
MODERATORIAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP

General Council appointed the Committee as follows:

- Convenor: Rev Ken Williams (Past Moderator)
- Members: Fiona Bentley, Alvin Gunawan, Steve Higgins, Rev Alan Jeffrey, Margaret Martin, Rev Lorraine Stokes
- Administrator: Maureen Bourke

NEEDS AND ISSUES FOR THE CHURCH IN THE 2017-2020 TRIENNIAL

In accordance with the By-Laws and Rules, General Council prepared advice for the Moderatorial Nominating Committee (MNC) concerning its assessment of needs and issues for the Church during the 2017-2020 Triennial, to be considered alongside the gifts and skills of nominees. This document is attached to the General Council Report to Synod.

NOMINATIONS

Nominations were declared open on 18 April 2016 in a letter from the General Secretary to all ordained ministers, lay appointees to the ministry of pastor, regional pastors, secretaries of church councils and secretaries of councils and boards of the Church in Western Australia. Notices followed in 'News and Notes' and an article appeared in 'Revive'. A graphic was prepared by the Media Unit and used extensively at the Presbytery meeting and on the website. The MNC thanks the Media Unit and the Business Committee for this publicity. Nominations closed on 24 June 2016 with three nominees submitting the required profiles and all being properly nominated. Besides these, the MNC believes that there are at least two or three others considering a possible future call to accept nomination and it thanks all those who participated by approaching others or considering their own position.

THE WORK OF THE MODERATORIAL NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The MNC met several times and communicated electronically as was necessary to prepare its documentation and timetable; review nominee profiles; consider whom it should itself approach; meet for conversations with nominees; receive referee reports; and finalize its recommendations to Synod. An unusual aspect was the nomination of the present Moderator. Assembly approval is required for a person to serve two *consecutive* terms. Historically, such approval has rarely been given although there have been recent precedents in respect of the Northern and Queensland Synods. The MNC raised with General Council the question of whether it wished to seek such approval, so that the MNC would know whether or not it should refer the nomination to Synod. In the event, Assembly approval was sought and obtained for the Rev Steve Francis to serve consecutive terms, should he be elected. Please note that Steve's nomination is to be considered on its own merits vis-a-vis those of the other nominees and without preference arising from the fact of his present incumbency.

STILL A TIME OF PRAYER AND DISCERNMENT

The *Basis of Union* reminds us that there is no gift without its corresponding service and so, for the Christian, life is characterized by ongoing prayerful discernment of call in relation to the gifts and graces with which one has been endowed. When it comes to discerning a call to serve in the Church, the process is one that is shared by the member and the Church. The Moderatorial nominating process and ultimately the election is set firmly within this context. At the May Presbytery meeting all members were encouraged to reflect prayerfully on whether they might be called to nominate someone and, if so, to request an Information Pack. Prospective nominees were encouraged to focus upon their own personal discernment as to whether this might be a call of God upon their lives, and not try to second-guess the subsequent discernment that properly belongs to the Church, through the work of the MNC and the ballot of the Synod in Session.



The three nominations, of the Rev Lesley de Grussa, the Rev Steve Francis and the Rev Margaret Tyrer, which are now placed before members of Synod, represent the fruit of this process to date. It is now the turn of members of Synod to discern prayerfully whom, amongst these faithful disciples, might be the one called by God to serve as Moderator during the 2017-2020 Triennium.

THE NOMINEES AND THEIR PROFILES

The MNC is required to submit to Synod the names of all nominees “who have demonstrated they can work within the visions and needs of the [Church] for the relevant triennium” (By-Laws and Rules 6.5.4(f)(i)) and has determined that all three nominees meet this criterion. That said, the MNC is mindful that, when it comes to making a choice, members of Synod must rely heavily upon the profile statements submitted by the nominees. Therefore the MNC has requested that nominees address, in their profile statements, how they envisage working with certain important aspects of the role of Moderator that have not necessarily been part of their experience to date. In view of the unequal position in this regard, which arises from the present Moderator’s incumbency, the MNC offered to the Rev Lesley de Grussa and the Rev Margaret Tyrer the opportunity of a conversation with the MNC Convenor, the Rev Ken Williams, to confirm or clarify the issues that are involved, if it would assist them in completing this requirement.

The brief given to nominees was to re-read the General Council assessment of needs and issues for the Church during the 2017-2020 Triennium [mentioned above] and then to prepare a two page profile statement addressing within it the following matters:

- 1) Your sense of call to the role of Moderator.
- 2) Your approach as Moderator to the diversity that exists within the Church and to what the General Council has termed “a Fresh Expressions” mindset.
- 3) Your approach as Moderator to relationships with the schools and agencies of the Church.

- 4) Your understanding of the role of Moderator vis-a-vis the Standing Committee and the General Secretary.
- 5) How you anticipate that your Moderatorship broadly would be categorized.

The profile statements prepared by the nominees are appended to this report.

PROPOSALS

That the Synod:

1. Receive the nominations of the Rev Lesley de Grussa, the Rev Steve Francis and the Rev Margaret Tyrer for election as Moderator for 2017-2020 Triennium.
2. Thank and discharge the Moderatorial Nominating Committee.

(Rev) Ken Williams

Convenor, Moderatorial Nominating
Committee 0427 782 136



Moderatorial Nominee Profile

Rev Lesley Ann de Grussa

(provided by the Candidate)



When two people approached me, and asked that I consider offering myself for nomination for the position of Moderator at the 40th meeting of the Synod of Western Australia, I was challenged by the words ‘A *discernment process for all*’. These words were spoken by Rev Ken Williams at the May Presbytery meeting and were repeated again in the Revive, issue 48.

“This is a discernment process for all,” Rev. Williams said and “The two most common mistakes would be for people to think this is for somebody up there, that they will get it done. What we want is for *all* members of the church to submit this to prayer.” These words caused me to rethink my initial answer to the question. I realised this call was simply; to faithfully put my name forward for consideration and focus on the needs and issues for the Church during the 2017-2020 Triennium.

In *The Basis of Union* (paragraph 13) the last sentence speaks of embarking on a journey where we *all* discern the gifts bestowed upon us. Then we will order our life in response to God’s call, to enter more fully into his mission.

I understand and acknowledge my own call and gifts that have shaped my ministry thus far. I’m encouraged by the journey and would feel privileged to be part of the Leadership

Team of the Synod of Western Australia as we vision a ‘Fresh Expression mindset.’ A form of church for our changing culture; through the principles of listening, service, contextual mission and making disciples.

My journey of faith in Jesus Christ began at the age of thirteen, when a teacher at the local country High School encouraged me to go to church. I went and it changed my life. I felt I had no choice but to discover *who this God* was in that little Methodist Church.

There was an instant warmth which has carried me through the ‘valleys’ and mountain ‘tops’ of life’s journey.

I have done my best to follow Jesus example and teachings. I believe that God has led me to Ordination and the role of Deacon in the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA), and now guides me to have the confidence to place my profile before you today.

My approach as Moderator will address the diversity that exists within the church and what the General Council has termed “A Fresh Expression mindset.” I expect that we as leaders (Lay or Ordained) are ‘to hear anew the commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of *all* nations’. Thereafter, enter more deeply into the faith and mission of the Church. By working together and seeking union with other Churches.

The Uniting Church (UC) does not claim to be *the* church but to live and work *within* the church of God. And continues to commit us to participation in ecumenical bodies and international confessional councils. We are to learn from the experiences of other united and uniting churches and to ‘seek special relationships with churches in Asia and the Pacific.’

We as the UC in WA also recognise the unique and special relationship which exists between our indigenous brothers and sisters. We affirm and acknowledge their place in this country as the first custodians and support the formation of an indigenous Presbytery in the future.

My approach as Moderator will be to continually demonstrate a balanced approach in affirming and encouraging opportunities. To gather as a united force by working collectively by valuing each other’s giftedness and boundaries.



We are experiencing a renewed emphasis on lay leadership. This is a welcome development. It is gratifying to see people taking leadership roles and rejoicing in their gifts and abilities. Both lay and ordained leaders need to think seriously about the future. Together we are charged to engender hope and encourage innovation. Let us leave our safe space and take a walk around the community surrounding us. Stop-Look-Listen to; families, young people, migrants and those from different backgrounds and origins. They are all there, we simply have to think of how the church can harness the vision, and be supportive to the many willing hands of passionate leaders in our communities.

My approach as Moderator in relation to Schools and Agencies of the church is again captured in the *basis of Union*, where the church is called into “Fellowship of reconciliation” (paragraph 3.) I deeply value our relationships with the Schools and Agencies of the UCA. I see the Moderator as wearing several ‘hats’; of visitor, steward of reconciliation and the shepherd (pastoral) and our goal as renewal with an end view for the whole of creation. We will know this is working as we witness our ecumenical activism in *all* our relationships with the Agencies of the Church, with open honest communication; each recognising the boundaries of its own authority. Allowing space for an open ended commitment which requires attention to diverse gifts, where the Spirit is continually re-equipping members of the church as we respond to unforeseeable changes in the missionary context.

My understanding of the role of Moderator vis-à-vis the Standing Committee and the General Secretary is highlighted by what Andrew Dutney calls “Constant Review”. This approach recognises the responsibilities and freedoms which belong to church councils. By acknowledging gifts among members for fulfilment of particular functions, deliberately leaving considerable room for the creation of ministry according to local needs. He draws attention to both paragraph 15 and 16 in the *Basis of Union*, clarifying the tasks and responsibilities to both the Church and the World; initially through the elected members from *our* Synod. I see the role of the Moderator to work pastorally as a servant

between these councils and shepherd the people within.

I have been blessed in having a broad and healthy God-given strength filled with grace and passion. I have engaged in regular Presbytery and Synod forums, gaining experience on several committees over the years in three Synods; WA, SA, NT, Frontier Services and Assembly. This has allowed me the opportunity to embrace a wide theological richness and diversity. Especially with the Indonesian Synod and Christian partnership, by preaching, attending the ordination of several students from Jakarta and a team member of the Mandurah UC, by hosting a cultural exchange for 15 youth from Bali. I was fortunate to attend the UCA Presidents Conference in Vanuatu and have participated extensively in the mission of God by living and walking humbly with our brothers and sisters in the Indigenous Communities of NT and Murchison Region of WA. My ministry profile is that of the Deaconate; allowing me to draw upon my own giftedness and continue the example set by previous Moderators as they endeavoured to visit as many UC’s, Communities, and Agencies in WA and beyond.

Finally, as a ‘Fresh Expression’ for the Church during 2017-2020 Triennium, I would anticipate my focus as Moderator would be broadly based, in a pastoral sense as

Craig Bailey aptly reflected at our May Presbytery meeting; “*The church has an amazing opportunity to become what God is hoping we will come to be, it will take the re-sculpting of our organisations and corporate culture, the incubation of new forms, new languages, new expressions, new symbols, flexible ways of being organised and lead to an even fuller explanation of what we know as the Gospel.*” (Quoted from D. Gibbons)

If you place your trust in me I will maintain the public face in all ecumenical settings. I will follow the example of Jesus’ wisdom, knowledge and experience, with the discipline of spiritual insight.



Moderatorial Nominee Profile

Rev Steve Francis

(provided by the Candidate)



Over the past twelve months I have been approached by a number of people to allow my name to go forward as a nomination for Moderator. At first I received comments like, “you are just getting into the role of Moderator and now we are looking for a new one. Why can’t you stay on”. Then several more persistent people advised me that the Assembly Standing Committee on at least two occasions has allowed a serving Moderator’s name to be nominated for a further term, along with other nominations presented to the Synod. The rationale seems to be that during the first year of the office the incumbent is getting to know the role, in the second year they are fulfilling the role and in the third year they are transitioning the role to a Moderator elect. In times of change leadership stability and continuity can be seen as a good thing. When two country congregations nominated me I had to prayerfully consider whether or not I should allow my name to go to the Moderatorial Nominating Committee.

After some heart searching, conversations with friends, family and colleagues and much prayerful discernment I felt I should proceed, sensing God’s call, believing that the Synod will sense the leading of the Spirit in electing God’s choosing for Moderator 2017-20 whoever that person is.

Fire in the belly.

In seeking God’s guidance for future directions I believe that I continue to have a passion for Christ, for Christ’s church and for Christ’s mission in the world. I love the Uniting Church and have energetically served the Uniting Church as an ordained minister for over 35 years. I have boundless hope and zeal for this church. I continue to believe that the best is yet to be. I am not naïve about the huge challenges that we face. Nor am I suggesting that there are any simple solutions to our problems. I continue to have a burning vision that the Uniting Church will, by the grace of God and power of the Spirit achieve its missional and redemptive potential. We cannot live in the past. Our demographic profile needs Godly, prayerful, pastoral and imaginative missional leadership. I love the words of the Basis of Union calling us “to confess the Lord in fresh words and deeds”(para 11). I am fully committed to this.

Over the past two years I have had the great privilege of being deeply and widely involved in the life of the Uniting Church. With the theme of “Towards healing and wholeness, through faith, hope and love” I have seen much that has encouraged me about this church. God is at work. The tone of our Presbytery and Synod meetings is changing. There is a stronger sense of unity, a greater willingness to work together and a deeper desire to discern the mission of God. We are in a period of transition with a new General Secretary and the restructuring of the church office. We are building stronger partnerships with our Agencies and Schools. We are listening more carefully to the voices of the first peoples and Congress (UAICC). We are reviewing First Third and seeking to renew theological education. We understand more about Fresh Expressions and Mission Shaped churches. (I have attended an International conference and am very enthusiastic about what God is doing in these areas). We are learning how to include and celebrate with our migrant ethnic and multicultural congregations. We are becoming clearer about our mission priorities. I have been personally and passionately involved in all these areas and if given a further term I would continue to give my time, energy and prayers to these important and strategic endeavours. Evangelism, faith sharing and faith formation,



vibrant worship, discipleship, care for the most vulnerable and social justice are core to who we are.

I believe I am a team player and I have always sought to practice collaborative and servant leadership. The role of Moderator goes way beyond the boundaries of the Uniting Church. I have worked hard at developing strong ecumenical relationships through the Heads of Churches and the Council of Churches. I have been an active member of Jewish/ Christian dialogue. I have had the special privilege of representing the Uniting Church in discussions with the Governor, Premier, and members of State and Federal Parliament. I feel comfortable when asked to speak with the media and to write a regular blog.

Most of all, however, I delight in being with congregations great and small, rural, suburban and remote, in worship and prayer on a Sunday. Moderators receive the enormous privilege of meeting so many inspiring, faithful and loving people who are part of this movement of God, the Uniting Church in WA. If I am given the opportunity I will continue to travel to our rural congregations to preach and bring words of encouragement.

Short bio

I am a boat person. I landed at Fremantle forty five years ago. I have an engineering background, having worked in a chocolate factory and with a mining company. I have had a long association with young people. In a previous life I was a local youth worker and Synod youth worker and have been engaged in student ministry for nearly forty years. I also have a strong affinity for non-Anglo/Celtic people. I have travelled widely in Asia and Africa. I love that the Uniting Church is a multicultural church and I have a special bond with Chinese people through many years of ministry with them. I have studied engineering, theology, and I have a double major in Philosophy and History and an ongoing commitment to continuous learning.

I have served as minister at Scarborough (4 years) and at Nedlands (23 years). I understand well the joys and struggles of congregational ministry. Over the past 18 months I have sought to reignite the retreat movement to give ministers time out for collegiate support and spiritual refreshment. I have served on lots of Councils and

Commissions, including co-chair Multicultural committee, co-chair of the Covenanting Commission, SMPC, PRPC, Assembly Standing Committee, MLC council, Youth Care board and the World Methodist Council.

I continue to be indebted to my wife Kim, who serves as a deacon at Maylands/Mount Lawley. Her wisdom, encouragement and occasional correction help me make fewer mistakes and her love helps to grow my spirit. My children Sarah (a GP) and Joel (an accountant) are active Christ followers who have served in Christian ministry in Africa and China as well as being active in the local church. They too keep me grounded. Many of you know me well. You know my weaknesses, limitations and failing. I am a work in progress. I still have much to learn, more growing, loving and serving to do. Whatever God calls me to do I want to do it with all my heart. I have known the riches of God's grace in Christ and I am open to further directions via the Holy Spirit and the church.

Your servant in Christ, Steve Francis



Moderatorial Nominee Profile

Rev Margaret Tyrer

(provided by the Candidate)



Your sense of call to the role of Moderator

My life-long journey in faith has led from infant baptism, through confirmation to ordination in 1985. Members of the church have challenged me about considering wider leadership roles since then. Over the last 20 years, I have been asked to reflect on whether I was called to be Moderator almost every time there has been a call for a moderator-elect. Early this year, it became clear to me for the first time that, should anyone ask me again to accept nomination, I should accept. A number discussed the possibility with me. The actual mover and seconder of my nomination were clear, strong and decisive in their discernment of the matter, believing that I have the appropriate character and capacity, and I am submitting to that. In the Uniting Church, however, the appropriate choice for such a commission is corporately discerned, and is now in the hands of the Synod in session.

Approach to diversity that exists within the church and to a “fresh expressions mindset”

The Bible itself indicates that diverse voices must be part of the ongoing witness to God. The Pentecost story in Acts suggests that the gospel is to go out in diverse forms, not that

diverse peoples are to be drawn in to one cultural conformity. The church’s early engagement with Gentile believers is an early form of diversification. We may note that the original apostles did not fall easily into consensus over this, but had to engage in some significant spiritual and theological struggle. Matthew 13:52 challenges us to bring out of our treasure, “what is new and what is old”. Luke 12:56 challenges us to “interpret the present time”. The Basis of Union (11) commits the church to “sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought”, says that “contemporary societies may help it to understand its own nature and mission” and commits it to “fresh words and deeds”. But the church is never released from its vocation as the people of God-with-us in Christ or the charge to proclaim God-with-us in Christ in word and deed. What is to be made new or fresh to diverse peoples in diverse settings is the church’s traditional confession of old: the Lordship of Jesus Christ. There are innumerable cultural forms, languages, venues and styles that may be used creatively in this obedience.

Approach as Moderator to relationships with the school and agencies of the church

The schools and agencies operate under the authority of the Synod, which has its formal, structural relations to them. Within that context, the Moderator relates to them partly in an ex-officio way under their respective constitutions. More personally and informally, the Moderator represents the Synod and the Uniting Church to governing bodies, staff and extended communities on appropriate occasions, helping to foster the common grounding in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. I have had experience in this area through membership of the Board of Mission and Nurture (1986-90), General Council (2011-12), Wesley College Council (1985-90) and, currently, Scotch College Council. I have also been invited to lead worship and/or preach at a number of our schools and colleges’ ordinary and special events over the years. My experience with UnitingCare West has been through regularly promoting congregational support of its various works. My experience with aged care agencies has been limited to visiting members accommodated in them



The role of Moderator vis-à-vis the Standing Committee and the General Secretary

For meetings of the Synod, the Moderator and Secretary have defined and differentiated roles. The Moderator presides so as to ensure that the agreed order and procedures are followed and that all members are able to exercise their rights and responsibilities. The Secretary ensures that all the business comes to Synod properly prepared and presented and that the proceedings and decisions are properly recorded. The Secretary advises the Moderator and the Synod on questions of procedure. The Moderator rules on questions of procedure. The Secretary communicates decisions of the Synod to those they concern. The Moderator represents the Synod in a more personal way to the wider Uniting Church, to other churches and to the public. As General Secretary, the Synod Secretary is responsible in an executive way for the Synod office and staff. The Moderator is concerned with the work of groups and staff on the Synod's behalf in a presiding or advisory capacity. Regulations and by-laws offer sufficient demarcation for Moderator and Secretary to work together without conflict. The more they can develop good levels of trust and consultation, the more the work will benefit.

How you anticipate that your Moderatorship broadly would be categorised

To be effective, leadership of a non-hierarchical, voluntary collective of adults, such as the UCA, has to respect the autonomy, gifts, responsibilities and feelings of all its corporate and individual stakeholders. Because this is a church, the person and work of Christ, our ultimate leader, and the vocation Christ calls the church to, need to be continually proclaimed for our continuing corporate and individual conversion.

The understandings of "faith" (built upon the one Lord Jesus Christ), "theology" (controlled by the Biblical witnesses and sharpened by contact with contemporary thought) and "mission" (human witness in word and action announcing the sovereign grace of God) expressed in the *Basis of Union* express my own position. I remain a serious student of the Bible, with all its diversity and complexity,

theologically Christological and Trinitarian, with all its problems, and pastorally responsible and responsive, with all its burdens.

My professional style is consultative, communicative, appreciative and encouraging. While I am usually clear about my own view, I do not need to assert it over others and enjoy working cooperatively with others. I am clear about accountability and boundary recognition. Dominant individuals may not just be permitted to assume un-authorized roles, expressions of various forms of prejudice may not just go unchallenged. I work hard at good communication, so that all stakeholders know what is going on and why. At the same time, I bring a light touch, accepting human foibles, enjoying shared laughter, and appreciating subversive insights.

In my current placement, I work at making myself equally available to all, at not giving privileged access to some or developing special friendships with a few. I encourage and support individual and corporate lay leadership, calling individual giftedness into the service of the whole and supporting the work of committees and councils.

People and congregations feel safe, and better able to negotiate life's challenges themselves, when they can perceive and trust the competence, care and incorruptibility of their leaders.

A moderator may primarily hope and pray to help the church to listen to its living Lord, but I have never chaired a very large gathering, such as a Synod, with a consensus meeting procedure. I would have to learn that, and, in the event mistakes are made, be relaxed about apology and remediation.

