An Event Recap of 2022 KNC Ministry Retreat

Rev. Seung Jae Yeon (Korean National Conference Chair)

"… the KNC retreat worked as a *sarangbang* (a guest room),
where everyone is freely invited to chat and laugh with one another."

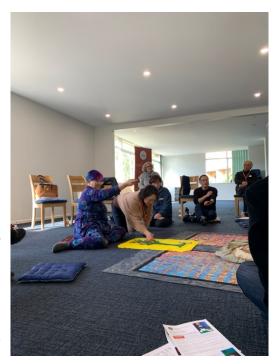Rev. Kevin Kim (Trinity Brighton UC, VICTAS)

The Korean National Conference Ministry Retreat was held at Mount Carmel Retreat Centre in Varroville, New South Wales, from 11 to 13 July 2022. The retreat, which was attended by 21 ordained ministers of KNC and Rev. Sharon Hollis, President of the Uniting Church in Australia, was a meaningful reminder of the importance of being the Church and co-operation to all participants who have been going through the COVID-19 period. All attendees re-affirmed through holy sacrament prior to the start of the retreat that all Korean members and ministers of the Uniting Church are one in the Holy Spirit, even though we are separated from each other (based on Colossians 2:5-7). During the retreat a total of three communions was held and Rev. Mike You (Endeavour Hill UC, VICTAS) officiated the second one, emphasizing the biblical meaning of the sacrament and the importance of the mindset of those who participate.

Rev. Sharon Hollis, President of the Uniting Church, introduced the various activities and future directions that the 16th Assembly is working and implementing. Among them, she introduced the Assembly Circles (Being a Multicultural Church, Discipling the Next Generations, Growing in Faith, Seeking Common Ground, Transforming Worship, Walking Together as First and Second Peoples, Working For Justice) that are active in the Uniting Church and encouraged KNC members to participate. The President then introduced the *Act2* project, which is an opportunity for the Uniting Church to think about how it can operate its church more effectively today and in future days and support the pastoral and missional activities that each church is involved. Through a question-and-answer session between the President and the attendees, we were able to share the concerns and hear the word of encouragement. Rev. David Dong Won Kim (Morningside UC, Queensland) was interpreting the conversation with the President, recalling that "President's presentation was informative in terms of explaining the *Assembly Circles* where KNC members could join in order to share, learn and collaborate for the ministry and mission of the church. And her gestures and encouragement towards KNC were well accepted."

On second day, Rev. Amelia Koh-Butler (Eastwood UC, NSWACT) presented 3 biblical stories in 'godly play' ('The Ten Commandments between God and the Israelites', 'the parable of the Mustard Seed', and 'Jesus is the Shepherd') and provided an opportunity for attendees to wonder rather than to answer. Rev. Sunny Lee (Warnervale UC, NSWACT) highlighted, saying, "It was meaningful and inspiring as we explore the more transformative worship in terms of not just verbal, but also visual and bodily communicative way of presentation." The Bible stories told by Amelia showed the interaction of language and culture, and had a message of the reality and hope in the immigration experiences of the 1st and 2nd generation of immigration. She said, "I was impressed by the humility and genuine spiritual seeking that characterised every conversation."

The following were the discussions and debates of the members of KNC during this retreat: In 2023, the KNC National Conference, the Assembly and Retreat will be held in Melbourne, and the Executive and ministers in VICTAS will work together to determine the date and place to advertise to members. The 'Intercultural Neighbouring Sunday', proposed by Rev. Paul Goh (South Australia Synod CALD Officer) and resolved by the 16th Assembly, will be observed in each member church on July 16, 2023, and the worship resources will be produced and distributed. There was a discussion about the tenure of ministers of the Korean Congregation. Although KNC could not conclude this matter, it was an opportunity to hear the voices of the

Korean immigrant church ministers. In addition, several members agreed with the importance of networking being created and maintained among KNC ministers, and also agreed that it was necessary for leaders to meet as often as possible to share stories on the pastoral concerns. Finally, in response to the need to sort out a brief history of KNC and the KNC bylaws, it was decided that the Executive would issue a bylaw at the 2023 Conference and Assembly. Kevin said, "This year's KNC retreat looked hopeful with all the discussions and debates of the participants who search for the prophetic role of the KNC to make their Uniting Church to be a truly cross/inter-cultural church in the 21st century Australia."

On the last night, the attendees gathered to pray together "tongsung kido"(a unique Korean way of praying together out loud), affirming each other's life and service of mission and ministry, and common vision within the Uniting Church in Australia. Paul said that there was a lot of grace and touching moments during the prayer session. "Although we speak same language, we are sharing bit different stories but interweaving together God's story of forming and building a multicultural fellowship of reconciliation in the unity of the Holy Spirit as co-pilgrims on the way to the promised end."

Since being recognized in 2012 by the 13th Assembly, the Korean National Conference has focused on Korean ministers who are active in the Uniting Church, providing resources related to the Uniting Church for Korean churches and Korean members of local churches. Currently, KNC has 88 Ministers (including retired ministers and ministry candidates), a total of 28 Korean churches nationwide, and 44 ministers in English-speaking placement. The incumbent Executive serving KNC includes the Chair Rev. Seung Jae Yeon (Boronia Park UC, NSWACT), the Secretary Rev. Gil Young Park (Maroochydore Korean Faith Community, Queensland), the Treasurer Rev. Kum Ran Chung (Sydney The Lord's Church, NSWACT), and 1 representative from each synod as contact person.