

President's Report

Give Spiritual leadership and encouragement

Death of Cassius Turvey

I wrote a pastoral letter in support of the statement released by the UAICC National Executive grieving the death of Cassius Turvey and calling for the Uniting Church to work for racial justice in this country. I am also working with Mark Kickett, Interim National Chair of the UAICC to issue a joint statement in the next week or so. Please continue to pray for Mark, for Cassius' family and all who grieve his loss. I pray that this moment will lead to real and lasting change in this land and in the Church and fear that we won't.

National Conferences

I have attended two national conferences since ASC last met. The first National Conference was a gathering of clergy who are members of the Korean National Conference (KNC). This was a time for sharing the joys and demands of ministry as Korean Australians in the Uniting Church. They spoke of how tiring it can be to constantly have to be a bridge between two cultures, having to translate between two languages. They told of experiences of racism in both the Church and wider society. They laughed together and spoke of the joy of being together speaking Korean and of the new opportunities and wisdom they experience in Australia.

I joined members of the KNC in an online prayer service for the victims of the stampede in Korea. I am grateful for the gift of the Holy Spirit who allows us to join in prayer even when we don't understand the language.

The second National conference was the Fijian National Conference (FNC). This event was held in Bachelor NT attracting about 200 Fijian members of the Uniting Church, along with several guests from the Northern Regional Council of Congress. The theme of the conference was Looking Back, Looking Forward and reflected on the history of Fijian missionaries to Arnhem Land. There was also reflection on what Fijian congregations in the Uniting Church can do to support Fijians who are coming to Australia as part of the Pacific Australia Labour Movement Scheme (PALM). As there are some difficulties in the relationship with the Methodist Church in Fiji it was good to be able to address some of the issues with members of the FNC.

I have also had a Zoom call with Rev Dr Semisi Turagavou, General Secretary of the Methodist Church in Fiji to discuss our relationship. There was a proposal at the recent Conference of the Methodist Church in Fiji to suspend the relationship with the Uniting Church, which was defeated. There was then a proposal to affirm the relationship with the Uniting Church which was passed.

I sent a greeting to the Fijian Parish in Sydney on the induction of their new minister.

One of the things attending National Conference events reminds me is that as someone who is part of the dominate culture in this land how much easier it is for me because I understand the language, practices and ways things are done. I think as a Church we underestimate the way we work unthinkingly and uncritically within the dominate culture. We need to keep working on

finding ways for the many cultures who are part of the Uniting Church to shape our life as a Church

Represent the Church

World Council of Churches General Assembly

It was a privilege to be one of the Uniting Church delegates to the World Council of Churches. The separate report on the World Council of Churches provides more detail of the Assembly.

Synod meetings

I attended the Northern Synod meeting. It is a joy to be a member of each Synod and to be able to attend most Synod meetings. They are a reminder of both the joys, hopes and concerns we share and the unique issues each Synod faces.

Ecumenical and Overseas partners

UnitingWorld visit with Indonesian partners

I was so glad to be able to join with UnitingWorld staff and most of our Indonesian partners in Bali for a regional consultation. I preached at the opening service and gave a presentation on how the Uniting Church works to be a safe church. I also heard of the work our partners are doing to embed safeguarding not just in the aid and development programs they deliver but also across the life of their Church. Some of them are now sharing the safeguarding material UnitingWorld has developed with them with their interfaith neighbours.

As well as meeting with churches leaders and development staff I was also able to visit two projects UnitingWorld supports through our partner in Bali, one a goat farm and one a chicken farm. With 95% of Bali's economy dependent on tourism the collapse of the tourism because of Covid was a crisis. Many people went hungry without income. Our partners have been working to help people learn how to grow food in their yards or other plots of land they might have access to and help those who are small scale farmers to increase their productivity through the provision of goats or chickens.

I give thanks for the work of UnitingWorld and our partners in Indonesia

I sent a greeting to the Protestant Church of West Timor (GMIT) for their 75TH Anniversary and sent condolences to our Korean partners after the stampede that killed so many people.

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