



Uniting Church in Australia
ASSEMBLY
Assembly Standing Committee

15-17 March 2024

DOCUMENT 3

Type of Paper (Information/Decision)	Information
Title	President's Report
Assembly or ASC Minute	<i>Regulation 3.6.4.2 Duties of the President: "The duties of the President shall be to give spiritual leadership and encouragement to the Church generally, to represent the Church as appropriate, to give counsel as occasion requires and to do such other things as may be requested or advised by the Assembly."</i>
Consultation	Various as outlined in the report.
Purpose	To report on key activities of the President.
Rationale & Findings Summary	
Attachments	
Recommendations	That the Standing Committee receive the report.
Submitted by	Sharon Hollis, President 0439 396 577

President's Report

Give Spiritual leadership and encouragement.

UCAF National Gathering

I attended the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship National Gathering and the committee meeting that followed the gathering. As you will see in their report to ASC the National Committee have decided to close owing to lack of leadership. This will not affect Synod or regional committees. This was not an easy decision for the National Committee to make and I was privileged to have journeyed with them over the last few months as they wrestled with the best way forward. I give thanks for their ministry over the last 30 years.

Retreat Yourself

I made a presentation at Retreat Yourself an event for young adult leaders in the NSW/ACT Synod. It was such a joy to spend time with a large group of young adults committed to faith, discipleship, and service. I am encouraged by conversations to make this opportunity more widely available through collaboration with the Assembly Resourcing Unit and other synods.

UCA Historical Society, Victorian branch

I gave a talk to the Victorian Branch of the Uniting Church Historical Society that traced the history of the Uniting Church's support for the recent referendum on constitutional change, including reflecting on the 6th and 7th Assembly debate about how to celebrate or not the bicentenary, the covenant as an agreement making document that initiates the Assembly into solidarity with the struggles of Congress and what it might mean if the question of how we are covenant keeping church was at the heart of our decision making as a Church.

Represent the Church

ACU Parliament Interfaith Prayer Breakfast.

I attended the Australian Catholic University Interfaith Prayer breakfast hosted by Speaker Dick at Parliament House, where I also offered a prayer. It was disappointing that the opposition leader chose to make an inflammatory speech that caused distress amongst those of the Muslim faith because of the way it allied all Muslims with the actions of Hamas and suggested that Muslims weren't welcome in Australia.

Part of the ARRCC delegation

I was part of an interfaith delegation organised by the Australian Religious Responses to Climate Change that met with Minister Bowen, Assistant Minister McAllister, staff from Minister Wong's office and Shadow Minister O'Brien to urge faster action on climate change.

Christmas message

Part of my Christmas message, along with messages from other church leaders was included in a news story on both the ABC website and TV.

Raising our Tribals Voice: An Indigenous Theological Revolution conference

I attended the Raising our Tribal Voices: An Indigenous Theological Revolution conference organised by the University of Divinity School of Indigenous Studies. This was a groundbreaking conference that featured Indigenous theologians from Australia and the Pacific. It both spoke the truth of Indigenous disadvantage and the rich contribution Indigenous theologians are making to theology. I made a response on behalf of the Uniting Church which you can read here <https://uniting.church/wp->

<content/uploads/2024/02/Rev-Sharon-Hollis-response.pdf> . I'm grateful to the Vic/Tas and NSW/ACT Synods and the Assembly who contributed to the Uniting Church being a white ochre sponsor.

Ecumenical Reflection Group on the report from the First Assembly on Synodality

I participated in reflection group hosted by the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA) on the report from the First Assembly on Synodality held in Rome late last year. I have participated in each of the ecumenical reflection groups in the lead up to the Assembly on Synodality so it was good to participate in a reflection group on the report of the Asszembly. It is humbling to be invited to offer encouragement and critique to another Christian tradition as they explore what it means to be more synodal in their discernment, governance and organisation.

Statement supported

I signed a statement on the situation in Gaza organised by Rev Dr Andrew Sloane from Morling College that was also supported by a number of Moderators, College Principals and agency leaders within the Uniting Church, along with heads of churches, academics and leaders in other churches. A meeting is currently being sought with the Foreign Minister to present the petition.

Greetings to partner churches.

I sent greetings to Dr. Kumar the new General Secretary of the Church of North India and Lin Manhong on her appointment as General Secretary of the China Christian Council.

Such other things as may be requested or advised by the Assembly.

Other

Key post ASC activities.

Between now and the 17th Assembly I will attend the Northern Synod, represent the Uniting Church at the Church of Scotland General Assembly, attend the 11th NCCA National Forum and 30th anniversary of the NCCA. The General Secretary of the World Council of Churches will be in attendance. I also hope to attend the 100th Free Wesleyan Church of Tonga Conference.

Thank you.

I am grateful to each of you for your commitment, your diligence, your offering of your gifts to the work of the Assembly through ASC . Thank you.

Sharon Hollis

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10/03/2024