

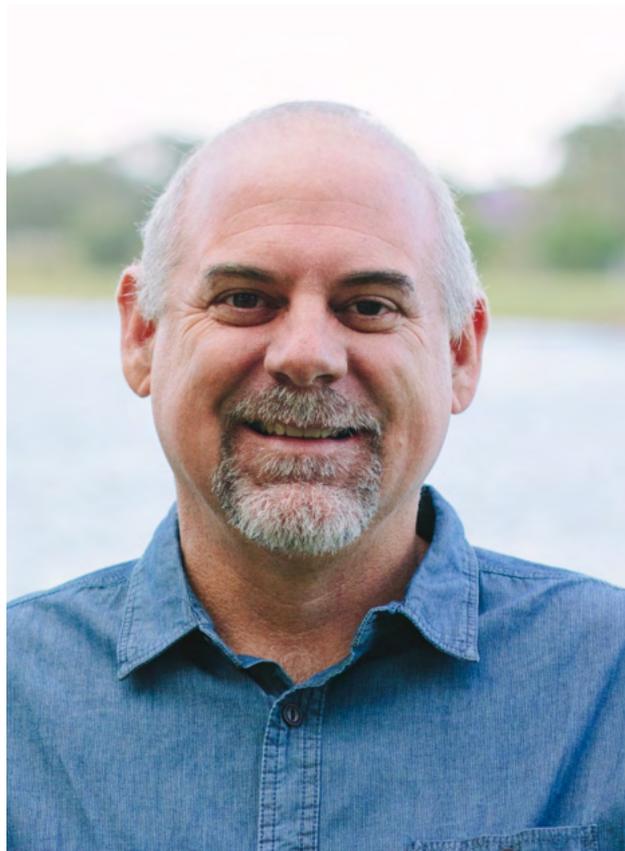
*a daring*  
**HOPE**  
SYNOD 36



Key Selection Criteria

## MODERATOR-ELECT

**Candidate 1: Rev Peter Armstrong**



## Sense of call

It has been a blessing to be part of the breadth of our church, fanning the flame and navigating the challenges of mission in congregations, schools, agencies, presbyteries, and the synod. My ministry is always about being with people, establishing partnerships, building teams, and innovating in the context for the mission of God. My calling is to be in the places and to ride the boundaries between the church and the community, bringing the good news of Jesus to the community and bringing the community to the hospitality and experience of God's Kingdom amongst God's people. In my call to the Moderator role, I hope I would bring my discipleship, my heart to serve others, my pastoral, teaching, and apostolic giftings and my calling to offer my complete self to the mission of God in service of the church. It is with a sense of discernment and seeking to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit that I have said yes to my name being presented to the Synod in session.

## Key Selection Criteria

*(a) The nominee shall be a member of the Uniting Church and will have an appreciation of the reformed and evangelical theological heritage of the Uniting Church and its ongoing significance to the faith of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church. In addition, the nominee will be aware of the theological diversity within the Uniting Church and will have the capacity to reflect theologically upon current issues in church and society in the light of the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

I was 10 years old at the inauguration of the Uniting Church in 1977 and my family joined the Uniting Church as part of the Gatton Uniting Church. With a family move in 1979, we became part of the St George Uniting Church. I was confirmed into the Uniting Church in 1980. During my university years, I was part of Indooroopilly Uniting Church and Chapel Hill Uniting Church, being involved in the North Brisbane Presbytery Youth Task Group and Synod Youth Council. After graduation and moving to Hervey Bay for a teaching position and then marrying Fiona, I became part of Hervey Bay UCA. In our time at Hervey Bay, Fiona and I were part of a small group who planted a new worshipping congregation alongside the existing congregation and were blessed to see this new expression of mission grow and develop. In 1994, I began a role with Hervey Bay UCA as Lay Parish Assistant—Children, Youth and Families. This year I also began theological study through the UCA's Coolamon College via distance education. In 1996, Fiona and I moved to Brisbane, where I began a Children's Ministry Coordinator role with the Synod's Mission and Parish Services—Crossroads Qld. In 1996, I continued theological and ministry study at Trinity Theological College as a private student. We attended Emmanuel UCA (Enoggera) 1996–2001. I applied to be a candidate for ministry (MOW) through Emmanuel UCA and the Moreton Rivers Presbytery in 1998 and began full-time study as a candidate for ministry in 1999. I was ordained in December 2001 and took up a placement at Redcliffe UCA in 2002, as Director of Community Ministry. In December 2003, I became the Ministry Team leader after a difficult time consequential to the Assembly's decision on sexuality and leadership. I remained in ministry at Redcliffe UCA until December 2009 and began my next placement at Samford Valley UCA in 2010. I ministered at Samford Valley until December 2016. I began my current placement with UnitingCare Qld, in a role focusing on the partnerships and relationships between UnitingCare and UCA Congregations across Queensland.

Through these congregations and ministries, I have engaged theologically and relationally the significant breadth and depth of our church. I believe I have listened, learned, and valued the people and places across the Synod as expressions of the mission of the Church. I believe that the good news of Jesus is the power of salvation to reconcile and renew peoples and communities in all contexts of life. Having shared in a range of ministry experiences and contexts from Mornington Island to

Cunnamulla, from Mt Isa to the CBD of Brisbane, up and down the coast, and many places in between, I have had the privilege to see the work and life of God's people across the diversity that is the church in Queensland. I am drawn to the phrase of reform and revival, "In essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty, in all things charity" and would describe this as my missiological posture. I intentionally use the word missiological, because I believe it is the mission of God lived out in the church's mission, that is most important in being the church. Further, that the mission of God is in and through relationships. Relationship is the priority and guiding approach to which I am committed.

*(b) The nominee will give evidence of a lifestyle commensurate with the responsibilities and demands of a key leadership role. Such evidence will include a nominee's awareness of his/her own gifts, abilities and limitations, his/her capacity to maintain healthy relationships, and an ongoing commitment to his/her own physical and spiritual wellbeing.*

I have sought to live my life with integrity to the call to follow Jesus, to give mature expression to the fruits of the Holy Spirit and to exercise with diligence the gifts God has given me, as gifts for the church, the body of Christ. I have sought to be a good husband in my marriage, son, brother, father, cousin and nephew in my families, a good neighbour in my communities, and a good citizen in my country.

Two strengths I believe God has given me are the strength of connecting and the strength of innovating. I see these strengths in the ministry gifts of pastoral and apostolic leadership. The gifts of building relationships and of releasing new expressions of ministry and mission through the church.

The most formative experiences I have had have come through relationship with people, as I realise my limitations and shadow sides, and as I am encouraged in my strengths and gifts. I count as friends' people from a wide diversity of experiences, backgrounds, cultures, perspectives, and contexts. I have found that when issues become people who become friends, that this changes me for the better. From being on Country and through story and community, I am committed to walking together with First Peoples, having listened and learned with and through my friendships from my school days through to my current places in life. I am committed to deeper reconciliation and our renewed life together.

I have learned through experience, professional supervision, mentoring and coaching that strengths/gifts need to be nurtured. Care of self is vital and healthy relationships, as being a husband and dad is my first calling. I am blessed with friends and colleagues who know me, support me, challenge, and encourage me. I would not still be in ministry but for this amazing team of people. Ministry takes all of me, and all of me has fragilities, brokenness, wonder and strength, which only Jesus makes whole and enables me to serve others. I practice spiritual disciplines, particularly around scripture reading, reflection, retreat, prayer, and devotion. I am conscious of the need to steward myself as a minister in the UCA to be of service to God's people and God's world.

*(c) The nominee will have a good understanding of the Uniting Church, including its community service institutions and the need for those community service agencies and the councils of the church to work together. The nominee will also have a good understanding of Australian society, including those emerging issues and trends that need to be addressed in the light of the gospel. Demonstrated team building and networking capabilities will have to be evidenced.*

I have had the privilege to be part of serving on Church Councils, Presbytery Committees and task groups, the Qld Synod's Board of Christian Formation (this current term as chairperson), the Qld Synod's Disaster Response and Recovery Committee, the Assembly's Mission and Evangelism network (including time as their convenor) and take part in the National Australian Council of Churches Volunteer Emergency Chaplaincy Alliance. These have formed me and continue to form me in my faith and practice as a follower of Jesus and as a minister of the Gospel.

I have had a broad range of experiences and ministry roles across the church in a variety of contexts. This has given me a base from which to build upon, should the Spirit and the Church determine to call me to Moderator. The governance roles I have held in the church have given me a firm base for further governance leadership.

My connection with the Uniting Church's community services have been through my whole life:

- From being a 10-year-old doing "walk-a-thons" for Blue Nursing (Gatton)
- Leading UnitingCare – Target Christmas appeal locally (Hervey Bay)
- Collaborating with Unicare and Bluecare in the North Brisbane Holiday Program (Crossroads)
- Serving on UnitingCare Lifeline Communities Local Area Committee (Caboolture)
- Networking with local church ministers, Lifeline, Bluecare and UnitingCare Communities managers in the northern Moreton Bay region in my first ordained placement (Redcliffe, Deception Bay, Pine Rivers, Morayfield, and Caboolture)
- Supporting Bluecare and Hospital Chaplains in pastoral care and worship (Redcliffe and Samford)
- Supporting UnitingCare's Disability service team with local emergent pastoral needs (Redcliffe)

My current placement is with UnitingCare as the Associate Director of Mission-Community Partnerships. The primary purpose of this role is to encourage strong and healthy missional relationships between UCQ services, its leaders, and the wider Church. Our current primary strategy for this is "Connect100". This aims to strengthen the connections between congregations and UnitingCare services to (i) enhance local pastoral support of staff and volunteers; (ii) grow collaborative mission; and (iii) encourage missional innovation in worship, witness, and service.

I have sought to stay engaged with the wider Australian community context through:

- participation in professional networks
- being on not-for-profit community service management committees (including *Youth Care – Hervey Bay, Redcliffe Area Youth Space – Redcliffe*)
- taking part in leadership development programs with corporate and government entities
- being part of local sporting clubs/groups
- reading widely on community issues
- engaging with emerging social technologies and platforms
- taking part in emerging innovation networks (e.g. <https://mindhive.org/>)
- doing post-graduate study engaging wider sector research in education and innovation.

My current role in UnitingCare means engaging with various industry sectors on matters of:

- policy
- management
- strategy
- governance
- project management
- property
- business and finance
- digital technologies
- health and well-being
- environmental sustainability
- legal
- community services

I understand the importance of faith-based, mission-led culture which is built through language, experiences, modelling behaviours, and practices that align to the biblical witness of the Gospel and a perspective that, as Lesslie Newbigin describes, provides a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's redeeming grace for the whole life of society. Theological reflection and spiritual discernment are vital practices in engaging our society.

Serving and growing teams has been a fundamental element of my ministry practices in every program, activity, and enterprise. It has been a challenging journey to learn the importance of teams and to learn the skills and practices of leadership that genuinely serves others. I am grateful for those many people, especially those I have served, who have patiently shown me better ways to lead and serve in a team. I have intentionally sought mentors and coaches who have developed my team-building competencies. It has been a rich experience to see teams develop and grow through encouragement, permission-giving, equipping, resourcing, accountability, shared vision, contribution, and co-creation. I love seeing new leaders and teams emerge, grow and flourish. This is one fruit of discipleship and would be one of my most rewarding aspects of ministry.

*(d) The nominee will have demonstrated the capacity to exercise pastoral care and discipline, and the ability to moderate, and will be respected generally by the members of the church.*

Pastoral care and discipline have been aspects of all my ministry placements. I have developed both my understandings and practices in these areas through the last 25 years of ministry, from responding to critical emergent needs, to building pastoral care teams, proactively and reactively serving the church and wider community. I have served on Presbytery Pastoral Relations committee where discipline was part of the remit, as well as three Church Councils.

I have convened and chaired various Assembly, Synod, Presbytery and Congregational councils, boards and committees and continue to develop the competencies to do this better. Learning how to lead well means learning how to moderate and influence for the good of the whole. I hope that I

have been able to serve in this way across the church and wider community, and if elected, continue to do so as Moderator.

*(e) The nominee will be a good communicator and, as the public “face” of the church, will need to be articulate and competent in working with the media.*

I have developed my communication capabilities through spoken, print, electronic and audio-visual mediums. My professional development has included preaching, leadership communications skills, apps, and computer/web-based programs. I do regular communications via newsletters, emails, social media, publications, and promotions. I have been part of producing various formation and education products, e.g. “Mission Stories” and “Faith Stories” (<https://ucaqld.com.au/about-us/ministry-resources/faith-resources/>)

*(f) The nominee will show a commitment to ecumenical engagement and a capacity to work with ethnic groups in both church and community.*

I have always been part of local ecumenical ministry networks. I am a member of the National Australian Council of Churches-Australian Volunteer Emergency Chaplaincy Alliance (AVECA). In my current role, I network with people across denominations at State and local levels.

## Personal Statement

### Self-Understanding

I understand myself as graciously love by God, gifted with family and friends, led through life by the Holy Spirit working through my choices and responses. I see myself as a follower of Jesus through life and in community. I understand myself to be an extroverted personality who values times aside in the natural environment, by myself and with family and friends. I am an energetically curious person who wants to learn as much as I can about a wide variety of topics and issues.

I am a connector and innovator and see what could be in a collaborative and integrative way. Being with people in their places is important to me in being able to understand others. I have an approach to issues through seeking understanding and then trying to solve problems collaboratively. Talking with other people helps me think. I have found that my confidence lags my competence, which is both good and not so good. Often, I proceed or lead intuitively more than in a planned thought-through way. I have learned to put in place processes to help with this.

I believe that God has asked me to offer my complete self in service of God through the life of the church.

## Theologically

Theologically, I recognise the formation that God has done and continues to do in my life. I have been, and am on the journey, from self to others, from condemnation to grace, from a small Jesus to a huge Jesus, from being tentative about what is important to confident in the good news of Jesus for all people.

I am on the journey of the vitality of God's reconciliation and renewal for all of creation, as expressed in (i) being a gospel-centred and evangelical faith community (ii) truth-telling and reconciliation with our First Peoples (iii) stewarding all of creation (iv) being a blessing and good news in my local community (v) seeking the welfare of all.

My theology is Jesus-centered, Holy Spirit enlivened, and missionally directed. This means that my theology is worked out in place, through experience, scripturally guided, conversationally explored and community shaped.

I value and align with the call and vision of the Uniting Church as expressed at the inaugural worship services in 1977:

As a people journeying together, we affirm our calling under God:

- to preach Christ the risen crucified one and confess him as Lord;
- to bear witness to the unity of faith and life in Christ, rising above cultural, economic, national and racial boundaries;
- to engage in fearless prophetic ministry in relation to social evils which deny God's active will for justice and peace;
- to act with God alongside the oppressed, the hurt and the poor;
- to accept responsibility for the wise use and conservation of the finite resources of this earth for the benefit of all;
- to recognise, treasure and use the gifts of the Spirit given to all God's people for ministering; and
- to live a creative, adventurous life of faith, characterised by openness, flexibility, hope and joy

## Leadership

I understand leadership as a gift of the community, given expression through people exercising their gifts, in mutual submission to Christ and one another.

Leadership is an expression of discipleship and cannot be separated from this.

I have learned much about leadership and its potential for positive outcomes and the risk it has for negative consequences.

Leadership begins and ends with character.

Leadership will have reduced impact if it is based only on an individual's competence but will have increased benefit if it is based on relationships, shared purpose and processes.

In ministry, we must recognise Jesus in the church's leadership.

I value the explanation the Apostle Paul gives for missional leadership in 1 Corinthians 3 & 4, as the actions of a (i) servant; (ii) gardener; (iii) manager; (iv) builder; (v) fool; and (vi) parent. This shows the need for adaptability to meet the needs of people, communities, and the mission of God. There is always a focus on partnerships and others in the role of the missional leader.

## Education

Bachelor of Human Movement Studies (Education) - University of Queensland (Focus in Disability studies)

Graduate Diploma of Theology—Brisbane College of Theology (Trinity)

Graduate Diploma of Ministry—Brisbane College of Theology (Trinity)

Currently completing a Masters-Doctor of Ministry—Adelaide College of Divinity (Flinders University) in the areas of Pedagogy and Missional Innovation

## Vocational Experience

Minister-UnitingCare Queensland

Minister-Samford Valley Community Church (UCA)

Minister-Redcliffe Uniting Church

Teacher-Albany Hills State School, Pine Rivers Special School, Caboolture Special School

Children's Ministry Coordinator—Crossroads Qld (UCA)

Lay Parish Assistant: Youth & Children's Ministry—Hervey Bay Uniting Church

Advisory Visiting Teacher-Medical & Physical Conditions-Wide Bay Central

Physical Education Teacher—Maryborough and Hervey Bay Special Schools

Special Needs Support Teacher—Mount Morgan State High School

Tutor—Griffith University

## Hope for the Synod

My hope for the Synod is that God will work through us to fulfill God's mission in our world.

I hope that reverence of God and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit will mark our Synod.

I hope we will see Gospel-centered transformation and regeneration through the renewal of the gifts of the people and the ministries of the church.

I hope the Synod will serve presbyteries well, who serve local congregations well across Queensland.

I hope the whole church experiences strengthened connections and missional partnerships.

I hope the weariness of our church will make way for encouragement, resilience, and courage.

I hope we will fan the fire of mission and navigate the challenges of mission in better ways together.

## Family

Married to Fiona with three adult children.