



Tuesday 30 October 2018
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The Presbytery of Western Australia Meeting was held on Saturday 13 October at Carramar Uniting Church in the St Stephen's School, Carramar buildings. More than 90 lay and ordained members from our congregations and faith communities around the Presbytery came together for fellowship and to seek the will of God for the business of the Presbytery.

Cleansing Smoking Ceremony

Cheryl Lawson, Resource Worker, Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (Congress) WA Regional Committee invited Presbytery members to begin the meeting by moving outside in a silent act of prayer to walk through a smoking ceremony led by Mitchel Garlett, Congress WA Regional Committee member.

"When you walk through smoke, the spirits of this place know who you are and we experience the cleansing spirit of God," said Cheryl.

Mitchell, a Nyungar man, said he was honoured to share and take part in the smoking ceremony for the meeting.

"The smoking ceremony is a very important aspect in the lives of Indigenous people in the area and I feel honoured to take part in that," he said.

"For me as a young Nyungar man, it's a privilege for me to know my language as it gives me an identity to this place and my culture."

In Nyungar language, and in English, Mitchell welcomed the Presbytery members to the land.

"My heart feels happy as we gather here in this place this morning. Welcome."



Presbytery members walk past the Smoking Ceremony on their way into the meeting.

God's word is alive and active

Worship, led by Rev Narelle Collas, Carramar Uniting Church minister, focused on Hebrews 4:12-16, that the word of God is alive and active.

As is the normal practice of worship at Carramar, children from the congregation began worship by lighting the candle and opening the Bible before sharing the call to worship. The children also led the singing of 'Jesus, God's righteousness revealed', 'Ancient Words' and 'Before the throne' throughout worship.

Narelle began her reflection by introducing, 'The Book With No Pictures' which is loved by children as all the sounds, and funny and silly words in the book need to be said by the person reading the book.

"Words have power, they can destroy one's spirit and stir up hatred and violence, or they can build people up, show love and compassion. Without words, a thought can never become reality," said Narelle.

Narelle shared her favourite word, 'Kumquat' and invited members of Presbytery to share their favourite words which

included hijinx, happenstance and discombobulated.

Narelle said that as we gather and enter into this time of worship, we together are attending to God's word.

"The living and active word of God, that is powerful and discerning. The Amplified Bible adds that the word is operative, energising and effective," said Narelle.

"We know that 'the word' isn't confined to the written scripture, but refers to God's active and continuing proclamation and revelation. The whole concept - the whole communication with us."

Members of Presbytery were then invited in the quietness to allow God's word to speak, to energise, to come alive, to convict, to invite us into God's presence through Jesus Christ and allow God's word to speak grace to us.

Interactive and intergenerational worship is part of Carramar Uniting Church, so Presbytery members, with focus, conversation and laughter, worked together at their tables to come up with great words using Scrabble letters prior to worship concluding with a shared benediction.



Sovereignty and Treaty Workshop

Following worship, Presbytery members were led by the Uniting Church WA Covenanting Commission and special guest, Assembly Consultant Covenanting, Stuart McMillan through 'Walking Together, Exploring the Covenant between First and Second Peoples' Study Guide (view at <https://assembly.uca.org.au/preamble>), Session Two: A Destiny Together.

Members of the Covenanting Commission in attendance to resource the meeting were co-chairs, Uniting Church WA Moderator, Rev Steve Francis and Congress WA Regional Committee Chairperson, Rev Robert Jetta, as well as Cheryl Lawson, Mitchell Garlett, Richard Smith and Rev Mervyn Anderson.

Presbytery members were given the opportunity to discuss what the Uniting Church's covenant with Congress might mean for our future.

Cheryl began this significant moment with Bible readings and Robert read a prayer written by Bishop Saibo Mabo, National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission Chairperson.

In table groups, members discussed if they had friendships or encounters with indigenous Australians that have been significant for them.

Together, we watched video 3, 'First Peoples, Second Peoples' (view at <https://vimeo.com/album/3459179>) and in table groups shared what words stood out in the video and what those words meant.

Stuart commended the Covenanting Commission report (view at https://unitingchurchwa-startdigital.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/20180822_-15-Covenanting-Commission-Synod-Report-2018.pdf) to the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia for further reading.

Stuart and Cheryl shared a brief summary of the Covenanting journey to date.

"This isn't new work today, this has been ongoing for a long time," said Cheryl.

Together, we watched video 4, 'Living our Covenant' (view at <https://vimeo.com/album/3459179>) and in table groups shared what stood out in the video and what questions it raised.

Presbytery members also had a rare opportunity to participate in a question and answer session about Sovereignty with Covenanting Commission members and heard gracious responses directly from members of Congress.

"We need each other and we need to work together," said Robert.

"We'll continue to invite you to walk beside us. We'll get there eventually."

Stuart shared that at the 15th Triennial Assembly Meeting of the Uniting Church in July, it was agreed that a 'Day of Mourning' occur on the Sunday prior to 26 January each year. During worship services we were requested to engage in activities such as reflection and discussion of the profound effect of invasion and colonisation on First Peoples. This will be held on Sunday, 20 January 2019.

At the conclusion of the session, Presbytery members shared an affirmation of faith based on the revised Uniting Church Preamble.

Ministry Milestones

Anniversaries of ordination for those who have served God and the Church faithfully over many years were celebrated.

10 years

Rev Greg Ross, Wellington Regional Mission

15 years

Rev Isobelle Shortreed

20 years

Rev Marion Millin



Some of the ministers who were celebrating service milestones.

25 years

Rev Lorna Atkins
Rev David de Kock, General Secretary

30 years

Rev John Marshall, Mandurah Uniting Church

40 years

Rev David Jackson
Rev David McAndrew
Rev Harold Sampson

50 years

Rev John Dihm, Remote Area Ministry Tom Price
Rev Wilf Pearce
Rev Marie Wilson

60 years

Rev Wally Fawell
Rev Sam McCollum

Each milestone recipient was presented with a succulent plant before the Presbytery of Western Australia Chairperson, Rev Lorraine Stokes led the Presbytery in prayer giving thanks to God for their gifts to the church with their own particular skills in their own way. The Presbytery sang 'Great is your faithfulness'. Rev Wally Fawell cut the cake which was shared for dessert at lunch.

Faith Community Designation Table Discussion

At the 13th Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of Western Australia held on Saturday 16 June 2018, the Presbytery resolved by consensus:

(3) that the Presbytery, in consultation with the Faith Community, appoint a designated specified minister for each Faith Community to provide guidance, encouragement, development and accountability (Regulation 3.9.2 (c)).

Presbytery members discussed with their table groups how this might work in practice to enact this part of the resolution as there is currently some confusion which is raising expectations in smaller congregations. Written comments will be reviewed by the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC).

Moderatorial Nominating Committee

Presbytery members were invited to submit nominations for members of the Moderatorial Nominating Committee by February 2019. The purpose of the Committee is to seek nominations of people who can provide leadership as Moderator. The Moderator-Elect for the triennium 2020 to 2023 will be elected at the 43rd Annual Meeting of the Synod of Western Australia to be held from Friday 13 to Sunday 15 September 2019.

Presbytery of Western Australia Chairperson Nominees

Presbytery of Western Australia Chairperson, Rev Lorraine Stokes will complete her term at the 14th Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of Western Australia to be held on Saturday, 4 May 2019.

Therefore, nominations are sought of people who can provide leadership as Chairperson. The Chairperson-Elect will be elected at the next Presbytery of Western Australia meeting to be held on Saturday, 9 February.

Deliberations and decisions

Reception of reports to the Presbytery

As agreed at the 11th Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of Western Australia held in November 2016, reports to the Presbytery were received individually to enable issues and questions to be addressed and discussed more effectively.

Reports were received from Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC) and the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC).

Staffing

Presbytery resolved by consensus to authorise Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC) to issue calls and make appointments to vacant approved Presbytery placements, on the recommendation of the Joint Nominating Committee (JNC), until the end of May 2019.

According to Regulation 2.6.6 (m) (i) the issuing of a call to a person to fill a Presbytery Placement must be made by the Presbytery meeting in session. Presbytery has three vacant positions which are in the process of being filled (Director of Education and Formation, Presbytery Minister - Uniting Generations and Presbytery Officer).

The need for change was that the earliest a call could be issued for any of the above positions would be following the next Presbytery of Western Australia Meeting to be held on Saturday, 9 February 2019. As the successful applicant/s would need to give notice from their current placement, the positions would be unlikely to be filled prior to the middle of next year.

Committee Structure Streamlining

Presbytery resolved by consensus to request the Strategy and Mission Planning Committee (SMPC) to continue facilitating conversations between the current ten committees of the Presbytery: Standing Committee; Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC); Property Committee; SMPC; Congregational Community Services Committee; Multicultural Committee; Uniting Generations Committee; Rural Ministry Committee; Candidates for the Ministries Committee; and the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) with a view to bringing a streamlined committee structure that can more



nimbly respond to the current missional needs of the church to the Presbytery of Western Australia Meeting to be held on Saturday, 9 February or 4 May 2019.

Uniting Church in Australia Regulations only define three committees: Presbytery Standing Committee, Pastoral Relations Committee and Property Committee, essential to support and equip congregations and faith communities.

Over the past two years, SMPC has been gathering Presbytery chairs and committees together to collaborate and consult how the church can refocus the energies and resources of the Presbytery and respond to emerging mission opportunities.

Presbytery Property Committee

Presbytery resolved by agreement to refer all powers and responsibilities of the Presbytery Property Committee (PPC) to the Strategy and Mission Planning Committee (SMPC).

The Presbytery has an emphasis on mission and missional use of resources, including real estate. It is essential that decisions made by the Presbytery regarding properties are made after due consideration is given to current and possible future missional use. Therefore, it's appropriate for decisions be made by the committee entrusted by the Presbytery for its future mission directions.

Presbytery Meeting in a Rural Area

After considerable discussion, Presbytery resolved by agreement not to honour its undertaking to have at least one meeting in a rural area every two years on the understanding that: buses be provided from Perth, with no travel reimbursement for those choosing to use their own transport from Perth; those from outside Perth travelling more than 100kms could still claim travel either to the host location or to Perth, whichever was closer; no accommodation costs would be covered for those from Perth or towns closer than 100kms; and members would be asked for a contribution towards the cost of the buses, in addition to the registration cost of the Presbytery Meeting.

Presbytery Treasurer

Congratulations to Marilyn Price who was elected Presbytery of Western Australia Treasurer for a term of one year.

Presbytery Secretary

Congratulations to Rev Hannes Halgryn who was elected Presbytery of Western Australia Secretary for a term of two years.

Presbytery Chairperson, Rev Lorraine Stokes sincerely thanked Rev John McKane who has acted as Secretary of the Presbytery with immediate effect from 10 February 2018. At the time, it was envisaged that a Secretary would be elected at the Annual Meeting of the Presbytery of Western Australia on Saturday, 16 June 2018, but John graciously agreed to extend his term until a new Secretary was elected.

Interim 2019 Budget

Rev Bev Fabb, Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC) member presented an Interim 2019 Budget as a working document as discussions around staffing structure, other income and expenses is ongoing.

PSC are continuing to work towards eliminating the remaining \$277,714 budget deficit through reduction in staffing costs through redundancies, reduced working hours, not replacing staff when positions become vacant and combining of work roles; asking congregations to consider increasing their Mission and Service contributions; reviewing income from Trust Funds; reviewing operational expenses to ensure costs are kept to a minimum; considering reduced costs of Presbytery meetings by not providing lunch; and requesting the Synod of Western Australia to make a grant to the Presbytery to cover any remaining deficit.

The Presbytery of Western Australia resolved by consensus to receive the Interim 2019 Presbytery of Western Australia Budget. Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC), in consultation with Presbytery Committees; Presbytery staff; General Secretary, Rev David de Kock; Chief Financial Officer, Michael Patchell; and People and Culture Manager, Monica Pettersen, was authorised to work towards the development of a balanced budget by the end of this year.

The 2019 Presbytery of Western Australia Budget will be presented to the next Presbytery of Western Australia Meeting to be held on Saturday 9 February 2019.

Marriage

Presbytery noted the Uniting Church's 15th Triennial Assembly Meeting decision to hold two equal and distinct statements of belief on marriage and resolved by consensus to commit itself to listen to the various and complex struggles of its congregations and ministry agents at this time; acknowledged that decisions and conversations related to the Assembly decision on marriage continue to be challenging and painful for some congregations, church councils and ministry agents; noted that earlier discussions with the Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) on this matter have resulted in positive action; and welcomed the action of the PRC to establish a group who will, amongst other things:

a. offer assistance to ministry agents, congregations and church councils in navigating decisions related to Resolution 64 of the 15th Assembly (decision on marriage), and

b. draw on the wisdom of other councils of the church who are taking active

steps to assist ministry agents and congregations at this time.

Save the dates

The Presbytery of Western Australia will meet on Saturday 9 February, 4 May, 3 August and 9 November 2019.