



Ecumenical Affairs Network ***(Formerly Ecumenical Affairs Commission)***

<i>Acting Convenor</i>	Dorothy Carey
<i>Ex Officio</i>	Rev David de Kock
<i>Members elected by Synod</i>	Rev Dr Sonny Rajamoney
	Rev Justine Wall
	Rev Marie Wilson

1. AIMS

- To promote dialogue with other Christian denominations
- To encourage dialogue with other faiths
- To maintain links with the Council of Christians and Jews
- To make available resources for local discussion regarding co-operation
- To share news of ecumenical activities around the state
- To be a liaison with the National Church's dialogues with other denominations
- To communicate worldwide trends in ecumenism and to be a link to activities within the World Council of Churches as well as the National Council of Churches in Australia and the Council of Churches of WA.

One of the defining qualities of the Uniting Church is that we began as an ecumenical church; ecumenism should be at our heart. As a committee we have a strong commitment to this and we recognise there are many other groups in our church structure that are ecumenical in their actions. The inquiries and entries for the Ecumenical and Inter-faith awards are a testament to the events and projects happening around the state. We are encouraged to ask how we are engaging with others in all our activities and to intentionally plan for this. The move to change the committee from being a Commission to a Network has taken us a year and we hope will result in the sharing of ideas and the telling of stories, throughout the year. The Network will be made up of all of you who have an event to talk about, an idea to float, and an activity worth suggesting. A small committee will liaise on your behalf with the Synod. The Network will only work if you share. We hope you and your church will join and share your stories that others may be encouraged and inspired.

2. ECUMENICAL AND INTERFAITH AWARDS

This award was designed to encourage, recognise and celebrate ecumenical and interfaith initiatives of our congregations, schools and agencies. Each year it becomes more difficult to determine the winner. In 2018 the award was shared between two very different communities, Gateway Uniting Church in Newdegate, and St Peter and Emmaus Church in Mt Hawthorn.

Gateway celebrated ten years of promoting Christian fellowship across their region through their *Inspiration Dinner* held annually prior to Christmas in the shearing shed of a family from the Catholic Church. The dinner is free of charge, involves other churches in the area, Christian speakers from many denominations and musicians some of whom travel from the city.

Each year Gateway's Holland Track *Inspiration Walk* brings together people from the churches in the wider area for a weekend of fellowship through camping, hiking, music and worship.



St Peter and Emmaus invited other churches and the local community to a series of lectures on understanding some of the faiths. They hosted a series of religious seminars titled, *Who is My Neighbour*. The seminars took the form of a 45-minute presentation by an eminent speaker with a 15-minute Q and A to follow. The speakers were from the Jewish faith, the Islamic faith, the Bhuddist faith with a fourth speaker, Professor Bill Loader presenting a Christian perspective.

Start planning your entry for the 2020 Award.

3. COUNCIL OF CHURCHES WA (CCWA)

The Uniting Church is a very active member of the Council of Churches with three members on the Executive and up to ten members on the Council. Earlier this year, Simone Micke, the Ecumenical Ministry Officer was appointed to the position full time, with a change in her title to General Secretary, in line with the Council of Churches committees in the other states. Simone has upgraded CCWA's Facebook page and the Newsletter where events, invitations and activities hosted by CCWA and the member churches can be accessed. If you would like to advertise or share information about events in your church in the Newsletter, you can contact Simone. Check out their Facebook page or website. To receive emails contact ecumenical@churcheswa.com.au

Some of our members were so enthused by the contribution from the members of the Christian Council of Sweden to the Fourth International Receptive Ecumenism Conference in Canberra (November 2017) that we planned to use ideas from their pilgrimage experiences for the Pilgrimage for Unity in Perth this year. Again, because of the over-crowded diary dates for April/May it was decided to re-think the pilgrimage time and replan. We are pleased to report the Fifth International Receptive Ecumenism Conference will be held in Sweden in 2020. Some members from CCWA are planning on going to this conference so let Simone or Dorothy know if you are interested and would like to be kept up to date with information. Why Receptive Ecumenism?

Receptive Ecumenism represents a remarkably simple but far reaching strategy that seeks to draw out a value that has been at work, to some degree at least, in all good ecumenical encounter and to place it centre-stage now as the appropriate organising principle for contemporary ecumenism. This is the principle that considerable further progress is indeed possible, but only if each of the traditions, both singly and jointly, makes a clear, programmatic shift from prioritising the question "What do our various others first need to learn from us?" to asking instead, "What is that we need to learn and can learn, or receive, with integrity from our others?" (Paul D.Murray)

The National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) continues to make resources available for worship and study. These are available on the NCCA website.

Act for Peace

Act for peace is the international aid agency of the NCCA. It is one of the world's largest, most effective networks of grassroots aid organisations. Uniting Church members continue to be generous in their support for Act for Peace. We share their vision of a peaceful world where all people share a safe, just and dignified life. Congratulations to those who participated in the Ration challenge this year. Read the Annual Report on line at <actforpeace.org.au>

The World Council of Churches (WCC) formed in 1948 promotes Christian Unity in faith, witness and service for a just and peaceful world... Today WCC represents more than 550 million Christians in over 120 countries. If you want to be more informed about the church worldwide, visit their Facebook page or sign up to have Weekly News summaries from the WCC emailed out every week.

4. RELATIONS WITH OTHER FAITHS

Council for Christian and Jews

In June this year, four people from Western Australia, Marie and Bruce Wilson a representative from the Anglican Church and one from Temple David attended the annual conference of the International Council of Christians and Jews which was held in Lund, Sweden. In August, Anette Adelman who is the General Secretary of the International Council for Christians and Jews spoke at a seminar in Wesley Church, Perth on her way to Melbourne to commence the planning of the 2021 International Conference which is to be held there. Marie Wilson will be attending in her role as a member of the executive of the Australian Council for Christians and Jews.

Council of Christians and Jews in WA (CCJWA)

The commemoration of Kristallnacht in November 2018 was held at Temple David with Rabbi Marcus Solomon as guest speaker.

The Annual General Meeting was held in February with Monsignor Kevin Long PhD, Priest of the Catholic Archdiocese of Perth as guest speaker. His topic *The Christian debt to the Jewish tradition of praying the psalms*, was both reflective and most inspiring. In May, the annual worship at St Georges College, with music from the Winthrop Singers using music common to both Christians and Jews was followed by dinner and a fireside chat with Ms Helen Bryant. The film this year, *Ushpizan* was screened at St David's Anglican Church, Ardross. Our Muslim connection

This year a group of Turkish Moslems from the Intercultural Harmony Society hosted

Members of the Uniting Church at their centre in Queens Park for an iftar meal. The

Iftar meal is the 'breaking of the fast' at sunset each day throughout Ramadan. The sharing of the meal between Muslims and non-Muslims has become a powerful symbol of solidarity and unity. We are planning a future event for later in the year where we can share some of our traditions.

The National Assembly Seeking Common Ground Circle invites people to learn about and participate in the ways the Uniting Church is in relationship with other Churches, other faiths and those of no institutional faith. You can find out more and join the circle at uniting.church/seekingcommonground

5. LOOKING AHEAD

Ecumenical Affairs Commission is now a Network. We are in the process of change. We need your help. When our revised Facebook page goes up, please Like us and Share. Help us set up a Network of interested people ready to share activities and ideas. Hopefully all congregations will register. Before you go from Synod you could leave your name and contact details in the box provided in the foyer or email me (see details below)

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