**Overview of the Wimala Presbytery Meeting**

**Saturday 13th April 2024, Woodville Uniting Church**

44 Woodville Rd, Woodville South SA 5011

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 9.15 am | Welcome Desk and Registration opens  Cuppa and a Chat. Take the time to check in and greet each other. |
| 10.00 am | Welcome and housekeeping |
| 10.05 am | Induction of Rev Dianne Holden as Chairperson of the Presbytery |
| 10.40am | Communion |
| **11am** | **Morning Tea** |
| 11.35am | Moderator – Rev Peter Morel  Potential for Q&A. |
| **12pm** | **Proposal 1** – Setting the scene (details below) |
| 12.05pm | Wimala Youth – Rev Rebecca Purling and Rev Ruthmary Bond |
| 12.20pm | Uniting College - Dr Rosemary Dewerse  (Academic Dean, Research Co-ordinator, Missional Research & Resourcing) |
| **12.35pm** | **Lunch** |
| 1.20pm | Thank you and farewell to Trevor Phillips as Chairperson |
| 1.30pm | Regional Coordinators - Rev Paul Turley and Rev Leanne Davis to highlight areas of their reports  Presenting the General Reports and time for questions |
| **1.45pm** | **Proposal 2**  Presenting the finance report and budget – Treasurer Peter Lane |
| **1.55pm** | **Proposal 3**  Synod Nominations – the number of nominations do not exceed the vacancies and therefore a formal votes is not required. Consensus by voting cards.  **Proposal 4**  Treasurer Nomination |
| 2pm | CMLA Update and Sharing – Criag Mitchell |
| 2.15pm | Uniting Foundation - Leesa Story  (Chairperson of Uniting Foundation Grants Committee) |
| **2.30pm** | **Afternoon Tea** |
| 2.45pm | Group Sessions |
| 4pm | Closing remarks and benediction |

*This program timing may be subject to change***.**

Following:

Proposal 1 – Setting the scene

Proposal 2 – Financial report

Proposal 3 – Synod Nominations

Proposal 4 – Treasurer Nomination

Other Proposals (if any)

Any other business

**PROPOSAL 1 – Setting the Scene**

That Wimala Presbytery resolve to:

1. a. ADOPT Standing Orders and Rules of Debate as set out in ‘A Manual for Meetings in the Uniting Church’, as recorded in the Constitution and Regulations, 2018 edition. (Reg. 3.8.4)

b. APPROVE that the style of voting shall be by the use of coloured cards, or if attending the meeting via Zoom, a clear indication of intent via on screen or visual aids, unless a secret ballot is called for by the Chairperson.

c. AGREE that in the event that a procedural motion for the council to move into “Private sitting” is carried by a simple majority then ALL those who are not members of the Presbytery must leave the meeting. The required Uniting Technology and Presbytery staff will be able to remain to execute their respective tasks.

d. DETERMINE that all discussions or decisions will be conducted in ways which comply with the Church’s safe church policies.

2. RECEIVE all reports as provided (electronic and hard copy) in the ‘Reports and Business Papers of Wimala Presbytery 13th April 2024and Supplements thereto’. Noting that all reports and papers are taken as read.

 3. NOTE that:

  a. Questions relating to the proposals brought before the Presbytery by the Business Committee will be answered at the time when the proposals are being considered by a plenary session of the Presbytery.

b. Comments and/or questions from the floor and replies to questions **shall be limited to three (3) minutes** unless otherwise determined by the house.

  c.Questions relating to the reports and proposals which are not considered by a plenary session of Presbytery because of time constraints, will be referred along with the particular proposals to the Presbytery Standing Committee.

 4. DEFINE the boundaries of the house to be the Woodville Uniting Church chapel and Locations connected by an authorized Zoom connection. On the 13th April 2024, between the hours of 10am until 3pm.

**Proposers**: Richard Idzikowski, Amy Duke

**Proposal 2 –** To accept the finance report as presented below.

**Wimala Presbytery Finance Report – April 2024**

**Executive Summary** – The Wimala Presbytery commenced 2024 with a total equity of $588,198.61, with a forecast income of $213,000.00 and operational liabilities of $202,614.00. If the Presbytery continues to operate within the approved 2024 budget, we can anticipate an operating surplus of $10,386 for the 2024 financial year. This will be achieved by continued prudent spending. Many of the budget lines however are not being used to their fullest (as in the past: especially travel as many do not claim for the distances they travel to come to meetings within the Presbytery.) This may lead to a greater than anticipated surplus. The 2024 budget has been set with an expectation of achievable expenditure costs, set against realistic income expectations, resulting in an estimated operating surplus. Any realised surplus at the end of the 2024 financial year will be added to either the small grants investment account or to the operational cash at hand accounts. Overall, Wimala Presbytery is in a good financial position!

The Standing Committee endorsed the ongoing investment of the $294,605.35 into a UC Invest fixed term account for 2024. The interest from this investment is used to support the presbytery Small Grant Funding Application process for member congregations and faith communities to request limited funding support for mission-based projects that will benefit their community, the Presbytery, and the wider Church. Standing Committee has updated the application and guidelines for use from now on. Please read the guidelines and look at the application as the grants may assist your Congregation with its great mission-based work in the community.

The presbytery continues to encourage all member congregations to continue, or in some cases to commence, contributions towards the M&SF. This is a vitally important missional activity – tithing to the wider church, and equally important to the stability of income for the Wimala Presbytery.

An ongoing priority for the Treasurer, Regional Coordinators and the Standing Committee is to further build and maintain relationships and understanding with each member congregation which will help to address any issues relating to this important missional activity.

**The 2024 budget assumes the following:**

- Chairperson role at 0.5 FTE

- Secretary position based on a Level 5 Private Sector Clerical Award rate working at 0.4 FTE

(15/hrs week): the role has expanded greatly and needs the time to keep on top of the needs of Wimala Presbytery.

- The 3 x 0.2 FTE Regional Coordinator placements will continue as they have for 2023

- Treasurer position based on a Level 4 Private Sector Clerical Award rate as a 0.05FTE (8 hours per month): as required.

- Project Officer: to continue the work of Synod regarding Mission and Property needs across Presbytery at 0.5 FTE for 6 months.

All other expenses as budgeted.

**Summary** – The current projection is for a sustainable year financially operating within the agreed budget.

As we move forward, Grants for Wimala Congregations to assist Mission and Service in each of Wimala’s Communities in South Australia are available. In order to make the most of these grants for Mission in 2024 we need your creativity and initiative. We encourage each congregation to explore how these grants may help your mission in the community.

**Peter Lane, Wimala Presbytery Treasurer. April 2024**

**Proposal 3 –**

(A) That the wimala presbytery approve the names as listed in table 1 for nomination to Synod of South Australia membership in accordance with Uniting Church in Australia regulations and Synod of SA bylaws.

(B) That the Wimala Presbytery Standing Committee, in consultation with the Wimala Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee, appoint such other members or members in association of the Wimala Presbytery to be members of the Synod of SA as may be required to fill the Wimala Presbytery's quota of required nominations.

**Synod Membership List Nominees – Table 1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Ordained Ministers of the Word and Deacons**  **(8 of 18 spaces filled)** | **Ministry of Pastor, Lay Pastor and Youth Workers**  **(4 of 7 spaces filled)** | **Lay Members**  **(16 of 39 spaces filled)** | |
| Paul Turley | Trevor Phillips | Joanne Palmer | Anne Ind |
| Leanne Davis | Simon Story | Anne Chase | Beverly Treadrea |
| June Ladner | Leesa Story | John Chase | Bruce Ind |
| Christa McGaw | Emelia Haskey | Paul Marsh | Peter Lane |
| Mark Dickens |  | Heather Schubert | Malcolm Wilson |
| Ann Phillips |  | Scott Davis | Ian Dempster |
| Rebecca Purling |  | Peter Hollister | Tony Loffler |
| Ruthmary Bond |  | Margaret Seacombe | Amy Duke |

**Proposal 4****:** To accept the nomination of Peter Lane as the Presbytery Treasurer.

**General Reports**

**Secretary Report**

Since our last meeting in October 2023 (minutes below), we have enjoyed the celebration of Christmas and Easter and not to mention the Summer School Holidays. It does seem to have made the past 6 months feel a lot more condensed!

I reflect on the fact that I have now been in this role for a year and consider all that I had hoped to achieve. Not surprisingly, I have not yet reached my lofty goals. However, we have made a start. With the support of the Digital Media Consultant, we have begun the journey of developing a database that gives us better information and understanding of our congregations. We are now able to connect more easily with those who have specific roles in the church councils, leadership and faith communities. We have also made a start on redeveloping the website for Wimala. This is a work in progress which we hope to improve very soon. The past 6 month have also seen a transition process as Rev Dianne Holden, incoming chairperson, and Trevor Phillips, outgoing chairperson, have undertaken the task of “handover”. I’m thankful for the time I have spent learning from Trevor especially of the foundational years of the Presbytery. And now we embark on the next chapter of the Presbytery under Dianne’s leadership with hopefulness for the future.

The Standing Committee has comprised of Trevor Phillips (Chairperson), Amy Duke (Secretary), Peter Lane (Treasurer), Bruce Ind, Rev Dr Peter Trudinger, Rev Dianne Holden, Richard Idzikowski, Dr Joanna Palmer, Rev Leanne Davis and Rev Rebecca Purling (PRC Chair). Standing Committee meetings have continued to be held in person, with the option of online attendance, on the third Wednesday of the month (generally at Enfield Uniting Church as a central location). Meetings generally take 2-3 hours depending on the agenda and how much we need to discuss.

Every standing committee meeting begins with an acknowledgement of country and a time of prayer and devotion led by one of the members before we turn to the administrative and business matters on the agenda. Key topics from October-April have included:

* Feedback on the Emergency Relief Centres Review
* Property and Mission Project
* The Streaky Bay Region
* Ongoing budget review and grant applications
* Preparing for the Presbytery Meeting

I also continue to spend my time working on the “Words from Wimala” newsletter, communicating via the Facebook page and attempting to respond to our Presbytery community as well as I can. There is always room for improvement, so please feel free to reach out and share ideas, constructive feedback and stories that I can share across our Presbytery.

**Amy Duke - Wimala Secretary**

**SUMMARY OF STANDING COMMITTEE DECISIONS**

**21st October 2023 – 27th March 2024**

\*This table excludes resolutions that pertain to the standard committee meeting internal process e.g. tabling, acceptance and/or approval of agendas, accompanying documents and minutes etc.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Decision No. (and Date)** | **Proposal** | **Outcome by Consensus** |
| **170120243a**:  (17th January 2024) | To appoint a Project Officer for an equivalent of half time for 6 months to support the Synod Strategy Planning Working Group (SSPWG). | Approved |
| **17012024b**  (17th January 2024) | Presbytery to fund the Project Officer role for the remaining balance after the synod contribution is exhausted. | Approved |
| **17012024c**  (17th January 2024) | To approve the Wallaroo grant, pending receiving the full copy from Peter Lane after the meeting. | Approved |
| **21022024a**  (21st February 2024) | That the Wimala Standing Committee accept that Trinity Alberton Uniting Church change their name to Village Church Alberton in accordance with UCSA and Assembly policy | Approved |
| **270320324a**  (27th March 2024) | For continuing to pursue an outreach program in Streaky Bay at this time without the use of the Streaky Bay Church building. | Not Approved |
| **270320324b**  (27th March 2024) | To quarantine emergency funds earmarked for emergency use to be explored. | Approved |

**Notes:**

PSC, refers to the Wimala Presbytery Standing Committee.

PRC, refers to the Wimala Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee.

The in proposal number, refers to a decision adopted formally (via email) in between PSC meetings.

**Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) Report**

The Pastoral Relations Committee is tasked with caring for the congregations, faith communities, ministry agents and congregational leaders across the bounds of the Presbytery.

There has been a lot of movement since the last meeting of the Presbytery, ministry agents who have concluded their placements:

* Rev Leanne Davis finished at Plains Community Churches, they are now being led by a Lay Ministry Team and Leanne was ordained in January!
* Rev Do Young Kim finished his placement at Payneham Road, Rev Jim Winn is providing supply
* Rev Do Young Kim finished his placement at Prospect Rd, Rev Chris Harkness is providing supply
* Ps Rob Morgan finished his placement in the Barossa Valley
* Rev Jesse Size finished his placement at Para Hills, Rev Cate Baker is providing supply
* Rev Cliff Birch retired from the Royal Park United Church, they are considering their future
* Rev Owen Roberts is planning to retire from the Goyder Ministry area later this year

Last weekend it was a delight to attend the induction of Rev Do Young Kim at Athelstone.

Before we meet again, Dernancourt UC will farewell Rev Amel Manyon, and the congregations of the Barossa Valley will welcome her as their minister. And Rev Montaz Ali will be inducted into the Dernancourt UC.

There are an increasing number of congregations being led by lay ministry teams and the PRC is conscious that we need to increase our support of these leaders. Please let us know how we can assist and support.

We have some people engaged in the Period of Discernment (PoD) process, we are looking forward to hearing how they will express their ministry into the future. If you know anyone who is pondering their future ministry Ann Phillips would be delighted to speak to them about doing a POD.

The PRC are a group of volunteers who give their time to support the wider church, we can be slow to respond but we do our best! Please keep us in your prayers and make contact if you need support or advice.

**Rev Rebecca Purling - Chair of the PRC**

**Regional Coordinator** – Urban and Outer Metro West - October 2023 to March 2024

*This report is in brief, note form. I am happy to elaborate on any of these items as needed.*

**Yorke Peninsula Regional Mission Council (YPRMC)**

I am the Wimala representative on the YPRMC and serve as deputy chair of the Council. While the ministry of the YPRMC has been hampered, since before Christmas, by the illness of the two pastoral ministry agents, the Council is in good heart. We have been very thankful that Rev. June Ladner has stepped into a ministry supply role during this period. The Council was pleased, on March 3, to commission Brenton Smith as the Yorke Peninsular Mission Minister. Brenton has the responsibility for supporting, encouraging, and guiding congregations in their various mission expressions across the Peninsular.

**Western region ministers**

Ministry agents in the congregations across the Western suburbs now meet monthly for collegial support, to explore how congregations can work more closely together across the West, and to better understand the religious, community and cultural trends impacting the church’s ministry.

**Congregations**

I have met with eight of our congregations during this period to participate with them in thinking about their future and in mission planning. I am very happy to work with any congregations and/or church councils seeking to engage with thinking about mission.

**Joint Nominating Committees (JNC)**

I have participated in three JNC’s since our last Presbytery meeting. And am currently engaged in two more.

**Awaken Adelaide**

I have been working with Paul Goh and the steering committee on the Awaken Adelaide program. There are four Wimala congregations (out of a total of eight) participating in the program: Campbeltown, Clayton Wesley, Prospect Road, and Woodville.

**Wimala Staff meeting**

We have begun to meet regularly and this has been very worthwhile.

**Paul Turley**

**Regional Coordinator*–*** *Outer Metro East* ***-*** October 2023 to March 2024

Since my last report to the Presbytery, I have continued to visit with congregations, and it has been my delight to share in Sunday services, as well as the conversations over cups of tea (and sometimes lunch) after the services. This helps me get to know people, congregations and communities, and getting to know you, we can work together to discern how the Presbytery (and the wider church) can best help. More of our congregations are in the position that they no longer (or haven’t had for a while) a ministry agent, and are being led by Lay Ministry Teams. I continue to work on understanding how we can best support these teams as a Presbytery – whether that be with people, resources, workshops, etc. This is something we are looking at in the Pastoral Relations Committee as we continue to care for and support ministry agents and congregations across the Presbytery. In recent months, I have been conducting training for members of Lay Ministry Teams in congregations to preside over Holy Communion. Some of us in PRC are working on a workshop for Church Councils – to help inform and equip church councils in what the responsibilities are, and how councils might function to equip congregations for local mission.

Property is still an issue for many congregations. The Synod work on property and mission will be driving some of this in the coming months, but these are among the topics we talk about as faith communities, congregations and Presbytery. As difficult as some of these discussions might be, they are conversations we need to have.

A few highlights for the six months:

* A personal highlight was my ordination service in January.
* What might sound like a strange highlight, I was involved in the closing service of the Hamley Bridge church building last year. The building has now been sold. The congregation continues gather regularly (and no longer on a Sunday – a weekday evening works better for them (perhaps encouraged by last year’s *Great Debate* that we abandon Sunday morning worship 😊)) in the local town hall and continues to pray for and serve their local community.
* Equipping Lay Ministry teams and local congregations/church councils.
* Worshipping in congregations where English is not the first (or second) language spoken.
* Being able to share with congregations in their worship lives.

**Leanne Davis**

**Wimala Presbytery Property Team -** October 2023 to March 2024

This report informs Wimala Presbytery of property related matters within the bounds of the Presbytery. Many of these matters are in process. Accordingly, circumstances could change since time of writing.

It is worth noting that some congregations are undertaking significant upgrading of their properties (utilising both congregation funds and external grant opportunities) and building modifications. In the coming months the Presbytery will need to work alongside congregations, to address and assess their mission viability as part of the Synod Strategy and Planning Mission and Property (SSPMP) The Presbytery intends to appoint a Project Officer to progress this work. The Presbytery Property Team can assist in resourcing this work. Summary of current property matters;

**Elizabeth Grove and Elizabeth North UC properties**

Elizabeth North UC property is listed on the Synod Property Risk Management register. Elizabeth Grove UC has high priority compliance issues which need to be addressed. Synod Property Team, WPPT members and PRC are working with the congregations involved to address these matters.

**Gulnare Uniting Church**

WPPT members have visited and discussed future options for Gulnare UC. Approval to demolish (subject to conditions) has been granted. This work is progressing.

**Modbury UC / Karadinga property**

A long-term lease arrangement for Karadinga property concluded on June 30th 2023. There was a period of uncertainty regarding the future use of this property. Some of the existing tenants concluded their rental arrangements.The outcome is that MUC continues as the “beneficial user” , receiving annual rental income and is responsible for maintenance and compliance matters. Modbury UC have been successful in obtaining new tenants for the premises.

**Port Adelaide UC.**

At the October 2023 Presbytery meeting Port Adelaide UC reps. presented a mission plan.There are ongoing conversation to explore what options are possible. The costs of maintaining a large Heritage listed property demand significant congregation resources which could be utilised for effective mission. These options may include sale of surplus property and increased utilisation of Junction Community Centre. Property Team members are liaising and working with PAUC to achieve an outcome.

**Clayton Wesley Uniting Church**

*(This information is unchanged from October 2023 report)*

Wimala Presbytery representatives have been involved in conversations about options for developing the Clayton Wesley Church site at Beulah Park. This church is heritage listed and requires significant restoration and maintenance which is very costly. Several projects have been completed utilising congregation funds and Heritage grant funding.

The objective of the development(s) is to develop the church site in ways which:

* enable The Spire Community to provide greater support to the community;
* provide funds for the restoration of the historic buildings;
* preserve the peace and beauty of the enclave; and
* together promote financial self-sufficiency for the Congregation.

A proposal to construct residential retirement facilities in conjunction with Clayton Church Homes on a portion of the UCA property was presented to Presbytery by the Parish Mission Council. After lengthy consideration by Presbytery Officers, it was resolved to advise the PMC that Presbytery could not support the proposal as presented. UCA Resources Board also resolved to not support the proposal. Further meetings have been held with PMC, Resources Board and Presbytery representatives. These conversations, involving all stakeholders continue to further evaluate, explore and develop options to best utilise the property and address the large maintenance costs while aligning with the mission directions and values of the congregation.

**Woodville Uniting Church**

During 2021 repairs to the church building and roof were approved. These repairs are progressing well utilising both congregation and St Andrew’s Capital Fund monies.

**Brougham Place UC.**

Brougham Place UC have been working toward the rectification of risks at that property. They have spent a considerable sum of money on investigations and consultancy to date and have recently advised that funds dedicated to this work will run out before major works can be commenced. The Synod Risk Management Committee are aware of their circumstances and will be investigating ways to assist them with managing this. Synod recently approved access to funding to enable this work to continue.

**Malcolm Wilson - Wimala Presbytery Property Team Convenor. April 2024**

**Digital Media Consultant Report**

# Executive Summary

This report highlights some conversations that Digital Media Consultant (DMC) has undertaken over the past 10 months and learning gained through that process.

Those conversations have raised a number of interesting questions and opportunities.

How do we use digital media?

How do we best measure the benefit of doing this?

What are others doing with this? Are we exercising best practice?

How can we work together and cooperate for everyones benefit?

Other tasks have been undertaken to improve how Wimala Presbytery operates and communicates with its members and congregations. Web, Mail, Database and Resourcing services are being developed.

An examination is made of how the role has developed since its creation. It’s initial principles of exploration and shared discovery have been adhered to.

4 Key learnings have been highlighted.

1. Good questions and practical applications give rise to growth.
2. The amount of digital media resources is expanding exponentially in ways that are both threatening and exciting.
3. New and unexpected opportunities are growing out of our use of digital media.
4. A forward looking and permission giving environment works best for this.

7 Recommendations are made.

1. Continue the exploratory nature of the work.
2. Identify, Gather and promote more useful resources and continue to develop a system to enable this.
3. Offer practical and technical assistance to congregations.
4. Broaden the project beyond the bounds of Wimala Presbytery.
5. Engage with the results of the Mission Resourcing Review.
6. Establish a project working group.
7. Run a conference in 2024.

# Introduction

A digital media consultant operates within the auspices of the Wimala Presbytery to explore the use of digital media by the church in its worship, witness, and work.

This role commenced with the Wimala Presbytery meeting of 28 April 2023

Initially Presbytery considered establishing the role of a **Digital Media Curator**. The focus was to be on creating and curating content for churches to use in their worship, witness, and work. As the position was considered and discussed by Presbytery, it was later determined that a short term contracted position was to be created instead to explore the landscape first before establishing a curating role. This position was not stipended. Instead, an hourly invoiced arrangement was established to the equivalent of up to .5 FTE for 12 months. It had been hoped that a complementary placement within Wimala could be found to provide full time work. This was not to be.

The work had been broad a mix of consultation, conversations and discussions aimed at discovering what future directions could be taken and to gauge the readiness of members and congregations to engage with the new media opportunities available to the church.

There has also been a component on developing services to assist the presbytery in its own processes.

# Conversations

These are some of the conversations and contacts that I have invoiced for. It would represent about half of the conversations and connections I have developed in the role over the past 9 months. Part of the character of this work, and my own approach, is the blended and expansive nature of the subject matter (Digital Media). “Boundary creep” comes built in.

## Ann Phillips – Woodville

## Paul Turley – Scots and Sunday Bible

## Paul Schmeltzkopf – Two Wells

## Saltbush

## Project Reconnect

## Simon Story – Creating Adventurous Culture and Trinity Alberton

## Lynne Aird – Adelaide West

## Geelong OmegaCon Gaming Conference

## Bob Hutchinson - Morialta UCA

## Brigette Ransom – Synod Engagement unit

## Ken and Sue Burt – Mediacom

## Jenny Hughes – CMLA

## Tim Adams – Uniting Technology

## Dean Brine – Croydon Park

## Linda Driver – CMLA

## Sandy Webb – UYP

## Bronte Wilson – Remote and rural congregations

## Tim Sherwood – Burra

## Craig Mitchell – CMLA, content creation

## David Badger – Riverland churches, West Lakes and DMC role

## **Summary of other tasks**

## Wimala.org domain

In consulation with the chair of Presbytery I was tasked with developing the wimala.org domain for the presbytery’s web and email presence. The operational and prudential considerations of the Synod provided IT services place significant limits on what Presbytery is able to deliver to its members. A new website and email service has been created to address some of these limitations.

## Curated Resources

The DMC has designed and built a system for offering quick access to quality and curated online resources for presbytery members and congregations. This can be found at curated.livedata.au

This is being developed to be readily and easily extensible. It has yet to be widely promoted within Wimala.

## Wimala Contacts Database

To improve how we contact members and congregations an online database system has been developed, initially for the use of the Presbytery Secretary. As the capacity of this system grows and the quality of its data improves it will have broader reach and offer more usable information.

This can be found at Wimala.livedata.au. It is under active development.

How has the role developed and changed over the past 12 months?

Given the restraints I have faced with a .7FTE supply placement outside of the presbytery and an extended period of illness in Nov/Dec 2023 I have been unable to put in as much time into the role as I would have liked. However, the exploratory character of the work has remained consistent over the past 9 months. Through this exploration I have learned much over this time which I seek to highlight in my recommendations for taking this role forward. I am very grateful for the flexibility built into the role.

The nature of digital media is that it breaks down barriers and creeps over boundaries. It’s like Kikuyu grass. It is invasive and aggressively takes over all available space if left unattended. We need to accept that its not going away and is a significant part of our lives. But it requires new and attentive gardening practices to manage and allow it to be useful. As such this work cannot be contained within the bounds of Wimala Presbytery. Wimala is a leader in this area. No other group within the UCA has taken this approach to explore these new possibilities. What we have started here can be useful for the whole church.

I started with a set of operating principles drawn from the DMC proposal given to Wimala at its inception.

***The consultation shall be conducted with the following principals:***

* 1. ***It is better to cooperate and co-opt than to oppose and compete.***
  2. ***Transparency in operation and outcomes. Sharing works in both directions.***
  3. ***Generosity, each participant offers and receives something of value.***
  4. ***Collaboration with other presbyters and synod resource centers where practical.***

**These principles were very helpful and guided my approach to my conversations.**

This proposal also states…

***The Consultation is a tool for the presbytery to use in order to determine if there is a need for an ongoing role for a digital media curator, either as a joint role with other presbyteries or synod, or primarily within the wimala presbytery. As such the expected outcome or learnings from this consultation would include:***

1. ***Discovering the who, how, why, and what congregations and other church communities are doing online and illuminate that data in order to determine and build co-operation, interest and experimentation with theological and ethically appropriate materials.***
2. ***Explore best practices that promote the creation, publication and sharing of resources for Christian life and mission within our churches.***
3. ***Determine the best ways to Create avenues for knowledge sharing.***
4. ***Find and highlight best practices that help us grow as churches in the online world.***
5. ***Determine ongoing educational needs of congregations.***

I have endeavored to order my work to achieve this.

Learning

My report in the July 2023 Wimala Newsletter stated…

*The need and opportunity for online services for our ministry, mission, administration, education and pastoral care is increasing and that growth is also accelerating. For the next decade there will only be more to work with in this space.*

*I am encountering some common questions and points of conversation.*

***What tech do we need to work with?*** *I am spending time with folks talking about what they currently use and what new things are coming “down the pipeline”. This also means encouraging people to look at IT expenditure as consumable line items and not capital expenditure.*

***What are some of the resources available for us to use?*** *How do we grade material and determine what is useful and of good value?*

***How can we create good content of our own to use within our local church community?****How do we balance being consumers and creators of content?*

***How is the wider church community going with this?*** *What are we doing to develop new ways of being present?*

These questions remain and provide a good basis to develop future learning. I have often been asking and answering these same questions with others. Here are 4 key points of my learning so far.

1. For many the application of technical solutions to practical problems is a great starting point for growth and change.  
   For example, a church has thought about recording some of its worship… This gives rise to some great questions.

What is a good way of doing this that will give a useable result? Do we make this content available live? Do we edit and polish this content before distribution? Do we do both of these things? How can we best use those results? Who will benefit most? How are others doing this? What is similar in our usage and what is different? How can we collaborate with others who are doing this? Is this ephemeral content or does it have some lasting value? What are possible new uses of this content? In answering these questions we grow… and uncover more learning and more questions.

1. The pool of available resources, even just within the bounds of the UCA, is rapidly broadening in scope, deepening in amount, and improving in quality. There will only be more of this exponential change for the foreseeable future. We have a significant number of creative people and congregations that can now make their ideas, approaches, and content available to resource, encourage and inspire others.   
   For example, Project Reconnect was established over 20 years ago in rural NSW for the specific purpose of providing DVD based video content to congregations in the Mid-Lachlan Mission Area for enabling worship to congregations without ready access to ministers. They have, each week, faithfully produced sermons, songs, prayers, discussion points, kids talks etc for use by their churches. Other churches, across Australia, have also made good use of this content. Much of this content has low production values. But this encourages others to say “We could do that!” Never discount the value of the “Dag Factor”! PR has expanded and changed its offerings having waited for years to find a betters ways of distributing content without posting out DVD’s.  
   It is remarkable to me that NSW Synod was able to resource a separate Unit in Saltbush to explore similar audiences, goals and methods. A considerable budget has been available for this and it has produced some excellent results in developing churches and community while asking the same sort of questions as PR.  
   The 2 projects are not related. This has always seemed odd to me. I have asked both organisations why this is so and the answers have not been clear or compelling  
     
   Within SA we have many individuals and congregations developing their own approaches similar to these. The power of collaboration has yet to be realised. We have significantly fewer resources than the NSW synod but the mission remains the same.

The challenge to this, often chaotic, growth of content and attendant opportunities is to bring it to people’s attention is useful ways. The amount of new content and the rate of its expansion is overwhelming. This can be disempowering. Worked examples and demonstrations can help folks steer their way through the morass. But key to it all is cooperation and partnering with others on the same journey.

1. Digital media is more than a means of improving and enabling our current practise. It is also creating brand new approaches to ministry. The weekend I spent in Geelong at OmegaCon was an eye opener for me in how the church is able to build community out in an “incarnational” way. Often using technical means that on the surface would appear to be the very opposite of “embodied” presence. Building on established communities in table gaming, online gaming operations (Twitch.tv) and other social media a small, but growing, group are exploring the boundaries of pastoral care and evangelism. The Australian government has identified social isolation as one of the large challenges facing us. This new approach to community building is one groups way of addressing that. It is reminiscent of the way in which Australian churches in the past embraced Op Shops, Drop in centres, Craft Clubs, Men’s sheds, sports clubs as means of building social cohesion and connections with the wider community. Same, same but different.
2. There is broad agreement that the opportunities appear to be boundless.  
   There is also broad agreement that we are bound by our current ways of operating.  
   Early in my ministry a mentor said to me… “To get away with building something new is to give the old ways enough sustenance to starve on.” For that particular project (a new church plant in an strong established context) this meant giving regular feedback to the existing congregation and using their leadership and financial resources, with their interest and blessing, to build a new church in their midst.  
   The most important gift the church can give to develop something new is permission. All else follows. Congregations that are successful in following new digital means of mediating the gospel all have encouragement and permission from the wider congregation. Even if the efforts are small, clunky and misunderstood.  
   The presentation from Simon Story on “Creating Adventurous Culture” clearly highlights this.  
   (<https://wimala.org/online/>)

# Recommendations

## Continue the Exploration.

Ensure that a large part of the role moving forward is about learning what things are changing within the digital media realm. New modes and means of communication are being developed and implemented at an increasing pace. We are only just starting to touch the edge of what “Artificial Intelligence” tools will provide to us. Guidance in that will be invaluable to the church. There are many individuals and churches exploring new approaches and ideas that can benefit all of us with nurture and encouragement.

## More Curation.

Take the systems developed forward. Promote their use and encourage contributors.

## Practical Help

Continue to offer practical assistance to congregations who want to purchase and setup new equipment for new projects. A certain amount of “tech savvy” is required but it needn’t be the work of the DMC. There are several folks within the UCA in SA that have the skills and the inclination to help.

## Broaden the footprint of the project to “hold” the various enterprises working in this space.

This “broadening” will involving moving beyond presbytery bounds.  
Wimala would retain philosophical and moral “ownership” of the project but would further seek to work with others to better embrace the ubiquitous character of digital media.  
For example the project would work with a wide range of “creatives” within and beyond the bounds of the presbytery. Members and congregations of Wimala will remain primary beneficiaries. Wimala would also continue to define the scope and direction of the project offering leadership to other participants.

I don’t consider this to be a synod styled project that would come under the ambit and governing constraints of that body. Rather it would become a “platform” that would underpin and hold up creative enterprises for the benefit of the whole church. This would take time and grow “organically” with the oversight and encouragement of Wimala

## Engage with the Mission Resourcing Report

We can use this report as an opportunity to exercise some leadership in mission resourcing of remote and regional churches.

## Establish a project working group.

This was stated goal at the beginning that continues to “gestate” There are a significant number of people who have expressed interest in being part of a “steering group” or similar body to identify directions that the project can develop. The next recommendation could be a task to help such a group “gel”.

1. Run a conference.

A conference I initiated with the JBCE in 2000 was key in bringing together a group of people at that time to look at emerging technologies. Many of those involved continued to develop new approaches and assets for ministry that are expected today. We ran workshops on using data projectors with PowerPoint. We explored how to establish and manage websites for churches. We looked at using voice conferencing and dreamed of doing it with video. We introduced folks to how email could be useful for churches to distribute administrative tasks. We wondered how all this could be used for resourcing remote communities and congregations.

An activity of this sort helps bring together like-minded folk for mutual encouragement and stimulation. Inviting practitioners from the likes of Project Reconnect and Saltbush would give a great launching pad for those who want to explore and try new approaches in ministry.

Regardless of my role going forward with the DMC project I would like to be part of a conference like this and offer any skills and resources I have available.

Wimala has taken a significant step in resourcing the church through this project and I look forward to how it will develop in the future.

**Geoff Hurst - February 2024**

**Minutes of the previous Wimala Presbytery Meeting**

**Saturday 28th October 2023, Enfield Uniting Church**

2 Park St, Sefton Park SA 5083

**Meeting Attendance**

A total of 59 people participated in the Presbytery meeting either in person or online. Of those who attended in person, 52 were presbytery members, co-opted or associate members and 7 were guests. We welcomed 2 presbytery members who participated in the day, online. Apologies were received from 15 presbytery members.

**Meeting Summary**

We began our day in community with one another, catching up over a cuppa and a snack before heading into worship led by Rev Amel Manyon with musical support from Leanne Davis. We were reminded by Amal, of the fears that we may hold which do not have to isolate us, but that we can stand firm in the strong foundation of Jesus Christ.

Our Presbytery Meeting was a bit different from the past meetings, in that we held the business sessions throughout the day. The aim was to finish the business early enough for those rural congregational members, to be able to head off as they needed.

Please note that the minutes are written as the day unfolded with the business proposals throughout the minutes, as it was spread throughout the program of the day.

**Proposal 1 – Addition of Proposal 6. Consensus by voting cards.**

Chaplaincy Update: We received an update from Wendy Prior, sharing the important work of our chaplains across Synod, highlighting the eight Chaplains connected to the Wimala Presbytery.

Mission Resourcing Team Update: Rev Dr Paul Goh then provided us with information about the implementation of a three-year Synod Action Plan for ‘Becoming a CALD and Intercultural Church: 2023-2025’. We were informed that Mission Resourcing is providing a six-month Congregation Pilot project titled Awaken Adelaide with the aims of cultivating an intercultural congregational leadership for missional renewal. Rev Dr Paul Goh is available to provide an information session to your Church Council meeting with a 15-minute presentation followed by Q&A. Please contact Paul on [pgoh@sa.uca.org.au](mailto:pgoh@sa.uca.org.au) or call on 0416 564 193.

The Synod General Secretary, Rev Philip Gardener addressed our Presbytery Meeting with two focus items, Property and Mission and the Review of the Mission Development Board.

Property and Mission

We heard that the hope is to see “missionally vibrant congregations in safe buildings that are fit for purpose”. Phillip provided us with an update on what has occurred so far:

* John Fong completing initial safety checks on buildings
* Some congregations have made a start on the work needed which came out of the safety checks. Phillip wanted us to be aware that having safe buildings is non-negotiable.
* Discussion about the congregational survey which looked at
  + Whether buildings are fit of purpose
  + Missional vibrancy which looked at worship, witness and service; community building; faith sharing; education and disciple formation; pastoral care and the connection with the wider community.

Phillip informed us that this project is well underway and the team are meeting in the coming weeks to form a process for the next steps.

Initial response to the review of Mission and Resourcing from the Mission and Leadership Development Board

The review has been conducted with the report completed in late July. The intention is to make a summary available to share very soon. Some of the work relates specifically to the mission resourcing team but other parts relate to the college resourcing and support for the mission of the church.

The review provided key areas of focus:

Faith formation and vitality - how to grow faith vitality in all stages of life.

Congregational renewal - how to lead a congregation through renewal into a new future.

A Covenant come alive – how our covenant relationship can be experienced and lived into more richly.

Local community mission – how to do local practical mission.

Evangelism – how to effectively proclaim/share the gospel with modern people.

Intercultural capacity – how to read and discern the complexity of modern cultures in order to engage faithfully.

After morning tea we thanked and farewelled Rev Bob Hutchinson from the PRC chairperson role and also from the Presbytery as he moves to The Corner congregation. We also thanked and recognised Rev June Ladner’s support over the past 2 years on the Standing Committee.

**Proposal 2 – Leanne Davis Ordination**

Consensus by voting cards was achieved.

**Proposal 3 – Joint Nominating Committee – Presbytery Chairperson**

**Due to an incorrect wording, the proposal was altered:**

**“**That the Wimala Presbytery resolve to appoint Dianne Holden as the Presbytery Chairperson, at the Presbytery Meeting in April 2024.”

Consensus by voting cards was achieved.

**The Wimala Great Debate: *That the Uniting Church in South Australia should abandon Sunday morning worship services.***

Thanks to those who formed the affirming and negative teams, which provided us with opportunity to discuss, laugh and share ideas about how we “do” church within our congregations.

After lunch we received an apology from **Geoff Hurst**, the Digital and Media Consultant, who was unable to attend and speak at the meeting due to illness. It was encouraged that congregations get in touch with Geoff via email.

**Marianne Vreugdenhil and Mike Lennon** then shared with us about their inspiring and creative plans which are coming out of the Port Adelaide Uniting Church.

Following on from this, **Linda Driver** provided an update on the work of Act2 as we are now in the “Collective Discernment” phase of the project until the end of November. Linda distributed copies of the project plan with us and encouraged the use of the FAQ page on the Act2 website. Linda also shared about the different options of reports that we could read as congregations and church councils but also highlighted the project summary and theological papers. David Walker asked if we could share the video from the day, and it was agreed that we could do this to assist congregations to engage with Act2 and provide feedback which is due by the end of November.

**Proposal 4 – presenting the finance report and budget.**

Consensus by voting cards was achieved.

**Proposal 5 – Nominations**

Consensus by voting cards was achieved.

**Proposal 6 – Nomination of PRC Chairperson**

This was an additional proposal made on the day:

“That the Wimala Presbytery appoint Rev Rebecca Purling as Chair of Wimala Pastoral Relations Committee for the next 2 years”.

Consensus by voting cards was achieved.

At 3.55pm the business session concluded.

Following on, Chairperson Trevor Phillips provided an encouraging challenge to us to consider the radically changing church and whether we decide to receive the change and be apart of it, or let it happen to us. He asked the questions of what motivates us as a congregational community, what do we feel we are being called into and to consider how are we going to get this work done. This was a great springboard into workshop groups connecting with our regional coordinators. We hope this was a helpful time of discussion.