

W WESLEY PLACE

From July 4, Synod Ministries and Operations will begin to move from 130 Little Collins Street into Wesley Place at 130 Lonsdale Street Melbourne.



Wesley Church and Wesley Place

In the following weeks, Uniting AgeWell and U-Ethical will also make the move from Little Collins to Lonsdale Streets. Of even greater significance will be the move of Uniting VicTas into Wesley Place from their offices in East Melbourne and 505 Little Collins Street, as this will bring together Synod Ministries and Operations and all agencies under one roof for the very first time, as well as the Wesley Church congregations.

The move was always intended to be progressive across the various parts of the Church. However, COVID-19 will initially limit the numbers of staff in each area who will be able to physically return to work in the new location. This will now be a progressive move in more ways than one.

We look forward to a time when the easing of COVID-19 restrictions mean we can open our floors of Wesley Place to welcome the wider Uniting Church community.

Even though the gathering of staff from across the breadth of Uniting Church ministries and services to Wesley Place represents something new in the life of the UCA in Victoria and Tasmania, it also is a type of homecoming.

From their new work environment on four lower floors of the 130 Lonsdale St tower, Synod and agency staff will have a prominent view of the newly restored 162-year-old Wesley Church, a centre of continuous Christian worship, ministry and mission since the earliest days of settlement.

Synod General Secretary Mark Lawrence said having Synod, agency and Wesley Church congregational staff working together under the one roof was a step that harked back to the UCA's founding document.



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“It showed a lot of foresight and a sense of the vision of people seeing the value of the Church being located on the one site,” Mark said.

“Both the economic value but also the high symbolism in that. It reflects one of the hopes of paragraph three of the Basis of Union that we are a pilgrim people and that as we move into this space together it is an opportunity to build up the whole, so that we can bear witness to Christ.

“This is about building up the whole body of Christ to work together more seamlessly and in greater relationship with each other.

“That vision has been shared by members of the church and staff of the church and of the agencies working together to achieve this.”

Mark Lawrence believes Wesley Place will highlight and enhance the Church’s evolving role in modern society.

“To be part of that general milieu, to be present in that significant part of the Melbourne CBD is a great symbol for the Church to be in the community,” he said

“People have generally seen it as being positive for the Church to operate out of a facility which is fit for purpose and takes account of contemporary meeting and working space standards and expectations.

“We understand that this is a long-term commitment for the Church to relocate to Wesley Place and that in doing so we’re moving into a facility, which is trying to address the future needs that we will have to work with in the decades to come.”

In 2016, property manager Charter Hall signed a 125-year lease on the Wesley Place site, which allowed them to build the tower, while committing to restore the heritage-listed Wesley Church and its associated buildings - the Caretaker’s Cottage, the Manse, Schoolhouse, Nicholas Hall and even the prominent statue of John Wesley.

[Watch](#) a short video on the return of the restored John Wesley Statue

Charter Hall is also providing a sinking fund for the church’s upkeep and maintenance.

The major move of Synod operations and ministry staff from 130 Little Collins St to Wesley Place will be over two days beginning at noon on Friday July 3 and continuing through to Saturday July 4.

Mark has asked for a special dispensation of grace and patience over the couple of weeks following as Synod staff settle into their workspaces, complicated by the COVID-19 restrictions that will see many people still working from home with a gradual occupation of the new offices.



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Synod leaves behind its longstanding centre of operations, 130 Little Collins St (left).

“I should acknowledge 130 Little Collins St has been the Synod centre for all the time since Union and from that place we’ve had significant missional, theological, justice and community service initiatives emerging,” Mark said.

“It’s disappointing that in the COVID-19 space we haven’t been able to give Little Collins St a public farewell as we had planned.

“Our expectation is that Wesley Place will provide a new centre for us to be able to continue the momentum of the Uniting Church.”



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