



Uniting History SA March 2017

A changing, developing, evolving church

Celebrating the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Uniting Church in Australia this year provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey so far, to pause and consider present challenges and to discern future directions. Over the last four decades the UCA has developed its own tradition through experience and memorable events, a changing social context and the struggle that comes with facing momentous decisions. In the years leading up to June 1977 many helped shape its polity, emphasis and style; and the Basis of Union became the reference point for an emerging tradition. The fading yet formative memory of our former Methodist, Congregational and Presbyterian traditions also embodied the changing and evolving nature of tradition.

180 years ago, in 1837, two of these denominations in SA were founded by a few people who covenanted together and formed the first congregations. The first Wesleyan Society meeting in SA was held on 11 May 1837 in the home of Edward Stephens at the rear of present day Parliament House on North Tce. Stephens was the cashier of the South Australian Company. Fifteen members indicated their willingness to become members. (Hunt,1985:25). Within two months of the arrival of the Rev. Thomas Quinton Stow, eleven Congregationalists met on 19 December 1837 and covenanted together to form the first fellowship. (Cameron, 1988:6)

The Rev. Ralph Drummond, a Presbyterian minister of the United Secession church, arrived in Adelaide eighteen months later and on 9 June 1839, his first Sunday in the colony, he was invited by Stow to preach in the Independent Chapel. A few weeks later, on 7 July, he preached at the opening of the new Wesleyan chapel in Freeman St. On 14 July 1839 the first Presbyterian service in the colony was held in the South Australian Society's schoolroom on North Tce. (Srimgeour, 1986:14)

Writing about his own experience in the Catholic Church, Paul Collins in his 1991 publication, *No Set Agenda: Australia's Catholic Church faces an uncertain future* writes,

Tradition, then, is not just a profound sense of history; it is also the perception that, on the basis of the past, the Catholic Christian can look to the future. Tradition is the theology of a changing, developing, evolving church, not just one that is

statically bogged down in one or other old period of the past. (Collins, 1991:173)

In this newsletter we draw attention to the important contributions made by South Australians to a living tradition that changes and adapts. We will share some of these insights at the national conference in June and in our other three events planned for this year. We look forward to your support and participation in this program of celebration and reflection.

Rev. Dr Dean Eland

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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 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)

The UCA History Centre

Open Wednesdays 1 - 4pm

44A East Ave
Black Forest

Website:

historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au

Facebook:

www.facebook.com/UCAHistoricalSocietySA

CORRESPONDENCE:

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COUNCIL MEMBERS

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Doug Hosking

Brian Chalmers

Jonathan Barker

Bill Harris

Lindsay Faulkner

You can receive this newsletter via email. Send your email address to admin@historicalsociety.unitingchurch.org.au and we will send you our up-to-date news and other items of interest

Membership of the Society

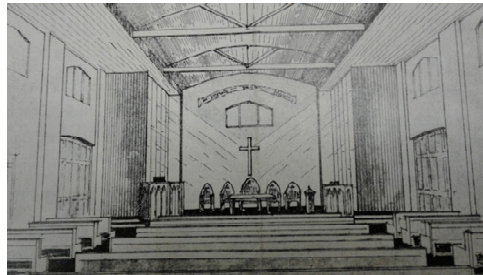
Individual—1 year	\$20
Individual—5 years	\$80
Individual—Life	\$250
Congregational—Life	\$250

Contact the Centre for more information

Why Unley?

A Case Study: Changing Community... Changing Church

This walk and talk will provide participants with an overview of the growth and development of a stable and predominately residential region of suburban Adelaide over nearly 170 years. Seventeen suburbs make up this local government area (LGA) and the current population is 35,000. Five existing Uniting Church congregations are located in the region: The Church of the Trinity, Christ Church, Rosefield, Malvern and Unley.



Drawing of the inside of Vardon Memorial—from the cover of the Jubilee Celebrations invitation/program

Over the years church sites have been sold to other denominations or become private dwellings. Examples include the former Vardon Memorial, Valmai Ave, Kings Park (formerly Congregational) and Black Forest (formerly Methodist) are now Baptist churches. Goodwood Methodist is now Greek Orthodox, and

Mitchell Memorial, Goodwood, which was once Presbyterian is now Chinese Methodist! Two former Methodist churches in Parkside, Epworth and Parkside West and St Andrews Presbyterian in Unley are private homes. This year's AGM on 7 May will meet in the former Unley Methodist/Uniting Church at King William Rd and will be hosted the present owners, Toop and Toop Real Estate agency.

The first Wesleyan Methodist church was founded in Arthur St in the late 1840s. In the final two decades of the 19th century Unley and its growing suburbs

witnessed a building boom of new churches. Wesleyan Methodist church buildings included Unley at King William Rd (1881), Parkside (1884) and Malvern (1891). In 1898 Congregationalists shifted from the original site in James St (now Rugby) and opened their second building on Unley Rd in 1898. Strong support for the projects came from families settling in new suburban sub divisions.

Agencies of the Uniting Church and its antecedent denominations have also been major land holders in the Unley LGA including several aged care agencies and two major educational centres. The former Wesley Theological College, principal's residence and deaconess house were located on King William Rd and Annesley College, formerly Methodist Ladies' College, originally the Bible Christian's Way College on Greenhill Rd. The History Centre of the UC SA Historical Society is in



Unley Methodist Church—1940—Diamond Jubilee Celebrations

East Ave Black Forest and is a former Churches of Christ building.

Local historians have been busy and authors have produced histories of Unley congregations and a bibliography is available from the History Centre for those wishing to learn more. A number of civic and agency history centres are located in Unley, including the SA Genealogical Society which has its Library and Research Centre at 201 Unley Rd.

Social changes and the many adaptations and responses by Unley churches over this time raise questions for churches in other areas. What can be learnt from this case study for the future?

- Were the decisions of churches to close and merge necessary and the right thing to do?
- Do local changes and population trends reflect the wider changes in the community at large?
- Social trends are beyond the control of the local church and some have adapted and seen these as new opportunities for ministry. Are their examples in the region?
- How do congregations discern when it is appropriate to hang on and when it is time to let go?



Mitchell Memorial UC—Final service—28 July 1991 with Revs. Kerr (left) and Macdonald (right) and the congregation

Did you know... ?

The first Methodist service in Unley was in the 1840s. It was conducted in Arthur Street, on the grounds of Mr. Hickman, the pulpit being a bullock dray.

(From: *Methodism in Unley 1849-1977*)



Found in the History Centre

From time to time, we will share some of the treasures that can be found at the History Centre.

The photos, books, records, artefacts, ... that are at the centre provide an interesting and exciting glimpse of the distant and not so distant past of church history. If you haven't visited for a look recently, why not drop in sometime.



This is a photo of the Alexander Street Methodist Church Choir in Port Pirie, South Australia.

The photo is undated and there is no other information on it about the photo or the people in it.

If anyone has more information about this photo, or the church, please feel free to let us know here at the History Centre.

History Grants Programme 2017

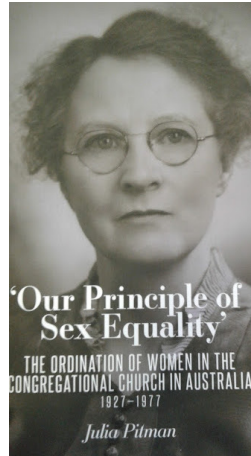
The Society's History Grants programme assists local churches and groups to meet the cost of producing printed or audio-visual histories, mounting historical displays, preserving heritage items, etc. If you would like more information about these grants or an application form, please contact us at ucsahist@chariot.net.au. The deadline for applications is 31 March, 2017.



BOOK REVIEW

Judith Raftery

Julia Pitman, *Our Principle of Sex Equality: the ordination of women in the Congregational Church in Australia, 1927-1977*, Australian Scholarly Publishing, North Melbourne, 2016. Paperback, 328pp, including illustrations, notes, appendices, bibliography and index. RRP: \$39.95. Available from Mediacom and from the publisher.



This is the story of the ordination of women within the Congregational Church in Australia, from the pioneering Winifred Kiek in 1927 to Linda Loader in 1975. But it is also much more than that. The author, Rev. Dr Julia Pitman, has published widely in the area of women's ordination and the history and theology of the Congregational Church. She is well-equipped to set the story firmly in the broad historical context of Congregationalism in Australia and Britain, and to defend the cause of women's ordination on theological as well as political and sociological grounds. Her argument, based on meticulous research and intelligent insights, avoids both the self-congratulatory and apologetic stance that too often limits the value of denominational history, and also the lack of balance that can mar gender studies.

The main body of the text deals with the emergence of Congregationalism in Britain, and its translation to the Australian colonies; the prophetic role of women within Congregationalism; the careers and achievements of the first women ministers, and their contributions to ecumenism and the emergence of "an ecumenical Christian consciousness"; and the legacy of this history for the Uniting Church. In her concluding chapter Pitman reiterates hers and the Uniting Church's defence of the ordination of women on theological grounds: it is a matter not merely of 'women's rights', important though these are, but a manifestation of the transcendence of gender-based difference that is intrinsic to the gospel and also of Congregationalism's historic commitment to the priesthood of all believers. According to Pitman, this is what Winifred Kiek meant when she claimed that the ordination of women gave substance to "our principle of sex equality".

In addition to the main body of the text there is a substantial appendix of brief biographies of the 15 women ordained within Australian Congregationalism between 1927 and 1977. These will appeal to many readers with memories of those times and of these remarkable women. The biographies are engaging 'stand alones', but also an accessible way into the rest of the work. There is also a detailed index and a comprehensive bibliography that other researchers will find valuable.

The Historical Society welcomes this splendid addition to Australian religious historiography. You may peruse a copy of the book at the History Centre, or better still, purchase your own from Mediacom or the publisher.

I am going home with a song!

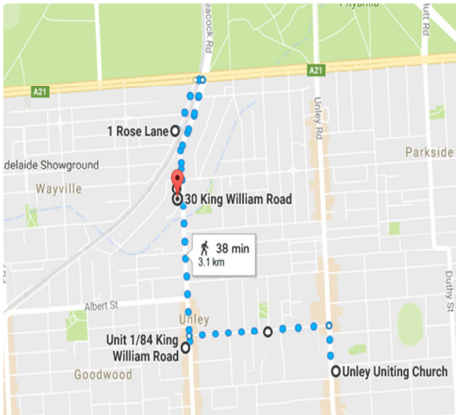


The Argent Uniting Church (Marian Rd, Payneham) is closing. The 1859 building was the home of an early Primitive Methodist congregation. Many early Methodist ministers and lay leaders are interred in the cemetery that surrounds the building.

One grave stone records the death of Serena Thorne. (Her grave stone reads: *For 40 years, she preached the Gospel. Her dying words were, "I am going home with a song!"*)

Details of her ministry in SA with Bible Christians are included in the Society's 2015 publication, *Bible Christian Methodists in South Australia 1850-1900* and copies of this major work of over 600 pages are for sale at the History Centre.

2017 Events



Note: Map image, distance and locations are approximate

Our first event on the program for 2017 is the **Unley Walk and Talk** on Sunday 19 March

This walking tour event will begin at 2:30pm meeting at Unley Uniting Church, 187 Unley Road.

This historic walk will include visits to several sites including the first Methodist church in Arthur Street (now the Unley RSL) and then north along King William Road to the former Wesley College (now The Lodge Eldercare). The walk will conclude by meeting at Gillingham Hall (former site of MLC, Annesley and Way College). Those wishing to travel by car may meet up with the walkers at Christ Church Uniting Church, 26 King William Road, Wayville for afternoon tea.

The 2017 **Annual General Meeting and Conversation** will be held on Sunday 7 May at 2:30pm at Toop and Toop, 84 King William Road, Hyde Park (site of the former Unley Methodist Church).

At 3:00pm there will be a display and panel conversation with those who have a story to tell about family life, community changes and the presence of Methodists in the region. Jane and Lew Toop will be our hosts on this day.



Unley Methodist Church—1940



Pilgrim Uniting Church

A Pilgrim People—40 years on

Our major event in 2017 will be hosting the **National UCA History Conference** on the June long weekend (Friday 9 June—Monday 12 June). More details on the conference can be found on Page 6, and there will be more to come in the coming months. The program is being put together, speakers have been invited and plans are being made.

The conference will be held at Pilgrim Uniting Church.

Registrations close on 31 March—don't forget to get your registration in

Our meeting on Sunday 8 October will be a panel conversation, and the topic of discussion will be **Leaders of the Women's Suffrage Movement in SA**

This panel discussion will explore the values and convictions of church members who led the women's suffrage movement in SA in the late 19th century. To be held in Brougham Place Uniting Church, North Adelaide at 2:30pm.

This will also be an opportunity to appreciate the significance of this 1861 heritage listed building and to hear about the influential ministry of Rev. James Jefferis, the progressive Christianity leader of his day! Afternoon tea will follow.



Brougham Place Uniting Church

A Pilgrim People: 40 Years On

National Uniting Church History Conference



All of this is us

 Uniting Church in Australia

National Conference Updates

Plans for the conference are coming along, and the program is being finalised.

Keynote Speaker

Honorary Associate Professor Dr Renate Howe AM has been confirmed as the keynote speaker for the conference. We look forward to hearing what she has to share.

Presentations, Papers and Topics

The Call for Papers has now closed, and we have received papers with an eclectic mix of topics including:

- The Diaconate
- Local churches and their histories
- Church and Public Policy
- LGBTQI
- Homosexuality Debate

Panellists for the Saturday evening panel discussion, *The Church and Public Theology* include:

- Hon. Brian Howe
- Rev. Prof. Andrew Dutney
- Dr Deidre Palmer
- Rev. Bev Fabb
- Rev. Dr Lynn Arnold

Conference Registration

Registration for conference attendance is now open, and the registration form can be found on the website for the conference (address above).

Registrations have been set at

- Full conference attendee: \$150 (\$120 concession)
- Day registration (Saturday or Sunday and

includes evening event of the day): \$65/day

- Saturday or Sunday evening only (public events): \$10/event

Conference registration closes on 31 March. Get your registrations in now!

Keeping up to date

The conference website will be updated as new information comes to hand, and we will be sending out regular email updates as well. You can sign up for conference specific updates at the conference website.

Questions?

Please contact

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

