the Word as the focal point of our worship together, this lack of due attention to the first part of the proclamation (preaching as the second, and I would add the sacraments as the third) on the part of those who read aloud in church dismays me greatly.

I do not ascribe to a narrow, literal approach to the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. I do view it with some sacramentality – by which I mean, it is Sacred, and also that it is incomplete without the sacraments, and they without the Word.

The Bible represents the grand Story of God, into which all of creation is invited, and as humans are storytelling beings, we have a particular role in that story. It matters that we tell it well.

My primary aim for the PhD was to develop a new method of exegesis by which storytellers and performers may employ a shared structure and language for communicating our insights into interpretation through embodied performance. But I also hoped that a deeper understanding of my practice would form a foundation from which I could return to the church and encourage more

rigorous practice in reading the Bible aloud in worship.

What I understand after my three years of study is that every time we encounter the Bible, we do so as embodied beings. Because that is who and what we are, and we make meaning using more than rational and objective cognition. Or, rather, our cognition is not merely rational and objective, but fundamentally embodied, intuitive, and emotional. And we must recover an understanding of this as good. We will do better to listen to the full range of our insights than to insist on privileging rational objectivity that we artificially detach from our bodies.

We are embodied, and we do believe this is how the Creator intends human beings to be. Jesus affirms and celebrates and is God incarnate in order to nurture the fullness of our human being. This is a Christ-inspired approach to interpreting and receiving the Bible. There is a richness to the way we make meaning of all we encounter, as embodied creatures of physical, cognitive, soulful, emotional, and relational being.

From my research, I will seek ways to help the church to encounter the Bible in our fullness as embodied human beings, through workshops, and hopefully, some published resources for you to use yourselves.

I want to help us to attend to what we bring of all this to our encounters with our Sacred Story, because we are doing it, so let's do it well.

Sarah Agnew
Minister, *Canberra Central Parish*

What I want to say to the Church

During 2018 Canberra Ministers, Rev Riana Kok from South Africa and Rev Jangwon Seo from Korea, were admitted as Ministers into the Uniting Church in Australia. Below and on the next page they share what this has meant to them.



Rev Jangwon Seo Canberra Korean Uniting Church

It is a meaningful thing to be part of a community for anyone. Everyone who belongs to the community has their own roles, just like every part of the body so I am very grateful to be admitted as a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA) and to be able to play my part in my placement for the ministry holds great meaning to me.

In the big picture, I am aware that I have roles to fulfill as a part of the body that is the Uniting Church. My role, in particular, is to apply values and the ways of the UCA to the culture of Korean congregation and among them, the value of equality and the way of decision making in the ministry.

Equality

Firstly, equality holds significant value for my ministry. A Korean congregation, culturally, under the effect of Confucianism, has the value of hierarchy in between minister of the Word (or men or the old) and lay person (or women or the young). It could be regarded as the way of expressing respect to others. However, it could be a result that too much power or roles is given to the minister of the Word.

It was a great opportunity for me to learn the value of equality from the [Basis of Union \(BoU\)](#). I like the expressions in paragraph 13 of the BoU that “*every member of the Church is engaged to be his faithful servant*” and “*all ministries have a part in the ministry of Christ*.” I believe that my congregation as a Korean migrant church should recognise the value of equality, since times have changed and the next generations are coming year by year.

It is meaningful for me as a minister of the UCA to control the power, make clear boundaries and let lay people have their own ministries in order to apply the value of equality within the congregation.

Decision-making

Secondly, decision-making processes are an important part of my ministry, though it is not easy. Why? In my view, there are two reasons that relate to the culture of Korea. One is the tendency for Koreans to be familiar with the people of higher power to solely make decisions rather than the people of less power having an equal contribution to making a decision.

The other is the tendency for Koreans to hesitate when they express their opinions and as a result, are not skillful with discussion about coping with issues. Unfortunately, under those kinds of cultural aspects, the church could easily be moved by a few numbers of people.

However, this is not the biblical view of church because the apostle Paul states that “*the body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ*” (1 Cor. 12:12).

The Bible makes it clear that people in Christ are different but they need to work together. In the light of that, consensus decision making of the UCA is consistent with the evidence of the Bible.

Even though the time for making decisions will delay if many people become involved in the process, it is necessary because the church should be built together in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:22). In his book, [I am a Church Member](#) (p 11), Thom S. Rainer states that “*membership means we are all necessary parts of the whole*”.

My acceptance as a Uniting Church minister means that I am able to function as a minister who can apply the value of equality and the way of decision making to the ministry placement.

Jangwon Seo
Minister, Canberra Korean Congregation



Rev Riana Kok

Yarralumla Uniting Church

When we came to Australia 10 years ago, we asked ourselves - to which church should we go?

Having had a good connection with a Dutch Presbyterian minister back in Cape Town, I thought we might attend the Presbyterian Church in Australia.

Through online research, I discovered women couldn't officiate, so we knew this would not be for us. At the time, as far as occupation was concerned, I was in secular employment, practising 'tentmakers ministry', so it wasn't as much about ministry options for me, but a matter of principle for us.

And then I stumbled upon the Uniting Church and having read its history online, I immediately knew.

In my previous denomination of the Dutch Reformed Church, I wrestled with the question of unity in diversity and issues of exclusivity. The denomination had a "Volkskerk" missional approach, with the belief that a church is necessarily culture and language bound and therefore, segregation is natural.

Even in my youth, I questioned this approach in terms of the New Testament teachings of Jesus. I remember at my late father's funeral, some of his co-workers of colour couldn't attend the service but came to sing at his burial. It just added to my heartbreak then.

I was very excited to share with Willem and his then concerned parents (mine had long since passed) that I had found for us not only a church to go to, but one I gathered we would be comfortable in as far as belief and values were concerned.

And so, within the first few weeks of our arrival in Australia, while living in Bendigo, Victoria, we went to the nearest Uniting Church where Reverend Kevin Dobson was minister and, feeling quite at home from the start, we became members within a few months.

On the 9th of September 2018, I was privileged to become a minister of the Uniting Church in Australia through the admission of ministers process.

Since 1 March 2015 I had served with great gratitude in the placement I had found with the **Yarralumla Congregation** as an ordained minister of another denomination. I am delighted for the placement to be extended for another two years until December 2020, now that I am a minister of the Uniting Church.

Though the process of transition has not always been straightforward due to both personal and church matters often causing delay, stress and frustration, it has been such an enriching experience.

The admission as a Minister of the Uniting Church holds great significance for me.

It is, on the one hand, the affirmation of my answer to the call to ministry, to that long-held yearning in the very "nooks-and-crannies", so-to-speak, of one's spirit and being, that you realise wouldn't come to life, unless you respond.

Perhaps one could compare it to some of the prophets' calls, in a way: you sense and know you are called and you have to obey, yet you are also much aware of your shortcomings, so daunted

by the task at hand and very uncertain regarding the people you are to engage with. But you also realise there is no escaping, only a humble acceptance to obediently comply.

On the other hand, it is also the realisation of having been led through God's grace to a place of belonging in terms of resonance and agreement as far as theology and faith is concerned.

I very much appreciate the Uniting Church for being a non-hierarchical, equality-seeking, kingdom-searching church of God, a church which sets out to let the teachings of Jesus come to life, a non-discriminating, inclusive and unity-seeking church, open to all people of faith.



***Maria G (Riana) Kok,
Minister, Yarralumla Congregation***

GLIMPSES - Working Together



Church and Community Engagement is all about working together.

We all bring different gifts to the table and when we collaborate and share those gifts, we really do unite for the common good. This year we have witnessed many collaborations between congregations with the broader Uniting Church community and others.

Briony Griffiths, Church and Community Engagement

and Community Services as well as Sales Proceeds Funds and a contribution from the Synod Stamp Fund. Goulburn Mulwaree Council staff assisted with food safety standards and approval of a Development Application. Synod Property Services and the Presbytery Property Committee gave support. Commercial kitchen suppliers and local tradespeople assisted to plan and undertake the work.

The Hon. Pru Goward officially launched the new Community Kitchen in Goulburn on 5 November (pictured with committee members, John Townsend, Jenny Townsend and Rosemary Miller). It will continue to be the “hub of this old house” for decades to come, serving the vulnerable and bringing community together. - *Briony Griffiths*

Bateman's Bay - Pivot Point Shower-Laundry

Bateman's Bay Uniting Church had a vision to redevelop one of their old shower blocks into an equipped laundry and shower space for those homeless or vulnerable to homelessness. This vision was supported by the Uniting Innovative Community Grants and realised by the hard work of the Pivot Point committee.



The facilities are accessible at the same time a drop-in café and Pivot Point emergency relief supports are open.

Goulburn Uniting Church Community Kitchen

Led by a dedicated team of congregation members and Briony Griffiths from Uniting, there were many who collaborated for the redevelopment of the Wesley Centre kitchen.

Significant funding was secured from the NSW Department of Family



L-R: John Townsend, Jenny Townsend, The Hon. Pru Goward and Rosemary Miller

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“Inner North” Canberra

(a co-operative venture of inner north Uniting Churches formerly known as “Tramway” - see Autumn 2018 Viewpoint)

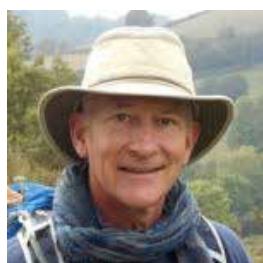
Inner North has asked Rev Steve Coster to do some preliminary work with regard to alternative expressions of church and community building in the area.

In the meantime, with Christmas not far off, Inner North is working on a joint Carols event - “Christmas in the Plaza”.

More GLIMPSES of Presbytery

Welcome back Elizabeth

Rev Elizabeth Raine is returning to this Presbytery to be Minister at [Tuggeranong Uniting Church](#) where she will begin on the 1st December. Her induction date is to be announced. Tuggeranong Church is looking forward to this new chapter in their life and wishes Elizabeth well as she moves from Perth to Canberra with her husband, John.



We are also delighted to welcome Anglican Minister, Neil Millar, who is to be long term Supply Minister at [St Ninian's](#) in Lyneham ACT.

We have known Neil as Uniting's Aged Care Chaplain at [Mirinjani](#), Weston Creek ACT some years ago and also through participation in Quiet Days run by the [Benedictus Contemplative Church](#), Holy Covenant Anglican Church in Aranda. Neil is a facilitator of Reflective Practice peer groups and has worked as a youth worker, parish priest and theological educator. [A liturgy recognising the beginning of his long supply](#) was held during worship on the 18th November.

Thank you to Rev Janice Freeston

who will be concluding her year at [Queanbeyan](#) at the end of December. We thank her for her insightful ministry over these 12 months.

Candidates for Ministry

- Daniel Mossfield will be presented to our meeting on the 24th November for final decision concerning his readiness for ordination.
- Sharon Jacobs has been approved to move into the intermediate phase of her formation.
- Brendon Lukin is expected to begin his formation after being accepted as a candidate in December 2016.
- Geoff Wellington, having been accepted as a candidate, begins his formation process in 2019.

Workshop on reducing conflict to be held at the coast

Rev Terence Corkin held a [workshop](#) in Canberra on the 9th October, based on his book, "[The Church Guide for Making Decisions Together](#)," which aims to help [reduce conflict in churches](#). A valuable point made is the importance of being clear about our values and not just to focus on the issue. David Russell who is Minister at Merimbula, is organising a workshop for the coast. We are also hoping to do another in Canberra during 2019.

Congratulations Keith!

Keith Robinson (right) has accepted a placement at Cootamundra in the Riverina following his ordination as Minister of the Word on 20th October 2018.

The Rev Ockert Meyer (left) of Canberra Central Parish preached at the service at Crookwell Uniting Church where Keith was previously Pastor.

Keith's ordination took place in the midst of the **Great Crookwell Blackout** which struck half way through the first verse of the second hymn. The heavens opened and the first rain in months began to fall. The church was plunged into darkness, power not being restored until the final verse of the final hymn. Unfazed, the congregation continued its enthusiastic singing, the order of service was read by mobile torchlight and at the close of the service, Keith skipped and danced his way down the aisle.



Keith Robinson's ordination. Rev Kevin Dilks holds a torch for Co-chair John Williams during the blackout.

What do you VALUE about this Presbytery?

Feedback

*from Members of Presbytery
who attended this year's
meetings.*

3rd March meeting at North Belconnen Theme: Healthy Congregations: handling challenges well, led by Mark and Mary Hurst of the Mennonite Mission Network. Mark and Mary conduct workshops on conflict transformation.

26th May meeting at Merimbula Theme: Disaster Response Chaplaincy Network. Rev Dr Stephen Robinson, Coordinator: NSW Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network, shared the work of the Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network and the role of the UCA in disasters across the state and territory.

11th August meeting at Tuggeranong Theme: Civil Chaplaincy-Church Meets World led by Rev Jean Shannon - Uniting overview of Chaplaincy; Rev Andrew Mead - Hospital Chaplaincy; Heather Potter Aged Care; Rev Robyn Kidd - Defence.

Feedback from meeting 3rd March at North Belconnen

- Fellowship and networking opportunities and sharing the challenges - 10 responses
- Inclusiveness, openness and friendliness - 5 responses

- Evolution of ideas – vision and dreaming - 4 responses
- Teamwork in the office and hard work in preparing for the meeting and the documentation x 4
- Thoughtful consideration of a range of issues x 3

- Forward looking structure focussed on congregational well-being into the future x 3
- Key part of support and connection between congregations and people across different communities x 3

- Opportunity to meet with those from significantly different congregations x 2
- The bigger picture of what is going on across the Presbytery x 2
- Sense of Presbytery care and encouragement and a desire for the church to move onwards x 2 responses
- Variety in the content and discussions
- Ability for everyone to have input
- Inclusion of information sessions and resources available for Ministry
- Communication, information, hospitality
- Active engagement with congregations
- Cooperation and working together for improvement

Presbytery - what it means

“presbyter” from presbuteros ‘elder’ (used in the New Testament to denote an elder of the early church), comparative of presbus ‘old (man)’. *From Oxford dictionary online.*

The word “**Presbytery**” can be puzzling and not only to people who have never heard the word. In the Roman Catholic Church for instance, the Presbytery refers to the home of the parish priest. However, in the **Uniting Church**, the Presbytery refers to two things:

1. a region or district which in our case is the community of 53 places of worship from Bigga in the north to Eden in the south.

2. a gathering of clergy and lay leaders/elders who represent the district and who, as an administrative body (a court), “... exercise oversight over the congregations within its bounds, encouraging them to strengthen one another’s faith, to bear one another’s burdens, and exhorting them to fulfil their high calling in Christ Jesus ...” - [UCA Basis of Union](#).

“Thank you to everyone who participates in Presbytery meetings, particularly for the feedback that encourages us and helps keep focus”

Kevin Dilks (Presbytery Minister - Presbytery Wellbeing)

Feedback from meeting 26th May at Merimbula

- Meeting people – ensure sufficient time at the breaks to be able to talk
- I really like that we can talk about practical things that can support congregations – no longer a business meeting.
- Diversity of congregations
- Connecting with those from other congregations. Learning about wider issues.
- Sharing stories of what is done elsewhere
- Support of staff when things difficult
- Communication
- Knowledge of and access to studies, discussions etc,
- Presbytery gatherings though this time too crowded
- Appreciate the faithful work done in the background on our behalf. Thanks and blessings!
- Opportunities (time) to interact with those from other congregations
- Breadth of experience

Feedback from meeting 11th August at Tuggeranong

- Prepared to discuss, open to comments eg resources to help congregations, notably websites
- Now – took a while to get these – the opportunity to meet with a wider network and how resources are made available to individuals and congregations. Looking at controversy.

- Openness
- Conversations with colleagues and others
- Voices are listened to
- The appreciation and care for another.
- Its keenness to assist all congregations
- Opportunities to share information with other congregations
- Willingness to embrace diversity
- The human face – so much done with so few – truly loaves and fishes blessed by God feeds five thousand and have baskets of bread left over.
- They at least attempt to connect the individual churches.
- Organisation is excellent; Being with people who are positive and have a vision for the Presbytery and their local congregation.
- Diversity of work, prayer and connection.
- Finding out what goes on in other churches; meeting people from different churches
- The way in which people value each other.
- The camaraderie amongst members.
- Openness to moving forward.
- It's very active
- The way it deals so professionally with important issues. Jean Shannon mentioned how well we do in her areas.
- Always worthwhile – even the 6 hours travel!!
- The work you do and attempt to do

Canberra Region Presbytery meets quarterly with a theme and guest speakers. Anyone who is a member of the church is welcome to attend. However voting is restricted to members of Presbytery - that is - a) all Uniting Church ministers and b) those elected yearly by their congregations to be lay members of this Presbytery. The majority of churches in Canberra Region Presbytery have one lay member each but larger congregations may have more than one.

Members of Presbytery are:

- aware of their own congregation's multiplicity of views
- prayerfully use their own wisdom and insight to help Presbytery come to consensus concerning issues it needs to address.

To find out more speak to your Minister or email the Presbytery Minister (Presbytery Wellbeing) Kevin Dilks who is also Secretary of this Presbytery: kevin@cruc.org.au

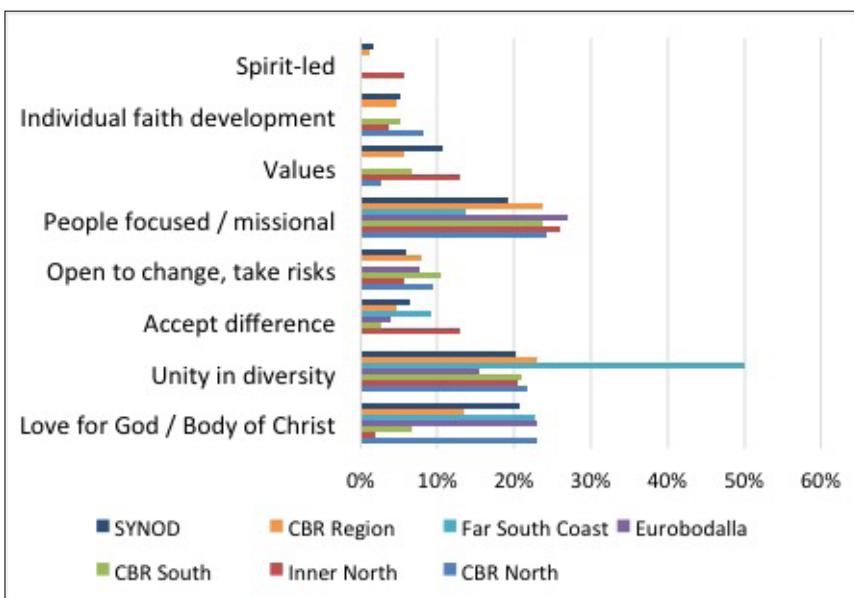


thank you for participating

Pathways has been a Synod initiative running throughout the year which has sought to engage all congregations in one conversation that speaks into the next Synod Plan. Uniting were asked to partner with Synod to facilitate [Pathways](#) in each Presbytery.

Thank you to the 23 congregations who could participate in the Canberra Region Presbytery.

Who are we called to be? A fellowship of reconciliation – what does that look like?



The conversations have contributed to Synod planning but were also valuable locally.

They identified local opportunities for mission planning, cooperation between congregations, regional challenges, and ways that the Presbytery can further resource congregations in 2019.

At the Presbytery Gathering in November we looked at graphs of our responses to the conversation, such as that shown here. These are available for all congregations.

Please speak with your Presbytery Rep or contact Briony Griffiths on bgriffiths@uniting.org



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ACCOMMODATION

- Group accommodation for up to 198 people
- Great package deals for groups include all meals, accommodation and use of facilities
- Four separate self-contained holiday Units and Cottage
- Whole site capacity of 215 people









The Presbytery Team consists of

- three full-time staff: Presbytery Minister – wellbeing (Rev Kevin Dilks), Presbytery Minister – congregation futures (LP Geoff Wellington), Operations Manager (Janise Wood);
- one part-time member employed by Uniting: Uniting Church Engagement Leader (Briony Griffiths).

Carolyn McAllister now contributes to the life of the Presbytery in a voluntary capacity producing the quarterly magazine *Viewpoint*.

Kevin's key responsibilities have included: Presbytery Secretary, Pastoral Relations Committee Secretary, pastoral care of ministers in placement, liaison with Synod on behalf of Presbytery, managing twice-yearly Ethical Ministry and Vital Ministry workshops and Annual Ministry retreat for all active ministers.

Geoff has responsibilities towards congregations seeking new ways of being in ministry and mission, including exploring possibilities for new development. He provides oversight to Joint Nominating Committees for congregations seeking new ministry leadership and is our Presbytery Rep on the Synod Committee (ACOMP) that oversees minister placements across the Synod. Geoff also has responsibility for managing Lay Preacher and Sacraments training.

Janise is kept busy addressing issues of a more administrative focus:

working with the Treasurer on Presbytery finances, providing admin support and guidance for Property Committee, acting as Minute Secretary for Standing Committee, responding to insurance and property matters from congregations and Synod.

Bri focusses on working with Congregations, often in partnership with Geoff, to discover and roll out new ways of engaging with the wider community through community service/development projects. She also assists congregations in grant applications and advice. - **Kevin Dilks**

Continual need for grace



Sometimes our work in the Presbytery Office feels as if it is rather chaotic – with many different needs calling on our ministers and staff and many different expectations being placed upon us, expectations that sometimes are mutually exclusive. Irrespective of the pressures that this aspect of our work for the Presbytery

brings, your Presbytery team have maintained a focus on supporting congregations and the ministers in ministry leadership positions so they can be the best they can be in service of Christ.

Plans disrupted 2018 has seen considerable disruption to the plans we had for the year, largely due to the need to engage with the Synod-wide Pathways project. As a consequence, our plan for regional gatherings, as were held in previous years, needed to be shelved.

The ongoing need to play our part in the well-being of the church right across the Synod sometimes feels like an intrusion into our plans. I guess this is the nature of any relationship, institutional or personal, when we take our part in it seriously.

The 2018 plan - identifying priority areas A major achievement in 2018 was the approval of a plan for the Future Directions of our Presbytery. This document gives guidance to us, the Presbytery Team, concerning the priority areas of our life together and the ways we will best contribute to the well-being of the Presbytery and the health of our Congregations.

The setting of key priorities does not mean that every congregation will “get what it wants”.

Setting priorities is about “what is it best for us to do with the resources we have”.

Key tasks and ‘everyday’ tasks Trying to identify and focus on the strategically key tasks while ensuring the “everyday” tasks of support and compliance are addressed, sometimes means everything cannot be responded to. We continually seek your understanding and grace if your congregation is one that feels a bit neglected.

Kevin Dilks, Presbytery Minister - wellbeing.

On the next two pages is a chart identifying the key tasks we believe we need to give primary attention to from now until June 2019. If you have questions about any of them please send us an email and we will do our best to give you a satisfying answer to your question.

Presbytery Team

4-6 month priorities

Any questions? Please email kevin@cruc.org.au and we will do our best to give you a satisfying answer.

Focus Areas (Pillars)	TEAM PRIORITIES		TEAM MEMBER
RESOURCING CONGREGATIONS Resource congregations to function in healthy ways	Microsites Website – Coast (Dec 6, 2018)	Providing training for congregations to develop easy to use website	Operations Manager + Uniting Church Engagement Leader
	Minimising and managing conflict workshop - Coast (Dec 8, 2018)	Providing training for Church Councils on effective decision-making that minimises conflict	Presbytery Minister - well-being
	Grooming Awareness Workshop (Date to be determined)	In cooperation with Synod – preparing and presenting resources for congregations to assist in being aware of grooming behaviours and what to do about them	Presbytery Ministers
	Governance Training – Church Councils (Feb 22-23, 2019)	In cooperation with Sydney Presbytery- presenting a workshop on effective governance, particularly for Church Councils.	Operations Manager
	Regional meetings x 3 for 2019 (ACT – May 4 or 5. COAST – July 27 COUNTRY – Sept 7)	Fostering communication and collaboration across congregations in our three regions.	Presbytery Ministers
DISCOVERING NEW FUTURES Work with congregations to discover new futures	Inner North - Canberra	Exploring, with inner north congregations, new ways of being the church in this rapidly developing corridor in Canberra	Presbytery Minister – cong futures + Uniting Church Engagement Leader
	Country Region	Exploring with Grace/Crookwell/Yass/Goulburn new possibilities for being the church in our Country Region	Presbytery Minister – cong futures + Uniting Church Engagement Leader
	Gininderry	Exploring possibilities for new Faith Community in this new development area of ACT.	Presbytery Minister – cong futures
TRANSFORMING WITH CARE Provide care for congregations facing radical change	Bega-Tathra	Continuing to offer support to the remaining members following a major split.	Presbytery Minister – cong futures
	Tathra Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy	Continuing to provide oversight and support to the Disaster Response Chaplain.	Presbytery Minister - well-being
	Queanbeyan	Providing support to Intentional Interim Minister (and associated Reference Group)	Presbytery Minister – cong futures
	Goulburn	Continuing to take actions arising from the Life & Witness	Presbytery Minister – cong futures
	Presbytery Minister Transition	Ensure all things are in place for transition to new Presbytery Minister – wellbeing.	Presbytery Minister - well-being

We would value your prayers as we try to identify and focus on strategically key tasks while ensuring the “everyday” tasks of support and compliance are addressed. Kevin.



Following the acceptance, by Presbytery, of the Future Directions plan the Presbytery Team have been identifying priorities for their work over the next four to six months.

As well as continuing to attend to the “regular” responsibilities that each one carries, the Team has prepared a plan, consisting of activities/projects/events that they believe will advance the five different “pillars” of the Future Directions plan.

This “4–6 month Priorities Plan” was presented at the meeting of Presbytery on 24 November for endorsement. What follows (left and below) is a table, listing these priorities in simple form. Some of the events already have dates. Others not yet. As and when the arrangements for each become finalised all congregations across the Presbytery will be notified and encouraged to participate. - **Kevin Dilks**

Presbytery Team

4-6 month Priorities

The Team

Rev Kevin Dilks

Presbytery Minister
(Presbytery Wellbeing)



LP Geoff Wellington
Presbytery Minister
(Congregation Futures)



Janise Wood
Operations Manager



Briony Griffiths,
Church Engagement
Leader - Uniting

FOCUS AREAS (PILLARS)	TEAM PRIORITIES	TEAM MEMBER	
GOVERNING EFFECTIVELY Increasing innovative and accountable leadership	Update admin and records for Presbytery Min - wellbeing	Ensuring records for: Ethical Ministry, Vital Ministry, Presbytery decisions are up to date Prepare PRC handbook.	Presbytery Minister - wellbeing
	Orientation meeting for Presbytery Committees – Feb 16	Arrange meeting.	Presbytery Minister - wellbeing
	IT transition	Continue to oversee the transition of Presbytery IT systems to a joint system with Synod.	Operations Manager
	Communications strategic plan	Develop new strategy for Communications to ensure current goals for Viewpoint, Weekly Notices and Website are not lost while developing new strategies and goals.	Operations Manager
	Financial Compliance and Operations review	Continue to roll out financial management procedures as directed by Standing Committee	Operations Manager
DEEPENING CONNECTIONS Work with the wider church for mutual well-being	Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What has been learned from 2018 process? How does Presbytery respond? 	Uniting Church Engagement Leader
	Synod Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presbytery Leaders meetings with Synod Leadership Team. Other contributions to the development of Synod Plan. 	Presbytery Minister – cong futures
	Moderator Visit	Arrangements for week-long visit of Moderator.	Presbytery Minister - wellbeing
	Grants management	Monitor, promote, scope and review ICGF grants.	Uniting Church Engagement Leader



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