***A community of Partner Churches & Cooperative Ventures seeking to reflect the essential unity of Christ's Church, living out what it means to be a missional church of Jesus Christ in today's world.***

**2022 REPORT TO GENERAL SYNOD**

2020-21 were challenging years for the world and for the Church catholic... But we must hope that we are two years closer to a reconciliation of the Church ecumenical! Local churches, especially the smaller ones, struggle with issues of compliance – made unnecessarily difficult for uniting congregations by being subject to multiple requirements.

**UCANZ Biennial Forum**

Forum took place at *El Rancho* near Waikanae Beach and was a day shorter than previously because of the uncertainties around Covid at the time of planning. Partner Church leaders, including Archbishop Philip, were invited. As he was unavailable, Bishop Andrew agreed to substitute but he too was unavailable at the last minute. Diocese of Waiapu Vicar General, Rev Jenny Chalmers, who is also UCANZ co-chair, stood in for him, participating in a ‘Question Time’ session that reflected the theme: *Hear what the CVs are saying to the Churches*. Whatever the reality, there is a significant feeling among union church people that their churches are marginalized in the proceedings of Partner Church courts.

Three Partner representatives affirmed the viability of the CV model and the need for it to keep evolving. It was acknowledged that it could be difficult for uniting congregations to negotiate property issues due to the multiple approvals required. This remains a frustration for many uniting congregations.

We appreciated presentations from Mary Petersen on the nature of CVs, Tony Franklin-Ross on ecumenism more widely, Anna Gilkison and Les Solomona reflecting on Cultural Intelligence in relation to Hutt City Uniting Congregations, Trudy Downes on health and safety, and Dr Emily Colgin on ecological readings of the Hebrew Bible.

It is anticipated that the UCANZ Biennial Forum will continue to meet in the autumn of alternate years due to the re-scheduling of Presbyterian Assembly and Methodist Conference.

**The UCANZ Office**

The office location has been subject to earthquake strengthening requirements, changed priorities of the Wellington Anglican Centre, and the challenges of Covid and forced homeworking. As a result, there have been three moves in three years and the current solution is an office in the Napier home of the Executive Officer. The post of Assistant to the Executive Officer has given way to office support for finance and statistics operations from the Diocese of Waiapu.

The Executive Officer is responsible for gathering financial statistics and the calculation of levies under the direction of the Resource Allocation Group which consists of the General Secretaries of Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches and two members of the UCANZ Standing Committee; for relationships with 113 local churches; and for the administration of the Removal Fund to which 28 churches belong.

A Directory of Cooperative Ventures was published in October 2021 and was sent to every uniting congregation, together with an offprint of the 2018 *Procedures for Cooperative Ventures* with its 2021 corrections having been approved by General Synod Standing Committee.

The EO has participated in the InterChurch Bureau, meetings with regional church leaders, commissions on dissolution, reviews and presbytery/synod business, and occasional preaching engagements – as well as organizing the Biennial Forum.

**Our future together**

Some national Churches seem to have turned their backs on local ecumenism. It is with regret that this year we formalize the withdrawal of the Congregational Union (CUNZ) from the UCANZ Partnership. And yet, many uniting congregations have fully realized the dream of Christians from diverse backgrounds worshipping together as one.

Against a background of an overall reduction in churchgoing nationally, there is evidence from census results that more and more people want to identify as Christian but with no denominational limitation. Some rationalisation of resources across the ecumenically progressive Churches seems inevitable. The challenge to the national Partners is to explain how they are pursuing the agreed aim of unity by steps. What steps have been taken this century?

**Rev Canon Jenny Chalmers Rev Andrew Howley Rev Adrian Skelton  
Co-chairperson Co-chairperson Executive Officer**