

## **A Vision for Ecumenism in South Australia Seventy Years from Now**

As I prepared to share this Vision Statement I realise how limited this may be. So if there is something which resonates with you that is good. If you think 'this is not enough' and imagine something more that is great and even better. This is simply one person's Vision and is therefore naturally limited. In any case here goes....

Through the **One Faith One Baptism** movement local Christian Churches gather during the Easter Season and at other times for shared Baptism ceremonies for children and adults. A common rite is used and our unity in Christ through Baptism is made visible. The Baptisms are held in a different church each time and on occasion in a local river or swimming pool.

Through **Local Mission Covenants** local churches across the State are engaged in local mission to face the needs and hopes of local communities together. This involves involving local faith communities, local expressions of church welfare agencies and church schools to enrich the life of local communities. This takes place in metropolitan Adelaide as well as in regional and remote areas and is focused on holistic care and social justice in the local community - together.

The **Mutual Recognition of Ministry** is present in many local communities as part of the Local Mission Covenants. There is a movement among many churches to support the mutual recognition of ministry, both lay and ordained, with shared liturgy and mission and the sharing of property and other resources for local mission. Our sense of shared communion in Christ is made real and visible in many ways.

As a result of the **One Faith One Baptism** movement and **Local Mission Covenants** local Christian communities are now completely intergenerational, culturally and linguistically diverse, and inclusive in diverse ways, with strong connections and credibility in the wider local community of which they are a part.

**Together in Christ** formerly known as the South Australian Council of Churches, continues to encourage and support ecumenical endeavours at every level including the renewal of a **State Wide Covenant** between the member churches and the sharing of ministries, places of worship and service, administration, finance and leadership. In Christ, we face the community we serve together and engage in God's Mission of Love as one, empowered by the Holy Spirit.

When it comes to the sharing of Vision, I am reminded of the words from Ephesians 3: 20: *Now to God, who is able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us.*

Glory to God! Amen.

Peter Burke Saturday 29 April 2017 on the occasion to celebrate the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the South Australian Council of Churches