

Dwelling in Love

Rev. Sharon Hollis (UCA Communications)

The Uniting Church in Australia has joyfully installed Rev Sharon Hollis as President of the Uniting Church in Australia. Rev Hollis is the third woman to be President, and the first ordained woman in the role. She will offer the Church spiritual leadership for the next three years. UCA members in locations across the country tuned into the livestreamed service to offer their prayerful support for the new President.

The Service of Worship was also the official opening of the 16th Assembly meeting. The service was led by Dr Palmer, Rev Hollis and Assembly General Secretary Colleen Geyer. The first Bible reading from Ezekiel (36:24-28) was read by Sharon's daughter Ingrid. The reading of 1 Corinthians 13 followed, read by students from Nungalinga College in 11 different First Nation languages. Final reading John 1:14,16-18.



The new President delivered a powerful sermon on God's love for us, and our call to live lovingly in the world. **"God loves, we see and know God's love in God's refusal to give up on us, even when we deeply disappoint them. We see and know God's love in Jesus Christ among us, in his rising and dying in love. We see and know God's love in her ongoing gifting of the Christian community for loving engagement in the world."**

"So beloved of God, let all you are and all you do be with love and for love."

Rev Hollis said although love was an "over-hackneyed" word in our society, in Paul's letter to the Corinthians, he does not speak of sentimental love. **"The love Paul talks about is active, tough, resilient and long suffering. This love risks the fragility of human flesh in the incarnation. It crosses boundaries. It raises up those who religion and society have excluded. It endures the cross. It rises again."**

Sharon reflected that Paul's letter was addressed to a community that was divided over who had the better spiritual gifts and the greater standing in the community. **"What Paul reminds us is that God's love is a reversing love. A love that upends the social order, disrupts our attempts to make certain ideologies or groups more powerful simply because they have the better gifts."** (page 2)



DWELLING IN LOVE (Cont.) “Love means we must ask ourselves whose voices are we marginalising, who have I turned away from, who have I shouted at, who have I preventing from hearing the good news of God’s enduring unquenchable love. The love Paul is talking about is not superficial polite niceness – it is an attempt to draw us more deeply into God’s radically inclusive difference-honouring love. It requires courageous strong action.”

Rev Hollis acknowledged the women who had gone before her and paved the way for her to stand as President today. **“We must continue to speak love in truth about the idol of patriarchy and the way it claims a place at the top of the hierarchy, it has no place to claim.”** Rev Hollis says God’s love calls all of us to the work of change and transforming.

“A love that bears all things will keep speaking this truth until it becomes a reality in all places for all people – love that will give up and make space and create new communities where the image of God in each human being and all creation is honoured.”

During the service, members of the 16th Assembly made a commitment to prayerfully discern God’s will and model behaviour that embodies Christ’s love through respectful conversation and reflection throughout the meeting, both this weekend and at the reconvened Assembly in 2022.

Ms Geyer led a pray of blessing and releasing of ministry for Dr Palmer, acknowledging her witness and service, but particularly her passion to encourage every-member ministry, pastoral leadership and the leadership of young people throughout the triennium and particularly during the anxiety and grief of 2020.



Extension of the Assembly General Secretary

The 16th Assembly resolved to extend the appointment of Colleen Geyer as the Assembly General Secretary.

In making the announcement, President Rev Sharon Hollis spoke warmly of Colleen’s ministry to the Assembly and her gracious and wise leadership.

Colleen responded: “The past five and a half years have been full. Full of challenge, full of opportunity, full of joy. I look forward to this continuing. I love working alongside the amazing staff of the Assembly - they make a difference every day, giving all their gifts, enthusiasm and commitment to the work they do.



“I will endeavour to continue to give my best to the role of Assembly General Secretary, to be faithful to God and to dwell in the love of a God who saved me and continues to save and walk with me every day.”

Interim National Chair of the UAICC of the Mark Kickett congratulated Colleen on behalf of Congress.

“Colleen, a wonderful result and congratulations. We are excited about the relationship we have and the commitment you bring to your role, and also for strength of support that you continue to share with myself and with Congress nationally. We really look forward to the journey with you, and we know that our Lord and Saviour will be central to all we do.”

The President prayed for Colleen in her ongoing ministry.

Mental Health Matters

REV. FI BOTCHER (DEACON AT SUNSHINE MENTAL HEALTH)

So, here we are again. Lockdown number... five is it? And I'm struck by how utterly exhausted so many people I speak with feel. There's such a heaviness that comes with this "same-but-different" situation we find ourselves in, yet again.

And a common thread I've noticed in many of the conversations I've had is this: We **know we're not operating at our "pre-pandemic" capacity**, but we feel like we should be. We hear ourselves mutter: "Why haven't I done that load of washing or written that report?"

We are tired, and irritable, and frightened about an uncertain future. No wonder we forget to buy the milk! If you don't relate to this, I am so genuinely happy for you, but I'm guessing that most do. We're simply not capable of our best right now and I'd love for us to openly, and collectively, acknowledge this fact, in all the spaces we work and play.



My prayer today is that we can pause for a moment and show ourselves, and each other, greater compassion, patience, and forgiveness than we ever have before. Love God, love your neighbour, love yourself.

Just love – which is indeed the greatest commandment, and gift, of all.



Joint Presbyteries Minister's Retreat

Sunday Sept 5 – Wednesday Sept 8, 2021



Formal program will start from Monday Lunch and conclude after 3pm on Wednesday. Ministers can come from Sunday afternoon onwards – Sunday evening meal will not be catered for.

Where: UCA Campsite Norval House / Halls Gap

Who: Open to all ministry agents, chaplains and Pastors in placement, and retired ministers in long term supply.

What: The theme of the retreat will be **Renewal – Psalm 119: 114**

Guest Speaker: Julie Perrin

Accommodation: share cabins – two people to a room

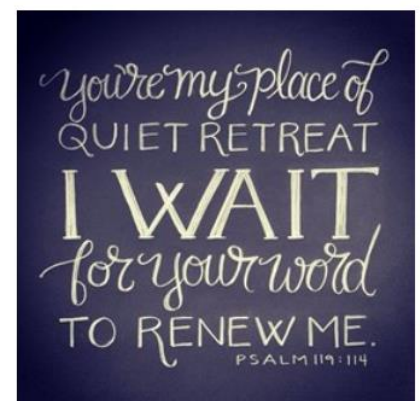
Cost: We have received in kind funding from Uniting Camping.

\$150 per person for three nights (i.e. come to camp on Sunday Arvo)

\$120 per person for two nights (i.e. come to camp on Monday AM)

Meals included (except for Sunday evening)

Extra Costs: Linen hire \$18.20 – you can bring your own linen for free



Booking: Trybooking. <https://www.trybooking.com/BQUHO> Final payments and bookings Friday Aug 20, 2021

We look forward to sharing with you in this Retreat. Jeanne, Narelle and Trevor (Retreat Organisers)

Education Events



27th & 28th July	Intergenerate AUS Brisbane, Sydney, NZ, Zoom	
6th August 10:30—3pm	Northey Lecturers Parkville, CTM <u>Liturgy & lectionary: New Perspectives</u>	
7th August	<u>Make it Messy</u> Parkville, CTM	
9th August 9:30—12:30pm	PWV Pastors Day	 
12th August 6—9 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 1	
14th August	PPW Presbytery Meeting t.b.a	 
20th August 9:30—12:30 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 1 In-person at Hoppers Crossing UC & ...	
20th August	Speaking of Christ/Christa/Christx: A Feminist Christologies Seminar Contact: Stephen.burns@pilgrim.edu.au	
26th August 6—9 pm	Pastoral Care in a Pandemic—Part 2	
21st August	PWV Presbytery Meeting t.b.a	 

Discipleship Learning Community 2021 Exploring Old Testament

For [Lay preacher Training](#) or [just wanting to learn more...](#) Cost Free.

Text Book: \$50- 'Studying the Old testament: A Companion by Rhonda Burnette Bletsch, Abigdon Press, 2007. This course was written by Mel Perkins eLM.

Exploring the Old Testament, online learning community, has these 10 topics and tutorial dates-

Reading the Old Testament 10 Aug; Foundational Stories 24 Aug; Exodus 7 Sept;
Living in relationship with God #1 21 Sept ; Living in relationship with God #2 5 Oct;
Prophetic Voice 19 Oct; Exile and the X factor 2 Nov ; Wisdom's Feast 16 Nov,
The things in Between! 30 Nov; Looking Back and Looking Forward 14 Dec

Email: Geoff Barker on gbarker333@hotmail.com or phone on 0407 349 578

