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*Community Connections* is a monthly email which contains news and announcements from the New South Wales Synod, along with items of social, religious or cultural interest and information on upcoming events. Its primary aim is to promote the wider work of the Uniting Church, and how you can support it through the Living is Giving program.

To keep *Community Connections* of interest to the widest possible readership, we welcome for consideration news and information about initiatives, events and activities from all parts of the Synod. Regional contributions, and stories of how your congregation supports Living is Giving, are especially welcome. Send your material (maximum 150 words) to [emmah@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:emmah@nsw.uca.org.au).

## NEWS AND INITIATIVES

### **Come to Canterbury for the Synod meeting**

Come to Canterbury Park Race Course from Saturday September 27 to Tuesday September 30 for the meeting of the New South Wales Synod. All Uniting Church people from New South Wales and the ACT are welcome to attend the opening service, interactive and plenary sessions.

The theme chosen by the Moderator for this year is "Inclusive".

Mark your diaries now and watch *Insights* for further updates.

You can also visit <http://nsw.uca.org.au/synod2008/> for more information.

### **Why don't we all embrace stewardship?**

That's the question at the heart of this month's stewardship feature in *Insights* which shows that Christians have a responsibility to maintain and use wisely the gifts God gives us. These gifts include time, talents, material possessions, wealth and the environment, for the service of God. Pick up a copy of April *Insights* in your congregation to read more.

### **Ecumenical worship services for children with disabilities and their families and carers**

WorshAbility is a new venture aimed at developing a safe, supportive environment for ecumenical worship for children with disabilities and their families and carers. It's hoped that children will have a space to be themselves and express themselves through music, craft and other activities that are sympathetic to their abilities. The venture is supported by Parramatta Nepean Presbytery. Worship will be held at Blacktown Uniting Church on June 1, August 3 and November 2 at 2.30 pm.

For more information, or to get involved in the planning of the services, visit

<http://nsw.uca.org.au/e-news/worshAbility-April-2008.pdf>, contact Sue Scott, 0425 360 826, Christine Bayliss-Kelly, 0409 925 607, or email [WorshAbility@gmail.com](mailto:WorshAbility@gmail.com).

### **Synod name change**

At the request of the New South Wales Synod, the Uniting Church's national Assembly Standing Committee on March 29 changed the name of the Synod to The Synod of New South Wales and the ACT. Following the Synod Standing Committee, which met on April 4 to 5, the General Secretary's Newsletter will officially inform presbyteries and congregations of this change.

### **National CLOSETHEGAP Day, Tuesday April 22**

National Close the Gap Day gives Australians the opportunity to come together and show their support for closing the 17-year life expectancy gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders and other Australians.

You can show your support by organising a small-scale event on or around April 22. Oxfam Australia will supply you with everything you need, from videos to posters to wristbands, to run an event. For more information, or other ways to get involved, visit <http://www.oxfam.org.au/events/close-the-gap-day/>.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### **SOULINTHECITY – free evening sessions**

7 pm, April 15 to 19 at Exhibition Park in Canberra. You are invited to free evening sessions of worship, teaching and prayer ministry at SOULINTHECITY in Canberra. Speakers include Mike Pilavachi (Soul Survivor Global), Matt Gelding (Soul Survivor NSW/ACT) and Tim Costello (CEO World Vision). Visit [www.soulinthecity.org.au](http://www.soulinthecity.org.au).

### **A Sho'ah memorial service, May 6**

The NSW Council of Christians and Jews is privileged to invite members of the Sydney community of all denominations to attend its annual Holocaust Commemoration in memory of the Sho'ah's Jewish Suffering – often seen as a paradigm for the suffering of others.

The service will be held in the crypt of St. Mary's Cathedral on Tuesday May 6 at 6 pm.

Further information can be obtained from Sr. Marianne Dacy NDS, [dacymarianne@yahoo.com.au](mailto:dacymarianne@yahoo.com.au).

### **A moral climate? Faith encounters global warming, May 6**

Tuesday May 6, Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta

Michael Northcott, Professor of Ethics in the Faculty of Divinity, Edinburgh University, has completed a large-scale study on faith and climate change, in which an awareness of what is happening to climate around the globe and its implications for life in particular places is brought together with a deep knowledge of ethics and the Christian biblical and theological traditions.

There will be a number of workshops on ecopraxis, climate justice, interfaith perspectives, ecotheology and case studies.

Website: <http://www.utc.edu.au>. Registrations: [events@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:events@nsw.uca.org.au)

### **Wanted: Singers interested in recording a live album of hymns, May 10**

The hymns are old favourites, well-remembered and cherished.

The music has been pre-recorded, and is available to all interested in participating. Come along and enjoy an afternoon of roof-raising hymn singing in the traditional style.

The recording will be held at Weston Creek Uniting Church in the ACT on Saturday May 10 from 12.00 pm to 5.00 pm. For more information, call David Miles on (02) 6373 4363.

### **Service of Remembrance and Reflection – Organ Donation, May 31**

LifeGift, which provides organ donation services in New South Wales and is part of the Australian Red Cross Blood Service, will hold a Service of Remembrance and Reflection for those touched by Organ and Tissue Donation and Transplantation on Saturday May 31 at 2 pm at the Wesley Centre, 220 Pitt Street Sydney 2000. For more information, please call Alison Barnwell, Coordinator of Bereavement Services on (02) 9229 4463. To register for organ donation, call 1800 777 203, visit [www.organdonor.com.au](http://www.organdonor.com.au) or contact the RTA to renew your drivers' licence details, then tell your family of your decision.

## LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

### **Living is Giving presentations in congregations**

Would you like to motivate your congregation in its financial stewardship and learn more about Living is Giving? Speakers are available to visit congregations to talk about Living is Giving and stewardship – whether at a Sunday service, a congregational meeting, a small meeting with key leaders from the congregation, or in another appropriate setting. Please contact Emma on (02) 8267 4475 or [emmah@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:emmah@nsw.uca.org.au) if you'd like to arrange for a speaker to come to your congregation.

### **Prayer point: Mission focus area 10 – Bringing Christ's hope to rural and remote areas**

Ross Neville, Rural Consultant for Evangelism and Mission Board of Mission, asks for prayer for:

- The farming community. The summer rains have been erratic and sometimes in excess, causing flooding, death of fish in some rivers, mould, fencing soil or stock losses.
- The Synod as it processes the possibility of employing additional chaplains to help in rural areas, and for the people who have already made themselves available to offer ministry and help in the rural areas.
- The Western Commission / Darling Presbytery and Frontier Services as they meet to determine the future of ministry in the western part of New South Wales.
- The lay leadership and ministry training that is happening this year.

For news on this mission focus area, visit

<http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/updates/april08updates/updates04-08mfa10.pdf>.