

24. Pastoral Network of Evangelicals Uniting in Mission Action

Chairperson Rev Luke Williams

The Pastoral Network of Evangelicals Uniting in Mission Action (PNEUMA) steering team meets monthly for encouragement and prayer and to facilitate ways we might support Uniting Church members and congregations in 'Mission Action', for example CampFire.

PNEUMA was established in 2007 and adopted a 'statement of shared convictions', outlined in its first report to the WA Synod:

Members of PNEUMA are Christians who stand with orthodox believers in all eras who have held the historic creeds. In particular, however, we differ from Christians in some traditions in the emphasis we place on the following commitments, together associated historically with the tradition called 'Evangelical'.

1. The focus of our thought and lifestyle is Jesus Christ, crucified and raised; whom we acknowledge not only as a good man, but as Saviour, Lord and true member of the Trinity.
2. Believing the scriptures to be God-inspired and fully reliable, we take them as our primary authority for what we believe and how to live, and by them we judge other potentially helpful sources of knowledge of God, such as human reason, church tradition, and personal experience; the final touchstone of all interpretation being the recorded words and works of Jesus.
3. Thus we understand from scripture that all individuals need to get right with God, not through good works or social reform which cannot save them, but through a 'new birth' by the Holy Spirit and holy living in the Spirit thereafter.
4. We respond to Jesus' example and command to be on mission, notably through personal evangelism; but also through social activism on behalf of all creation, with special concern for people suffering pain, injustice or oppression.

1. CAMPFIRE

One way PNEUMA has sought to be active in mission is through its annual 'CampFire', held over the September long weekend. Over 120 people from Uniting Churches around WA descended on the small, Wheatbelt town of Lake Yealering for CampFire 2017. This was an intergenerational camp with the expressed aim of encouraging and resourcing people for mission. It was and continues to be a fantastic weekend of relaxing and hanging out with friends – old and new.

At CampFire 2017 Mark Illingworth explored the topics of spiritual gifts and giftings with the campers, encouraging each of us to consider our role and part to play in the body of Christ. A fantastic all age celebration on Sunday morning culminated with a huge temple being constructed from sheets, chairs, tables, candles, bread and most importantly, the people in an 'all in' Godly play story.

Campfire is deliberately low-key with plenty of time to sit, chat, walk, wander over to the pub to watch the footy and just 'be'. Campfire 2018 is being held on 21–24 September – download the registration form at pneuma.org.au/campfire. Our guest speaker this year is Alison Gilchrist, the newly appointed Uniting Church WA Presbytery Minister Mission. Steve McKinnon of TEAR WA, will be leading the youth program for the weekend.

2. UCA ASSEMBLY DECISION ON MARRIAGE

The PNEUMA steering team has met twice since the 15th Triennial Assembly Meeting in Melbourne to discuss the Assembly's decision on marriage and what this means for the Church and members of PNEUMA.

We wish to report the following at this time:

1. PNEUMA remains committed to supporting and creating a space for 'Evangelicals' in the Uniting Church WA to continue practising their faith according to their convictions.
2. We are aware of the possible and current pastoral, missional and ecumenical implications of the Assembly decision. At this time, we are prayerfully considering how to best support Evangelical members and congregations of the Uniting Church WA, and are doing that in consultation with other like-minded networks across Australia such as some 'Mission Networks' in South Australia.
3. The 'P' in PNEUMA is important to us – we are a pastoral network and support base for our members. We recognise that there is significant tension, struggle and confusion across the Uniting Church at this time, including but not limited to Uniting Church members leaving their congregations and congregations feeling they must leave. We will continue to reach out to those who need pastoral support at this time, by God's grace.
4. We have substantial concerns that what the Assembly has clearly allowed and supported, ie. the freedom to choose one of two views on marriage, is not being reflected by all Uniting Church members across Australia, especially on social media platforms, and that this is creating hurt and tension within the body of Christ.
5. We have held and will continue to hold open opportunities for discussion and prayer for members of PNEUMA and others who share our convictions.

If you would like to know more about PNEUMA, CampFire or upcoming meetings on the Assembly marriage decision, please email luke@pneuma.org.au.

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