

Uniting Church in Australia

Presbytery of Western Australia



Minutes of the General Meeting of
the Presbytery of Western Australia
Under Electronic Procedures
on 19 March 2022

1. CONSTITUTION

On Saturday 19 March 2022 at 9.00 am, the Presbytery of Western Australia opened online in worship, the Chairperson, Alison Xamon, presiding along with the Secretary.

This service incorporated the welcome from the Chairperson, Alison Xamon, who also provided guidance on some of the particular protocols that would be used to facilitate the meeting via this different medium.

It also incorporated an acknowledgement of country delivered by Alison Xamon, recognising that she is meeting on the land of the Whadjuk Noongar people and others come from other people's country, recognising elders present, acknowledging the ongoing stewardship of these peoples and reminding us all of the covenant that we walk within.

Rev Hollis Wilson preached on the texts of 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11, I Corinthians 13:1-13 and Colossians 3:12-17. He spoke on the need that we need to come together as body of Christ as a people of grace, willing to forgive, and to know God's love and grace. Then we may trust each other and face together the challenges of the now and future.

Rev Dr Ian Tozer led us in the prayers of the people.

There were 44 ministerial and 58 lay members present, with all attending via Zoom. 2 apologies were submitted.

2. MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

The Secretary, Rev Dr David Ferguson, reported on the arrangements made for the meeting.

The Rev Dr David Ferguson moved on behalf of the Business Committee, with minor amendments:

That the WA Presbytery agrees:

1. Amend the Roll of Presbytery attached to the Minutes of the Presbytery meeting on 20 November 2021 by:

Ministers in active service

Rev Trevor Waters – removed due to retirement

Rev Steve Francis – moved from co-opted (now in placement at Tranby College)

Rev Andrew Broadbent – moved from Baylife to Fremantle Wesley

Rev Dr Andrew Williams – new General Secretary

Rev Claire Pickering – in placement at Mt Pleasant UC

Rev Dr Katalina Tahaafe-Williams – UCIC (Trinity)

Associate Ministers

Rev Don Dowling – removed by request

Ministers Co-opted

Rev Janelle McGregor – removed as no longer in supply.

Rev John Dunn – removed - concluded appointment as General Secretary

Faith Communities

Tapu Niue – welcomed

Co-opted Lay Members

Susan Sydney Smith – MoW Candidate

Janine McDonald – removed as no longer employed

Congregational Lay Representatives

Marie Yuncken – elected 2nd rep for Floreat UC

Sue Arthurs – elected rep for St Andrews UC

Ralph Moore – elected 2nd rep for Mt Pleasant UC

Bob Nicholls – added as once-off Alternate rep for Swan View UC as current rep is an apology for this meeting.

Cheryl Lawson – elected rep for Maaman “O” Miya UC

2. Authorise the Presbytery Standing Committee to confirm the minutes of this Presbytery Meeting

3. Authorise the Presbytery Standing Committee to act on all matters that are the responsibility of the Presbytery, including those excluded items in Presbytery Rule 3.1.2 if a public health warning in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic leads to the cancellation of any future meeting of the Presbytery.

4. Appoint Rev Ken Devereaux as the Returning Officer for this meeting.

These were approved by consensus.

3. INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSAL 4

Rev Des Cousins introduced the matters covered in Proposal 4 and opened the issues regarding the particular changes made. Some discussion was held, and particular matters raised by the members.

4. INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSAL 3

Rev Ivan Clark explained the process that led to the recommendation contained in proposal 3. He explained that there is work planned by the Billabong in the near future that the PRC believe justify their recommendation that Luke's placement be extended for a period of three years. This involves exploring opportunities either for a Church Plant or a replanting in an existing Church building. Dean David and Liam Salter also spoke in support of this proposal.

5. INTRODUCTION OF PROPOSAL 2

Rev Bev Fabb introduced Proposal 2 on behalf of the Candidates for Ministry Commission, describing the activities and processes that Elaine has passed through to get to this point, and Elaine also shared many of the aspects of her journey.

6. DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION ON PROPOSAL 2

Elaine left the room for this part of the discussion.

Alison Xamon tested the meeting as to their readiness to move to a vote on this matter. This was approved by

consensus.

A formal ballot was opened on the following proposal:

That the Presbytery of WA agree:

To ordain Dr Elaine Ledgerwood as a Deacon, subject to her receiving a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Studies from the Assembly and being called to a placement.

7. PROMOTION OF MINISTRY EXPO

Rev Bev Fabb encouraged members to personally invite members of their congregation to the Ministry expo.

8. DECLARATION OF BALLOT ON PROPOSAL 2

The electronic ballot on the following proposal was declared closed:

That the Presbytery of WA agree:

To ordain Dr Elaine Ledgerwood as a Deacon, subject to her receiving a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Studies from the Assembly and being called to a placement.

Alison Xamon announced that this vote was approved by the appropriate majority, Elaine was admitted into the room and the moment acknowledged with applause.

Rev Claire Pickering led us in a prayer for Elaine.

9. DISCUSSION AND DETERMINATION ON PROPOSAL 3

Rev Alan Jeffrey and Rev Ivan Clark provided further information on questions received. On behalf of the discussion group, Ivan informed the meeting that the three-year timeframe (rather than maximum of five allowed in the Regulations) was assigned on the basis of the plans that were presented. He also informed the meeting that Luke has faithfully made himself available for conversations with other congregations ever since he has been available for placement.

Dean David spoke on some of the congregation's part in the discussion regarding the decision to seek an extension for three years, and on some of the thinking going on towards launching a new church plant.

Liam Salter spoke on the behalf of the congregation on the intentional work they are doing in developing leadership from within the congregation, and the ways in which Luke has worked in a number of different specialised areas within the life of the congregation and has handed on leadership to other members.

Rev Alan Jeffrey responded on behalf of the Consultation team, informing the meeting that they had entered into a lengthy and challenging discussion regarding the congregation's expressed need to retain Luke. He also revealed that Luke has entered into a conversation with another congregation while this process continued.

After discussion, and the acceptance of a minor amendment to align the closing date of the extension with the general timings of placements, the meeting indicated that it was willing to proceed with making this decision by formal electronic ballot.

10. DECLARATION OF BALLOT ON PROPOSAL 3

After the closure of the ballot, Alison Xamon announced with pleasure that the following proposal had been passed.

That the Presbytery:

1. Agree to the beyond 10-year extension of the placement of Rev Luke Williams with the Billabong congregation for a period of 3 years, commencing on 1 February 2023, so that the placement concludes on 31 January 2026, if no other call is accepted prior to that date.

Rev Alan Jeffrey then led us in prayer for Luke, the Billabong and their continuing ministry together.

11. INFORMATION SESSION – COVENANTING COMMISSION

Geoff Bice presented a quick information session on behalf of the Covenanting Commission. He introduced a tool that the covenanting commission has developed for congregations to seek to develop their local expression of the covenant.

We agreed to send out the link to this guide to Presbytery members as part of our communique: <https://unitingchurchwa.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/Covenanting-Guide-2021-WA-Final-V1.1.pdf>

The Covenanting Commission is a Synod Committee, members who are interested may show interest through contacting Geoff in the Synod Social Justice Unit.

12. DELIBERATION AND DECISION OF PROPOSAL 4

Rev Des Cousins indicated that he was willing to do more work and present later amendments as a result of feedback, some amendments will be made in the future to the ones approved on Saturday to deal with General and Casual Vacancies in the membership of Presbytery Bodies and to clarify the rights of Presbytery Members who are members of other denominations. He then indicated that he was unwilling to accept amendments as he was representing a significant group that worked on the proposal, and asked for the proposed rules to be considered on that basis.

Alison Xamon indicated that she would be proceeding by asking for comments and feedback on each of the particular proposed rules before checking for consensus.

It is proposed: That the Presbytery endorse the following sets of Rules, replacing the corresponding existing Rules.

Presbytery Rule 5: Presbytery meetings

Approved by consensus

Presbytery Rule 7: Election of Presbytery bodies

Concerns were related in relation to P7.4(f), in that it may have potential to effect Ministers serving in placements with us from other denominations. The group working on this requested that the current set of words be approved, and that the working group seek to address this concern and to respond to the Presbytery by June.

Approved by Consensus

Presbytery Rule 11: General Rules for Presbytery Bodies

Approved by Consensus

Alison Xamon offered her thanks to Des for the care he has exercised in consulting broadly in this process, and in the diligent preparation of the rules as they come to the meeting.

13. QUESTIONS ARISING FROM REPORTS

Alison Xamon reminded that we take the reports as read, and asked for questions arising from authors of our individual reports:

CEDAL

A question was asked regarding the VET position, Rev Claire Pickering informed CEDAL has determined that the current position shall be closed, and a small group is being put together to discuss the role of all of their staff positions around the important matter of lay education.

The report was accepted by consensus

CMC

A question was asked regarding the use of other UCA theological colleges as a part of our work. Rev Claire Pickering informed that this is being considered as part of our current strategic planning. Rev Bev Fabb also informed the meeting that this is already occurring in the place of many of our candidates.

The report was accepted by consensus

Multicultural Network.

Alison Xamon noted that this is Rev Bev Fabb's last meeting as the convenor of this committee, and asked Presbytery to express their thanks to Bev for this work. *Approved by consensus*

Bev spoke on the continuing importance of the work of this committee in building communication.

The report was accepted by consensus

PRC

Ivan provided the process for appointing Pastors via the chat functions. We promised to distribute this document, this is attached.

A question was asked regarding the review of extensions of placements. Ivan informed the Presbytery that we are reviewing our life and witness processes internally as they proceed through a number currently in progress. The process regarding extensions beyond ten years is that of developing a discussion paper that will be presented to Church Councils for comment before further development and presentation of a proposal to the Presbytery.

The report was accepted by consensus

Concerns were raised regarding the ongoing work of distributing worship resources past the end of Rev Gordon Scantlebury's current period of volunteering, and this was referred to the Presbytery Standing Committee to bring back to the June Presbytery meeting.

Sue Thompson offered to assist in preparing these resources.

The report was accepted by consensus

Property Strategy Development Joint Working Group

The report was accepted by consensus

Thrive Mission Committee

Rev Greg Ross informed the meeting that he has answered a question by email to the satisfaction of the questioner.

He spoke of the research project led by Dr Kunek is proceeding, and the next day's workshop is now just restricted to Thrive. Invitations to a meeting on Saturday March 26 will soon be sent by email.

The report was accepted by consensus

UnitingGenerations Report

Alison Xamon reminded us that we will be seeking to refill this position after a review of the role description.

The report was accepted by consensus

Treasurer's Report

Rev Greg Ross asked Rev Marilyn Price if it has been getting easier to gain financial information from the Synod. Marilyn informed the meeting that this is not the case but that the Finance Committee are working towards developing a memorandum of understanding with the Synod.

Rev Bev Fabb reminded the meeting that Ps Marilyn Price's term as Treasurer ends in November, and we urgently need a volunteer to take this role in order to allow an orderly transition.

A query arose relating to the entanglement of Presbytery finances within Synod accounts in the current financial arrangements. The PSC has been asked to consider how best to inform the Presbytery of this matter.

The report was accepted by consensus

Chairperson's Report

Bob Hunt (Former Chairperson) took the chair, to allow Alison to present.

Alison was asked to elaborate on the review of the current structure of the Council for Mission. Alison informed the Presbytery that a broader discussion is occurring in relation to the best ways we can structure the important task of identifying and resourcing opportunities for mission that arise.

The report was accepted by consensus

Alison Xamon resumed the chair.

14. MATTERS ARISING

Rev Claire Pickering was asked about whether current vacancy of the minutes secretary on CEDAL is seeking to be filled. Claire informed the meeting that this in the past has been filled by a staff member in a position we were currently seeking to fill.

The report was accepted by consensus

15. ANNOUNCEMENTS

The meeting was informed that the ordination of Mitchell Garlett has been temporarily postponed due to personal matters. We are hoping to bring a revised date for this in the near future.

Alison reminded the Presbytery of our two upcoming inductions:

- Rev Dr Katalina Tehaafe-Williams at Trinity Uniting Church in the city at 2 p.m. on 3 April
- Rev Claire Pickering at Mount Pleasant Uniting Church at 2 p.m. on 10 April

Alison repeated the request from the CMC that members of the Presbytery actively challenge members of their congregation to attend the Ministry Expo, and also reminded members of their opportunity to contribute to the survey relating to the “Revive” magazine.

Doug Birkinshaw asked if we could find out what direct and personal connections we have with Ukraine, and thanked Alison for her great work in leading this meeting. Act for Peace was identified as a point of connection. Rev Hollis Wilson informed the meeting that the protest from the Ukrainian Church is being held outside the Wesley Uniting Church in the City. Ralph Moore informed us that Mt Pleasant has held a prayer meeting for Ukraine which attracted people from the broader community

16. FINAL THANKS

As the meeting concluded, Alison Xamon expressed thanks to all members for their diligent attention to the matters of the day and to the following people for their assistance in the running of the Presbytery meeting:

- PSC for their guidance in how to conduct this meeting
- Rev Dr David Ferguson, Amanda Badenhorst, Rev Luke Williams and Rev Ken Devereux for working through the technical issues
- Attenders of the trial meeting that identified and helped address many issues before the meeting

17. CLOSURE OF THE MEETING

Rev Greg Ross closed the meeting in prayer at 1:04

Alison Xamon
Chairperson

Confirmed by the Presbytery Standing Committee 5 April 2022