



Uniting History SA Newsletter—September 2016

Several articles in the Winter Edition of *Heritage Living*, the magazine of the National Trust of South Australia, made me stop and reflect. In commenting on the call from the President, Norman Etherington to develop our appreciation of heritage tourism the editor writes,

“The core of this plan is that we need to find new ways of telling stories about our past that people actually want to hear. The stories, he tells us, should be compelling and linked thematically to familiar places” (pg.3). The magazine then includes examples of how this can be done and a two page article titled, *City of Faiths*, documents how a walking tour of Adelaide’s city churches illustrates the basic principles of heritage tourism. Check out the tour on web sites at...nationaltrust.org.au/tours-and-walks-sa/ and adelaidecityexplorer.com.au

Heritage tourism has become a significant contributor the State’s economy. In Europe during their summer season cathedrals and other landmark buildings draw the crowds and are overflowing with visitors from many lands.

UCA congregations with heritage listed buildings face major challenges to keep property in good order, raise the funds needed and ensure that spaces are adapted and well used by both church and community groups. I can think of many churches in SA where this commitment makes a lively and creative mixed of ministry and mission. As stewards we do this and at the same time look for new opportunities to welcome and host visitors. We share information about important dates and features of buildings but we also tell the story of the women and men who shared their faith through many generations and have contributed to making Adelaide a great city to live and work. People and places are inextricably linked and over the generations members have met around the table, broken bread together, shared in life’s struggles and celebrated achievements.

On Sunday 11 September I will be meeting with a SA Historical Society tour group in the grounds of the UC Port Adelaide. This is an opportunity to tell the story not only of this monumental and landmark two-storey 1868 building but also of the ministers and members who over 167 years have been committed to social reform and civic engagement. The congregation was formed in November 1849 and the Commercial Rd building is their third home in what was a very busy industrial waterfront

town. Port Adelaide’s built heritage, preserved when traditional industries declined in the 1960s, is now a major centre for several state-sponsored museums.

Stories of place here are based around the struggles to found a self-sufficient community, a community that welcomed newcomers from many lands, led social reform movements to protect women and children, supported the women’s suffrage movement and found ways to respond pastorally in times of industrial conflict. In the 24 years up to the WW1 church members embraced educational innovation, provided opportunities for young members to “better themselves” and become active leaders in local and state governments.

Let us find new ways of telling the compelling stories of our congregations, the contribution they make to family life, moments to celebrate social achievements and the commitment to ensure that places and people together create a sense of place where community life is enjoyed and all are welcomed.

In this edition of the newsletter we include two major articles...

The address given by former President, Prof Andrew Dutney at the Society’s AGM in June (page 4) and excerpts from the Memorial Service held at Colonel Light Gardens UC on 6 August to celebrate the life of Margaret Knauerhase (page 2).

Andrew’s reflections will prompt us to prepare for 2017 when we celebrate the 40th anniversary of the UCA. The life story of Margaret, shared by daughter Carys and son-in-law Ian, remind us to be thankful that we are the beneficiaries of a SA church family at the forefront of social reform movements that affirmed that every member is called to minister, that women and men are equal in leadership roles and as ordained ministers.

Rev Dr Dean Eland

Next Meeting: Sunday 25 September at 2:00pm In the Beginning: The West Lakes Congregation



This congregation, located at Bartley Terrace West Lakes Shore, will be celebrating its 41st Anniversary on this day.

At 2:00pm founding minister, the Rev. John Watt will share some of the core convictions and inspiration that led to its formation. John’s new book, *One Sign of Hope*, which tells the story of the first eight years of the congregation, will also be launched at this event. Copies of the book will be for sale at \$30. Afternoon tea to follow.

The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

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Membership of the Society

Individual—1 year	\$20
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information



**The life story of Margaret
Knauerhase
14/6/1914 – 19/7/2016**

When one lives for 102 years it is difficult to cover every aspect of their life and do justice to all their achievements. Margaret Knauerhase achieved much in her life and I hope that we do her memory proud.

Margaret Lucy Kiek was born on June 14, 1914 in Halifax, Yorkshire, England, and came to Australia in 1920 because her father, the Rev. Dr.

Edward Sydney Kiek, had been appointed as Principal of Parkin College, a residential Congregational Theological College in Kent Town, Adelaide. Her mother, Winifred Kiek travelled to Australia several months after Edward with her three children, Noel, the eldest, Margaret and then Laurie her younger brother. They were supported by a much-loved Nurse Miss Wakie. Their later sailing date was a result of Margaret contracting measles when they were due to leave, delaying them until she had recovered.

Education

Margaret initially attended a 'dame' school called Poltoonga. She later continued her education at the Methodist Ladies College when she was seven. Her tertiary education was at Adelaide University where she obtained a Bachelor of Arts Degree in 1934. Following this she taught English, Latin and French, first at Ellerslie School for one year and then at Wilderness Girls' School for two years.

Marriage and Family

On the 18th December 1937 Margaret married the love of her life, Oscar Knauerhase, whom she had met at Adelaide University and who had also joined the teaching profession. After their marriage she left the work force as married women were not allowed to teach. They had four daughters, Juliet (deceased 10/3/2016), Athalie, Carys and Veronica (Roni). At the time of her death Margaret had five grandchildren and twelve great grandchildren. (Oscar having died in April 1997 ending 59 years of marriage.)

Teaching

The rules about married women not teaching had relaxed by 1954 and so Margaret was able to return to teaching French at Methodist Ladies College where Julie and Athalie were attending and that helped ensure that Carys and Roni could be educated there too. She became the Senior French Mistress and held this position until she retired in 1975. During this time she was the representative of the Independent Schools on the Public Examinations Committee for French, was an active member of the Modern Language Teachers' Association and President of the Alliance Francaise. (Her love of languages was ongoing and besides French and Latin she studied German, Italian, Spanish, Japanese and New Testament and Modern Greek.) She was house Mistress of Delphi at MLC, later Annesley, for 20 years.

In 1981/82 she was President of the Annesley Old Scholars Association. She continued her support for Annesley well after she retired and in 2008 she donated money for a perpetual prize for poetry writing for Senior students of the college. The prize winners would receive money and the poetry book, "Awakening", written by Margaret. This is now presented to Junior School students.

Her love of learning and teaching was evident in her life and after retirement she invented games and aids for her grandchildren to assist their learning.

Her Writing

Margaret started writing poetry at an early age and her first book, *Songs of Sixteen* was published by her father in 1930. In 1936 Margaret won the Centenary Ode Competition for South Australia's Centenary. The writing of poetry, hymns, plays and books was a constant throughout her life resulting in 43 publications including biographies for both her father (*Straight on till Morning*, 1961) and her mother (*Winifred*, 1978); plays and pageants; church histories (including *Ivy on the wall* - the history of the Salisbury Crescent Congregational and Presbyterian Church in 1975); devotional books, poetry and hymns. Her last book, *Awakening*, was published in 2007 at the age of 93 years.

Margaret has always worked and contributed within various church organisations, first in the Congregational Church and later in the Uniting Church.

In her local church she taught Sunday School (including time as superintendent) for 35 years. Margaret also served as president of the Women's Guild, an Elder and Deacon, Congregational Chairperson (including guiding her congregation through an amalgamation) and Social Justice Officer for the new congregation for many years. At various times Margaret played the organ and conducted the church choir. Music was one of her driving passions. Margaret was a Lay Preacher (only retiring from this role in her 89th year), and public speaker—speaking on her varied travels and experience.

Margaret was also very involved **in the wider Church**. She was secretary and then president of the State Congregational Church Women's Society. Margaret also served on the executive of the ecumenical organisation, Australian Church women—representing the Uniting Church. In her involvement with Australian Church Women, she also composed and produced a Jubilee Pageant in 1986, represented the organisation on the Bible Society and World Day of Prayer boards as well as the Lavender Lads and Ladies. She was convener of that organisation's Winifred Kiek Scholarship (The scholarship set up by her mother—the Rev. Winifred Kiek—to enable Australian and Pacific Islander women to continue their tertiary education in Australia). In 1993, Margaret was honoured with Life Membership of Australian Church Women. She was also involved in the League of Women Voters (prior to it being disbanded).

Margaret's activities since retirement included working for Meals on Wheels; involvement with The Marjorie Black Centre; joining Amnesty International (writing letters on behalf of political prisoners around the world); driving for The Lavender Ladies; working for The Offenders' Aid and Rehabilitation Service; served as president of the Friends of Allambi Home for the Aged—raising money for the home and its activities; regular visits to Victor Harbor (a place she had loved since childhood); hospital visiting and many other interests and pursuits.

All these things and many other memories which I suspect all of you hold in your hearts and minds. However, her

greatest love, pride and passion was for her family who gave her great joy and satisfaction and more about that later.

Ian Penny

Personal memories of my mother

Margaret Knauerhase

Carys Penny

Unconditional love just poured out of Mum. I knew whatever mistakes I made she would forgive, whatever successes I had, she would celebrate, and she would be empathetic in my sorrows and hurts. If I was disobedient she would be so sad and disappointed I would feel guilty and try to make amends. She had high expectations of me and I wanted to live up to them. She wanted me to be the best and do my best in whatever I tried.

When I was very young and I thought my mother was like everyone else's mum. When I was about 10 I began to realise she was very different. Mum had twice as much energy as most people and endless optimism. She worked full-time and not a lot of mothers did that in 1954. She made our clothes. I would ask for a dress explaining what I wanted and she would buy the material which I chose and make the dress, often without a pattern, in a couple of days. She knitted jumpers, baby clothes and dresses. I still own a pretty pink dress she knitted for me in my thirties. She also knitted for our children and grandchildren. One of her last efforts was a Crows jumper for Aaron.

She had been brought up in a privileged way in Parkin College where they had servants to do the work and look after children and so she came to motherhood without a lot of skills that other young women possessed. She had to learn how to cook, clean, wash and iron and she did this with determination. She became an excellent cook and her strawberry, cream sponges were legend. She was also an experimental cook, trying new recipes and teaching me to cook by helping in the kitchen. Invariably the kitchen looked like a dog's breakfast when we'd finished. In 1951 she wrote the forward for the 24th edition of the "Green and Gold Cookery Book".

She expected us all to do chores, and mine, in the early years, were to do my piano practice and set the table on week nights and hang out the washing and mop the laundry floor on Saturdays with my friends standing by waiting for me to come out to play. She was strict but fair and I knew what was expected of me.

My parents gave me endless opportunities to do extracurricular activities such as ballet, piano and sport, especially tennis. We had a simple childhood with lots of time for imaginative play. I loved going to the Victor Harbor Minister's Rest Home with Grandpa and Grandma Kiek and later to Port Elliot when the rest home was sold. Mum would read books such as *Black Beauty*, *The Water Babies*, the Narnia series and other classics, by the fire. We would beg for just one more chapter and she would usually give in.

Mother shared her love of words and liked to make jokes using them. I first understood a pun when I was about 8 years old and we saw some cows standing in a mist in

paddock as we drove to Victor. Mum exclaimed “those cows look really mystified” and we all laughed at once. I continued to enjoy words with her right up to the end of her life, learning new words as we played scrabble and crosswords. Even at 102 she could spell and give meanings for words of which I had never heard. She corrected our grammar constantly and used rich language which enhanced our ability to read and write.

We played many games as a family, mostly word games and cards. One game Mum did not like was Monopoly. She thought it was based on greed and it lead to fights amongst us.

I was much older when I realized she had high intelligence and she had to write and challenge herself with new learning. The poetry, of which just a small portion is published, just poured out of her and when I asked how she did it she said it was a gift. Her favourite quote was “I am but a little pencil in the writing hand of God.” To write any book she had to be very disciplined and put aside other interests to do it.

Mum wrote heaps of letters to everyone and looked forward to receiving mail too especially from Julie. While my family lived in Texas for a year she wrote about 100 letters to us. She also wrote to relatives and friends all around the world especially to England, which her mother always referred to as home.

I remember how mum taught me to swim and much later to drive giving praise and encouragement even when her heart was in her mouth.

She loved gardening and I helped her, learning the names of flowers and plants as we worked together. She maintained her own garden, using a complicated planned schedule of work, until she was 89.

Most importantly she taught me to pray by praying with me every night for many years. Christian belief was a constant in my life but not forced on me. I was free to choose and when I was twelve I was able to decide for myself which Church I would join, the Lutheran church where my father attended or the Uniting Church.

When asked once why she did not continue with her studies she said that being a mother was the most important thing in her life. She also adored her grandchildren and was really disappointed that Ian and I stopped at three. She minded our girls on a regular basis for seven years while we were involved with Gallery singers and even helped our friend Beth, who sang in the same choir, with her two girls. She and Dad babysat for sick children and picked them up from school many times. She also had them for weekends when Ian and I went to conferences or short breaks.

She came to my kindergartens and demonstrated her spinning and weaving skills and gave a talk on poetry at Prince Alfred College where Ian was principal of the Junior School.

Her sons-in-law were loved as true sons and they all returned her love in various ways. Ross deserves a special mention as he managed her financial affairs and was her Power of Attorney for more than 15 years. His conscientious, faithful work was gratefully appreciated by mother and all of the family.

Mum gave me so much love and support all my life I wanted to give her love and encouragement in her later years. After Dad died she needed me more and so Ian and I took her for holidays to Spindrift, Batemans Bay, Melbourne and Hall's Gap in the Grampians. We will never forget helping Mum negotiate a small, steep path with her walker, even climbing over fallen logs when she was in her eighties. She managed it and was very proud of her achievement. She was sad she couldn't walk up Mt. William so we brought back snow from the top in an umbrella and built a snowman on the car bonnet so that she didn't miss out. She had an enormous capacity for enjoyment.

She came to all the plays and concerts in which I performed and wrote many songs and some plays for Polkadot Puppets, my small business. She took me and my sisters to ballet, orchestra concerts and plays. She particularly enjoyed Gilbert and Sullivan and we would sing the songs when we drove in the car, such as “Willow tit Willow tit Willow”, and “Three little maids from schools are we”. My love of theatre stems from my childhood.

I will miss her incredibly but her words of wisdom and her example of courageous, stoicism in times of pain will stay with me forever and continue to guide me through the rest of my life.

The following address by Rev Prof Andrew Dutney, Principal of Uniting College for Leadership and Theology was presented to the Historical Society's AGM on Sunday 19 June 2016.

Those Days...These Days: Studying the Basis of Union

Andrew Dutney

At the end of last year, having completed my term as President and taken a good, long holiday, I was fortunate enough to be granted a three-month period to do some research and writing before returning to Uniting College to resume my role there. It was a very generous gesture on the part of both the Leadership Development Council and my colleagues, who would have appreciated an extra pair of hands. I didn't want to waste it. So I set myself the task of attending to three separate but related projects. In each case I would be working with existing material; mitigating the risk of the blank page. Each project was also related to the Uniting Church, its origins and identity. I've been researching, writing and teaching in this area for thirty-four years now. It's become my “sweet spot” and offered me my best chance of completing the projects in the time available to me.

The first project was to review and edit the large body of written material generated during my term as President, finally having the space to reflect on what I had experienced and learned. In the event I was able to edit the material into a book which was published in December 2015.

The second project was to work on a revised edition of my first book, *Manifesto for Renewal*, incorporating the further

knowledge and insights gained in my subsequent thirty years of studying, teaching and writing about the Basis of Union. This was a major project and involved returning to the research I did as PhD student at St Andrews as well as bringing together more recent research. In the end I made substantial changes to the original book including adding a new chapter on missiology and completely rewriting two other chapters. I think the new edition is a much better book than the original.

The third project had been on my “to do” list for several years. I had come into the possession of an unknown (to me at least) brief commentary on the Basis of Union by Davis McCaughey published in 1971 – before the voting on union had begun. To my reading it not only had an energy about it that reflected the excitement about the process about to begin but also made the core principles underlying the proposed union more clearly and directly than later commentaries. The text of the commentary needed a lot of tidying up and it was necessary to apply the principles of inclusive language to it that were used in the 1991 version of the Basis of Union. I also wrote a long introduction to the commentary explaining who Davis McCaughey was, why his views continue to be important, and what the commentary adds to our understanding of the Basis of Union.

I’m very grateful to the Historical Society for this invitation to offer some reflections from this intense period of research and writing.

Working on and completing these projects had the feel of “closing a circle” to me. It connected my most recent experience – serving the church as President, discovering and discerning what God is doing with the UCA – with my earliest experiences as a student of the Uniting Church in Australia. It connected the man I am in my fifties with the man I was in my twenties, working on the same project but in very different Uniting Churches.

Before I comment on what is different about the Uniting Church I’d like to share the story of how I came to this area of study – a story that I felt ready to write down for the first time last November.

How I came to this work

On completing the prescribed course of training for the ministry of the Word I was directed into “secular employment”. That was the church’s way of saying, “You’re dropped.” It wasn’t that I had performed poorly as a candidate for ministry. On the contrary. But I had ended up in deep conflict with the Synod Settlements Committee as it tried to work out what to do with me during an awkward nine month hiatus before I took up a place at St Andrew’s University in Scotland to do a Postgraduate Diploma in Ecumenical Studies. The details don’t really matter here, but the affect it had on me does.

It was 1980. Little more than three years since the inauguration of the Uniting Church in Australia. I was twenty-two and devastated. How could I have been so

wrong about my sense of call to the ministry? How could the church be so wrongheaded in its management of my vocation? What is “ministry” anyway beyond this stupid, pointless, soul-destroying system? I was very hurt and very angry.

In the course of that final year at theological college my anger and frustration at the settlements process turned me into a difficult person to deal with and I became progressively more alienated from the church’s systems and practices. By the time the letter arrived, officially advising me to “get a job”, I was already working as a clerk in a legal firm. I was happy. Regular hours. Regular income. Regular people my own age. And the prospect of a career in the sensible field of Law – *after* I returned from Scotland having completed the Diploma. That adventure had already been planned and saved for and Heather and I were going ahead with it. Three terms of study followed by a few months backpacking around Europe. We were young after all. Plenty of time to get started on the new career when we came back.



But that’s not how things unfolded. It turned out that, away from the distractions and commitments of our life in Brisbane and with no other duty to fulfil than to attend my classes, write my essays and sit my exams, I was quite good at academic theology. My examiners recommended that I be encouraged to go on to doctoral research and I was invited to continue at St Andrew’s working on a PhD. That appealed to us. We were very happy in Scotland and were beginning to wonder if there might be a way that we could make our life there – far away from the painful associations that Australia held for us.

Having worked out how to finance an extended stay in Scotland with support from our families and part-time and casual work for each of us, the only question remaining was what I would research. That was easy. I was still angry and hurt about what had happened to me as a candidate for the ministry in the UCA. I wanted to expose the stupidity and duplicity of this new church and the way it approached ministry. And I wanted to do a root and branch job of it, starting with the negotiations for church union and uncovering the compromises and mistakes behind the system that had derailed my life and undermined my faith. Staying motivated is half the race in completing a PhD, and my supervisor thought that the thirst for revenge would be a reliable ally in getting me to the finish line. So it was agreed. I would research “The development of the understanding of ministry in the Australia church union negotiations 1957-1971” – and then watch them squirm.

But once again, that’s not how things unfolded. Within a few months my attitude had been completely transformed. As I investigated the long history of the church union movement in Australia, and especially what made the work of the Joint Commission on Church Union so distinctive, I became increasingly convinced that I was dealing with an authentically Spirit-led process – one that challenged the tired denominationalism and unimaginative institutionalism that I despised. And when I eventually got to a close study of the final version of the Basis of Union I was simply captivated. The vision crystalized within its eighteen short paragraphs was what I had been looking for

– a vision that could guide me as a disciple and servant of Jesus and renew the community that gathered around him. All I wanted to do was to share what I'd discovered with my peers – my own generation; the first generation of the Uniting Church in Australia. I didn't know it then, but I had found my life's work.

As I worked through the documents, notes and papers from that initial period of study and began adding to them the further material that I have gathered in subsequent decades of research, I became very aware that while I have been working on essentially the same project for thirty-four years the Uniting Church, to which my project was most relevant, has been transformed.

In those days... These days...

The most obvious difference between the church then and now is that in those days it was so much bigger. In those days the vast majority of congregations were more than 100 strong and only a few were smaller than 50 people. In those days we expected to gather 2000 or more young adults to NCYC every other year. These days we aim for 800 or so (including an army of middle aged support workers). In those days there'd be 800 or more at an Adult Fellowships rally during the annual Synod meeting. These days that network of devoted disciples and church workers is much smaller, and the rally ceased to be called after numbers halved and halved again with each passing decade.

In those days the church was essentially monolingual and mono-cultural and the orders of service were essentially the same week by week and congregation by congregation. These days diversity and variety is our liturgical norm. And as our President reminds us in his video message for the UCA's anniversary, there are 185 UCA congregations worshipping in one of 25 languages other than English as well as the many Aboriginal communities within the Uniting Church worshipping in their Indigenous languages.

In those days almost all congregations had their own Minister, perhaps two, or at least shared one with another congregation. These days fractional placements are common and more than half of our congregations are lay-led. In those days the Minister was pretty much in charge, did most of the hands on ministry, and was an important community leader. In those days the church was at the centre of the community – in towns, neighbourhoods, and the society as a whole. Along with the RSL, the church had some public clout. Together with Rotary and Lions, the church was expected and trusted to get things done for the community. Like Scouts and Guides, church was somewhere people sent their kids to be prepared for adult citizenship.

That Australia and that church are long gone. Sometimes we miss it. That's understandable. But God has already made us into a new church and is calling us to be Christ's body and witnesses in this new Australia.

In those days we were still the church of Christendom. These days we aren't. In those days we still thought of mission as something done by someone else somewhere else. These days we can't avoid the truth that the church is missional or it's not the church – that our congregations and faith communities are missional or they are not an *ekklesia*. We can see now that we live in the midst of a neo-pagan culture that is thirsty for the

news of Jesus Christ and his resurrection. These days the Basis of Union is speaking to a new generation with startling clarity. Why this text speaks so clearly today, nearly half a century after it was drafted, became obvious to me again as I worked away at the end of last year.

What I (re)learned

Church union was not a new idea in Australia in the 1950s. The end of the nineteenth century had seen the reunion of five separate Methodist denominations and six separate Presbyterian denominations, and the first half of the twentieth century saw seven different attempts at negotiating a union involving various combinations of the Anglican, Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches. Australians saw the good sense in church union. But the compromises needed to achieve it generally proved too much.

Davis McCaughey arrived in Australia in the mid-1950s, just as another attempt at uniting the Congregational, Methodist and Presbyterian churches was coming to what appeared to be a successful conclusion. A Basis of Union had been drafted. It was practical. It didn't ask too much of any of the participating denominations. The union could probably be finalized on this Basis in just a few years. But McCaughey opposed it. And as he explained why, more and more people were drawn to the alternative approach that he advocated:

...the only union worthwhile would be one in which we seek again the fullness of the Church's faith, the fullness of the Church's life, and the fullness of the Church's witness... We must talk about the Holy Catholic Church and focus on the fact that we are engaged on renewal of the Church, not just tacking it all together, we reject ecclesiastical carpentry.

There was tremendous energy in the international ecumenical movement in the period after World War 2 – especially among its younger leaders like McCaughey. Big things were happening. In 1947 Anglican and non-episcopal Protestant churches had united to form the Church of South India – slicing through the Gordian Knot created by the Chicago-Lambeth Quadrilateral, scandalising some observers and thrilling others. And now negotiations towards a similar union were underway in North India, Pakistan, Burma and Ceylon.

In 1948 the World Council of Churches had been formed, holding its first General Assembly in Amsterdam, not only manifesting the fact that for the first time in history the church really was world-wide but also the new realisation that the separated denominations belonged to each other and needed each other in spite of their differences. Big things were happening. God was renewing the church in faith and mission. It would be awful not to be part of that. At this critical time McCaughey's contemporary and friend, Lesslie Newbigin expressed what many of their generation of ecumenical leaders were thinking:

There is a real danger at the present time of a false sort of ecumenism, an attempt to find consolation amid the wreckage of the old Christendom in the vision of a new and wider Christendom, yet without the acceptance of the hard demands of missionary obedience. The attractions of this broad and comfortable blind alley must be resisted. There is no true ecumenical movement except that which is missionary through and through.

This kind of outlook had been formed in McCaughey through his experiences in the Student Christian

Movement, the British Council of Churches and the World Council of Churches. He brought it with him to Australia. And when he looked at the draft Basis of Union towards the end of 1956 he did not hide his disappointment. On the contrary, he argued that there was a critical choice now before them:

[A choice between] a union which committed no one in the existing denominations to anything to which he was not already committed, and one which sought the renewal of the face of the Catholic Church and so called into question that which we already are.

In the end, McCaughey's argument was persuasive. That set of union negotiations was wound up and a new Joint Commission on Church Union was formed to enable the three denominations to embark on that more difficult, more confronting journey towards union – a journey towards deep renewal in faith and mission.

One thing that struck me in the brief 1971 commentary is Davis McCaughey's emphasis on "renewal". From the outset he says, "unity is only of significance if it is an aspect of the renewal of the life of the Church." A little later he says,

The only union which is worth having is a union of those who acknowledge God's grace and who as penitent sinners go forward together on the way of renewal... If we depart from this, it is open to question whether we ought to have union at all. Would we not be better to wait until the Spirit of God quickens in us a spirit of penitence and a determination to go forward together in the way of renewal?

He could hardly be more emphatic. It's essentially the same argument that he used back in 1956 and 1957 to persuade the Presbyterian Church *not* to unite with the Congregational and Methodist churches on the Basis that was being proposed. He meant it then, and he meant in 1971 too. It isn't worth uniting unless it is to participate in the renewal that God is effecting in the church.

And so the Joint Commission on Church Union had prepared a Basis of Union specifically as an instrument through which the Holy Spirit could renew the church in faith and mission in an *ongoing* way. In his later commentary, Davis McCaughey said that, "The Basis of Union was intended as a call to the Church to renew her commitment to the faith by which she lives and to go out boldly on her mission." This call to renewal was not just needed at the time of union, but again and again as the church continued its pilgrimage. As Ian Gillman commented at the time:

...it is the hope of the Joint Commission that the Basis will have a continuing formative role to play in the life of the Uniting Church, rather than become merely a reference source as have so many definition-type statements of the past. The Basis, in the spirit of the Gospel, calls us to step out, with faith in Christ rather than in a man-made detailed contract. It has an open-ness about it as a result – but so has the call of Christ – 'follow me!'

Little wonder, then, that so many people tell me about their excitement when they first read the Basis of Union – not just those who first read it in 1971, but first-time

readers in all the years since then right up until the present. Teenagers, young adults, new members of the UCA and ministers being received from other denominations today tell me with real energy how the Basis of Union speaks to them. It rings true to their sense of what being a Christian and being part of God's church is all about.

Craig Bailey, the Director of Leadership at Uniting College told me about a trend he's noticed among participants in the Period of Discernment. He's overseen the Period of Discernment in the Presbytery of South Australia for several years, and interviewed each participant personally at the start of the process. A few years ago Craig noticed that he was meeting a steady stream of youngish people who had worked for a while in para-church organisations like Scripture Union, YWAM or the Schools Ministry Group and were now testing a call to commit to a mainstream ministry in one of the denominations. They'd had experience working with several denominations and had decided that the Uniting Church was the one that they felt most connected to. Why would that be? Craig wondered. And he got into the habit of asking.

Craig found five themes in the answers he got to that question:

1. The way Uniting Church congregations relate to their surrounding communities
2. The space people have to think for themselves in the Uniting Church
3. The flexibility built into the Uniting Church's structures which creates opportunities for "fresh expressions" etc.
4. The polity and governance of the Uniting Church
5. The Basis of Union

I said earlier that it felt a bit like "closing the circle" on my life's work as I brought each my three projects to a conclusion late last year. But it only feels like that a bit. Because as I return to the College and the South Australian church, I am met by an enthusiasm and excitement about the Uniting Church's vision and vocation that tells me my work has only just begun.

AGM—Council Elections

At the recent AGM, the following people were elected to the Historical Society Council.

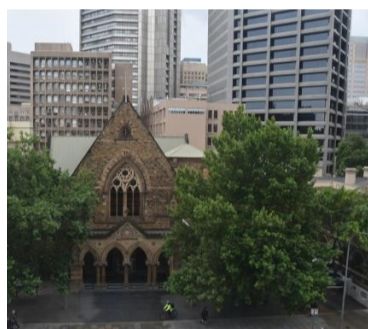
- President: Judith Raftery
 - Vice President: Val Canty
 - Secretary and Editor: Dean Eland
 - Treasurer: Gaye Brown
 - Other council members:
Norah Norris
Barbara Hayes
Ken Hayes
Glenys Edwards
Doug Hosking
Brian Chalmers
-

News items

A New Future for History in the UCA

The Assembly of the Uniting Church in Australia has decided to establish a National Historical Society. This is good news for the UCA and for the cause of history! Those of us already engaged, through state UCA Historical Societies, through the teaching of religious/church history or through regional or local church history groups and programs, welcome this move and we are looking forward to what the conference will contribute to the important processes of understanding, recording, debating and celebrating our history and allowing that history to inform our future journey as a pilgrim people on the way.

To formally launch the new national society, and also to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the UCA (not to mention the five hundredth anniversary of the Protestant Reformation!) a conference is being planned for 9-12 June 2017 (the Queen's birthday long weekend). The conference will be held at Pilgrim Uniting Church in Adelaide, starting at 5.00pm on Friday 9 June and finishing by 12 noon, Monday 12 June.



It will feature a mix of

- major contributions from specially invited keynote speakers and panel discussants
- short papers presented by conference participants (who will be academics, non-academics, local historians, archivists, former missionaries, members of UAICC, clergy, laity - in fact anyone interested in and engaged with UCA history)
- workshops and field visits
- plenty of opportunities for networking and conviviality.

Please plan to come. Save the date and start planning your paper or workshop. Expect to see further information and a conference registration brochure via your usual UCA communication channels soon.

Questions? Please contact

Leanne Davis, Admin. Officer, UC Historical Society SA
admin@historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au OR

Dr Judith Raftery, Chair, Conference Organising Committee: judith.raftery@adelaide.edu.au

News from the History Centre

Volunteers continue to serve the church and the wider community by providing advice and assistance for those involved in researching church, local and family history. The centre welcomes volunteers to help manage the large and growing collection of documents, memorabilia, books and records of churches and agencies.

A number of upgrade works are being undertaken to improve the on-site amenities. The Centre at 44a East Avenue, Black Forest, is open on Wednesday afternoons from 1:00pm to 4:00pm

(Other contact details can be found on page 2)

Upcoming Meetings for 2016

Sunday, 25 September, 2:00pm
In the Beginning: The West Lakes Congregation
(see front page for details)

Sunday, 23 October, 2:30pm
Early Revivalism in South Australia

Guest speakers, Rev. Brian Chalmers and Dr. Jenny Hein, will join in a conversation about their recent research work in early revival movements in South Australia. Jenny is a lecturer in history at the Uniting College for Leadership and Theology; Brian is completing his doctorate on early Methodism in South Australia. This meeting will be held at Church of The Trinity, 318 Goodwood Road, Clarence Park, beginning at 2:30pm.

Dates for 2017

Keep these dates in mind for Society events in 2017...

- Sunday 19 March
- AGM—Sunday 7 May
- National Conference—Friday 9—Monday 12 June
- Sunday 8 October

A detailed program is currently being prepared for 2017.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of the Rev. Keith Smith on Friday, 12 August, 2016. Keith served in a number of congregations throughout the state as well as being the second Moderator of the Uniting Church in South Australia, and contributed significantly to the Methodist and Uniting Churches in this state. After retiring in 1992, he remained passionate about the life and mission of the Uniting Church. His book *The Methodist Pilgrimage via Pirie Street* (2012) is an important record of the challenges facing city churches

We will include a tribute to the Rev. Keith Smith in our next newsletter.
