

## **Moderator's Report**

Every year there are blessings, challenges and difficulties, and this year has not been any different. This second year of my term I've continued the duties and responsibilities in the ministry. It was not only a challenge, but a time to test my loyalty and obedience to the Lord of the church. I'm extremely grateful for what God created as it is said: ***"you did not choose me; I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit, the kind of fruit that endures"***.

The old will end, and the new will start, it's all because of God. He began He also ended according to His purpose and will. That is what we experience before we all prepared to welcome the birth of Jesus the Prince of Peace in the celebration of Christmas. During that time we wished farewell to Peter Jones as our synod General secretary after 11 years. We faced challenges, difficulties and happiness together as team leaders. The kindness of your heart that is ready to help whenever it is needed will not be forgotten.

A new leaf was turned when we welcomed and inducted Rev. Haloti Kailahi as the new General Secretary. It was an honour and privilege that the members of the local congregations, ministers with our Synod were present at the Induction Service. The presence of the UCA President, Assembly General Secretary and general secretaries from each state made it a special day. They came as a form of solidarity in accepting duties and responsibilities in this noble work. The colleagues from NTCC also came to from different backgrounds to celebrate, but we are all one in God.

I began my ministry this year by attending the National Young Adult Leaders Conference NYALC meeting in Adelaide the young people who are in leadership positions in UCA, come from so many diverse backgrounds in Australia. Young people are the most important part of the church. They are the next generation and the pillars that will determine the future of our church. Therefore, the Church must be a safe home for them; a place where everyone is considered equal. For the very first time the President encouraged all the Moderators to join in mentoring the youth by inviting them in conversations, and to share their journey as national leaders in our church. We had a wonderful time together sharing experiences to learn about culture through worship, and exploring what it means to be second generation in our church.

The youth experienced the gifts of offering their passion and insight to shaping our participation in God's mission of reconciliation and hope in this world. Before NYALC, some of the youth together with the President and young UAICC leader Sean Weetra went on a 'walk on country' as part of 'survival day.' The President encouraged members of the church to re-affirm our commitment to honour the God given culture of Australia First People. We make this acknowledgement in the hope that in time there may be healing, and we may move forth in our destiny together for as first and second people to reflect God promises of reconciliation for all creation.

It would like to present this report with the theme of the synod for the next two years: ~ ***sharing Your Life Message*** ~ The Northern synod is one synod full of diversity. This diversity should be gratefully accepted as God's gift that must be valued. This theme was chosen based on personal experience and struggle with our brothers and sisters as First People on this land. In visits to their communities I often hear stories of those who live in trauma and feel marginalized but uphold their culture. Sometimes they are not able to share their stories fully because they cannot express it in our language. They have many stories to tell about culture, especially those related to the natural surroundings created by God.

There has been the establishment of a relationship with Northern Regional Council of Congress (NRCC) by visiting the community. Sharing stories and celebrating various events that occur in the community, such as: the commissioning of Kirsty Burgu as a Pastor at the Mowanjum community

- the first woman in West Kimberly especially the Mowanjum community. The members of the congregation and family were proud and grateful for God's endless love.

In Ramingining, we finally commissioned Matjarra as a Pastor in her community. Matjarra was a convenor of the East Arnhem Area Council. She's a teacher as well and has been part of the bible translation team for many years. The support and encouragement continues with attending the NRCC Executive meeting, and area council meeting. The support especially affects the Darwin ministry by visiting the hospitals, preaching, pastoral conversations with families and students who come to Nungalinga.

Establishment and continued support for PPNA by visiting congregations in Darwin, preaching, holding pastoral conversations especially for congregations without a minister. Creating relationships with Agencies and Schools, supporting and attending the graduation at Nungalinga College.

In relation to the ecumenical partnerships through NTCC, there was a slight change after the shifting of bishops and pastors in the Lutheran Church. Basically, the initiative to meet fellow heads of the church always comes from the president of the NTCC. In regular meetings we discuss the changes that occur in social life, because the church is indirectly influential on the character and personality of a person. For this reason, the church must play its role as a safe home for members of the congregation to remain faithful and strong in the faith.

There are also a number of Ecumenical events in solidarity with Darwin Asylum Seeker Support & Advocacy (DASSAN): "stand for refugee" - "*Change the heart*" reflecting on January 26<sup>th</sup> and what it means to the first nation. After the events of that happened in Wellington and also Darwin, there was a vigil prayer at DMUC. All of this shows us who live in this city of diversity share what our brothers and sisters experience. We are an example of God's love for all in this nation.

I have continued to connect and also participate in government activities and functions such as: Christmas celebrations, Australian Day to celebrate the 41<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of Self-Government in the Northern Territory and Remembrance Day. Together we celebrated Chinese New Year and Harmony Day. Collaboration between the Darwin City Council and Indonesian Consulate, celebrating the End of Ramadan the Islamic Holy Month fasting, 77<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Bombing of Darwin.

The most valuable opportunity was meeting with other Moderators which was again hosted by the President. These meetings are an opportunity to share our wisdom, hopes and concerns regarding the life and mission of the Uniting Church. They are also opportunities to offer mutual support to one another.

Another exciting moment was when I attended the President National Conference in Fiji: "***For The Whole of Creation***". This is a unique opportunity to discuss and explore issues of environment in particular climate change, gender justice, and how we grow in Christ's discipleship as we connect and grow with our brothers and sisters in faith.

There are many other tasks that are not included in this report, but one thing is certain; all are made only for the glory of the name of God, the owner of this life and He will help in time of need. ***"I lift up my eyes to the hills- where does my help come from? My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip- he who watches over you will not slumber."* Psalm 121:1-2**

Lastly, thank you to the Synod Leadership Team, Synod staff and my family without your support a lot of the above would not have happened. ***Rev Thresi Mauboy Wohangara, Moderator***