



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
Northern Synod

NORTHERN SYNOD NEWS

FEBRUARY 2025

LEARNING TOGETHER - UCA HERITAGE, THEOLOGY & POLITY



The NRCC and PPNA Presbyteries held a joint “UCA Heritage Theology and Polity, Course” on 3rd - 7th February covering each Paragraph of the Basis of Union, including Union, Sacraments and Code of Ethics.

The group gathered included people engaged in their Period of Discernment, people training for Pastor and people preparing to train others in community. Thank you to all the participants for your generous spirit leading devotions, engaging in good conversation, and listening to the Holy Spirit in your own lives. Our Synod is very blessed to have such a devoted cohort of members willing to grow in their own relationship with God and the Church.

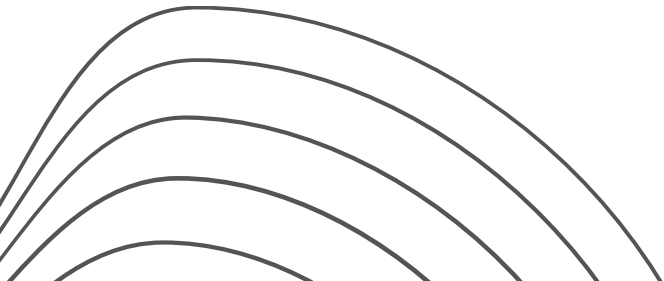


The PPNA Presbytery invited the members currently engaged in a Period of Discernment to participate in the UCA Heritage Theology and Polity Course. What a joy to see such willing and committed people seeking God's will for their life and their future. Left to right: May McPhee, David Young, Heidi McKelvie, Amy Lasslett and Doreen Leana.



Thank you Sharon!

Thank you to Rev Sharon Hollis for spending a couple of weeks with the Northern Synod in December while the General Secretary was attending the General Secretaries conference. Pictured here with Emily Evans (right), Sharon graciously offered pastoral support to people who cared for Rev Michelle Cook during her passing and her family. She also provided support for the Synod Staff while the General Secretary was away. During this time Rev Janet ended up in hospital and required surgery, so Sharon's support was especially appreciated during this time. Thank you too to Rev Mark Lawrence General Secretary Vic/Tas Synod for releasing Sharon to support the Northern Synod during a difficult time. We appreciate the support of the wider Uniting Church.





Rev Viliami Mila is inducted into the Casuarina Congregation

Casuarina Uniting Church was overjoyed to welcome the Mila family, Viliami, wife Ana, and daughter Leni, to their congregation from their home in Cairns.

Rev Viliami was inducted on 31st January in a service led by Presbytery Chairperson Ps Lauren Merritt. The singing from visiting Tongan choir nearly raised the roof, concluding with an invitation to join in the Hallelujah Chorus in a language of our choice - a precursor to the heavenly choir, I'm sure.

We pray that the Mila family soon feel at home in Darwin. May Rev Viliami's time with the Casuarina Congregation be a time of fruitfulness for all.





A special cake made the 500km journey from Alice Springs arriving fresh and delicious!

Overflowing blessings

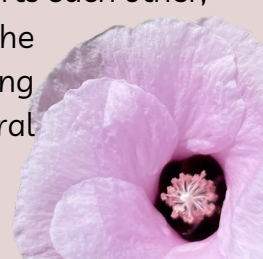
Pastor Amy Lasslett is Commissioned in Tennant Creek

The community came together for the commissioning of Amy Lasslett on Sunday 9th February in a time of joyous celebration. The service was led by Rev Tony Goodluck, our Moderator and we thank him for stepping in at the last minute when Presbytery Chairperson, Ps Lauren Merritt was unable to attend.



Driving down from Darwin through showers of rain, and with Sturt's Desert Roses lining the highway, we were reminded of God's blessings.. And that was the mood during the service - so much gratitude for God's goodness.

It is tough living in a tiny remote community where there is a constant turnover of people. Regardless, Tennant Creek Uniting Church loves and supports each other, welcoming in the stranger, and shining Christ's light in Central Australia.



Remembering Rev Gowan Armstrong

On the 21st of January, we gathered at Modbury Uniting Church in Adelaide for the funeral of our beloved friend Rev Gowan Armstrong who died on Friday 10th January 2025.



Gowan was 97 years old and will be best remembered in the Top End for his decade as Methodist Minister at Manayingkarirra from 1962. In 1966 the first baptism of Aboriginal Christians at Manayingkarirra took place in that large government settlement, where more than nine languages were spoken on a daily basis. Gowan also helped local people to develop an enterprise with traditional art and craft into a big business. In 1972 Gowan moved to Darwin, where he was the Registrar and Teacher for a budding Nungalingya College. Cyclone Tracy on Christmas eve 1974, blew the college apart and the homeless Armstrong family subsequently moved south to Adelaide.

Born at Robertstown on 17 May 1927, Gowan was raised on the family farm. He served for two years in the Royal Australian Navy Reserves, qualified as a Methodist local preacher in Canberra and after 4 years of study served at Mount Gambier Methodist as a Probationary Minister. Gowan was ordained at Kent Town in 1952 and served at Hallett (4 years) and Pt Augusta (5 years), where he met his lifelong sweetheart, Shirley Symons, a primary school teacher. They married in 1961 at Woodville Methodist Church, before heading to Manayingkarirra in 1962. At Pt Augusta, he and others from the congregation founded Willsden Footy club.

Gowan is renowned for his hearty 32-peal laugh which has brought a smile to many a face. His strong faith has underpinned a wonderful pastoral ministry. From 2009 to 2016 Gowan was Associate Minister working beside me at Modbury and Para Vista Uniting Churches. During these years we became close, which was such a joy for me, since he was my Dad's close friend and colleague from the MOM days in 1960s Arnhem Land. Gowan led by example. He led regular Bible studies in their home, well into his eighties; he preached often; and was the best pastoral visitor I have ever known. A remarkable ministry of caring and joy.

After his time in the north, Gowan moved to the Torrens Valley Parish with congregations at Athelstone and Dernancourt. He then ministered for 10 years in Prospect North/Clearview Parish, before officially retiring and becoming the Minister in Association at Modbury and Para Vista.

He remained a steadfast friend of Congress people, supporting the work of TAACL (Training Aboriginal Christian Leaders), an arm of Nungalingya College in South Australia, from 1991 until he was 96 yrs old in 2023; a member of the SA Covenanting Committee; and through personal friendships. Gowan was committed to Ecumenism over the course of his ministry.

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Gowan was a great encourager. He was my friend, my mentor and my trusted colleague. He was supported by Shirley throughout his ministry. They are now reunited in that great mystery beyond.

Our sympathies are extended to Gowan and Shirley's children, John and Roslyn, their grandchildren and their great-grandchildren. We pray God's peace and comfort for friends and family in this time of grief.

We thank God for Gowan. Well done, old man. Our lives are all the better for knowing you. Gunmolamola.

Rev Tony Goodluck, Moderator Northern Synod – Feb 2025

FEEDBACK *requested*

Dear Members of the Northern Synod,


The Act2 Project Transition Committee is requesting feedback on the Terms of Reference (TOR) for The Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership and The Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration. Click on links to read documents.

[The Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership TOR](#)

[The Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration TOR](#)

Please submit your feedback via gensec@nat.uca.org.au.

The final deadline is **1 March 2025**.



Language and Culture

As part of our commitment to learning language and culture, we are starting a class every Tuesday morning at Uniting House 9am-10am. Howard Amery will be guiding us through the learning. If you would like to join in, please contact Heidi. Anyone with a passion for learning is welcome.



Welcome new Principal, Yane Damanik

Yane Damanik will be commissioned as Principal as part of the Nungalinga Commencement Service. The service will be on Friday 21st February 2025, at 2:30pm at the College Chapel. You are welcome to attend.



Frontier Services
Standing with people in the bush



Frontier Services Bush Chaplain Gathering

Frontier Services bush chaplains met in Sydney to discuss the pressing needs of rural and remote communities and ways to strengthen First Nations partnerships, advocate for social justice. Chaplains James Hughes (West Arnhem Land), Benjamin Quilliam (Alice Springs) and Jill Doolan (Apatula) attended as well as support workers, David Young and Dora.

FEB

- 3rd - 7th Heritage, Theology and Polity of the UCA Intensive
- Sunday 9th Commissioning and Induction of Amy Lasslett
- Tuesday 18th Language and Culture 9am-10am followed by Uniting House Devotions.
- Wednesday 19th FAPS meeting
- Friday 21st & Saturday 22nd SSC face-to-face meeting
- Tuesday 25th Language and Culture 9am-10am at Uniting House

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- Tuesday 4th Language and Culture 9am-10am followed by Uniting House Devotions.
- Tuesday 11th Language and Culture 9am-10am at Uniting House
- Tuesday 18th Language and Culture 9am-10am followed by Uniting House Devotions.
- Wednesday 19th FAPS meeting
- Tuesday 25th Language and Culture 9am-10am at Uniting House



Northern Synod 47th Meeting
3-6 April 2025
Theme: 'Woven into a Tapestry of Love'

The Northern Synod Council will hold its 47th meeting on 3-6 April 2025 as a full Synod Council.

Reports

The closing date for receiving Reports shall be 14th February 2025. **Thank you to those who have submitted their reports.**

Presbytery Appointed Members

The closing date for appointing members from the Presbyteries shall be 10th February 2024. The process for appointing members shall be Church Councils nominate in writing a member to the Presbyteries. Members must complete the Synod Member Registration by 10th February 2024 to indicate accommodation and travel preferences. **Thank you to those who have submitted their forms in a timely manner. If you have not done so yet, please find registration form on the next page.**



Northern Synod 47th Meeting 3-6 April 2025

Theme: 'Woven into a Tapestry of Love'

Registration Form

The Meeting Session times are still to be confirmed. However, we ask that you allow from Thursday 3rd April from 3pm to Sunday 6th April 3.30pm for our meeting time.

PPNA members will need to arrive on Wednesday 2nd April to attend a Thursday morning meeting.

Please complete the information below and return by Monday 10th February to: admin@ns.uca.org.au

Name: _____

Congregation: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

For those requiring flight bookings, please complete the following:

From _____

to Darwin

Date: _____

From Darwin to _____

Date: _____

Frequent Flyer Number: _____

Airline: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Out-of-Darwin members return home **Monday 7th April** unless otherwise agreed. Transport to and from the airport will be arranged.

To out-of-Darwin members who drive to Synod, a travel contribution of 30 cents per km will be paid. **Please request a payment form to enable reimbursement.**

Out of Darwin members will be accommodated at Nungalinga College. Please indicate if you require accommodation:

Yes, I need accommodation

No thanks, I've got it sorted

Please indicate if you have any special accommodation, dietary, mobility concerns or other requirements:

I want you woven into a tapestry of love - Colossians 2:2-3