



Uniting Church in Australia
Presbytery of Western Australia



**Minutes of the Meeting of the
Presbytery of Western Australia
at Noranda Uniting Church
on 16 March 2024**

1. Constitution

On Saturday 16 March 2024 at 9.00 am, the Presbytery of Western Australia met at Noranda Uniting Church with the Chairperson, Alison Xamon, presiding.

There were 33 ministerial and 50 lay members present, with 4 ministers and 3 lay members attending via Zoom. Apologies were submitted from 10 ministers and 13 lay members.

2. Welcome and Opening Prayer

The Chairperson, Alison Xamon, welcomed members, especially those attending their first meeting, opening in prayer.

3. Welcome to Country

Alison Xamon acknowledged that we were meeting on Whadjuk Noongar land and paid her respects to their elders, affirming the Covenant with Congress.

4. Opening worship

The Opening Worship was led by the Chair of Presbytery with Rev Reuben Edmonds preaching on the text of Ephesians 4:15-16. During the service Rev Andrew Broadbent was inducted into the role of CEDAL Education and Resources Co-ordinator.

5. Community Building and Prayer

Members of Presbytery met in small groups for sharing about congregational life and prayer together.

6. Meeting arrangements

The Secretary, Rev Bev Fabb, presented Proposal 1 about the arrangements for this meeting.

The Presbytery agreed by consensus to

- 1. To amend the Roll of Presbytery adopted at the Presbytery meeting on 18 November 2023 as follows:***

1.1 Ministers in Active Service

- **Remove Rev Ruth Vertigan- retired from placement**
- **Remove Rev Alan Jeffrey- retired from placement**
- **Add Rev Samuel Annan- ordained and inducted into Rockingham congregation.**
- **Add Rev Ana Lea'aetooa- ordained and inducted into Pastoral Care Team at King Edward Memorial Hospital.**
- **Add Rev Dr Anne Wright- re-classified to Active Service**
- **Change Rev Andrew Broadbent to CEDAL Education and Resources Co-ordinator.**
- **Change Rev Dr Cathie Lambert to CEDAL Formation and Learning Culture Co-ordinator.**
- **Change Rev David Jackson to Pilbara Patrol.**
- **Change Rev Toby Keva to Willetton.**
- **Change Rev Ivan Clark to Trinity North.**

1.2 Ministers Co-opted

- **Remove Rev Zac Cronje- no longer in supply minister**
- **Add Rev Frances Hadfield- supply ministry at Ross Memorial**

1.3 Community Ministers

- **Remove Uto Fotu- retired from Community Ministry**

1.4 Congregational Lay Representatives

- **Remove Gwyn Thornton- no longer lay member from Dongara**
- **Replace Liz Pederick with Robyn Willey as lay member from Wagin**
- **Replace David Preece with Neville Blesing as lay member from Nedlands**

1.5 Co-opted Lay Members

- **Remove Samuel Annan- moved to active ministry list**
- **Remove Ana Lea'aetooa- moved to active ministry list**
- **Change Heather Hamblin- now on Property Committee**

Members of the Presbytery should note that the approval of these appointments (apart from once off alternates) will confer membership of Presbytery to the person until the next AGM.

2. To appoint the following as once off alternates for this meeting only

- **Ann Britt Wasley as lay member from Wagin.**
- **Stephen Thiele as lay member from Nedlands.**

3. Adopt the Order of Business for this meeting.

4. Appoint Rev Sophia Lizares and Rev Hannes Halgryn as Chaplains for this meeting of the Presbytery.

5. **Appoint Sue Whitworth as Returning Officer and Mary Riley and John Berger as scrutineers for this meeting of the Presbytery.**
6. **Authorise the Presbytery Standing Committee to confirm the minutes of this meeting of the Presbytery.**

7. Chairperson's Report

A past chairperson, Rev Lorraine Stokes, took the chair.

Alison Xamon presented the report. There were no questions and the report was received.

The chairperson, Alison Xamon, resumed the chair.

8. Finance Report

Janine McDonald, Presbytery Treasurer, presented the Finance Report. She explained the audit requirements for congregations and informed members that a new template for congregational financial reports would be distributed soon. A comment was made that congregational deposits in UCIF had value for the wider church and encouraged congregations to deposit their funds in UCIF. The report was received.

9. Candidates for Ministries Committee report

Rev Bev Fabb presented the report. There were no questions and the report was received.

10. Pastoral Relations Committee report

Sue Strutt presented the report, indicating that PRC are a small group who work hard and are listening to congregations especially through the Listening Journeys process. There were no questions and the report was received.

11. Thrive Mission Committee report

Yvonne Robinson presented the report. The Chair of Presbytery explained that PSC has approved a co-Chair arrangement for Thrive, as Rev Greg Ross cannot attend PSC meetings and Yvonne has been co-opted to PSC. Yvonne and Greg are sharing

the role and this is working. Yvonne reported that Listening Journeys are time consuming but it was a great experience to hear from congregations although at times challenging. Thanks were expressed to Rev Rob Douglas, PRC and Thrive members who were participating in the Listening Journeys. MSM training is being held later this year, but is not getting the same level of support as in previous years- it will only proceed if 15 people participate. Thanks were expressed to Rev Rob Douglas who only has a few months before retirement. A question was asked how the separation of Thrive and Property is working out with the response that this is working well. Thrive are now able to focus on mission, but the amount of work that sits under Property is enormous. The report was received.

12. Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) report

Dr Karen Flowers presented the report commenting that CEDAL had been busy over the last year. There was an amendment to the report in relation to the Mentor for Cameron Harries. The report was received

13. Presbytery Property Committee

Heather Hamblin presented the report. The committee is now 2 and half months old and has 80 items on its agenda- a huge amount of work is being undertaken. The latest property inspections have thrown up a lot of maintenance issues- smaller and elderly congregation who cannot maintain buildings. Property Committee are working with PRC and Thrive on these issues. Insurance is a major concern- many properties are under insured. The value of the building for insurance purposes is set by the congregation and most cannot afford the cost of getting the building properly valued, so often they under insure. Thanks for those who have agreed to help. The report was received.

14. Proposal 2- Ordination of Susan Lord

Rev Bev Fabb on behalf of the Candidates for Ministries Committee presented the following proposal and invited Susan to address the Presbytery.

That the WA Presbytery agrees to ordain Susan Lord as a Minister of the Word, subject to her receiving a Certificate of Satisfactory Completion of Studies from the Assembly and being called to a placement.

15. Proposal 3- Recognition of Lay Preacher

Rev Bev Fabb on behalf of the Candidates for Ministries Committee presented the following proposal and invited Carolyn to address the Presbytery.

That the WA Presbytery agrees to recognise Carolyn Ebell- Taylor as a Lay Preacher and request the Chairperson of Presbytery to arrange for this to be recognised in a service of worship, including presentation of a Certificate of Recognition as a Lay Preacher.

16. Secret Ballot on Proposals 2 and 3

After the two proposals were presented, the Presbytery broke for morning tea. No questions were asked of CMC in relation to the two proposals. The Presbytery voted on the two proposals via secret ballot.

After the scrutineers counted the votes it was announced that both proposals had received the two thirds majority required. Rev Steve Francis led the Presbytery in prayer for Susan and Carolyn.

17. Congregational Selfies

A video was shown with news from Geraldton, Mandurah and Margaret River congregations.

18. Rural and Remote Ministry Network report

Dr Richard Hugman presented the report. He reported that meetings had not been happening as the Convenor had been in Japan dealing with family matters, and there were problems with accessing Zoom. As a result the Network is fragile at the moment. It has about 50% rural and 50% metropolitan members so anyone interested in rural and remote ministry was welcome to participate. The aim was to bring people together, including people from city congregations. There were no questions and the report was received. The Presbytery was asked to hold the Convenor in our prayers.

19. Multicultural and Cross Cultural Network report

No report was presented as the Network has not met and the Convenor has resigned. A new Convenor will be appointed at the June Presbytery meeting.

20. Uniting Generations Network report

Pastor Julie Ridden presented the report which included a list of congregations involved in children and youth ministry. If your congregation has been missed out it is probably because you have not told the Network what you are doing. There were no questions and the report was received.

21. Group discussion

Pastor Julie Ridden made a presentation on the Assembly Report *Being an Intergenerational Church*. After this the Presbytery broke into small groups to discuss how their congregations could become more intergenerational.

22. Elections Committee

Sue Whitworth, the Returning Officer, thanked those who had nominated for vacant positions. The ballot papers for the election of members of the Thrive Mission and Presbytery Property Committees were distributed and collected

23. Mic Minute

During a Mic Minute the following notices were given

- Julie Ridden mentioned that books on children and family ministry were available for anyone who wanted them.
- John Boon announced that an Easter Fun Fair was being held at Willetton next Saturday
- Elaine Ledgerwood indicated that on the 4th Sunday of the month Claremont congregation were having a worship preparation meeting and that others were welcome to come and join.
- Carolyn Ebell mentioned that Kalamunda congregation had made a pledge to Merredin congregation to provide accommodation for any members who had to visit Perth. She encouraged other city congregations to offer similar support to rural congregations.
- Yvonne Robinson said that MSM flyers are available- lets learn and grow together
- Bob French announced that the Great Eastern Regional Gathering was happening next Saturday. Lindsay Ginn will lead a workshop on use of music in worship.

- Cathie Lambert invited all to the Formation for All Day being held at Star St next Wednesday.

24. Recognition of Phase 3 Ministers

Rev Ken Devereux explained that Phase 3 is the first 3 years after ordination. It is a time of special support of ministers in the early years of their ministry. A new approach is being taken by CEDAL on how to provide this support and Ken is chair of the support teams set up for Phase 3 ministers. We currently have 8 ministers in Phase 3- it is an intense time for these people. The Phase 3 ministers were introduced to the Presbytery. Each has a Mentor and a Professional Supervisor. It was noted that Rev Sione Lea'aetoa has now completed Phase 3 and a Certificate was presented to him.

25. CEDAL Review Report

Dr Karen Flowers presented the Report of the Review of CEDAL which had been completed over the last 18 months. This Review has outlined new Vision and Goals, suggested a new name for the theological college, has created two new staff positions with the goals incorporated into the PD's, and was reviewing governance structures. The Appendix to the Report is an example of how they will use the Vision and Goals which are set for 3 years to align with placement of the two staff who will contribute to how we deliver the outcomes. The Goals have been incorporated into new PD's. No questions were asked and the report was received.

26. Proposal 4- CEDAL Vision and Goals

Dr Karen Flowers presented this proposal. It was affirmed that CEDAL worked in collaboration with other committees of the Presbytery. The Vision and Goals outline key priorities for the next 3 years. Assurance was given that comprehensive learning about Christian theology with intellectual rigour would be maintained.

The Presbytery of Western Australia agreed by consensus to approve the Vision and Strategy (2024-2026) for the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL), as presented below which will guide CEDAL's planning and evaluation of activity for the next three years.

***Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL)
Vision and Strategy 2024-2026***

Introduction

The Uniting Church upholds, as a central purpose for its life, the achievement of a learning culture in which education and formation for the whole people of God is innovative, collaborative, accessible, inclusive, contextual and prized. To this end the role of CEDAL is to oversee the development and fostering of opportunities for education and formation that encourage, empower and equip learners, congregations and faith communities of the Uniting Church in discipleship, mission and ministry.

Vision

The Uniting Church in Western Australia will be an inclusive and inquisitive community of lifelong learners, open to growing in the way of Christ and serving the mission of God.

Strategy

Goals

Learning Culture

- **Education and formation for the whole people of God.**
- **Encourage, empower and equip all learners, congregations and faith communities.**
- **Clear identity and philosophy for the UCA WA theological college (to be renamed).**

Diversity and Inclusion

- **Recognise and celebrate the cultural, generational, geographic and theological diversity of learners, congregations and faith communities.**
- **Particularly attend to the voices of First Peoples.**

Collaboration and Sustainability

- **Collaborate with colleges and education communities in the Uniting Church and in other churches.**
- **Responsible stewardship of all resources, financial and human.**

27. Proposal 5- CEDAL- Name for Theological College

Dr Karen Flowers presented the proposal outlining that CEDAL had reviewed the traditions, history and structures of the theological college and had come to the conclusion that we needed a new name for our theological college. There are also changes underway at a national level with recommendations to come to the next Assembly which may result in us having one national theological college. There was a lengthy discussion about the proposal with the following comments being made

- There is general support for getting rid of the title *Perth Theological Hall* as this is dated.

- It was noted that establishing a new name for our theological college was not dependant on national decisions.
- It is better now to speak of education and formation for ministry rather than a focus on academic study of theology.
- Lack of support for the suggested new title *The Well*- it was argued this was very in house, confusing, unclear and too informal. Perhaps the image of a well could be used on the logo instead.
- Concerns that re-branding is a difficult process and even with a lot of effort going into it, people tend to go back to using the old name. If the name is to be changed there needs to be a marketing strategy.
- There is already a podcast *By the Well* from Pilgrim College and there will be branding cross overs.
- It was argued that although the title *The Well* has strong metaphorical meaning, it will not be understood in university or academic circles.
- It was argued that the use of the words *UCA WA* was also meaningless to those outside of the church.
- Suggestion made that the college be named about a person but there was no support for this. Other possible names suggested have already been used by other colleges. It was agreed that we would not workshop a new name on the floor of Presbytery.
- We need to clear in our name. Don't be afraid to say what we are doing. Let's call it for what it is.
- Who are we naming this for? Does the name need to communicate to church members or to the wider community?
- Some amendments were suggested but no consensus was reached on any amendments. There was then discussion about whether this needed to be decided today.

The Presbytery of Western Australia agreed by consensus to

- 1. Acknowledge that the education and learning context of the Uniting Church in Western Australia has markedly changed since the establishment of our theological college, Perth Theological Hall (PTH), in 1978.***
- 2. Acknowledge that, over time, the name of our theological college has become outdated, and no longer wholly connects with or complements our current education and learning needs and emerging trends in the Uniting Church in Western Australia, as explored by the Commission for Education for Discipleship and Leadership (CEDAL) in its review and set out in its Vision and Strategy (2024-2026).***

The third clause of the proposal was not agreed to, namely,

3. Approve changing the name of our theological college to **The Well: UCA WA Centre for Education and Formation**, in order to restore the identity of our theological college as our education and formation provider, separate from CEDAL as the governing body, and to better encompass and meet the current learning needs and future hopes of the Uniting Church in Western Australia.

The Presbytery of WA agreed by consensus to refer the new name back to PSC and CEDAL for discussion to come to the June Presbytery meeting with options for names and a branding process.

28. Report of Feedback from November Presbytery Meeting

Rev Bev Fabb presented the report of feedback from the last Presbytery meeting on the Act 2 directions for local communities of faith. There were no questions and the report was received.

29. Proposal 6- PSC- Rescind Presbytery Decision

Rev Bev Fabb presented this proposal arising from the feedback to the last Presbytery meeting.

The WA Presbytery agreed by consensus to rescind Decision P9.1/06-2018 of the June 2018 Presbytery Meeting.

30. Proposal 7- PSC- Identifying and responding to struggling congregations

Rev Bev Fabb presented this proposal arising from the feedback to the last Presbytery meeting.

The WA Presbytery agreed by consensus

- 1. To note the requirements of congregations as set out in the Basis of Union and Regulations.***
- 2. To adopt the following characteristics to identify struggling congregations***
 - i. Worship- meeting for worship less than once a month***
 - ii. Sacraments-celebrating the sacrament of Holy Communion infrequently and services of Baptism conducted rarely***
 - iii. Discipleship- limited or no programmes are in place, other than Sunday worship, to build members up in Christian faith and life.***
 - iv. Witness-the congregation is not offering activities, other than Sunday worship, to share the gospel with others***
 - v. Service- the congregation is not providing services to those in need in the local community.***

- vi. Mission- the congregation does not have an up to date Mission Plan.*
 - vii. Church Council- the Church Council is not meeting or is not carrying out its responsibilities as set out in the Regulations*
 - viii. Congregational Meetings- are not being held twice a year or less than 8 Confirmed Members or Members in Association are in attendance.*
 - ix. Support for the Wider UCA- the congregation has not elected a lay member to Presbytery, or the lay member rarely attends Presbytery, and they are making no or a declining contribution to Mission and Service giving.*
 - x. Finance- congregation is struggling to meet its financial commitments and repay it's debts*
 - xi. Property- property is not being maintained and/or it is under insured.*
- 3. To adopt the following process for the Presbytery to respond to struggling congregations.**
- i. When a Presbytery Staff Member, Committee or Committees become aware that a congregation is demonstrating characteristics of being a struggling congregation, or when a congregation reports that they are struggling, this will be reported to the Presbytery Standing Committee.*
 - ii. Presbytery Standing Committee will prioritise which congregations it is most urgent for the Presbytery to consult with and support taking into account the number of characteristics they are demonstrating.*
 - iii. Presbytery Standing Committee will request a particular Committee or Staff Member to consult with the congregation about the situation and discuss with them the best way ahead. The aim of the consultation will be to provide support to the congregation in order for them to acknowledge the situation they are facing and discern the best way ahead.*
 - iv. A report will be prepared from this consultation recommending what action is needed. This may include referral to Thrive to assist with mission planning, to Property Committee to deal with property issues, to CEDAL to assist with training needs, or to PRC to provide pastoral support. The report may also recommend that the congregation be dissolved, amalgamated with another congregation or re-constituted as a faith community.*

- v. *If needed a proposal to dissolve a congregation or to re-constitute as a faith community or to amalgamate it with another congregation, will come to a Presbytery meeting for decision.*

31. Proposal 8- PRC- Dissolution of congregations

Rev Lorraine Stokes presented the following proposal, affirming that all named congregations had been consulted and that a similar proposal would come to the June Presbytery about other congregations once there had been appropriate consultation.

Rev Hannes Halgryn suggested that we give thanks for the life and witness of all those congregations which were being dissolved. He then led the meeting in prayer.

It was affirmed that a service of closure of a congregation could be organised if there was a desire to do this.

It was noted that there was a variety of ways to deal with property of congregations which were being dissolved.

The WA Presbytery agreed by consensus

1. To dissolve the following congregations according to Regulation 3.4.3 as they are no longer able to carry out the responsibilities of a congregation.

- ***Badgingarra***
- ***Bencubbin***
- ***Gidgegannup***
- ***Tammin***

2. To dissolve the following congregations according to Regulation 3.4.3 as they are no longer able to carry out the responsibilities of a congregation and recognise them as faith communities according to Regulation 3.9.2

- ***Carnamah, Coorow and Three Springs***
- ***Kellerberrin***
- ***Narrogin***
- ***Southern Cross***
- ***Toodyay***
- ***Trayning***

32 Proposal 9- Global Climate Action

Rev Ken Devereux presented the following proposal.

The WA Presbytery agreed by consensus to encourage each of its members to draw the Global Week of Action 4 Climate Justice to the attention of their Church Council (or other relevant decision making body), noting:

- a) the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC) is collaborating with GreenFaith to promote actions around the world to raise awareness between 3-12 May 2024;*
- b) information and resources are available from www.arrcc.org.au/weekofaction*
- c) a range of options are available for household or communal responses including letter writing, group discussions, prayer, meditation, sermons, ecumenical gatherings and/or public displays of banners. Such activities can draw on a long tradition of Uniting Church engagement with energy, sustainability and justice issues and a rich resource library of materials and decisions. Many of these are on the Synod and Assembly websites.*

33. Notices

Rev Bev Fabb reminded members that the next meeting would be the AGM and that there would be no Zoom available for this meeting.

34. Declaration of Ballots

Sue Whitworth the Returning Officer informed the Presbytery that the following had been elected.

- Members of Thrive Mission Committee- Rev Coral Smith (2 year term), Rev Sione Lea'aetoa (1 year term)
- Members of Presbytery Property Committee- Guy Lambert (2 year term), Phil Ridden (1 year term)

35. Closure of ministry for Rev David Kriel and Rev Chris Crause

Alison Xamon led the Presbytery in a Closure of Ministry service for Rev David Kriel and also thanked Rev Chris Crause who was concluding in the supply ministry role at Presbytery Officer.

36. Closing Reflections

The Chair, Alison Xamon, made the following expressions of thanks on behalf of the Presbytery:

- Noranda for hosting the meeting and providing hospitality.
- Janine McDonald and Bev Fabb for staffing the registration desk
- Reuben Edmonds for preparing Opening worship
- Julie Ridden for preparing the group discussions.
- Rob Douglas for the Congregational Selfies.
- Sophie Lizares and Hannes Halgryn for being chaplains
- Mary Riley and Elaine Ledgerwood for providing music
- Sue Whitworth, the Returning Office and Mary Riley and John Berger for being Scrutineers
- For all those willing to stand for election.
- Claire Pickering for her Closing Prayers
- Luke Williams for organising the Zoom participation
- Lorraine Stokes for being Spare Chair
- Bruce Wilson- timekeeper
- Chairs and members of committees who work so hard for the Presbytery
- Other Presbytery Officers- Secretary and Treasurer
- Ned Radov- for behind the scenes organising, handling registrations, organising catering, printing of materials, Power Point etc

37. Closing Prayers

Rev Claire Pickering led the meeting in closing worship

38. Closure of the meeting

The meeting was then closed with the singing of the hymn *May the feet of God walk with you* at 3.45 pm

Confirmed by the Presbytery Standing Committee on

8 April 2024 as a true and correct record



Signed by Alison Xamon- Chairperson