



Uniting Church in Australia

PASTORAL LETTER

TO MEMBERS OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA

Greetings in the name of Christ,

In recent days there has been some public commentary made about the possible creation of alternative conciliar and related structures within and outside the Uniting Church in Australia.

These statements have suggested, among other things, a “replacement” Assembly, a separate College for the training of ministers, and the creation of alternative Presbyteries.

I am concerned that members and those in specified ministry who adopt and/or subscribe to these statements, inadvertently or otherwise, will place themselves outside the Church’s formal governance structures.

I am particularly concerned to ensure the continuity of oversight, guidance and various practical protections that the Uniting Church currently provides.

I have been speaking with Moderators and General Secretaries in all Synods and the Assembly Officers, who share my concern.

From preliminary consideration of the proposed changes, it appears that it will not be possible to operate with the alternative conciliar and related structures that have been suggested, without compromising the nature and responsibilities of our various Councils.

The Assembly is seeking advice from a number of sources so that it can clearly articulate the impact on the Church’s polity as a whole, and any potential consequences for ministers and congregations who are unwilling to work within the existing formal processes and structures of the Church.

We will work to provide this advice in a timely manner to all Uniting Church members, working collaboratively across the Church.

I thank all the members of the Uniting Church, who have expressed their convictions about the Assembly decision on marriage, with respect, love and care toward their sisters and brothers in Christ and with respect for the leaders of the Assembly, Synods and Presbyteries.

As we respond to these difficult conversations in our Church, the Uniting Church continues to be a Spirit led community, centred in Christ, courageously living out God's hope and reconciliation in the world.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Deidre Palmer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Deidre Palmer
President
Uniting Church in Australia

