



## Ecumenical Affairs Network

### Committee Members

*Convenor*

*Ex Officio*

*Member elected by Synod*

*Member elected by Synod*

*Member elected by Synod*

*Member elected by Synod*

Rev Justine Wall

Rev David de Kock

Dorothy Carey

Rev Lesley de Grussa

Rev Dr Sonny Rajamoney

Rev Marie Wilson

### 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.

### I. NEW DIRECTION 2019-20

Having made the transition from a Committee to a Network during 2019, we set up a contact list of people interested in ecumenism and interfaith dialogue and we looked forward to establishing an online presence in 2020. However, events this year have made it difficult for our committee to make regular contact and establish an effective means of sharing information and ideas.

Nevertheless, we have maintained a Uniting Church presence in ecumenical and interfaith organisations at state and national level, including the Council of Christians and Jews (WA), the Council of Churches of WA and the National Council of Churches.

We decided not to hold the Ecumenical and Interfaith Awards this year, giving our committee the opportunity to review the award and consider alternative activities to promote ecumenical and interfaith relationships. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, many of our ideas and planned events, including the annual Iftar meal with the Perth Muslim community, did not eventuate. Instead, our members have participated in meetings, workshops and prayer sessions largely online.

### 2. COUNCIL OF CHRISTIANS AND JEWS WA

The final event for 2019, the Kristallnacht commemoration, was held in November at Perth Modern School. The guest speaker, Malcolm McCusker AC CVO QC, addressed the topic: *'Evil creeps back, if good people stand aside'*, which is as relevant today as it was at the time of the Holocaust.

The AGM was held in February at the Gordon Bloomfield Hall in Yokine. The guest speakers for the evening were two students from Carmel School who gave an interesting presentation on their Year 10 trip to Israel.



Further events have been cancelled until August when a special screening of the film 'Resistance' will be shown at the Windsor Theatre. The film is inspired by the life story of Marcel Marceau who, before his film career, worked to bring orphaned children to France from Nazi Germany.

There will be a small gathering at St George's College Chapel with the Winthrop singers, hopefully in September, in place of our usual May gathering. The chapel service is usually followed by a meal and fireside chat with college students, but this is unlikely this year.

If you are interested in membership of the Council of Christian and Jews (WA), please see their webpage: <https://www.cjwa.org/index.htm>

### **3. COUNCIL OF CHURCHES**

#### **a. Council of Churches WA (CCWA)**

Uniting Church members continue to have an active involvement on the Council of Churches. Despite the changes that had to be made with the Covid-19 restrictions and the closure of the CCWA Office at Noranda UCA, the Executive Committee has continued to work and meet via Zoom.

The Annual General Meeting planned for April had to be cancelled but now will be held on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 2.30 pm at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 29 Robinson Road, Morley. The guest speaker will be Rev John Dihm, UCA Frontier Services Pilbara. This is an open meeting and all are invited.

#### **b. Week of Prayer for Christian Unity**

During this week leading up to Pentecost, CCWA presented a series of daily reflections live-streamed on Facebook, the internet and on radio by members of our local churches. The resources were prepared by the World Council of Churches and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland. There was a great response to the videos which are still available on the CCWA website.

The planned training programme for WA Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network (DRCN) in May had to be cancelled but an alternate programme was held via Zoom. That this was fully booked is an indication of the importance of and interest in this work. If you are interested in being involved in a further training program contact Simone at CCWA.

You can access CCWA through Facebook and its newsletter where events, invitations and activities hosted by CCWA and the member churches are available. If you would like to advertise or share information about events in your church in the Newsletter, you can contact the General Secretary, Simone Micke. To receive emails contact [ecumenical@churcheswa.com.au](mailto:ecumenical@churcheswa.com.au)

Six of our members were planning to attend the Fifth International Receptive Ecumenism Conference to be held in Sweden in June of this year and were very disappointed to have to cancel their registration and flights. The organising committee is hoping to reschedule the conference for October 2021. We had planned on using ideas from the Swedish experience for our Pilgrimage for Unity in Perth but will have to re-think and replan what we do. Why Receptive Ecumenism? How do we make that shift from prioritising the question "what do others first need to learn from us," to "what do we need to learn and can learn or receive with integrity from others."

We were sorry to see the Rev Pearl McGill resign from the Executive at the end of the year and thank her for her significant involvement on the Council.

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

c. 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, with a vision of a peaceful world where all people share a safe, just and dignified life. Uniting Church members continue to be generous in their support for Act for Peace. Representative, Andy Corkill, came over from Sydney in December to launch the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Christmas Bowl at the Ecumenical Christmas Service at St John's Lutheran Church in Northbridge. While here, Andy held an information session over morning tea at All Saints Uniting Church, Floreat.

The Act for Peace website provides a variety of weekly resources for worship from Christ the King day to the first Sunday after Christmas. These include worship outlines, prayers, hymns, videos, clip art, posters, craft activities and ideas for fund-raising.

d. The World Council of Church (WCC)

The World Council of Churches (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. IN MEMORIUM: JANET WATTS**

We give thanks to God for the life of Janet Watts who contributed so much to ecumenical activity not just in WA but in Australia. Janet was involved in the Christian Unity Committee, the Ecumenical Affairs Committee, the WA Council of Churches. She also attended National Council of Churches events and the WCC Assembly in Canberra. Janet was part of the Wellspring group and the Iona Community. For her participation in Australian Church Women, she was awarded life membership at both State and National levels. Janet died peacefully on 27<sup>th</sup> June, aged 95.

#### **5. LOOKING AHEAD**

Given the magnitude of recent global events and their ongoing impact, it is important for faith communities to work together to inform local responses as well as national policy making and programs. Ecumenical and interfaith organisations can give voice to the disadvantaged and disempowered. For these reasons we strongly encourage Uniting Church members to be actively involved in ecumenical affairs.

The Ecumenical Affairs Network is seeking new committee members and we hope to add to our growing community of individuals, congregations and agencies interested in ecumenism. To register your interest please contact Rev Justine Wall (Convenor) at [Justine.Wall@Scotch.wa.edua.au](mailto:Justine.Wall@Scotch.wa.edua.au)

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