

PRESBYTERY UPDATE



DATES 2021

Synod Whole of Church Event - Palm Sunday
"Obedience in the Wilderness"

Gerringong Uniting Church
7.30pm Sunday, 28 March
View online – links in main article

Grants for Mission Applications Close
Wednesday 31 March

Prayer workshop for Illawarra Presbytery Presence in West Lake / West Dapto
1pm - 3pm Sunday, 11 April
Presbytery office (TBC)

Seven Days of Solidarity
18-25 April
View online – links in main article

Presbytery Retreat
Ministers and Ministry Agents
20 and 21 April
Presbytery office

Faith in Action Conference
9:00am - 4:30pm, 7 and 8 May
Morling College Ministry & Learning Centre,
Macquarie Park

Women in Ministry Retreat
23-26 May
Kincumber South

Adult Fellowship Annual Gathering
10.00am – 2.00pm Thursday, 27 May
Corrimal Region Uniting Church

UME Events
See main article

Illawarra Presbytery Meetings
10.00am – 2.00pm Saturday, 15 May at Nowra UC
Wednesday 11 August
Saturday 13 November AGM

Illawarra Presbytery Contact:

Vi Richardson, Presbytery Administrator

Mobile: 0491 185 320 Email: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

PO Box 163, KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500

Office: 5/32 Addison Street, Shellharbour Village

All underlined, blue items in this newsletter are active links.
Click to connect

Prayer for Illawarra Presbytery Presence in West Lake / West Dapto

1pm-3pm Sunday, 11 April at the Presbytery office
5 / 32 Addison Street, Shellharbour (venue to be confirmed)

The Presbytery has affirmed that establishing a Uniting Church presence and ministry in the West Lake region is a priority for the Presbytery. Any new ministry like this needs the support of a wide range of people as we seek God's leading together.

If you are interested in supporting this ministry, you are welcome to join us as we gather to pray together and share our hopes and dreams for ministry in that region.

For more information or if you would like to be on an email list for updates on the West Lake project, contact Kath Merrifield on 0409 650 118 or revkath@ozemail.com.au

Due to Covid restrictions, please email Vi Richardson if you would like to attend Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Wollongong and Keiraview Kids Camp Out (KCO)

Kids Camp Out is an annual event for primary school aged children. The aim of KCO is to provide an opportunity whereby children can experience the wider church family through fun, worship and learning.

Keiraview UC hosted 20 children from Keiraview and from Wollongong UC.

The bible time was about building your house on firm foundation and Jesus being the cornerstone of our "house".

There was also team trivia, won by the team "Who Let the Dogs Out?".

Keiraview welcomes kids to Friday nights:

- 4pm – 5.30pm Kids Club for kindergarten to year 4.
- 7pm to 8.30pm Three:Sixteens Youth Group for school years 5-9.



Have you got a story to share about something your congregation is doing? Contact Vi Richardson if you would like her to write about what's going on in your congregation or write the story yourself and she can publish it in the Presbytery newsletter, email Vi Richardson: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Induction of Rev David Stuart – Keiraview UC and Rev Graham Anson Corrimal Region UC

This past summer, the Presbytery welcomed two new Ministers of the Word to our region. Rev David Stuart at Keiraview UC in January and Rev Graham Anson at Corrimal Region Uniting Church.

Rev David Stuart – Keiraview Uniting Church

I was born in 1977, which was a particularly good year. Not only was I born, but so were two things which I have come to love in life – Star Wars and the Uniting Church in Australia. I am a big fan of Star Wars, enjoying both the movies and series which have come about. I am also a big supporter of the Uniting Church, which I have been involved with my whole life.



My call to ministry began in my late teens when I discovered a passion for the scriptures, discipleship and talking with people from diverse backgrounds and faith journeys. The path to ordained ministry was not easy, and to cut a long story short, I graduated from university in 1999 with a B.Arts (Sociology), and entered into the world of banking and finance in 2000, where I spent the next 12 years.

I became a candidate for ministry in 2012, and after completing my time at college I was ordained into placement with the congregations of Yass and Rye Park, where I spent 6 great years of ministry. During our time in Yass, my family and I found a place within the community through being involved in different activities such as school P&C, sporting groups, choirs and playgroups. These activities allowed us to interact with and build relationships with different families. It was interesting to see how God was at work through the simplest of conversations and interactions with people. We are now settling into a new community in Figtree and I am looking forward to seeing how God will be at work in new conversations and relationships.

One of the things that drew me to Keiraview was the intentional focus on mission and ministry into the community, particularly through the relationship with the local primary school. This type of mission focus is something I am passionate about and am keen to encourage and explore further.

Gillian and I have been married for 20 years and have three children who keep us very busy and entertained. In my spare time I like to keep active by exercising and will play (and watch) any sport I can.

Rev Graham Anson – Corrimal Region UC

I began full-time ministry way back in the 1980's, where I cut my teeth as a youth worker. My first position was running a drop-in centre and engaging in street-work in Sydney's inner-city Redfern, and then as a Drug and Alcohol Outreach Youth Worker in Sydney's inner-west.

In the early 90's I joined the Uniting Church, called into placement with the Canberra Region Presbytery as their Presbytery Youth Worker. My next placement was with the Parramatta-Nepean Presbytery, again as their Youth Worker. In 2004 I moved into a Congregational placement with Campbelltown Uniting as their Family and Community Minister, acting mostly as a community chaplain. It was during this time that I moved from being an Accredited Youth Worker into ordination in the Diaconate.



After Campbelltown, I had a short stint with Uniting Mission and Education, where I was the New Initiatives and Congregational Development Consultant. It was during this time that I was called to Bondi Beach - Chapel By The Sea, which I led into being part of the Wayside Chapel. I am now settled in as the Minister in placement with Corrimal Region UC.

Over the years I've led communities of faith into their wider communities, with fresh eyes, hearts, and favour for the non-churched, the poor, the disadvantaged, and those who are isolated and lonely. I have a passion for growing connection in 'third spaces', for communities that are inclusive and outwardly focussed, and for faith that is lived practically.

I live with Gail in northern Wollongong, and between us we have 7 children. I love a game a golf, sudokus, Seinfeld, cycling (with a tailwind), Hard Quiz, and the Sydney Roosters.

Rev David Russell - SZMDA
UC Shoalhaven Zone Meeting
held on 6 March 2021
at Milton-Ulladulla UC

The Shoalhaven Zone met together on Saturday 6 March at Ulladulla Uniting Church. Representatives from Milton-Ulladulla, Bomaderry, Nowra were present and Rev Janice Freeston attended representing Bay & Basin. Apologies were received from the Chair of the Bay & Basin and from Berry Churches.

The passage from Exodus 20:1-17 was read as well as Robert Fulgham's story "Everything I need to know I learned in Kindergarten" and there was a meditation on the ways in which we might find our directions and be guided into the future. As Fulgham's story concludes: "And it is still true, no matter how old you are – when you go out into the world, it is best to hold hands and stick together". The future for the mission within the Zone congregations might look gloomy at times but we agreed that the lesson from both readings is that God is with us in all that we do and therefore "All Will Be Well" when we move forward together with God.

As this was my first experience attending a Zone Meeting, I was delighted and encouraged by the positivity and openness to possibilities that shone through each of the Congregations' reports.

There is tremendous energy in Ulladulla with a new fortnightly Meditation Service and the hope that Messy Church will soon start. Their Outreach Centre is putting this Congregation in touch with a wide cross-section of the community as well as raising much needed funds to support the mission and ministry. There is a plan to develop a "Reflection Garden" to space of peace and spirituality in the grounds of the Church.

In Nowra there is a sense of celebration that the majority of people have returned to attending service in person, but there remains the task of distributing DVDs and broadcasting Services online for some members. This has raised for them the need to upgrade and improve the audio/visual equipment as it seems that services will continue to be delivered online in some form. The UN-WIND Group is back into full swing and is going really well – this is a group that is mostly families from the outside community - and there is the thought that as the children move beyond this group that a 'Kids Club' will need to be developed. Alongside of this, they will be recommending Messy Church in late March. Nowra is seeing more clearly what will and won't survive COVID and they are needing to think seriously about the future direction of their mission and their current property.

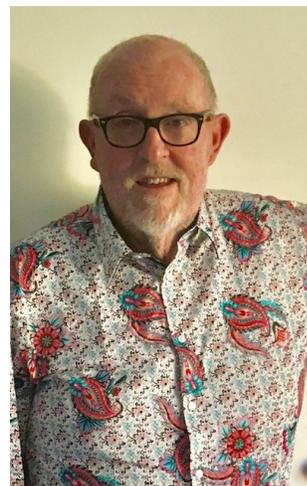
Bomaderry remains a small but faithful group of people with a wonderful community presence. They have tried several strategies to communicate with the community housing around the Church but they continue to ask the question "how do we get people to come to Church?".

This question created and opportunity for discussion, as this is the same sort of question that faces each of the congregations in similar but different ways – "how might we create connections with our communities which people to cross the threshold of our sacred space?" Bomaderry wonder about their future but they continue to look for God's leading into whatever the future holds.

Bay & Basin Congregation is also a small group. As Janice said "they are really lovely group of people". They have really good property resources and their OpShop is going extremely well with many volunteers from the wider community. The OpShop has made donations to local schools which have been well received. They are aware that there is a great need for food help within the community and they have begun considering ways in which they might be able to address this need. As is the case in other congregations in the Zone, they are in an area with significant social issues which calls on them to consider what the future holds. They celebrate that since Janice has been with them in Supply there has been some growth, with some new people attending worship.

Having heard these encouraging Reports, I shared some of my work and thoughts about the sorts of issues, needs and service gaps that I have begun to see. I sought to emphasise the need for the Zone to find ways to "unite" together in collaborating and working together to develop what is necessary in each place. The way of shared service is the way forward. I encouraged people to attend the "Mission Shaped Ministry" Taster day at Nowra on the 20th March in the hope that a Zone cohort might develop through which we might be able discuss and share future mission possibilities. I also indicated that after Easter I would be seeking to hold workshops with each congregation. Finally, I left the group with a paper entitled "14 Things the Church Needs to do in 2021" which engendered some discussion and led to a few people meeting afterwards to look at ways in which they might cooperate on particular projects into the future.

Rev David Russell
Shoalhaven Zone
Mission Development Agent



Prayer Points

Dapto UC

We pray that our unimplemented mission activities in the year 2020 will be done in 2021. Every closed door of opportunities is opened for the congregation and community.

Give Thanks

Even though the congregation have been limited and restricted in many ways due to the Covid, Dapto has received many blessings beyond measures - Sunday School ministry,

Kiama Jamberoo UC

Pray as building work starts at the end of April. Pray for safety onsite and a smooth build.

Bay and Basin UC

Thanks to God for new people attending worship and for joyfulness in worship.

Please pray for the congregation as they have conversations about their future direction.

We give thanks for the ministry to the community through the Op Shop.

If you would like Prayer Points published, please email to:
Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Adult Fellowship Annual Gathering

10.00am – 2.00pm Thursday, 27 May
Corrimal Region Uniting Church

Everyone is welcome to the annual Presbytery Adult Fellowship event at Corrimal Region UC.

The day begins with morning tea and communion service.

The two speakers are Pastor Jon Own from Wayside Chapel and Leanne Begg from Northern Illawarra Combined Churches Christian Education Board.

Jon Owen has been Pastor and CEO of Wayside Chapel since 2018 and has dedicated his life to closing the gap on inequality, both living and working amongst some of the most disadvantaged communities in Sydney and Melbourne. Prior to Wayside, he worked for Urban Neighbourhoods of Hope, an international not-for-profit organisation specialising in community development and care coordination for families living in poverty. In this role, he shared his family home with those seeking asylum, refugees, people in recovery and ex-prisoners.

Leanne Begg is the Chaplain and SRE Teacher at Corrimal High School, part of the Northern Illawarra Combined Churches Christian Education Board. As the school Chaplain, Leanne works alongside the learning and support team to facilitate the wellbeing of students and their families. She runs programs that build emotional resilience, personal awareness and social capabilities. She also provides a listening ear and a source of comfort and referral for those in a difficult time or in need of a friend.

If you would like more information about the Adult Fellowship day, please contact Carole Burnard email
john.burnard087@gmail.com

Morning tea provided, please bring your lunch.

Donations received on the day will go to Wayside Chapel and Combined Churches Christian Education Board.



WHOLE OF CHURCH EVENTS ACROSS THE SYNOD IN 2021

7.30pm Sunday, 28 March 2021 Gerringong Uniting Church

What if we refuse to let 2020 define us as a Church?

After an extraordinary year, we are looking forward to new ways of celebrating being the Church and living out our faith in a renewed way.

Synod 2021 will explore Where the wild God is, a God that is active in the turbulent world in which we live right now.

A series of whole-of-Church events will be held in Churches across the Synod and led by the Moderator. The services will be livestreamed on the official Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT Facebook page and the Synod's YouTube Channel and will be available on both those platforms after the events for on demand viewing.

Links to view the services:

[UCA Synod of NSW and ACT Official Facebook page](#)

[Synod YouTube livestream](#)

7.30pm Sunday, 28 March 2021
Palm Sunday "Obedience in the Wilderness"
Gerringong Uniting Church

7.30pm Sunday, 23 May 2021
Pentecost "The Possibilities of the Wilderness"
Sydney Cheil Uniting Church

7.30pm Sunday, 8 August 2021
Transfiguration Sunday "Changed in the Wilderness"
New Beginnings Uniting Church

7.30pm Sunday, 21 November 2021
Christ the King Sunday "A Home in the Wilderness"
Parkes Welcome Uniting Church

Presbytery Retreat - Ministers and Ministry Agents

9.30am – 4pm, 20 and 21 April at the Presbytery office
5 / 32 Addison Street, Shellharbour Village.

The Presbytery Retreat 2020 was cancelled due to COVID.

The Moderator, Rev Simon Hansford will facilitate a replacement retreat which will include a mix of engagement, learning and reflection.

More details will be sent to Ministers and Ministry Agents in coming weeks.



Rev Kath Merrifield, Minister of the Word, Kiama UC

The theme for Gospel Yarning 2021, "For Such A Time As This", invited us to reflect on the way we are called to share the gospel in our own time and space. This is a conference about evangelism and designed to encourage the evangelistic ministry of the church. About 80 people attended in person (the first gathering of its kind for 12 months) and another 10-12 were present via Zoom. The participants were from all parts of the UCA around Australia. We were welcomed to the conference by Dr Deidre Palmer, President of the Assembly. Rev Simon Hansford, Moderator of NSW&ACT was also present.

The key note speaker, Rev Dr Peter Hobson, invited us to think about the power of story, words and language. Peter explored this through the three lenses: Christ the incarnated one, Christ the crucified one, Christ the resurrected one. He invited us to let the gospel stories speak for themselves, to immerse ourselves in them, and to embody them - that is, we are called to be participants in the unfolding drama of God's kingdom in the world.

In our discussions, we talked of what this might look like not just as individuals, but what does it look like as a Christian community? How does the Christian community work hard at embodying Christ in its togetherness (corporate life)? I think one of the great challenges for the church in this age is how we live together the values we proclaim, and how do we respond when we have not embodied the gospel or lived up to the gospel we proclaim, and when we are the ones who have caused hurt or pain?

This theme was also part of the first elective I attended on findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Sexual Abuse of Children. The Royal Commission has made comment about theologies and doctrines that, when assumed, unquestioned and not critically examined, have the capacity to cause harm. Some of these areas include:

- Clericalism
- Secrecy and separation
- Sin - how we understand and talk about heaven and hell and eternal damnation
- Forgiveness - penal substitution, atonement & a wrathful God
- Manipulation of power
- Gender
- Sexuality
- Evangelistic caring (mission)

We did not explore these in depth, but there is much to unpack in thinking about how these subjects are taught and discussed. This is supported by research from McCrindle who asked a group of Australians what puts them off going to church / Christianity (Faith and Belief in Australia, 2017, https://mccrindle.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Faith-and-Belief-in-Australia-Report_McCrindle_2017.pdf see p.32). It is not that we need to throw them out altogether, but we do need to be conscious that the way we speak about these things can impact negatively. The question I am left with is how we re-frame and/or re-language the ways in which we share the gospel, and can we do that consistently across the life of the church?

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The Presbytery sponsored four representatives to attend Uniting Mission and Education's recent Gospel Yarning conference in North Parramatta.

The event aimed to significantly raise participants' understanding of how the context of secularism affects the church, and to introduce tools for strengthening ministry in that context.

Illawarra Presbytery's attendees at the conference have written the following reports on their experience:

Khairul Hamdan, Church and Community Worker Keiraview UC

I really enjoyed being a part of Gospel Yarning, in particular, I enjoyed the 'Open Spaces' method that was used to fuel discussion. It allowed for a lot of flexibility in the conversations that occurred. After such a long time in lockdown it was refreshing to go to an event where I could meet and be in fellowship with my fellow Uniting Church members and leaders.

Rev Doo Ah Leeming, Presbytery Tertiary Minister

Thank you for this great opportunity to join the conference in person.

The conference provided the participants with open space to discuss and learn from each other. It was quite different to the previous conference, at which several guest speakers spoke.

This year, included many small groups discussions, such as:

The Gospel in Aged care

What does it mean to follow Jesus?

Talking to young people on hard Biblical topics

Engaging Aboriginal people

Talking with people about Jesus - what makes it hard, what makes it easy, what does it mean to witness?

I didn't have time to join all the groups discussions, but these topics are very important.

I thought it was a great idea that we could bring these topics to our congregation for discussion.

Dr. Ian Robinson led a small group about "Evangelism". I shared that people believe Evangelism is a gift. But as we are followers of Christ (Matthew 28: 18-20), we are all called to evangelise in words and actions.

I gave an analogy to the group that, even I don't have a gift for cooking, but I cook and bring food to the church for the sake of fellowship.

Eventually, my cooking skills improved a lot.

Dr. Ian said the Evangelist is like a MasterChef and people do witness as cooks. I strongly believe, one day we all become MasterChefs, as long as we continually cook.



Rev Kath Merrifield, Kiama UC

Continued from previous page

Other electives and conversations covered a broad spectrum of topics including thinking about how we reach people who no longer attend church, how we can engage with our indigenous brothers and sisters, climate change, and nurturing diversity.

One of the highlights of the conference, for me, is the opportunity to meet with people from all parts of the church, to listen to one another, to share ideas with one another, and to encourage one another. The conference is designed to offer some directed input (the key-note speaker and electives) and also to provide space to explore issues that are determined by the participants. The Open Space process is used to enable people to identify topics they would like to discuss and then to enable the group to self-select across the range of discussion topics. There were also lengthy gaps in the program to enable conversations to continue or for new conversations to begin.

The organisers hope to collate the videos of the key-note addresses and the electives and make them available for the wider church. I recommend them highly to congregations for study and discussion and active response.

Rev Dr Matthew Wilson

The conference was a good opportunity for serious discussion on what it means to be engaged in evangelism in the early C21. As Kath has pointed out, we are in a challenging context, where the church has been actively or implicitly involved in many of those activities that our society is now reacting against – whether that be through clerical and institutional abuse, participation in stolen generations, or benefiting from stolen lands. Mission is now a very loaded word – particularly from an indigenous context.

That does not mean, however that mission and evangelism are less important. Not in the least, however we need to reframe our understanding, our language and our methods. As Kath noted with regard to aspects that have flowed from the Royal Commission into institutional abuse of children we need to re-think our theology, to find new ways of understanding and explaining God's relationship with us. We should expect that similar results will flow from serious thought about Aged Care, Disability Services and our relationship with our First Peoples.

The conference enabled serious discussion of some difficult topics. It enabled people with different experiences and viewpoints to engage with questions of mission and evangelism. We did not, and will not, all agree with everything that was said, but to hear where the Spirit might be leading we need to have such opportunities where a diversity of thought and experience can come together (virtually or in person) to engage with such important issues.

MISSION SHAPED MINISTRY

What is it all about?



Interested in developing mission initiatives for your congregation?

Mission Shaped Ministry is more than a course, it is a journey of discovering what God is saying regarding mission in your congregation.

The course focusses on new areas of outreach that engage with those beyond the reach of the traditional church.

For more information email:

Grant Bilbey - grantbilbey@optusnet.com.au

David Russell - davoruss@gmail.com

Cameron Eccleston - camerone@nswact.uca.org.au

Grants for Mission and Capital Works Applications close 31 March 2021.

Illawarra congregations have innovative mission ideas. The Presbytery is receiving a great range of projects seeking support from the Presbytery's own funding under the Grants for Mission and Capital Works program.

If you want to talk through an idea, please be in touch with Rev Kath Merrifield, Convenor Presbytery Strategic Mission Committee, mobile: 0409 650 118, email: revkath@ozemail.com.au

All applications received will be considered and recommended applications for funding will be notified by Presbytery Standing Committee after their meeting 24 June 2021. The Presbytery's own funds will support the successful applications.

Please contact Vi Richardson if you need assistance to submit documents electronically or if you have any questions regarding with the Project Plan, Budget and Timing or Application.

Mobile: 0491 185 320,
email: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Coming Soon:

Presbytery Education Committee Course Interest Survey

The Presbytery Education Committee (PEC) is seeking input to determine training needs and courses of interest to members of congregations and/or church councils.

A survey will soon be sent to Church Council Chairs and Secretaries.

Help with Building Compliance

Congregational buildings were recently inspected by Australian Essential Services Compliance for safety and building compliance. Copies of each congregation's full inspection reports are available from Vi Richardson.

Please email Vi with any actions your congregation has taken to address compliance issues.

If your congregation needs assistance with compliance issues, email Vi who will notify the Presbytery Finance and Property Committee. Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

WOMEN IN MINISTRY RETREAT 23-26 May 2021

For Ministers, Pastors and Deacons and those in other specified Ministry roles

St Joseph's Spirituality & Education Centre,
Kincumber South

Cost \$485.
Registrations close
9 May 2021.

Click: [Registrations and Information](#)



Uniting Mission and Education Events

Be sure to check the complete list of UME events for 2021 on this link [UME EVENTS](#).

There are a range of free and paid for events, delivered in a variety of ways: Live digital, downloadable videos available after the event and face-to-face options.

There are 16 courses listed with topics including:

- Equipping pioneering and emerging missional ministers and leaders in the Uniting Church.
- Ministry of Pastor Retreat
- Preachfest - How can we preach the Gospel in a transformative way after COVID-19, for lay preachers and Ordained leaders.
- Fundamentals of Transitional Ministry - an introduction to the key concepts and practices of ministering with congregations

Seven Days of Solidarity

8-25 April

[Seven Days of Solidarity](#) is an opportunity in one week to MEET our NEIGHBOURS, RECEIVE a story each day of the week of Christ at work in a different part of the world; PRAY for the work, and TAKE ACTION in solidarity.



These stories will be available on the website <https://donate.unitingworld.org.au/7dos/resources>, emailed out to everyone who signs up, as pre-formatted emails you can forward to all Presbytery congregations, and as printed hard copies that you can order from us.

All congregations are welcome to CELEBRATE GOD'S FAITHFULNESS on 25 April, show the video "I lift my eyes to the hills..." during the Service on 18 April, and RE-COMMIT TO GOD'S GLOBAL MISSION.

UnitingWorld will give you everything you need for a full service, including a sermon from UCA President Deidre Palmer, prayers, music, liturgy, etc.

FAITH IN ACTION CONFERENCE

9:00am - 4:30pm, 7 May 2021 until 8 May 2021

Morling College Ministry & Learning Centre, Macquarie Park

For counsellors, chaplains, pastors, carers and anyone interested in learning more about transforming their faith into action.

The Faith in Action conference will focus on various aspects of counselling and chaplaincy practice, exploring what transforms belief into practical expressions of care and love that commend Christ to a broken and hurting world. Speakers and presenters are from both Counselling and Chaplaincy disciplines and are all specialists in their fields.

For more information on the speakers for the conference and to register if you wish to attend click this link [Faith in Action](#).

Corrimal Region Uniting Church

"Connecting with God and Community"

Administrative Assistant (Part-time, 20 hours/week)

This opportunity exists within a community-orientated church, for someone who is able to perform administrative, support and concierge duties. Ideally we are seeking someone who is organised, helpful, friendly, and competent in professional assistance.

Tasks include phone, mail and email communication, managing and maintaining organisational calendars, managing property bookings, managing site visitors, photocopy/scanning/printing, social media maintenance, money-handling, record-keeping, preparation and support for meetings, managing and maintaining volunteer rosters.

The successful applicant will be professional, polite, computer-competent, able to manage a wide-range of people and tasks, have great inter-personal skills and a helpful demeanour. It is expected that they will be able to work within the ethos of the Uniting Church.

For a copy of the Position Description, to submit an application, or for more information please email minister@corrimalregion.unitingchurch.org.au.

Phone enquiries can be directed to Rev. Graham Anson on Mob: 0417 267 095.

Applications close Friday April 16, 2021.