



UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA
Northern Synod

NORTHERN SYNOD NEWS

NOVEMBER 2024

NORTHERN SYNOD IN SHOCK AFTER MICHELLE COOK'S SUDDEN PASSING



Northern Synod's General Secretary, Rev Janet Staines, and Moderator-elect, Rev Dr Michelle Cook

Rev Charissa Suli, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, writes,

“With profound sadness and grief, the Uniting Church Assembly mourns the tragic passing of Uniting Church minister and Moderator-elect of the Northern Synod Rev Dr Michelle Cook.

“Michelle embraced her ministry as a Deacon with the whole of her life. With open-hearted generosity she followed Christ’s call to serve those on the margins and minister at the edges of the church. She embodied sharp and practical missional insight and a passion for local discipleship. She reminded us that our mission is not just about faith but about action.”

To read more of Rev Charissa Suli's pastoral statement, or to leave a message of condolence, [click here](#).

<https://www.ns.uca.org.au>



Farewelling our beautiful Michelle

Funeral announcement for Rev Dr Michelle Cook

Thank you for the overwhelming expressions of love, support and prayer following Michelle's injury leading to her death on 2/11/2024.

Michelle's Funeral and Service of Thanksgiving will be held on Thursday 14th November at 10.30am at Nightcliff Uniting Church.



Live Stream Link: <https://bit.ly/revdrmichellecook>

A Reflection on Death

As we grieve the death of our beloved Michelle Cook, we are aware that it also raises up grief, and maybe even trauma, from the death of other loved ones. 'Grief piggy-backs on grief', or so the saying goes. I offer the following reflection from priest and professor, the late Henri Nouwen. I pray it will offer some comfort for you at this time.

Grace and Peace to all. The best is yet to come. Tony – Nangarridj - Moderator

A Death for Others

The great mystery is that all people who have lived with and in the Spirit of God participate through their deaths in the sending of the Spirit. God's love continues to be sent to us, and Jesus' death continues to bear fruit through all whose death is like his death, a death for others.

In this way, dying becomes a way to an everlasting fruitfulness. We touch here the most hope-giving aspect of our death. Our death may be the end of our success, our productivity, our fame, or our importance among people, but it is not the end of our fruitfulness.

The opposite is true: the fruitfulness of our lives shows itself in its fullness only after we have died. We ourselves seldom see or experience our fruitfulness. Often, we remain too preoccupied with our accomplishments and have no eye for the fruitfulness of what we live. But the beauty of life is that it bears fruit long after life itself has come to an end.

Jesus says: 'In all truth I tell you, unless a wheat grain falls into the earth and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest' (John 12:24).

This is the mystery of Jesus' death and of the deaths of all who lived in his Spirit. Their lives yield fruit far beyond the limits of their short and often very localised existence.

Reference - Henri Nouwen - [A Death for Others](#)





Anangu Church leaders at the Ananguku Area Ministry Council meeting

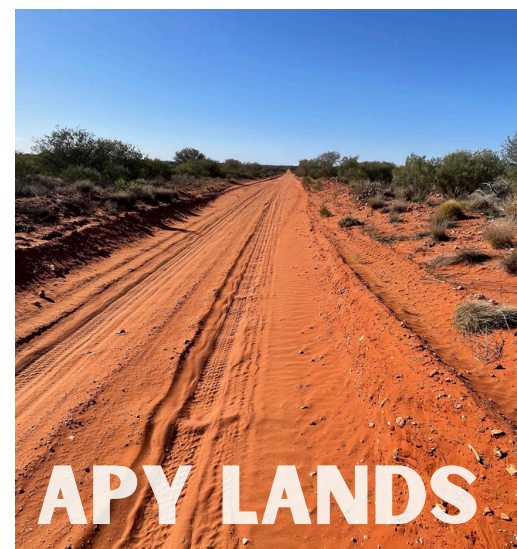


Tony and Stanley have a good yarn about life and faith at Pipalyatjara



NRCC Resource Worker, Rev Dr Peter Hobson and the Moderator, Rev Tony Goodluck travelled to the APY Lands to meet with church leaders. Visits to Yulara, Kalka/Pipalyatjara, Amata, Pukatja, Katjiti-Fregon and Aputula-Finke provided rich connections and conversations.

Pictured above right: Bush chaplain, Pastor Jill Dooland and Church Elder, Marlene Boko, with the Moderator in Aputula Finke.



APY LANDS



Thanks Reg!

I first met Reg Gulley at church one Sunday morning at Darwin Memorial Uniting Church with his wife Jodi. We struck up a friendship of sorts, you know couple-to-couple in the same congregation. Good people, the Gulleys. Some considerable time later Reg came to work with us in the Synod Office as the Chief Operating Officer. Some of you will remember, this was the time

that the Synod of Queensland was providing support and Rev Heather den Houting was General Secretary of both Queensland and the Northern Synod. Reg became her Chief Operating Officer on the ground in Darwin and brought significant experience and expertise in finance and governance. Reg also brought a calm presence and gentle strength which was a gift to all of us.

Reg's role has morphed over the past year and he has had the capacity to roll with the many changes and the comings and goings of other people. He has helped us to stay focused on the big picture and to provide reports that have helped to clarify circumstances. He has also helped with budgeting processes and a term he has left us with is about being 'fearless and frank'. No smoke and mirrors here folks, just clear facts and figures. Reg's support with financial planning and reporting over the past four months has been invaluable to our new General Secretary, Rev Janet Staines. Reg has also opened up communications and reporting transparency in conversations with the NRCC in ways that have been very helpful. Reg has helped to improve communications with local Church Treasurers. His calm and clear communications, particularly in presenting reports and answering questions has been greatly appreciated. Just what we needed for this season.

Above all, Reg is a servant of Christ; a man with a heart for God and all God's people; a man who is able to place himself before God and respond with the gifts and graces that God has developed in him. We will miss Reg and wish him well for the next chapter of his life.

Thankyou, brother, for coming and walking with us through this time of transition, when we needed what you could bring to us.

God is good. All the time. Praise the Lord

Rev Tony Goodluck
Nangarridj
Moderator

The team farewell Reg with a laksa lunch and lots of laughs.
We will miss you, Reg.





Out and About with our General Secretary



Our General Secretary, Rev Janet Staines, recently went on a road trip, travelling the 1500 km to Alice Springs.

On the way, Janet enjoyed spending time with the little congregation in Tennant Creek, led by Amy Lasslett.

Living so remotely, in a township of just over 3000 people, presents its challenges including violence, poverty and racism, but Tennant Creek Uniting Church seeks to provide hospitality and hope.

Amy writes,

“When things are so broken & we have tried hard we stop searching for answers and start searching for connection.”



Our General Secretary continued her journey to Alice Spring, where she met with members of the John Flynn Memorial Church, pictured right, and below left, led by Rev Emily Hayes.

Janet also spent some time at St Philip's College in Alice Springs with Chaplain Sarah Pollitt. Below left is pictured the bush chapel at St Philip's.

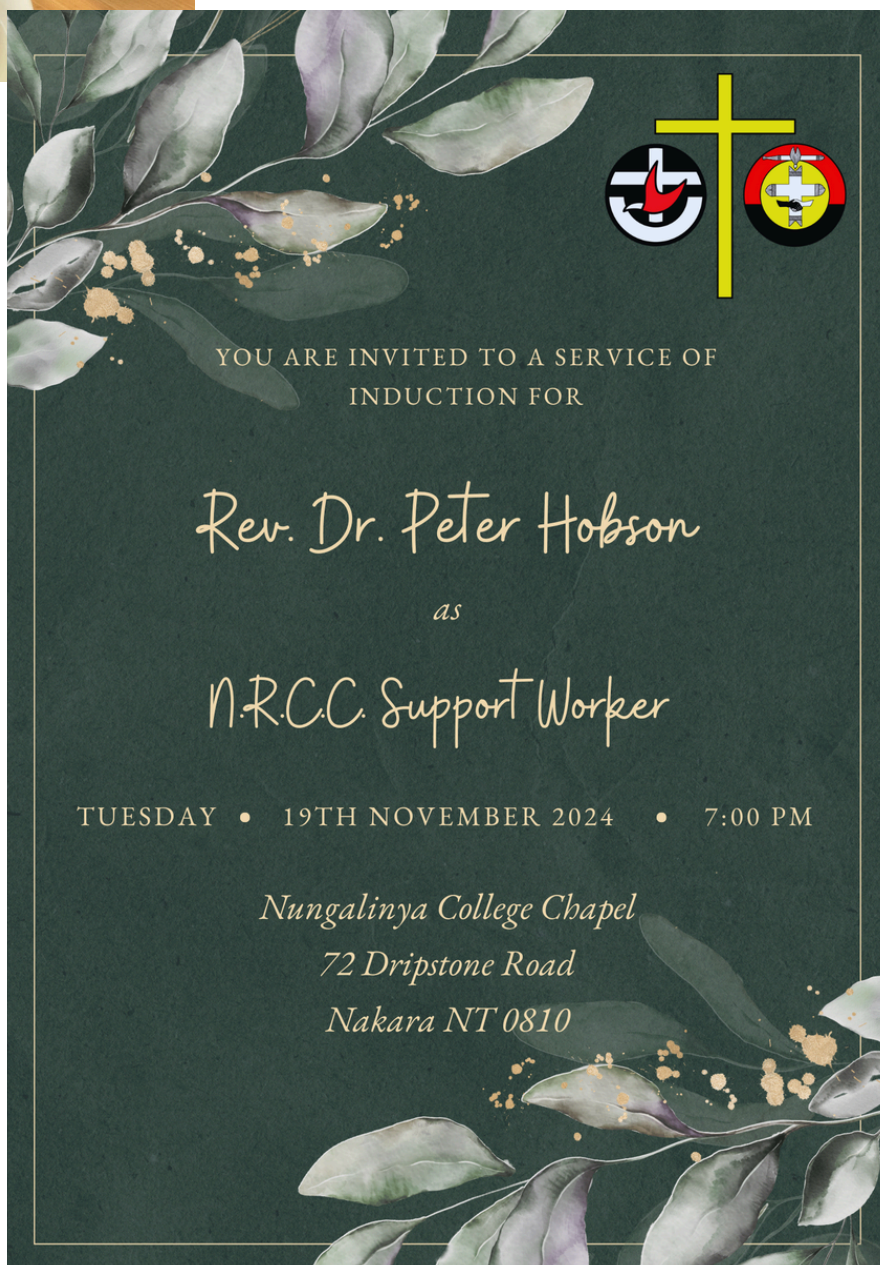
Please continue to uphold our remote communities in prayer.





Welcome back, Ross!

We are pleased to welcome Ross Coburn back on staff in the Synod office. Ross has played a significant role in helping us get back on track over past 18 months. His expertise moving forward will address Property maintenance and the Property audit for the Synod. He will also provide leadership for our financial services, working with the finance team and congregations.



Funeral and Memorial Services for Mr Barry Hanson

Barry Hanson, long standing member of Nightcliff Uniting Church, died unexpectedly on Saturday 2nd November 2024, following surgical complications.

Barry's funeral will be held at 2pm on Tuesday 12th November at Scots Uniting Church in Heidelberg (Melbourne). Nightcliff Uniting Church invite you to join them on Tuesday afternoon, at 12:30pm, Darwin time, to participate through the live stream.

Family will travel to Darwin for a Memorial Service at Nightcliff Uniting Church at 2pm on Monday 2nd December 2024.



Please Note

The Synod Office will be closed from Tuesday 24th December 12pm and reopening on Monday 6th January.

MEETING DATES IN NOVEMBER

- **Finance and Property Services Committee** - Wednesday 13th November
- **Synod Standing Committee Face to Face** - 15th & 16th November
- **Placements and Pastoral Relations Committee** - Monday 18th November
- **NRCC Exec Meeting and Ethics Training** - 18th - 23rd November
- **Assembly Standing Committee (in Canberra)** - 22nd to 24th November

MONDAY 3RD FEBRUARY – FRIDAY 7TH FEBRUARY 2025

HERITAGE, THEOLOGY AND POLITY OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA INTENSIVE

NUNGALINYA COLLEGE

TOPICS INCLUDE:

- The Basis of Union
- The Covenant Relationship
- Ministry in the Uniting Church
- The Polity of the Uniting Church
- The denominational history of the UCA
- The practice of Sacraments – Baptism & Communion
- The Code of Ethics and Ministry Practice for Ministers in the UCA
- The Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress Covenant



REGISTER NOW

**Phone: 08 8982 3400
or email**

PPNA email: admin@ns.uca.org.au

NRCC email: nrccadmin@ns.uca.org.au