



## 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations, including General Meeting: Minutes

Theme: *An Exchange of Gifts on the Journey towards Unity*

**Saturday 29 April 2017, 10am-3.30pm**

**In four Adelaide City Churches:** Pilgrim (Uniting), St Francis Xavier (Roman Catholic), St Mary Magdalene's (Anglican) and St Stephen's (Lutheran)

### **Background to this General Meeting-with-a-difference**

SA Council of Churches [SACC] was formed as an ecumenical council in June 1947 "to represent South Australia in the World Council of Churches and to function as an integral part of the Ecumenical Movement".

Seventy years later, SACC continues to exist through the membership and active participation of eleven Churches across SA in their desire for and commitment to greater manifestation of their unity in Christ.

The primary focus for their ecumenical council is as a place of gathering where the Churches together nurture and nourish their understanding, spiritual growth, disposition and practice of ecumenism, so that all may be drawn into deeper expressions of love and more visible expressions of Christian unity, from within as well as across.

SACC had invited the communities of four city churches – Pilgrim (Uniting), St Francis Xavier (Roman Catholic), St Mary Magdalene's (Anglican) and St Stephen's (Lutheran) – to host a pilgrimage-gathering on 29 April to enable General Council and people from across the churches to gather and celebrate these seventy years.

### **Pilgrimage – Gathering: An Exchange of Gifts**

For the names of those who participated and those who sent apologies, see Appendix A.

The day comprised various elements, as follows:

#### **a) Welcome and Greetings**

Rev'd Dr John Littleton, Vice-President, welcomed all, acknowledged Country and thanked the four churches who were hosting the celebration through hospitality and prayer.

Everyone was invited to stand as their church or ecumenical organisation was named.

Each Member Church had been invited to bring a greeting from their Church to the other Member Churches, and the following were offered on the day:

- Uniting - Rev Sue Ellis, Moderator
- Lutheran - Bishop David Altus
- Coptic Orthodox - Fr Philippos Boghdadi, representing Bishop Suriel
- Roman Catholic - Archbishop Philip Wilson
- Churches of Christ - Rev Dr Greg Elsdon, State Minister
- Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) - Dr Jenny Stock

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- Anglican – Bishop John Stead
- Greek Orthodox – Bishop Nikandros of Dorylaeon (read in his absence)
- Salvation Army – Envoy Ted Wright

Sr Elizabeth Delaney, NCCA General Secretary, offered a greeting from the National Council of Churches in Australia.

As Rev Rob Williams, President of SACC, was unable to be with us on the day, a message he had sent earlier was read out by John: “My prayers for a wonderful time of celebration are for you and all who will attend Saturday’s historic gathering. May it be a time of great blessing, thanksgiving and further strengthening of relationships of people of God in the unity of Christ.”

## **b) Hospitality**

Pilgrim offered morning tea which included a birthday cake, St Francis Xavier the first course, and St Mary Magdalene’s the second course.

## **c) Prayer in Words and Music**

Prayer was prepared and led by each host church and included hymns.

A Taizé chant, *Bless the Lord my soul and Bless God’s Holy Name; Bless the Lord my soul, who leads us into life*, was sung as we departed and as we arrived at each church, led by Joan Claring-Bould, Peter Burke, Ngaire Llewellyn and Ali Hull.

We also prayed Our Father together, and Doug Walladge, Churches of Christ, led Grace at Pilgrim Church as we prepared to walk to St Francis Xavier Cathedral Hall for the first course.

## **d) Pilgrimage**

Walking in twos from church to church, sharing with another, *What is the gift that have you received from the other on the journey?*

Jill Gallio, Jane Lee-Barker and Leon Rosenberg led us as we walked.

## **e) Story telling**

A Bible and Candles were placed at each venue and carried from church to church by various ‘teams’: Heshmat Keroloss, Neil Traeger, Kathy McEvoy, Velvy Holden, Michael Vial, Howard Smith, Barry Grear, Amany and Mohsen Abdel-Meseh.

A number of people were invited to share their story about the difference the ecumenical journey had made to them and their journey in faith: Mary Camilleri, Ernest Sorensen, Pierre Magar, Jacqui Liu, Charles Stevenson and Ruth Mathieson.

We imagined what ecumenism and SA Council of Churches would be like in another seventy years, led by Peter Burke.

A collage of photos of companions over the years was shown on the screen, accompanied by music from Taizé - *Veni Sancte Spiritus, Ubi Caritas* and *Gott ist die liebe*.

And we remembered those who had died.

**South Australian Council of Churches: *nurturing and nourishing the understanding, spiritual growth and practice of ecumenism across the Churches of SA***



## f) Business of the General Meeting

John Littleton introduced the General Meeting business and indicated that on this occasion business was more about sharing information rather than for decision making:

1. Receptive Ecumenism: Fourth International Conference - *Leaning into the Spirit: discernment, decision-making and reception*: Monday 6 November to Thursday 9 November 2017 at University House, Australian National University, Canberra.
2. Exchange of Gifts: *Reimagining our Unity in Christ through Receptive Ecumenism* – an Ecumenical Learning interactive event to be held on 8 July 2017 – see [www.sacc.asn.au](http://www.sacc.asn.au).
3. Budget 2017/18 – The Executive Committee is in conversation with churches regarding a review of contributions so that the costs of their ecumenical council may be more fully met.
4. John concluded by encouraging local events to mark ecumenical ‘birthdays’.

## g) Thanksgiving

As we prepared to leave on the last stage of our pilgrimage/celebration together, Dr Marie Loller, Vice-President, gave thanks for all who had made the day possible: especially she thanked:

- *SACC Member Churches for their continued commitment to their unity in Christ through their ecumenical council.*
- *The four church communities who offered hospitality and led us in prayer - Marelle Harisun and team from Pilgrim Uniting Church, Jill Gallio and team from St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Stephan Clark and team from St Mary Magdalene’s Church, and John Strelan and team from St Stephen’s Lutheran Church.*
- *All who participated on the day and all who led a part of the day - for their faithful companionship and imaginative action in many arenas.*
- *And the SACC ‘Birthday Party’ Team – Rob Williams, President and from the Uniting Church, Ngaire Llewellyn, Churches of Christ and a member of Executive, Melanie Macrow, Office Administrator and Geraldine Hawkes, Ecumenical Facilitator.*

## Conclusion

The entire day was a seamless pilgrimage, with time for prayer, hospitality, sharing of stories and walking together, and as a celebration of the commitment of the Churches to conversations and action on Christian unity through their ecumenical council, as one response to the prayer of Jesus that “they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me”. *John 17:21*

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## Appendix A

### Present:

#### General Council:

Anglican:	The Rev'd Barbara Paull-Hunt, The Rt Rev'd John Stead
Catholic:	Dr Marie Loller, Ms Jill Gallio, Most Rev Philip Wilson
Churches of Christ:	Rev Doug Walladge, Mrs Ngaire Llewellyn, Rev Dr Greg Elsdon, Mr Barry Grear
Coptic Orthodox:	Fr Philippos Boghdadi
Ethiopian Orthodox:	-
Greek Orthodox:	-
Lutheran:	Rev Leon Rosenberg, Mr Gilbert Materne, Bishop David Altus
Religious Society of Friends:	Dr Jenny Stock
Romanian Orthodox:	-
Salvation Army:	-
Uniting Church:	Dr Marelle Harisun, Rev Ernest Sorensen, Rev Sue Ellis

#### Executive Committee:

Rev'd Dr John Littleton (Vice-President - Ecumenical), Mr Peter Burke (Chair - Anglican), Mr Refaat Georgy (Coptic Orthodox), Mr Neil Traeger (Treasurer)

#### Standing Committees:

##### Community for Ecumenical Learning:

Ms Mary Camilleri (Catholic), Dr Heshmat Keroloss (Coptic Orthodox), Envoy Ted Wright (Salvation Army)

##### Community for Local Ecumenism:

Rev'd Dr Jane Lee-Barker (Anglican), Ms Bridgid Medder (Catholic), Mr Pierre Magar (Coptic Orthodox)

##### Ecumenical Partners for Justice and Peace:

Ms Kathy McEvoy (Catholic), Mr Refaat Megalli (Coptic Orthodox), Dr Colin Cargill, Ms Pamela Jones (Justice and Peace Issues)

##### Finance:

Rev Colin Dredge (Churches of Christ)

#### Local Churches (Observers):

Rev Alison Whish, Ms Ali Hull, Mrs Amany Abdel-Meseh, Mr Andrew Clarke, Mr Andrew Hunt, Mr Anthony Patterson, Mrs Barbara Horne, Bishop Bruce Rosier, Mr Bruce Whyatt, Mr Charles Stevenson, Rev Craig Bossie, Mr David Hall, Rev Dr Denis Edwards, Dr Don Hopgood, Sr Elizabeth Delaney, Graeme McIntosh, Ms Heather Carey, Major Howard Smith, Mr Ian Hopewell, Rev Ian Schneider, Ms Jacqui Liu, Rev'd Joan Claring-Bould, Pastor John Strelan, Mrs Julie Bradley, Archbishop Leonard Faulkner, Mr Leon Driessen, Rev Liellie McLaughlin, Rev Dr Malcolm McArthur, Mrs Margaret Cargill, Ms Margaret Chittleborough, Ms Margaret Flint, Rev'd Martin Bleby, Mr Michael Vial, Mr Mohsen Abdel-Meseh, Rev Nick Kerr, Rev Norah Norris, Ms Priyanka Mohan, Mr Ray Llewellyn, Rev'd Ruth Mathieson, Ms Sheila Hill, Mrs Sonia Bradtke, Fr Stephan Clark, Dr Stephen Downs, Ms Velvy Holden, Ms Vivien Bleby, Ms Wendy Morecroft.

In addition, there were many who prepared hospitality, led prayer, took photos, offered welcome and support from across the four churches. Some of these are: Ms Lindy McNamara, Mr Peter Russell, Rev Sandy Boyce, Mr Fred Chetcuti, Mr Timothy Davey, Ms Julie Dow, Fr Charles Gauci, Ms Colleen Fitzpatrick, Organists, and some whose names we don't have. Thank you all.

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SACC Staff: Ms Geraldine Hawkes (Executive Officer) and Ms Melanie Macrow (Office Administrator)

## Apologies/Absent:

### General Council:

The Rt Rev'd Dr Tim Harris and The Rt Rev'd John Ford (Anglican);  
Bishop Greg O'Kelly (Catholic);  
Fr Abraam Elbaramousy and Bishop Suriel (Coptic Orthodox);  
Mr Belay Getachew, Mr Hailmariam Kassa and Mrs Alganesh Abegaz (Ethiopian Orthodox);  
Fr Silouan Fotineas and Bishop Nikandros of Dorylaeon (Greek Orthodox);  
debra hackett, Ms Millicent Stein and Dr Yarrow Andrew (Religious Society of Friends);  
Fr Viorel Stoica and Bishop Michael (Romanian Orthodox);  
Major Barry Casey and Major Rosslyn Casey (Salvation Army);  
Rev Rob Williams (President – Ecumenical Delegate on Executive) and Rev Nigel Rogers (Uniting).

### Standing Committees:

Ms Sarah Moffat, Mr David O'Dwyer (Catholic)  
Ms Carol Assaad (Coptic Orthodox);  
Mr John Sullivan, Mrs Dawn Sullivan (Justice and Peace Issues)  
Ms Kay Thorp (Local Ecumenist).

### Local Churches (Observers):

Ms Beth Ackland, Rev Beth Seaman, Mr David Shinnick, Rev'd David Thornton-Wakeford, Ms Helen Whittington, Ms Jo Jordan, Bishop John Henderson, Rev Lindsay Faulkner, Sr Liz Morris, Rev Margaret Polkinghorne, Mr Phil Megson, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, Bishop Stuart Smith, Major Susan Wallace, Mrs Susie Traeger, Rev Vikki Waller, Mrs Virginia Macaspac.