



Uniting Tasmania

Issue No. 233 | April 2025



“My name is Ricky Beswick, my middle name is Lee, I was born May 17th 1963”; so started my early high school essay.

Today, I’m living in Hobart, married to Ros, with three adult sons.

“At the end of 2024, I retired from Hydro Tasmania after 43+ years, working in the area of connection and registration administration. I’m involved in a Rostrum (Public Speaking) Club and playing social sport including badminton (as much as my dodgy knees allow). I enjoy travelling, watching science fiction and comedy TV and listening to history podcasts.

Faith and church were always part of my life, growing up attending Ulverstone Methodist Church and at Glenorchy UCA since 1981.

My young adult years infused and enthused by youth groups and services, Easter and other camps including NCYCs and at it’s best I think a holy rambunctiousness!

Later on involved in Lay Preaching and the usual congregational engagements.

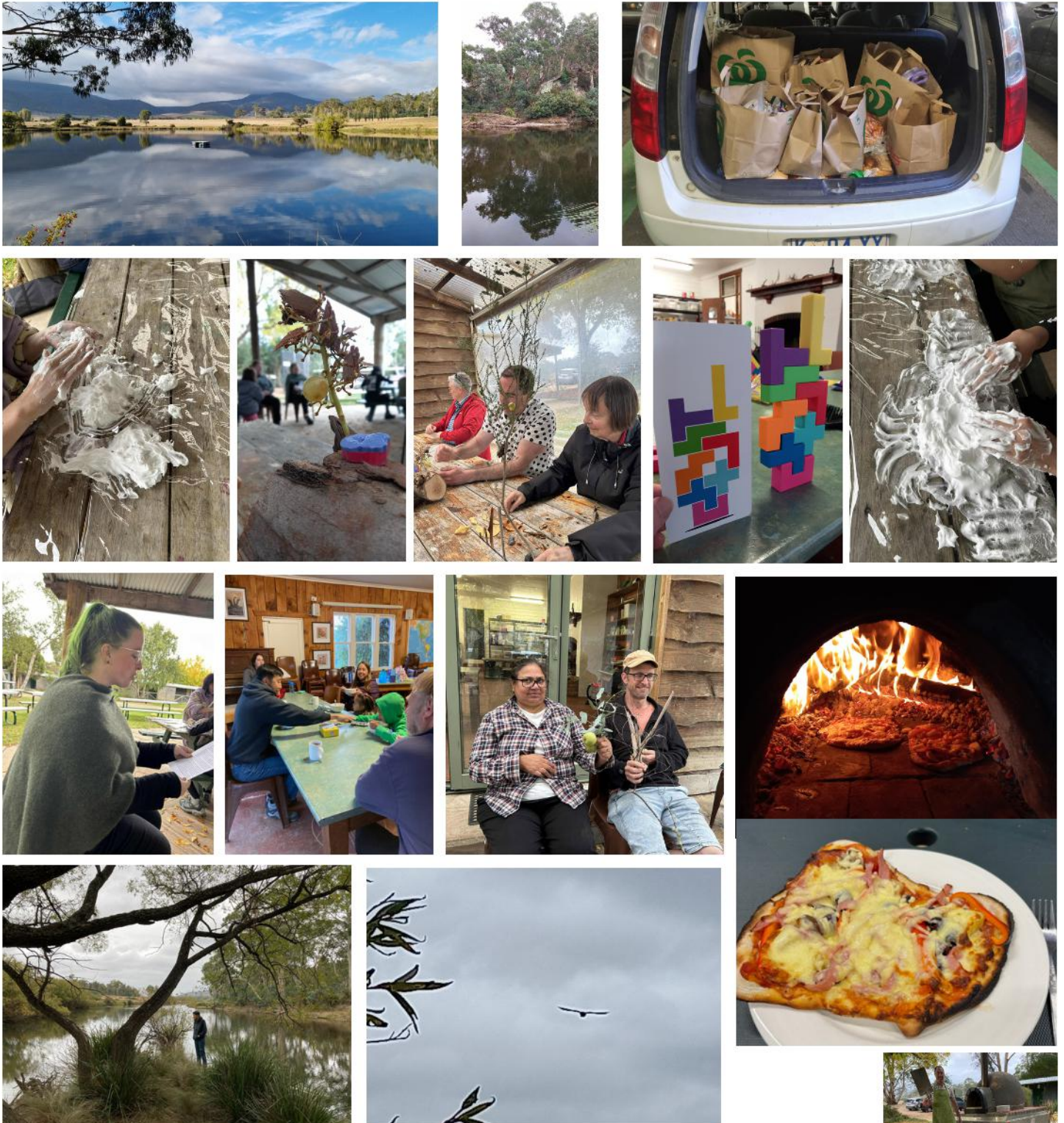
Over the last 18 months attending Synod and Presbytery Standing Committee seeing some of the wider church issues, as well as the work of some of the faithful, talented and dedicated staff and volunteers of the Presbytery and beyond.

I think church leadership, particularly in the UCA, (as per Ephesians 4:16) is more about connection than direction. So a challenge is how do we share connections between congregations and the wider church, that inform, inspire and encourage us in our shared journey as a pilgrim people? Over and above this, in a half remembered quote I recall; “the loss of a sense of high adventure is the death of religion”, is the reminder to me of the call in the everyday mundane tasks, to always keep in sight the high calling of the Kingdom of God.

“...we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love”.

Ephesians 4:15b-16

Families 'getaway' weekend



The families 'getaway' weekend was held in March 2025 at the Valley Campus of Scotch Oakburn College. Photos by Pru White, Rosalind Terry, Sandy Brodine, Caro Field, Rohan Pryor.

Reflections



It is great to welcome Ricky as the Chairperson of the Presbytery of Tasmania, following the discernment of the Presbytery meeting in council on 1 March 2025.

Leadership is a vital and challenging topic for our times. There are many challenges and problems we face, as well as some opportunities, but the way ahead is not very clear.

The activities, patterns and structures that we are most familiar with no longer serve us well.

At the same time the legal requirements upon us are increasing, as the wider Australian community requires us to meet compliance requirements in the areas of keeping children and vulnerable people safe, ensuring our properties are safe for access by the general public of all abilities, and planning ahead to maintain our cemeteries for at least 100 years following the last interment.

Many of us long for a leader who will solve the problems for us, including answering the question of where all the Sunday school children have gone.

My reflection after three years as Presbytery Chairperson is that nobody can solve these problems for us. Together we can work to address some of the challenges, but our activities, patterns and systems must adapt and change.

God still calls us to grow in discipleship through communities of faith, and to act with compassion in the world: this is still the purpose of the Church, joining God's mission of incarnating (embodying) love in the world.

But we no longer need to do that by maintaining lovely historical and traditionally shaped church buildings, even though our ancestors in the faith have done so across recent generations. We no longer have to meet each Sunday morning for liturgical worship services, even though that is what many of us have done for our whole lives, including both Ricky and me.

Those patterns and familiar expectations now involve more burdens than blessings. We can faithfully lighten the load, but this will involve some difficult decisions. We have choices to make, and we have to make choices: that requires leadership by us all.

Continued on page 8

Marian's Musings



“Progress can be waiting”

“**Progress can be waiting**” was a phrase I recently heard from a colleague. It struck me as a different way to consider both waiting and progress. What does it mean when we alter our perception of time and our understanding of what is comfortable to think about pausing as progress?

The church divides the year into liturgical seasons and both Advent and Lent seem to be enriched by pausing and waiting. These are intentional decisions when we take an intentional pause in time.

The question is ‘why’, why take intentional time to pause, to wait? When we wait to see the purpose, we wait to see what there is in front of us, what lies behind us, waiting to see where God is in all the busy and crazy.

I wonder whether this is perhaps what the church needs to do, to wait, to pause to recognise God in the busyness and in the anxiety. But it is more than seeing God. Is it not also listening for God in front, behind and beside? We as people of faith can get so caught up in the trappings and lose sight of God. This Lent may we as individuals and as a Christian community wait, pause, listen and respond.

May this intentional act of waiting and pausing be a spiritual habit we all practice and in so doing may we as a church, as a presbytery and as people of faith see God’s progress for us all.

Rev Marian Bisset is the recently Inducted Presbytery Minister for Resourcing (Northern Tasmania) and Presbytery Minister eLM for Tasmania. Marian will be contributing to Uniting Tas regularly with Marian’s Musings.

THREE VISIONS

The 17th Assembly in July 2024 adopted three clear visions for the future of the Uniting Church as part of a suite of resolutions arising from the Act2 Project report. The three visions related to:



God of revelation, you made your son known at a wedding, a public celebration of love.

Celebrate Love with us by revealing Jesus among each and everyone of us.

And as we join with you in celebration, help us to set aside what no longer serves us, grant that we may shape new wineskins so that new wine may flow freely and without impediment.

Help us to see you and meet you in unexpected places and ways.
Amen.

<https://uniting.church/an-update-on-the-act2-project/>

THREE VISIONS – continued

Preamble

The 17th Assembly resolved, in response to the Act2: The Gift of the Spirit report: to open ourselves to the gift of the Spirit, given in order that we may not lose the way. With thanksgiving for the past 47 years of our life, and after taking a long, loving look at the reality of our present, and with hope in God's faithfulness for our future, we commit to continue our journey together. We believe now is the time to reshape our life so we may better live into God's call in our time and place. By centring life-giving communities of discipleship and mission, cultivating a flourishing theological culture and deeply sharing in our common life and wealth we will treasure Christ's gift of abundant grace, share this gift with our world and pass it to future generations.

Stream A

to adopt a vision for local communities of faith:

Communities of faith will sustain a life of worship, build one another up in love, grow disciples of Jesus and participate in God's mission. These diverse communities of faith will shape their life in response to God's call in their context and deepen their relationship with God, one another, the wider church and the world.

Stream B

to adopt the vision for a National Network for Theology, Formation and Leadership:

A visible and accessible network of intentional communities engaged in life-long learning to equip people to courageously follow Jesus and participate in God's mission in contemporary Australia.

Stream C

to adopt the vision for the ordering and resourcing of the wider Church:

A network of deeply connected councils responding to God's call to enter more fully into mission through healthy oversight of ministry and mission, celebrating our diverse and shared identity and being faithful stewards of our common life and wealth.

These visions have been translated into seventeen languages which can be found at <https://uniting.church/act2-visions-in-your-language/>

Your invitation to contribute to our theological culture and common life and wealth

The Assembly General Secretary invites our feedback and expressions of interest with regard to two

whole of Church Commissions to progress the visions outlined above.

Terms of Reference (TOR). Expression of Interest (EOI)

- The Commission for Theology, Formation and Leadership TOR / EOI
- The Commission for Governance, Resourcing and Administration TOR / EOI

Direct feedback and/or expression of interest to gensec@nat.uca.org.au.

Reflections

(cont. from page 2)

Could we choose instead to gather in a home or a cafe, and have faithful conversations about God's Spirit active in our lives, rather than maintain a lovely large old building that requires so much energy and money? Could we choose to invite a neighbour or friend to a meal or a walk with some of our Christian friends, rather than expect someone else every week to create and lead a liturgy, and play familiar tunes just for us?

My reflection is that although it feels easier to just keep things going and 'hold on' a bit longer, that actually prevents us inviting new people to hear the vitally good news we have found through Jesus' gospel and Jesus' wisdom.

The good news is that God loves us regardless, and that in faithful community we can find connection, well being, and together can seek justice and give service in the world.

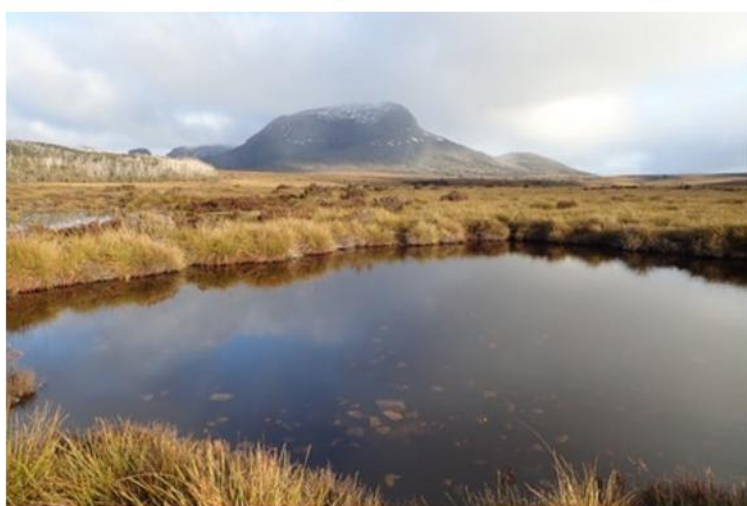
My reflection is not restricted to Tasmania: all eight presbyteries within the Synod of Tasmania and Victoria, and the Uniting Church across Australia as well as throughout the western world, are facing the same challenges. That is why the eight Presbyteries and the Synod are working together on the 'Faithful Futures' project, and why the national Assembly is working on the Act2 project. These inter-related projects each help local church communities and the other councils of the church to meet the challenges, and to engage the opportunities.

Again, we have to make choices. Can we choose to work together to adapt and try new things to thrive, rather than just survive until we are forced to close? Can we choose to meet in another way, at another time, so that we can invite others with comfort and confidence? Can we reflect the character of the early church communities rather than the more recent assumptions of western colonialism and global capitalism?

The Presbytery and Synod together need a strategy for the future of the church in Tasmania, and that is a vital project for the Presbytery Chairperson along with the three oversight committees and the members of Presbytery. Together we can choose to coordinate ministries, respect Country and First People, as well as sustain intercultural communities, and grow in all-age communities of faithful disciples who are sharing community, compassion and justice with the world.

My prayer is that together we will have the faith and courage to make some of those choices, and to reflect the good news of Christ and Sophia in our choices and plans for God's future in Tasmania.

Rohan Pryor
Synod Liaison Minister and
Presbytery Minister team leader,
and past Presbytery Chairperson.





Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

HEALTH AND SAFETY MANUAL

Resource for Presbyteries and Congregations



The new Health and Safety Manual is available from <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/ohs/>
“The OHS/WHs Manual provides an overview of the elements of a safety management system relevant to congregations. Although not all elements may be applicable to all congregations, it describes a summary of the key actions recommended and/or required.”

If there are any questions or feedback, please contact Synod OHS via email:
SynodOHS@victas.uca.org.au

Everyone, including ministers, workers and volunteers, has a role to play in complying with the OHS legislation; however, the key legal responsibilities of the Church are shared between Presbytery, Church Council and congregations.

External legal advice has been sought to clarify and confirm the responsibilities of the positions held within the Church structure and in accordance with the Tasmanian Work Health and Safety (WHS) legislation and the Victorian Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) legislation. These key responsibilities are defined on page 6 and following.



Digital Toolkit - Uniting Church in Australia. Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Welcome to Our Holy Week and Easter Resource Page Easter is a powerful season of hope, renewal, and celebration. To support your congregation's preparations and outreach, we've gathered a range of...

 Uniting Church in Australia

Coder of Ethics and Ministry Practice sessions: Professionalism

Attendance at Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice is required for all ministers, pastors, lay people in ministry placement, and retired ministers providing any active ministry or pastoral care.

The first ethical ministry refresher session for 2025 on the topic of "Professionalism" (CoE Section 3.5), will be conducted on Zoom and provided through the Presbytery of Port Philip East.

Four different times are offered:

- Wed 11th June 9.30am to 12.00pm,
- Thurs 12th June 7-9.30pm
- Thurs 19 June 9.30am to 12.00pm
- Wed 25 June 7-9.30pm

Further details, including registration and materials to be released soon.

Mark the session which suits you best in your diary.

For further information please contact:

Rev Marian Bisset

marian.bisset@victas.uca.org.au

or via the Uniting Church Tasmanian Office

The Uniting Church National Assembly invite you to lament in lent!

Join with Aunty Alison Overeem
and Rev Alexandra Sangster as they stand with mob,
on Country to support our ancient forests.

We invite you to be part of **sacred space**
to demonstrate **solidarity** with creation
and to **activate** holy hope
by being **love in** action
and by **helping**
to **protect** one of our most
precious living life forces:
The Giant Styx

We will be holding this vigil with
The Bob Brown Foundation
and **Stand with Uncle Jim.**



When: Thursday April 3rd 10.30-2.30
Where: Approx. 1.5 hours west from Hobart
(Exact location on Request)
Contact: Rev Alexandra Sangster - 0411292273



The Lutheran-Uniting Church Dialogue met in early November at the Uniting Church Centre for Theology and Ministry in Melbourne. The Dialogue, comprising theologians appointed by each church, has been underway for more than forty years. There is a clear correspondence in our understandings of ordained ministry and the centrality of God's word and sacraments for our communities.

Of significant note, the Lutheran Church in Australia has recently resolved that both women and men can be ordained. This decision means that a significant barrier to developing shared ministries in our two traditions has been removed, recognising it will take time to implement. It is also a major step forward toward reaching one of the ongoing goals of the Dialogue of full "altar and pulpit fellowship" between our two churches.

We are also excited to soon release a study guide on At the Table, the two churches' agreed statement on Holy Communion. The Dialogue is asking not just how we face each other, but how we face the wider world and not just alone but potentially together. This work will continue as the Dialogue serves our common life in Christ.

Edited from document at <https://uniting.church/uca-lca-dialogue-november-2024/>

UNITING CHURCH VIC & TAS DRAFT VISION, VALUES & GOALS

**Following Christ, walking together as First and Second Peoples,
seeking community, compassion and justice for all creation;**

Inclusive, diverse, seeking justice, journeying with Jesus

Coordinated Ministry

Coordinated ministry and mission in each Local Government Area (or suitable equivalent), attentive to the life and needs of the local context, by 2030.

Respecting Country

Every congregation will be able to tell some of the story of the Country in which it is located by the end of 2028, and be invited to develop local and appropriate ways to respond.

Intercultural Leadership

By 2028, to:

- (a) be providing leaders of different cultural groups with appropriate formation and equipping; and
- (b) develop networks to support worship, witness and service among communities of diverse languages and cultures.

All-age Growth

80% of Local Government Areas (or equivalent) have at least one all-age community of faith that is interactive, diverse, inclusive and transformative by 2030.

The Uniting Church is called to be a pilgrim people, participating in the movement of God. Presbyteries and the Synod have been engaging in a "Faithful Futures" Project discerning ministry and mission ahead. The VISION is widely recognised.

The VALUES have been distilled through the 2023 Synod meeting Working Groups. The GOALS have been developed through Bible study, survey, prayer and consultation. This poster shows the progress of this work, which is expected to be finalised in March 2025. Shared goals will help to relieve burdens and strengthen new mission opportunities as we follow Christ together.

For further information contact FaithfulFutures@victas.uca.org.au

WHAT'S ON!

APR - MAY 2025

**APR
01**

Pastoral Relations Committee
10.30am - 4.00pm

**APR
25**

Anzac Day
Presbytery Office Closed

**APR
18**

Good Friday
Presbytery Office Closed

**APR
29**

Resource and Development
Committee 10.30am - 2.30pm

**APR
22**

Presbytery Office Reopens
9.00am

**MAY
06**

Pastoral Relations Committee
10.0am -4.00pm

**APR
24**

Presbytery Standing Committee
10am - 3pm

**MAY
20**

Presbytery Standing Committee
10am - 3pm

**MAY
22**

Resource and Development
Committee 10.30am - 2.30pm

As we enter the Season of Easter may the eternal possibilities of transformed life sustain you, and inspire all of us to peacemaking, justice and new communities of solidarity, care and love.

MONTHLY CHECKLIST



Annual Report documents
to UCA Tasmanian Office



Logbooks to UCA
Tasmanian Office