



Autumn
Edition
2025



Air Force chaplain makes history

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for Baptist Care SA

Our movement prepares for
Mission 25

Becoming a Gospel Prepper

Together *in Mission*

Baptist Churches SA & NT



Left: Rev Karen Haynes, Rev Stewart Pieper and Rev Dan Sweetman. Right: Karen with her chaplaincy welfare dog, Connie.
Cover photo and above by Jonathan Lamprecht

Air Force chaplain makes history

words by
Ruth Grace
Editor, *Together in Mission*

Air Force Chaplain Karen Haynes has become the first woman to be ordained by Queensland Baptists, and the first female Baptist to serve as a chaplain in the Defence Force. Currently posted to Darwin, Karen is a missionary member of Darwin Baptist Church.

Karen described the ordination as an affirmation of her calling. "It represents the church having a vote of confidence in you, saying 'yes, we're setting you apart to do this work. We believe in you; you can do this.'"

She joined the Air Force in 2016 and has served at multiple Defence bases. Now posted at 13 Squadron in Darwin, Karen provides pastoral, spiritual and religious care as well as moral and ethical advice to command. To enhance her holistic care of Air Force members, she recently welcomed a chaplaincy welfare dog, Connie, into her office.

Her ordination follows years of advocacy for women in ministry. In May 2024, Queensland Baptists voted to allow women's ordination after decades of discussion. Karen played an active role in this movement. "Women and men have always been involved in all types of service in the church, but many churches have differentiated between men and women's roles, particularly in leadership," she noted.

Reflecting on her journey, she shared, "For me, part of the challenge of discerning pastoral ministry from the get-go was not having met a female pastor before. If I can be that example, I hope it helps other women pursuing ordination."

Karen recalls then meeting Melinda Cousins, who was working towards her accreditation at the time. In Melinda, Karen saw "a role model

of a single woman, serving in the church and welcomed to do so by her peers".

Looking ahead, she hopes to continue to serve in Defence and eventually train future chaplains before returning to local church ministry. "To those who have prayed and worked for women to be fully included in the mission of the church, I say 'well done and thank you.'"

Darwin Baptist Church shared their well-wishes through Facebook; "Congratulations Karen, an amazing achievement. We are grateful to have you as part of our congregation, and we continue to pray for you in your very important role within our Defence Force."

For more NT stories head to
bcsant.org.au/belonging-people



Melinda Cousins thanks Sue Raw and the Baptist Care SA Board

Baptist Care SA merger approved

On Saturday 22 February, a Special Assembly was held to vote on the merger of Baptist Care SA with BaptistCare (NSW & ACT) and Bapticare (Victoria).

Interestingly, the last Special Assembly, held in 2008, approved the formation of Baptist Care SA, bringing together Baptist Community Services and Baptist Homes for the Aged.

Since then, the landscape of community services and aged care has changed, creating challenges for Baptist Care SA and its national counterparts. As discussed at our Annual Assembly in November 2024, this merger aims to ensure a sustainable future for this vital mission. Other state entities, including Baptist Care NT, may join in the future.

The Assembly Board unanimously recommended the merger, seeing it as a God-given opportunity to strengthen the work of Baptist Care nationwide. Over 80 people attended the Special Assembly at Springpark Baptist (SA) and Casuarina Baptist (NT), with all motions passing unanimously. We celebrated Baptist Care SA's history, thanked board members, and recognised CEO Sue Raw for her leadership and resilience.

Please pray for the new national entity launching in March, and for Melinda Cousins, who will serve on the Board.

The next Assembly will be on 31 May – all are welcome!

Together in Mission

Baptist Churches SA & NT

Sharing the latest news and stories across our movement of Baptist churches in the SA and NT.

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In other news

Broadview Baptist relaunched after a season of regrowth as a campus of Rostrevor Baptist Church.

Photos by Gessica Francesca





A rich history and new future for Baptist Care SA

When Baptist Care SA was formed in 2008, it was the result of a journey that began in 1913 when the West End Baptist Church and West End Baptist Mission were built to provide a safe place for people living on the streets.

The church and mission were built at Wright Street, using the proceeds of the sale of the Bentham St. Baptist Chapel, in what was then considered a highly undesirable area of Adelaide. Afforded aegis by the community of the Flinders Street Baptist Church, the mission's main work was to administer relief to the needy in the district, irrespective of denomination. With many facing poverty and hunger, the mission was reported by The Advertiser

newspaper to have been 'much appreciated' by the mothers and children living in that part of the city.

In 1930, during The Great Depression, the Lavis Free Kindergarten was set up in the area used for Sunday School. Established by Robert and Lucy Lavis, the free 'sleep and eat kindergarten' accommodated 40 children to sleep overnight, and gave all who attended free milk and a free hot midday meal. On that site today, Baptist Care SA's WestCare Centre provides free breakfasts to people experiencing homelessness, and overnight accommodation during extreme weather events.

By November 1930, management of the West End Baptist Mission



had been assumed by the South Australian Baptist Union who continued the missional work of its founders. The South Australian Baptist Union extended this work when they established Mylor Baptist Camp as a campsite for school and church groups in 1956. Both entities were merged in 1998 to become Baptist Community Services SA.

The South Australian Baptist Union established South Australian Baptist Homes for the Aged in 1949. In 2008, they sold their properties and merged with Baptist Community Services SA to form Baptist Care SA. (Proceeds of the sales were used to establish the Baptist Care SA Foundation, which serves to provide funds

for programs and services when ongoing funding may not be available.)

The newly formed Baptist Care SA carried with it a deep missional legacy, which was rooted in its relationship with the Baptist Church, and commenced when the South Australian Baptist Association was first formed in 1863. The consolidation of the three Baptist entities merged their shared mission of expressing God's love and compassion in ways that supported and strengthened South Australian communities.

In 2025, subject to various members' approvals, the next stage of our journey will see us merge with BaptCare and BaptistCare to become an integrated care and

services provider serving NSW, ACT, VIC, TAS, WA and SA.

With each organisation sharing its heritage as an outworking of the Baptist faith, our coming together will continue our journey and shared mission of valuing people and supporting them to have hope, dignity and a fullness of life.

Amongst all that will change, our commitment to serving our community will remain the same.

Please continue to support our work. Your prayers, practical and financial support are vital to what we do.



words by **Sue Raw**
CEO, Baptist Care SA



Above: Baptist leaders gather at West Beach Community Church and online to hear about Alpha and Mission 25

A bold vision for Australian Baptist churches

Mission 25 is a phrase that will be difficult for Baptists to escape in the coming months. It refers to the bold vision of uniting Baptist churches across Australia to run Alpha courses simultaneously in Term 2 of 2025.

This nationwide movement will see churches committed to prayer, invitation, and discipleship, believing that together, we can witness our nation be transformed by the gospel.

Melinda Cousins (Director of Ministries, BCSANT) has noted the incredible impact of Alpha courses in previous years; “We’ve been so excited to see people encountering Jesus and choosing to follow him across our local churches through

Alpha courses”.

Throughout Term 1, churches are encouraged to focus on prayer and preparation, with consulting and training opportunities available for church leaders and Alpha teams.

On March 9th, the first training event kicks off with A Taste of Alpha — an event for churches and leaders to explore how Alpha can be brought to life at their church.

In Term 2, churches will focus on ‘fostering a culture of invitation to explore Jesus’. Which boils down to inviting friends to attend, and running the Alpha course.

In Term 3, we will celebrate together, and share stories of what God has done.

Mark Wilson, Director of Australian Baptist Ministries, shares, “When a local church participates by regularly hosting Alpha, there is a direct impact for the Kingdom.”

Mark Sanders (Church Growth & Development) is excited to facilitate seed funding to help churches get started with Alpha. Churches can contact the Baptist Support Office on (08) 8357 1755 or email Mark at msanders@bcsant.org.au to learn more.

For more information about Mission 25, as well as resources to support your church, visit alpha.org.au/mission-25.



Becoming a Gospel Prepper



The Good Samaritan must have had some margin in life, don't you think? Loving your enemy-neighbour that much surely took quite some admin! Bothering to attend to the battered stranger in the first place. Then there was all the over-and-above: Time taken to get him to care, money spent for treatment and recuperation, forty bucks for the deluxe donkey-wash.

Who has the time and money ready for that sort of spontaneous act? Uncomfortably, my first answer is 'Not me', and my second answer is, 'The person who loves their neighbour the Jesus way.' So going forward as a sacred agent, I have adjustments to make.

I think preparation is the key. Careful preparation opens up windows for spontaneity, as any romantic will tell you. So what would it look like to be a gospel prepper?

'Preppers', of course, are people who stockpile supplies in case of a future disaster. Sacred agents similarly have an eye on the future. We're not oblivious to the dark powers and spiritual forces in the

world, so putting on the armour of God is good preparation for standing firm. But part of that armour, in Paul's metaphor, is "feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace." So standing firm does not mean standing back or standing still!

Are we fitted out to cross that road and help that bleeding stranger? To run up to that chariot and share with the Ethiopian official? Ac8 To make the most of every opportunity with gracious conversation? Col4 The peace we have with God means we prepare not out of a sense of doom or lack of control in this crazy world—but with all the assurance of the one who naps in the boat before calming the storm. Mt8 The peace we have with God is a shalom we can share in radical ways like the Samaritan. It shows and tells the good news that what's upon us—and right up in our face—is not a zombie apocalypse, but the kingdom of God.

Here's a very basic Gospel Prepper's Checklist:

TIME: You can't schedule sudden opportunities. But why not

arrange a code-word you can say/text to your friends/family that means, 'Sorry, I'm delayed by an opportunity to show and share Christ'? Just having that conversation in advance could be helpful all round.

MONEY: A gospel-opportunity fund—even if it's only enough to buy someone a meal—it's set aside and ready to go when the opportunity comes.

WORDS: Memorise a basic outline of your own testimony/gospel outline, cleared of jargon and tangents and practised on your Christian friends—so you really are 'always prepared to give an answer' when asked about your hope.

Imagine how effective we'd be at sharing Jesus if we were prepped up like that? How prepared are you? And what would you add to the checklist? Discuss!

For more Sacred Agents head to crossover.org.au/encouragement/sacred-agents



words by **Andrew Turner**
Director, Crossover Australia



Exploring Mission?

Baptist Mission Australia



"It is not so much the case that God has a mission for his church in the world, as that God has a church for his mission in the world. Mission was not made for the church-the church was made for mission-God's mission."-Christopher Wright

I love this quote from Christopher Wright. It reminds me that God asks us, his people to seek ways to engage in the privilege and responsibility of sharing the amazing news of the gospel with the community around us.

As we enter 2025, this may be something you are pondering for yourself or for your church. There are so many ways to be involved in God's mission work. What are the opportunities you already have to serve and share in your own community and workplace? Does your church have community service or volunteer programs? Does your church sponsor work overseas or around Australia you could visit as part of a team?

An amazing program that Baptist Mission Australia has run for

many years is our Global Exposure trips. These short (approx. two week), small group trips, (5-10 people), allow participants to be immersed in an unfamiliar culture, experiencing life on one of our ministry fields. These trips are not so much about doing as they are about observing and experiencing. Each trip is unique with the team on the ground working to make your time interesting and valuable, experiencing how they invest and care for the communities God has placed them in. There is time also to explore, reflect and debrief as you go.

If this sounds like something your church, small group, young adult group or ministry team would like to be a part of, get in touch with me for a chat (lcornish@baptistmissionaustralia.org). Let's explore your opportunity to be part of God's mission to the world.



words by **Lisa Cornish**
State Director SA/NT

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Growing Together in Marriage

In 2025 we are inviting married couples, no matter what stage or age, to try to balance the busyness and prioritise their partner and marriage!

On the weekend, there is no group discussion or public sharing of your marriage! The Team couples share honestly and openly of their personal experiences and insights, sometimes out of pain and sometimes with humour, about different aspects of marriage. Following each session opportunity is given for couples to discuss their responses in the privacy of their room.

Retreat weekends in 2025:

- **March 28-30**
- **June 27-29**
- **October 31 - November 2**

This year all weekends will be held at Abbotsford Country House, Lyndoch.

For more information contact Steve & Val D'Arcy (0402 983 154) or Rob & Lee Allen (0438 892 980) or see gtimsa.org for details and registration.



Morialta Charitable Trust

Through an annual grants program, we support charitable organisations working to bring lasting change to young South Australians in need.

Your donation will contribute to achieving our vision for communities where all young South Australians reach their full potential.

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