

# Profile Form for Nominees for President-elect

Regulation 3.7.5.1 requires that the Assembly Standing Committee provide advice to the Church on the challenges and issues which may be faced by the President and the Assembly in the next seven years. This is to assist the discernment process as the Church nominates and elects the President – elect.

In November 2020 the ASC addressed itself to this responsibility and offers this guidance to the Church.

“As the Uniting Church continues to move through a season of significant change, the ASC believes that the challenges and issues likely to be faced by the President and the Assembly in the next seven years will include:

Promoting the joys, passion and hope of who we are as the Uniting Church as we walk together in our diversity

## **The Covenant**

- Living out the Covenant and relationship to First Peoples

## **Our Foundations of being the Uniting Church**

- Evolving and growing as a Church bearing witness to the Kingdom of God - modelling a countercultural way of living in the world
- Growing discipleship
- Enhancing the church’s capacity for theological conversations by encouraging familiarity with the Bible, and how to use it according to Uniting Church’s understanding of the Bible
- Confidence in the Gospel - in the context of a declining Church and a multifaith context

## **Future of the Church**

- Changing face of the church as worshipping communities
- Helping the church to respond effectively to rapidly changing contexts and ongoing marginalisation in society
- The church in a digital age
- Guiding the church through significant structural and regulatory change towards a sustainable future

## **Leadership**

- The nature of ministry for the future
- Encouraging young leaders, listening to their voices for how they see the future of the Uniting Church

## **Oriented Towards Justice**

- Resourcing the complex issues of life
- Climate justice - the impact of climate change
- Racial justice



**Name:**

**Rev Dr Michelle Cook (Deacon)**

**Nominated by:**

Andrew Johnson  
Rev Dr Geoff Thompson

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| <b>Synod of residence:</b>     | Northern Synod   |
| <b>Age range:</b>              | 40-49  |
| <b>Personal Interests:</b>     | Running, Gardening, Reading  |
| <b>Placement / employment:</b> | <p>Teacher, Nungalinga College 2019-present<br/>         Presbytery Minister – Mission Tasmania 2014-2018<br/>         UAICC Qld Mapoon and Yalga Binbi 2011-2013<br/>         Frontier Services, Weipa and Cape York 2005-2011</p> <p>Chair of Pilgrim Presbytery of Northern Australia (2020-present)<br/>         Convenor of Assembly Task Group on Practical Outcomes of the Affirmation of the Sovereignty of First Peoples (2018-2021)<br/>         Assembly Standing Committee 2009-2015<br/>         Phd Practical Theology University of Queensland 2020<br/>         ‘On Being a Multicultural and Covenanting Church’<br/>         Masters of Theology Brisbane College of Theology 2009<br/>         ‘The Atonement, the Work of Christ and the Church: Conversation between contemporary Atonement theologies and the <i>Basis of Union</i>’.<br/>         Masters of Social Science Applied Research UQ 2005.</p>   |
| <b>Passion:</b>                | <p>I am passionate about partnering for justice with First Peoples and committed to growing the relationships between First and Second Peoples of many lands.</p> <p>I am passionate about the church being a loving community in Christ that makes real our statements of faith, including climate justice, being a covenanting church and being a multicultural church.</p> <p>I am passionate about equipping God’s people to live out our calling as a loving community in Christ - sharing our faith, – young and old, tired and energised, curious and settled – to better live out our faith in the world</p>   |
| <b>Vision for the UCA:</b>     | <p>With my faith being formed by the Uniting Church I have been nurtured by the vision of a community of reconciliation through Christ’s grace, witnessed to in Scripture, empowered by the Spirit and ready to admit to wrong and make amends.</p> <p>It is this journey of Christian faith as a pilgrim people ‘living our prayer, and praying our life until love and loyalty embrace, peace and justice kiss and all are free as Christ is free’ (UCA Mustard Bush Faith Community) that we are all called to.</p> <p>God calls us to live our lives as a loving community of faith, bearing one another’s burdens, nourishing one another’s faith, upholding one another in prayer and encouraging one another’s gifts. By living this calling to bear witness to the reign of God we can - individually, as communities of faith and as the whole Uniting Church in Australia - work for justice, share our faith and live with integrity in our different contexts. To do this we need to be grounded in our spiritual practices of advocacy, prayer, worship, study of the Scriptures, and service.</p> <p>Living the reality of this loving community means entering deeper into the covenant relationship between the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress and First Peoples and the Uniting Church. This is a challenge for each of us individually, for our congregations, and for all our councils. Paying attention to difficult stories, mourning with those who mourn, lamenting our inaction, and</p> |

continuing our commitment to be led by God in working for justice and partnership between First and Second Peoples. Providing such a witness and learning from the witness of others can give glimpses of the beauty of the vision that God has for the world and shared with us in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

To be this loving community of faith we are to work on our relationships with each other. We are to listen and learn from one another, from the ways we interpret the Scriptures and live out our lives of faith. We can learn so much from our partner churches in the Pacific, Asia and Africa. We can learn so much from our Ecumenical brothers and sisters and we can learn so much by listening to people of all cultures in our part of the universal church and beyond.

**In light of the advice provided by the ASC on the challenges and issues likely to be faced by the President and the Assembly in the next seven years I can/will**

**Promoting the joys, passion and hope of who we are as the Uniting Church as we walk together in our diversity.**

**The Covenant**

I will work to deepen the relationship between the UCA and the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress. This includes promoting opportunities for congregations and other councils of the church to listen to, learn from and partner with First Peoples in their own contexts. It also includes creating more platforms for First Peoples in the church to share their wisdom and their calls for justice.

**Our foundations of being the Uniting Church**

I will encourage the church to live out the gospel in 'fresh words and deeds' (Basis of Union paragraph 11) looking for and living as glimpses of the reign of God in this world. I will encourage the practice of all of our spiritual disciplines as above to grow our capacity to live out our lives as disciples of Christ. This includes deep engagement with the Scriptures, listening to and learning from each other's stories of faith, and practicing our worship of, witness to and service for God.

**Future of the Church**

I will encourage creative, innovative ways to gather as community, grow our connection with each other and with God, the Holy Trinity of Love. When we focus on God's calling to us as part of the people of God the change in the church's place in society becomes easier to bear. This focus also pushes us to listen to the edges rather than be concerned with being at the centre. As someone who has grown up after the heyday of the 1960s church, I am not mourning the loss. I am ready to dance in the joy and freedom that comes with Christ and the power of the Spirit, to try new things, to value that which has gone before and to carry what is needed on the way.

**Leadership**

'All gifts have their corresponding service' (Basis of Union Paragraph 13). I will create opportunities for young people to lead and take responsibility for the role the church has as part of the ongoing reconciliation of the whole creation. We all have different roles in being the people of God. I will encourage the sharing of these gifts and the valuing of these roles across the whole people of God.

**Oriented towards Justice**

I will encourage the whole church to engage in the vocation of discipleship, bringing into intentional conversation our faith, our contexts, and our daily lives. I will work with our partner churches and ecumenical bodies to advocate for climate justice and provide guidance for the church to live out its commitment to be an environmentally responsible church.

I will work with others to advocate for anti-racism, working to create structures and ways of living that work for justice and against racism.