

the Good Confession



AUTUMN 2022

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0423 637 576 | accoffice@confessingcongregations.com | PO Box 846 Newtown NSW 2042 | Issue No.6



Annual National Council Meeting

The annual meeting of the National Council of the ACC was held in Sydney and online from 20 – 22 March, 2022. The physical location was Golden Grove: Healing Ministry Centre. This is a beautiful retreat and accommodation centre, a spiritual oasis in the heart of Newtown. Council members were well looked after by the team. The Healing Centre Golden Grove is operated in conjunction with The Healing Service at St. Andrew's Cathedral Sydney. *Scan the QR code to learn more about Golden Grove.*



On the Sunday night, members of the council shared a lovely Thai meal with a group of NSW members and then together reflected on what God has been doing in these difficult days in our local congregations and the future of the Uniting Church and the ACC.

Continuing matters of business were considered on the Monday and Tuesday, including hearing updates on significant matters impacting ACC congregations and ministers; reports on ACC activities in different states; contact and liaison with other evangelical groups in the Uniting Church: HopeNet SA, Propel Network, and Generate Presbytery in South Australia; administration arrangements and relocation arrangements for the ACC office.

Initial planning was undertaken for the 2022 National Conference and AGM. This will be in Sydney (venue to be confirmed) with the preferred dates 9 – 11 September. The Theme of the conference will be: ***In Christ Alone.***

“¹⁵ The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”



Devotional

with *Rev Ian Weeks*

ACC Treasurer & Minister of the Word at Belrose Uniting

How long, O Lord?

This encouraging message was presented at a zoom gathering of Confessing Christ Central Coast group (including ACC people from NSW) on the 12th of February 2022.

1. The Dark Night of the Soul

We are broken people living in a broken world that is groaning in anticipation of deliverance, and we groan with it.

Romans 8

As we acknowledge our brokenness, it should not surprise us that the Church is broken as well, being made up of fallen people such as ourselves; but even more so when God's righteous rule and holy Word is distorted, maligned, or ignored.

So even Godly people of great faith can feel despair.

What do we do with these feelings?

Ignore them? Hide them? Deny them?

Do we dare to be honest with God in expressing our feelings?

I believe the Psalms give us that permission to "vent" our despair, doubts, feelings of lost-ness, even abandonment by God, as we long for holiness and righteousness in our denomination.

Psalms 13 provides us with one example of daring to be honest with God:

¹How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?

How long will you hide your face from me?

²How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and day after day have sorrow in my heart? How long will my enemy triumph over me?

³Look on me and answer, Lord my God.

Give light to my eyes, or I will sleep in death,

⁴and my enemy will say, "I have overcome him," and my foes will rejoice when I fall.

⁵But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation.

⁶I will sing the Lord's praise, for he has been good to me.

Psalms 13 NIV

Your congregation or group may like to view the video at a service or as the devotional for a meeting? How Long, O Lord - Rev Ian Weeks (Psalm 13) (confessingschooloffaith.com)

2. The Critical Question: How long? vv 1, 2

David's anguish: in the face of his enemies, when it seems the wicked will be victorious, David shares his despair.

How long, Lord?

Feelings of doubt, even abandonment by God!

Has God withdrawn his favour (grace)?

God where are you? I feel alone in my struggle.

Feelings are real – we are people created with emotions.

3. The Crucial Petition: Look at me! vv 3, 4

David's plea: he shared his doubts as he wondered if he still has faith, and yet at the same time, demonstrated faith and trust in the mere action of crying out to God with a painful petition:

Look at me Lord & listen!

Enlighten me with an answer: why?

Don't let my enemies gloat

Faith in action – being honest with God & telling Him how we feel

4. The Confident Resolution: But I know! vv 5, 6

David's confidence: David could very easily have let his feelings dictate his faith and continued to be despairing. Instead, he cast his mind back to the times when God had been faithful.

But I know what God is like – He is faithful

God has been there for me in the past

In this fact I will trust, and therefore praise Him

We are not told if David's circumstances change as a result of his prayer – I suspect not. But what has changed is David's attitude and outlook. Despair had been changed to hope. Lament to praise.

Fact brings hope – feelings are fleeting; the truth about God is firm.

5. Talking Honestly with God

This Psalm re-assures us that we can talk honestly with God, and know that:

He will not turn away

His faithfulness is firm, and God is trustworthy

David's feelings were real, our feelings are real – we should not deny them or ignore them. I believe God gives us permission to "vent" them with Him – God will not turn away in disgust, nor get upset with us & chuck a wobbly!

Instead, we are invited to remember that God's wisdom, faithfulness, grace and mercy are sure, unchanging, firm and solid.

Our feelings are not a reliable indicator of spiritual fact!

Our faith is built upon the fact of God's character/nature – not on the shifting sands of our feelings.

And so we can praise Him, even in times of great despair, as we long for the consummation of God's great plan in spite of the brokenness of the world, and the church.

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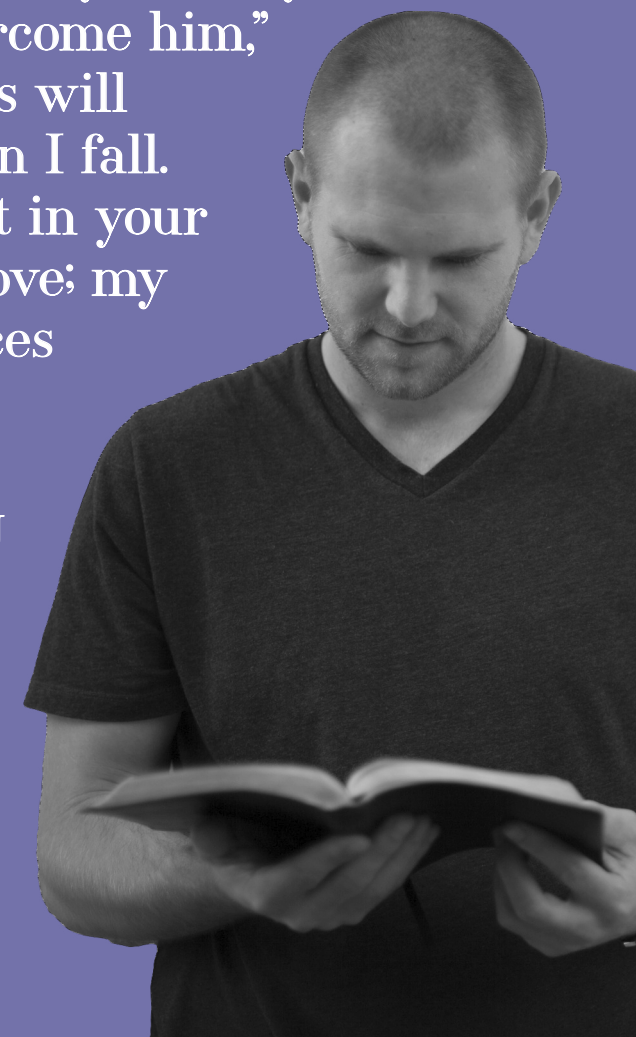
praise, for

he has

been good

to me.

Psalm 13
(NIV)



**FIND US
ONLINE**



Facebook

Are you on Facebook? Have you liked the ACC Facebook page? See the ACC Facebook page for encouraging bible verses, quotes from well-known writers and preachers and links to helpful and topical articles and reference material.

New ACC Website

See the new website for ACC info: confessingcongregations.org.au

The old website: confessingcongregations.com is now the Archival Site and a helpful source for copies of past material, including all the magazines and Reforming Alliance material, as well as links to other information and resources.

ACC Annual Prayer Network Retreat

Understanding the Basis of Union and how it can help us

Prayers for ACC

The ACC Annual Prayer Network Retreat for 2022 was held on the mornings of 24th-25th February (9:50am-1:00pm) via zoom. The theme of the retreat was "Stepping Stones towards God's will".

Once again, Peter and Kathryn Yaxley from Kingdom Presence Ministries facilitated the retreat. The first day focussed on Stepping Stones into Hearing God and growing in listening to God individually. The second morning focussed on Stepping Stones towards God's will. Scan the QR for a copy of a report.



Scan for the
report PDF

Dr Katherine and Rev Walter Abetz provide a workshop to help in understanding the Basis of Union of the Uniting Church in Australia, and how the Basis can help us in the ACC (Assembly of Confessing Congregations) as a confessing movement. This workshop was given on the March 12th, 2022, via zoom to a Confessing Christ fellowship group mostly of NSW ACC members with guests from Tasmania and Queensland. The video can be watched on the Confessing School of Faith website.



Scan to access
the website

- Praise God that the Lord is faithful, and His love never ceases.
- Please continue to pray for good working together and unity in Christ for the different evangelical groups in the UCA:
- Pray for ACC National Chair Hedley Fihaki for strength, provision and protection.
- Pray for Lu Senituli and the members of Sunnybank Congregation for their future.

WHO WE ARE






For more about the ACC visit: confessingcongregations.org.au

Within the Uniting Church context of a very broad range of theology and practice, the Assembly of Confessing Congregations is a nationwide body of congregations and individuals whose vision is confessing the Lord Jesus Christ, proclaiming the truth, renewing the church. Our goals include:

- Encouraging the confession of Christ according to the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church, as that faith is described in the UCA's Basis of Union.
- Providing resources, seminars and conferences to build up believers, develop their gifts, and equip them for life, mission and works of service.
- Encouraging Christian believers in earnest prayer through our Prayer Network.
- Encouraging younger members of the Uniting Church in their faith and participation.
- Communicating about current events and issues through our website, social media and local newsletters.

JOIN US

Membership rates for supporting members:

-  Concession (single or couple):
\$10.00 pa. (financial year basis)
-  Full (single or couples):
\$20.00 p.a (see website)
-  (0423) 637 576.
-  accoffice@confessingcongregations.com
-  PO Box 846 Newtown NSW 2042