

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

e-news April 2009

Welcome to *Community Connections*.

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 kima@nsw.uca.org.au.

Click [here](#) for *Community Connections* in a PDF that you can print off and distribute, or email to others in your congregation and community (requires Adobe Acrobat reader — click [here](#) to download).

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NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Message from the Moderator:

As Christians and as a church we seem to have a very big “but”: “I believe in grace but (here insert whatever grievance, experience, person that makes grace impossible in this circumstance).”

Easter is what it is all about for a Christian. It is the canvas on which the depth of grace, the astounding image of God has been portrayed; the image of what things look like if we are people living in the way of Jesus. [READ ON](#)

Easter in Australia

What makes an Aussie Easter? What memories do you have of Australian Easter rituals? In April *Insights* Patricia Hayward take a look at how people in Australia approach what, she says, is meant to be the biggest celebration of the church year. [READ ON](#)

Let's honour our volunteer heroes

People in the Uniting Church in this Synod give thousands of voluntary hours each week in community service, social justice and welfare activities — with an amazing 37 per cent involved in church-based service activities. In order to honour some of these wonderful people in an upcoming feature, *Insights* wants to hear about the church's volunteer heroes — male and female. We know the heroes themselves may be shy about the good work they do. So it's up to you to tell us about their vital contribution.

Go to www.insights.uca.org.au to fill in our online form [click on the *Insights'* Volunteer Hero banner ad at the top of the page to access the form]. Or post 150 words, a clear photo of the person, your congregation name and contact details to *Insights'* Volunteer Heroes, PO Box A2178, Sydney South 1235. The most outstanding Volunteer Hero stories will feature in *Insights* magazine. And all the Volunteer Heroes will have their names listed on the *Insights* website.

UnitingCare recognised as top employer for women

UnitingCare was delighted to accept the award for EOWA or an Employer of Choice for Women. UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families was given the honours on March 18, 2009 to the delight of the leading NSW child and family welfare agency. The welfare agency employs over 620 staff in which more than 75 percent of whom are female. Women-friendly policies include flexible work practices that build work and family balance and opportunities for promotion

within the organisation. The organisation also has a predominantly female management team.

Director Jane Woodruff, who is also a former Director of the NSW Women's Coordination Unit, is thrilled that UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families has been recognised as a great place for women to work. "As an organisation deeply committed to social justice and the wellbeing of NSW children, young people and families, we are extraordinarily proud of this recognition of our support of working women," Ms Woodruff said.

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Socially responsible spending

This article suggests ideas on how to spend your Economic Stimulus Package \$900 in a way that adds to the economy in a socially-responsible or ethical way. Many Australians will use their stimulus payment to reduce their credit card bill or other debts, and this is an absolutely compelling and valid use of the payment. However, for others the temptation will be to snap up a new flat-screen TV or latest fashionable outfit. [READ ON](#)

Church Leaders hot under the collar about Fairtrade

This Easter, prominent Christian leaders are asking Australians to support Fairtrade and prevent the exploitation and enslavement of children and adults who pick cocoa beans for Easter eggs. Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania the Rev. Jason Kioa, said "now that I know some children are exploited picking cocoa beans, I may choke on a chocolate egg that is not Fairtrade." [READ ON](#)

UnitingCare expresses concerns to Senate's aged care inquiry

UnitingCare Australia, one of Australia's biggest aged care providers told the Senate's aged care inquiry that without "substantive positive funding reform" it would have to withdraw from the provision of residential aged care. UnitingCare Australia told a Senate committee hearing earlier this month that the sector needed greater investment. [READ ON](#)

Pricing carbon: where morality meets economics

No one much likes the Government's Carbon Pollution Reduction Scheme (CPRS). If we believe other critics, it is so flawed and toothless that we'd be better off with nothing. And this is dangerous. The Uniting Church shares the concerns of those who believe that the current emission reduction targets for Australia for 2020 are too low. The best scientific evidence available shows that the government's emissions reductions targets of 5-15 per cent will be drastically ineffective in avoiding dangerous climate change. [READ ON](#)

Easter: Alive in Tamworth

Australia 's only touring Easter Passion Play will perform in Tamworth on April 4 and 5 in the Tamworth Town Hall. [READ ON](#)

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Uniting Minister appointed first female NCCA General Secretary

The Reverend Tara Curlewis, an ordained Minister in the Uniting Church, has been appointed the first female General Secretary of the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). Tara is the 3rd General Secretary of the NCCA, taking over the role from Rev John Henderson, Principal of the Australian Lutheran College.

[READ ON](#)

Website focuses on 2010 gathering

The Uniting General Council of the World Communion of Reformed Churches has launched a new website that focuses on the activities that will occur before, during and after the creation of new Reformed church body that will represent some 75 million Christians around the world. The website —

<http://www.reformedchurches.org> — will permit churches and interested individuals to access information about the historic gathering set for June 18-28, 2010 at Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Mich. [READ ON](#)

Help the church support those in need

Uniting Financial Services delivers a large proportion of the funding with which the church conducts its mission and service and supports families and communities in need. Click [here](#) to read more about Uniting Financial Services and how investing with UFS supports the work of the church.

7th International Dialogue Australasia Network Conference

Relations between Christians, Jews and Muslims are among the most divisive, challenging and important issues in the world today. Despite their often violent differences, each share a common heritage as the Children of Abraham and the worship of one God. In a time when understanding these three religions has taken on a new and critical urgency, this important conference will equip educators with practical strategies and resources to enable students to explore the similarities, differences and relationships between the Abrahamic faith traditions. Titled "Teaching the Abrahamic Religions: Christianity in Dialogue with Judaism & Islam" the conference will be held on April 15-17 2009 at Old Parliament House, Canberra.

Delegates will receive a DVD containing PowerPoints, teaching notes and video resources. See [here](#) for more information.

Community living: Residential mission internship

The Wayside Chapel is now accepting 'Expressions of Interest' from people who may like to participate in a Wayside 'Residential Mission Internship'.

The Wayside is hoping to find a group of young people who are willing to spend a year living and working amongst the poor and disadvantaged in inner city Sydney, whilst living together under the principles of 'Hospitality, Simplicity, Generosity, Creativity, and Social Justice'.

For more information please contact [Beres Jackson](#) on 9358 5582 or please forward this to anyone who might be interested.

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EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

12th Assembly visitors' program

The 12th Assembly of the Uniting Church has designed a visitors' program that will showcase the many faces and moods of Sydney, while taking visitors on a spiritual tour of the city.

There will be space for conversations and other experiences in addition to the chance to sit in and listen to the discussions, reports and various special aspects of the meeting.

There will be the opportunity to meet with special visitors from overseas churches, question and answer times with the President and General Secretary, plus various other people in key roles in the life of the church. July 15-21, visitors will have an opportunity to visit the legendary Wayside Chapel in Kings Cross, friend to some of Sydney's most disadvantaged people; explore the multiculturalism of the Uniting Church via a Cabramatta day tour; and visit the Chapel-by-the-Sea at iconic Bondi Beach. The program will also give visitors tips on independent sightseeing. The Living Water Thirsty Land Visitors' Program is available on the 12th Assembly website: <http://www.assembly2009.uca.org.au/>.

Easter Mission 2009

Wesley Mission will once again mark this pinnacle point in the Christian calendar by hosting a string of events during Holy Week. The Rev. Keith Garner will deliver the message of "a new beginning" through a series of four sermons during Holy Week and the lead-up to Easter. Each message will look at the issue of forgiveness and how through the love of God we are given a new beginning. The messages will be delivered on the TV program, Rise and Shine, and at the Easter luncheon, breakfast and Wesley Mission services. Further information about the upcoming Easter events are available on www.wesleymission.org.au/easter

Ciaron O'Reilly: ELM Centre and the Wayside Chapel May 12 and May 14

Irish Australian peace activist [Ciaron O'Reilly](#) is to give the 2009 May Macleod Lecture: "Faith and Resistance in a Time of Neverending War". The lecture,

hosted by the ELM Centre, will be held at the Centre for Ministry, North Parramatta, May 12 at 8 pm. [READ ON](#)

Ciaran O'Reilly is a member of the pacifist [Catholic Worker Movement](#), the author of *Remembering Forgetting: A Journey of Nonviolent Resistance to the War on East Timor* and is working with the Dublin catholic worker community. See his weblog [here](#) and register for the May Macleod Lecture [here](#).

Or if you miss the May Macleod lecture, catch Ciaran at The Wayside Chapel where he will also speak about his radical form of peace activism, and to answer questions about non-violence, activism, and other experiences. The event is held on Thursday, May 14 at 6:30pm, 'The Wayside Chapel' 29 Hughes St, Kings Cross. To RSVP or request additional info for any of the events please contact [Beres Jackson](#) on 9358 5582 or

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Between the Monster and the Saint: Bishop Holloway presentation, May 20

Bishop Holloway is a well known writer and broadcaster in the UK who will be presenting at the Centre for Progressive Religious Thought titled "Between the Monster and the Saint". He is also a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh and Professor of Divinity at Gresham College, London. For entry fee of \$5 you can catch him at St James Church Centre, 40 Gillies Street, Curtin, 10.30am, Wednesday May 20.

Workshop on Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers, May 8

Presented by Roger McFarlane from Volunteering ACT this workshop will provide information for community sector workers who are interested in strategies that contribute to the recruitment and retention of volunteers. The workshop will be held at 9.30am-4.30pm, Friday 8 May 2009 at the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Cultural Centre, Lady Denman Drive, Yarramundi Reach & Times: , 9.30am - 4.30pm. Cost: Members \$50; Non-Members \$66; Persons receiving HACC services \$33. To register, please download registration form from <http://www.actcoss.org.au/flyer/RecruitVolunteersMay09.pdf>

LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

Living is Giving 2009 Updates due to arrive at a congregation near you

Check your Living is Giving Updates when they arrive this month. Living is Giving Updates exist to keep congregations informed about the different mission focus areas they have supported throughout the year.

Make sure you read about your congregation's selected mission focus areas to learn about the wonderful things happening in the Uniting Church thanks to your financial and prayerful support.

For more information, visit the website <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/> or contact Kimberly Almarza, Missions Promotions Officer on (02) 8267 4475 or kima@nsw.uca.org.au.

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. Depending on the mission focus areas your congregation supports, we can also arrange for a speaker from that area of ministry to visit your congregation and talk about their work, and how your congregation is supporting it.

Please contact Kimberly on (02) 8267 4475 or kima@nsw.uca.org.au if you'd like to arrange for a speaker to come to your congregation.

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Prayer point: Mission focus area

Pray and give thanks for:

- African Ministry Gathering which is the first gathering of African people in the Synod, hosted by Blacktown UC and the Cross-cultural Ministry of Board of Mission. 15 August 10am – 2:30pm (Centre for Ministry).

The purpose of gathering is for fellowship, to network and explore orientation into the UCA. The Moderator and other leaders of the church will welcome the African Ministry. Contact: Myong Yang at Board of Mission.

- Spreading the gospel message to the wider Australian community through the *Jesus. All about life* (JAAL) media campaign.

JAAL has run successfully across a few states including; Tasmania where a total of 208 churches registered to participate; Adelaide saw an estimated 75,000 people attend a JAAL event; and in Canberra an estimated 22,000 people attend a JAAL event.

Let's pray that JAAL gathers enough support to make a significant impact across NSW in September 2009.

To find out more about Living is Giving visit <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au>.

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Studying journalism, graphic design or communications and would like to offer your skills to *Insights*? Go to <http://nsw.uca.org.au/cu/internships.htm> to learn how. Don't forget about the [Moderator's Drought Appeal](#). Your donation will help provide counselling, chaplaincy services and emergency relief to drought-affected people.

CONTACT US: cu@nsw.uca.org.au

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