


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

 Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, Uniting Church in Australia

e-news September 2008

To read this newsletter online, visit <http://nsw.uca.org.au/e-news>



Community Connections is a monthly email which contains news and announcements from the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, 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.

NEWS AND INITIATIVES

From the Moderator: the God-dynamic in our lives

In September *Insights*, the Moderator Rev. Niall Reid reflects on the God-dynamic in our lives and the way in which we experience the activity of God in the life of the church.

"I do not believe that experiencing the presence of God in the events of our lives is to be understood as God controlling or manipulating every detail of life," he writes.

"Rather, it is as we experience God or allow space for God in the events of our lives that things happen." Read more in your copy of September *Insights*.

Called to be inclusive – Synod 2008, September 27 to 30

Up to 500 people will gather in worship at Synod 2008. From that worship will flow decisions about the work of our Uniting Church. Interested people (not just Synod members!) are invited to attend the opening prayers, interactive sessions, most plenary sessions and associated events. All sessions are at Canterbury Park Race Course. Please pray for Synod in your congregations. You can find more information, including a prayer, in September *Insights* and at <http://nsw.uca.org.au/synod2008/>.

Synod Fund Annual Report

The Synod's annual report for 2008 will be mailed to congregations at the end of the month. The report echoes the Synod meeting's theme of inclusiveness and emphasises the way Uniting Church gatherings of God's people nurture those within them but also welcome others. The report outlines the extensive work of the Synod and how congregational contributions to Living is Giving and the Synod Fund have enabled this work to happen.

Extra copies of the report are available by calling 8267 4307 and an online version will appear at <http://nsw.uca.org.au> along with summary reports in Korean and Tongan.

New UnitingJustice website

UnitingJustice Australia is pleased to announce the launch of its new website, www.unitingjustice.org.au.

The new site has comprehensive information on UnitingJustice's work, including a variety of resources such as fact sheets and longer discussion papers, media releases, submissions to government inquiries and annotated links pages. The website will be constantly updated with news, resources and information from UnitingJustice and around the church.

Uniting Church joins network on climate change

The Uniting Church has joined the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), a multi-faith network committed to taking action on this pressing issue. The ARRCC believes Australia's faith communities can help provide the moral, ethical and spiritual impetus for addressing climate change. Visit <http://www.arrcc.org.au/>.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

President's Table, September 12 and October 10

The Rev. Gregor Henderson, President of the national Assembly, will be speaking at gatherings of the President's Table in the next two months. All are invited to attend.

Details of these gatherings are: Friday September 12, Murrumbateman Uniting Church, Barton Highway, Murrumbateman, 6.30 for 7 pm.

Friday October 10, Yarralumla Uniting Church, Denman Street, Yarralumla, 6.30 for 7 pm (two course meal with non-alcoholic drinks).

Cost for each gathering \$15 per person. Please pay by cash on your arrival at the gathering.

For more information, please contact Alistair Christie, (02) 6288 6843 or ac.36@bigpond.com.

"If not religion ... What?" September 18

Dr Nigel Leaves, Director and Dean of Studies at Wollaston Theological College and Conference Centre in Perth, will explore what it means to be religious in the light of recent criticisms from scientists and those engaged in the spirituality revolution. What kind of religion will emerge that is both honest to our present understanding of the cosmos and the spiritual search of humankind?

Where: St James Church Centre, 40 Gillies St, Curtin. When: 7.45 pm, September 18. Entry: \$5.00 (members); \$8.00 (friends/guests).

Contact and bookings: Rex Hunt, rexae@optusnet.com.au or 6281 7419.

Presented by the Centre for Progressive Religious Thought Canberra.

Christians Singing in the First Millennium, September 20

With Dr Marie Therese Levey rsj; sponsored by the Royal School of Church Music NSW.

When: 1.30 to 4 pm, Saturday September 20. Where: The Province Centre, 5 Alexandra Avenue, Croydon. Marie Levey is a musicologist with special interest in Gregorian Chant and liturgical music (see www.gchants.org.au).

In the course of her research over many years she has compiled a collection of facsimiles of Christian writings and liturgical books, including books for singers. Each has its own special story. These stories will be shared at the workshop by conversation, slide projection, singing, and listening to recordings. The cost of the afternoon is \$20 for members of the RSCM (including member choirs), and \$25 for non-members. Afternoon tea is included in the cost.

For more information, call (02) 8741 2341 or email jasporsyth@tech2u.com.au.

Korean Diaspora Symposium, October 14-15

Topic: "50 Year of Koreans in Australia — the history and its meaning"

Speakers: Dr Gil-Soo Han, Monash University; Dr James Coughlan, James Cook University; the Rev. Kil Bock Hong, Sydney Woori Church. When: October 14 to 15. Where: Centre for Ministry auditorium, 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta, 2151. Host: PaCT and the Association of Asian–Australian Theology and Ministry (Joint Program of UTC and Korean Commission). Registration: Free but make a booking by contacting Dr Myong Duk Yang on (02) 8838 8905.

LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

New Living is Giving Powerpoint presentation

The new Living is Giving Powerpoint presentation, highlighting the 2008–09 mission focus areas, is now available online at <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/resources.htm>. You can play the slides that relate to your congregation's mission focus areas at the beginning of worship, or play the whole presentation as part of a service on giving and stewardship.

Prayer point: Mission focus area 7 — Evangelism and sharing faith

The Uniting Church balances a commitment to evangelism with a desire for positive and respectful relationships with people of other faiths. Assembly President, the Rev. Gregor Henderson, has strongly affirmed congregational efforts to engage in evangelism.

"We all know there are millions of Australians who have no religious faith whatsoever and there are more millions of Australians whose Christianity is nominal, who have no connection with any local church," Mr Henderson said.

"Congregations are to be congratulated where they are reaching out in witness and service to spread the gospel and call people to faith in Christ."

- Pray for the Jesus All About Life campaign (see www.jesusallaboutlife.com.au), which the Uniting Church is supporting. The campaign aims to motivate Christians to share their faith.
- Pray for Uniting Church programs like the Jesus Conversations and U Turn which are encouraging Uniting Church people to share faith in new and interesting ways with people in the communities around them. See www.nsw.uca.org.au/bom for more information.