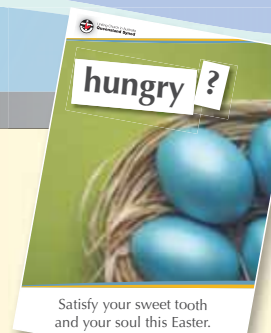


NCYC WRAP UP PAGE 5

"NCYC is more than just singing songs and meeting new friends. It is about living out faith in practical ways." **Ms Julie Gozali**

EASTER POSTCARDS PAGE 11

"So many of our churches were a place of refuge during the recent floods. It would be great if these cards helped congregations keep in touch with people they supported and those who helped." **Ms Mardi Lumsden**



BURDEKIN'S BAG MAN - P4

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PRAYER DIARY - P14

TIDES AND OFFERINGS

By Mardi Lumsden

THE ENORMOUS clean up is well under way in Central and South-East Queensland and the Downs Presbytery after the region experienced the worst flooding in 30 years.

Thousands of volunteers have turned out to scrape mud off flood affected properties. Volunteers also fed those cleaning.

Despite tragedy communities have banded together on the long road to recovery.

Downs Presbytery Minister Sharon Kirk said some places will find that harder than others.

"Our communities will put themselves back together again, but they will never be the same."

As lines of communication reopen, the human cost of this tragic event is coming to light. It is in this area that perhaps the churches will need to assist their communities most.

The Crows Nest congregation, north of Toowoomba, is grieving the deaths of two of its members.

The St. Stephen's congregation in Toowoomba is grieving the death of one member.

A number of ministry agents have been sent to the Lockyer region and South-East Queensland to assist in community recovery and to support local congregations.

Lifeline Community Care Queensland has also sent counselling staff to grieving communities.

UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross said 95 staff had been sent to flood affected communities throughout the state to provide psychological first aid.

To date the Lifeline Flood Appeal has raised over \$340,000 for their Community Recovery Program which is designed to provide support to individuals and communities affected by disasters or other significant

events. The program aims to make an immediate impact on the trauma and stress experienced by communities through counselling, as well as spearheading longer term recovery through a coordinated approach to rebuilding or re-establishing key community networks and support structures.

The Wesley Hospital in Auchenflower, Brisbane, continued to care for patients and staff while being virtually inaccessible for four days, with only pedestrian access via a local railway station.

By noon on Thursday 27 January, the Queensland Synod was aware of 82 Uniting Church properties that have been damaged due to floods. The properties are located throughout the State

from Central Queensland to the South-East corner.

Uniting Church property and insurance officers said the damage has been from flooding which started just after Christmas and has continued in other parts of the State until early January.

Affected properties include: 6 Lifeline retail stores and 4 Lifeline properties; 6 Wesley Mission Brisbane premises including a commercial kitchen at Moorooka and a social enterprise at Rocklea; 48 Blue Care facilities; 7 Uniting Church congregation properties including churches, halls and manses; 5 hospital properties and enterprises; and damage to a youth centre, 2 university colleges and one of our schools.

Continued P.7

Being the body of Christ

WHERE WILL the hope come from?

We are currently faced with the greatest natural disaster that Queensland has ever faced.

The loss of life, destruction of property, farming and grazing land, the inundation of homes and businesses has destroyed many dreams, livelihoods and shattered families.

How we respond to this event is a major challenge to all of us.

It is a major challenge to the Christian church.

Many have looked to us to help them make sense of this experience.

I want to congratulate all who have given themselves energetically and generously to assist those who have been most seriously affected.

Soon many will ask the question, "Why did God let this happen?" assuming that if they had the answer they would find some hope.

I give you permission to refuse to answer that question.

Even if we knew why it happened, the mud would still be

there; people would still have lost their loved ones, homes, valuable possessions and businesses.

Answering "why?" is not as helpful as people imagine.

Christians usually come up with terrible answers to this question.

There are some such answers doing the rounds on the internet at the moment which are not only embarrassing for Christians, but will only add to the pain and confusion felt by so many.

I learnt very early in my ministry that even if we could answer the question "why?"

Even if we knew why it happened, the mud would still be there.

it would not be of any help to grieving people.

We live in a culture that believes that if we have the answers it somehow makes things better. That is not true.

When people ask "why?" they usually really want to know how

they can cope with such an event or where they can find hope.

Psalm 121 says: "I lift up my eyes to the hills – from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Our hope comes from God, but that hope will need to be made present in our communities.

As Christians we believe that God has been made known to us in the person of Jesus, God incarnate; God with us.

In the face of grief and suffering Jesus did not try to answer "why?" – rather he simply was present with those who felt the pain and injustice of human living.

As Christians, the body of Christ, we are simply called to be collective reminders of the presence of Christ.

That is why I spent a day mucking out a stranger's house.

Heather, Helen and I spent several hours carrying out filthy stuff from a family's home and washing out one room.

At the end of the day it seemed so little.

Message from the Moderator

Rev Bruce Johnson



It seemed insignificant in the scheme of the mess and destruction we saw around us.

There was still a tremendous amount that needed to be done if the family was to be able to move back into that house.

I don't know whose house it was.

They didn't know who we were, but hopefully we helped to be the presence of Christ in that home and street.

I know that many of you have mucked out homes and businesses, provided food and sustenance, offered shelter, listened to the pain and despair, and prayed.

Together you have been the body of Christ.

Continue to be like Christ.

Weep with people, lament with people, be angry at God with people, stand alongside and help people where you can.

Speak words of encouragement and hope.

I want to remind you that God is with you; the whole Christian church is with you.

We have heard from the United Church in Solomon Islands, the United Church of PNG, the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the Protestant Church in East Timor, the GKI West Java Synod, the Church of North India and a Methodist Church in the United States.

We have received expressions of support from other synods and the Assembly.

These greetings, financial contributions and practical help are reminders of God's presence.

Our hope is found in God and expressed tangibly through God's people; those who know God personally as well as those who may not even be aware that God is using them.

Let us continue to live as the body of Christ and in all we do and say become reminders that God is present among us.

Living in the lucky country

"IT'S JUST like a war zone."

That was the comment I kept hearing from people in the aftermath of the Queensland floods.

If this is the most confronting, terrifying natural disaster to happen in Queensland in our lifetime we are very lucky.

Driving through flood-ravaged Fairfield and Moggill (in Brisbane) it was hard to comprehend how high the water rose.

The mud-covered gum trees gave a glimpse of the river's peak.

In towns in the Lockyer Valley and Central Queensland, where floods have taken the lives of people, countless livestock and destroyed farming crops, I can only imagine the devastation.

Yes, this was a horrible event.

But a war zone it is not.

There were no gun shots fired at people seeking evacuation.

Neighbours met neighbours for the first time; strangers helped clean family heirlooms; friends grieved together.

Churches became places

of refuge, focal points of the communities they serve (with no sermons in sight).

By the time news of Brisbane's floods consumed worldwide media reports, parts of Queensland had been under water for weeks.

Some towns had also been without power since just after Christmas.

Towns in almost every other state in the country were also cut off by floods.

Floods and landslides in Brazil have killed upward of 700 people (with hundreds still missing) and floods in Sri Lanka have left a million people in need of shelter, food and medical supplies.

There is no doubt that the floods of December 2010 and January 2011 will go down as some of the worst in Queensland's history.

Last December we decided the theme for this edition would be optimism and new beginnings.

I think it is important to continue looking for new

beginnings in the face of disaster and to remember that, on the whole, we really do live in the lucky country. I also want to remind people about the Synod photographic competition.

Trawling our Facebook page at the amazing photos of these floods has reminded me of the great photographic talent in our church.

The competition aims to creatively explore the Church's Call – Uniting in Christ: acting with love; living with hope; witnessing in faith; working for justice.

There are so many examples of people living out that Call at the moment. Let's capture it and celebrate it!

To enter visit www.ucaqld.com.au or <http://journeyonline.com.au/photographicCompetition>

Mardi Lumsden
Editor

Sign of the times



Photo by Smaraki Samantaroy



Sign of the Times is sponsored by Blackstar Coffee. The chosen entry will be contacted by Blackstar to receive their prize of freshly roasted organic fairtrade coffee. www.blackstarcoffee.com.au.

Easter postcards satisfy need

IT MAY feel like we just celebrated Christmas but it is time to start preparations for Easter.

This year the Synod Communication Services Unit will provide Easter postcards for congregations to invite members of their community to their Easter events and services.

The 2011 Easter postcard theme is: "Hungry? Satisfy your sweet tooth and your soul this Easter."

The back of the card will have a space for congregations to put their service and event times.

Communication Services Unit manager, Mardi Lumsden, said this campaign once again invites people to connect or reconnect with their local Uniting Church.

"So many of our churches were a place of refuge during the recent floods. It would be great if these cards helped congregations keep in touch with people they supported and those who helped," she said.

This partnership with congregations produces high-quality, low-cost resources for Easter outreach in local communities.

Once again churches from all over Australia will be using the Queensland Synod's Easter postcards.

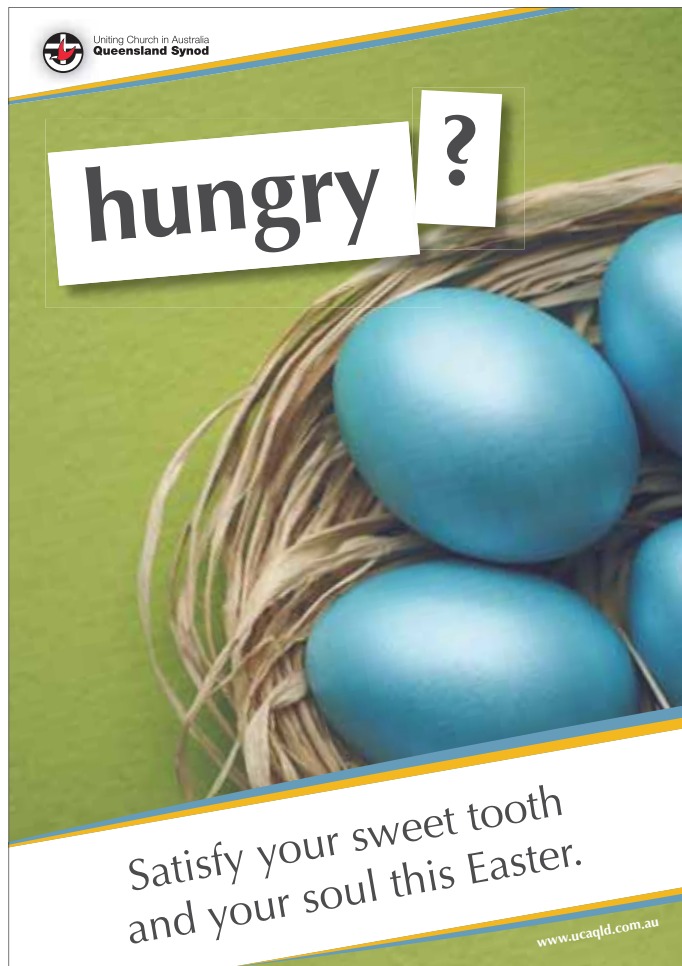
Congregations can also sign up to a special section on the synod website (www.ucaqlld.com.au) which will list Easter service times around the state and provide information about church locations.

Congregations that do not participate in the Easter campaign can still have their information added to this page.

A starter pack with 3000 postcards and 10 full colour A3 posters is \$165 (includes packing and postage to your congregation).

Additional postcards are available at \$130 for 3000 (minimum lot) and posters at \$10 for packs of 10.

Online registrations for the Easter campaign will be open from Tuesday 1 February and close on Monday 21



Uniting Church in Australia
Queensland Synod

hungry?

Satisfy your sweet tooth and your soul this Easter.

www.ucaqlld.com.au

February. Final approval of proofs will be needed by Friday 25 February.

For more information or to register visit www.ucaqlld.com.au/Easter2011



Commonwealth asks for prayer

THE UNITING Church has been asked to be part of Project 54; the Commonwealth prayer initiative.

In October this year Perth will host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

The West Australian Council of

Churches has asked all churches to pray for and during the event.

The initiative came, in part, as a response to West Australian Premier Colin Barnett's (pictured left) request for "the community to get right behind CHOGM".

According to organisers,

churches in many nations throughout and beyond the Commonwealth have agreed to join in, praying for a safe and successful meeting.

Churches were organised to pray for recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meetings

in Uganda and Trinidad and Tobago.

The Australian Prayer Network is also promoting Project 54 throughout Australia.

For more information visit www.commonwealthprayer.org

Amnesty empowers Queenslanders

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL will host a one-day conference in Brisbane on 19 February to help educate people as to how human rights instruments can be applied to governance, law and enforcement and justice for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in Queensland.

Co-chairs of the event, to be held at the State Library, are Les Malezer, the 2008 Human Rights Medal winner, and Gracelyn Smallwood (pictured right), a James Cook University (Townsville) academic and activist.

There will also be local

Indigenous dancers and singers, discussion panels and workshops.

Workshop topics include family wellbeing and child safety, health services, employment and the UN declaration on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Presenters include more than 20 well known Indigenous

community leaders from several key professions, all of whom have given substantial commitment in major issues confronting Indigenous people throughout Queensland.

For more information visit www.amnesty.org.au/qld/events



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Burdekin bags church

WHAT STARTED as a pipe dream at a craft market meeting has turned into a nationwide venture for the members of the Burdekin Uniting Church in North Queensland.

The Burdekin congregation wanted to give away reusable shopping bags with the Uniting Church logo on them to patrons of their annual Craft Spectacular, which attracts around 1000 people.

Buying 1000 bags by themselves was uneconomical, but after

spreading the word, churches throughout the country jumped on board and a total of 7000 bags were made and distributed just before Christmas.

Burdekin minister Rev Paul Clark said he was excited to see the Uniting Church logo at supermarkets around the country.

"I liked the idea on both a mission and an environmental front," said Mr Clark. "We're going to have 7000 bags across Australia showing and telling the good news; 1500

in our community alone.

"The bags also make a statement on the environment front," he said.

"I can't wait to see them in our local supermarkets! "

2011 has started with a bang too for Mr Clark after he was awarded Citizen of the Year for the Burdekin Shire on Australia Day.

The Burdekin congregation secretly nominated their minister, who was apparently (briefly) speechless after his win.



Rev Paul Clark displays the Uniting Church bags.

Community connects to Chennai

By Mardi Lumsden

LAST OCTOBER Rev Sue Pickering led a small group to Chennai, South India, to put their faith in action.

Ms Pickering's local community in Wilston also got behind the trip with local businesses donating money to projects supported by the Church of South India.

"The aim of the visit was to be challenged by the idea that we believe God has a preference for the poor, that as Easter people we are called to a ministry of reconciliation, feeding the poor, welcoming the stranger, being a voice for the voiceless and vulnerable," she said.

Ms Pickering, Yvonne Liekefett, Heidi Liekefett, Jill Bryant, Kristy Wakem, Fiona Innes and Margaret Neithe visited ministries of the Church of South India including hospitals, schools,

child care centres, a women's centre and churches.

"We met and spent time with so many amazing people, we were able to spend time listening to stories of faith and struggle.

"We spent a week at a semi-rural place called Chengalputta.

"During that week we did some teaching and we shared meals together at a home for young people with disabilities, Mahamiliam.

"This home had no funding and a warden by the name of Suzie cared for the children and prepared meals for the group each day."

Also on site were two schools and two girls' hostels.

"We engaged with people of great faith, who saw everything they did as an act of worship and an act of obedience to God in their lives.

"Women dedicated their whole lives to caring for the children of

others, forfeiting what is seen as the appropriate path for a woman in India, namely getting married and having children of their own."

The donation from Cafe Conti in Wilston enabled Puithur, a school for children with disabilities, to purchase a freezer needed to set up a sheltered workshop for women.

Another Wilston business, Abode and Bod, decided to fundraise by asking for a donation for gift wrapping leading up to Christmas. They raised \$600 for building at Alison Cassie Secondary School.

"Both the cafe and gift shop owners have asked us to keep them updated and let them know if there is anything else they can support us with," said Ms Pickering.

"The juxtaposition of wealth and poverty in India is everywhere you turn, which leaves you with the struggle of how can there be



Kristy Wakem from Enogerra Uniting Church with Veejay, a student at Mahimai Illam, Chengalputta. Photo by Sue Pickering

such a divide, how can people be living in such dire circumstances in the 21st century?

"I think the challenge we face is not about feeling guilty about our wealth, or the privilege of being

middle class, but rather what we do with that and how we live in a world that is full of injustice in a way that is just.

"I am sure these experiences will stay with us forever."



Clayfield's morning tea raised \$3000 for DRUG ARM. Photo courtesy of Peter Lockhart

Clayfield arms rehabilitation

CLAYFIELD UNITING Church, in Brisbane's inner-north, raised over \$4000 for DRUG ARM (Drug Awareness, Rehabilitation and Management) last year through a series of events.

The congregation has supported the work of DRUG ARM over the past few years.

DRUG ARM is a not-for-profit organisation founded on

Christian values and principles, committed to reducing harms associated with alcohol and other drug use.

Clayfield Uniting Church congregation members hosted fundraising events including meals in people's homes and a board games afternoon but the highlight was a morning tea before Christmas which raised

around \$3000.

The morning tea was attended by over 100 people from the Clayfield community.

Minister Rev Peter Lockhart said, "In raising awareness and funds the congregation prayed for healing and wholeness to come into the lives of those affected by addiction."

Jane Thompson, DRUG ARM

Fundraising and Marketing manager, spoke at the morning tea about the work of DRUG ARM and how the funds would be used to reach out to those most in need.

Music at the morning tea was provided by Harmoniques from the Gap Uniting Church and the event concluded with some shared carol singing.

"We continue to pray for people affected by drug addictions and for those who work in this area," said Mr Lockhart.



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Photos by Julie Gozali

NCYC youth start year on a high

By Julie Gozali

WHILE MANY young people were planning New Year's Eve celebrations, more than 900 people from Australia and overseas came together for the biennial National Christian Youth Convention 2011 (ncyc11) on the Gold Coast.

Approximately 350 delegates were from Queensland and around 100 delegates were part of the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress group.

From 29 December to 4 January, ncyc11 encouraged people aged 16 to 25 to "Turn It Up" for God and make a difference in their lives and the world.

For many, ncyc11 offered a forum to share and discuss their faith with a multicultural group of young people with different understandings of Christianity.

Local and international guest speakers were invited to share their faith stories.

Keynote speaker Gillian Best spoke from her mission experience and her role as Youth Ministry Coordinator with the Methodist Church in Northern Ireland.

Pop/folk group Remember Seven told stories through music they wrote whilst in Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Magician Christopher Wayne used everyday magic tricks and

illusion to communicate the Gospel message. Among tricks he performed was creating snow in the hall in the middle of a Queensland summer.

"What I saw this week was young people, not just from all over Australia but from different places of the world, all united in one thing – their faith," said Mr Wayne.

"It helped me appreciate and see the bigger picture of what faith is all about.

"There isn't necessarily one way to go about worshipping God or living a Christian life."

One of the highlights of ncyc11 was the New Year's Eve celebration. This was the first NCYC held over New Year and while the Gold Coast is known as a party destination, ncyc11 offered something unique.

New Year's Eve organiser Fa Ngaluafé wanted to mix her Tongan culture with the youth culture in Australia.

"A lot of young people get wasted and make up these New Year's resolutions they can't really remember the next day," Ms Ngaluafé said.

"Being on the Gold Coast we wanted to create a party atmosphere where no one would want to leave because it's pumping right here."

The night began with a dance party and outdoor games.

Close to midnight everyone

ventured outside where the Tongan community led worship.

At least 100 young people came forward to pray in groups and recommit to God.

Throughout the week, delegates were divided into different communities to create a sense of belonging as part of a smaller group.

Community leader Laura Baird said this New Year's Eve marked a different start to the year.

"I realised it was the beginning of something new for not just me, but for everyone.

"We had a Tongan feast together after countdown, which I really enjoyed because it made it feel like a family, like we were a community," she said.

Her words resonated with many others who enjoyed being a part of a community where faith was shared, explored, and acted upon.

"I've really enjoyed being immersed in a Christian environment for a week, which is a pretty unique experience in our society," said Heidi McNamara from South Australia.

"It was great worshipping with other young Christians and getting to know new friends," said Queensland Heath Reynoldson.

The convention also provided an outlet for young Christians to live out their faith through Submersions.

These planned activities

encouraged delegates to take action and do something in the community.

Activities varied from building a house for a refugee family, to visiting a monastery, to public demonstrations and expressions of faith.

Bible study leader Dave Andrews encouraged delegates to continue to live out their faith after ncyc11.

"I want to help people to feel like anything they do, no matter how big or small, is really significant and really important," he said.

When Rockhampton and areas in Central Queensland were flooded some delegates donated money to support flood affected communities.

One week after the convention ended a number of ncyc11 adult volunteers and friends from Oxley Uniting Church lent a hand delivering 380 bags of ice to flood affected residents in Brisbane.

Other groups also helped clean flooded houses.

NCYC is more than just singing songs and meeting new friends. It is about living out faith in practical ways.

In an ageing Uniting Church, seeing hundreds of young Christians doing something for God and for the community is both inspirational and reassuring.

Visit ncyc11.com.au for more news, photos and videos

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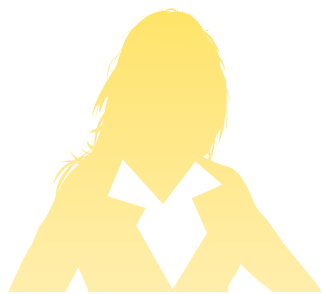
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The big questions

This year *Journey* explores questions from the pews, namely from a (fictitious) person exploring faith and the Uniting Church. This month our (fictitious) church goer, Nova B. Lever, asks: **Why do men wear dresses?**

HI, MY NAME is Nova B. Lever. I attend a Uniting Church after twenty years of not doing church.

At 36, a tertiary educated single mum, I'm exploring faith.

My parents never went to church so I don't have a traditional background, but I do have plenty of questions.

Last Sunday there was a guest preacher. This middle-aged man wore a white smock with a coloured scarf and a tasselled piece of rope around his waist.

My last encounter with men in dresses was in the church I left as a teenager.

I might say I have some serious issues about uniforms and badges of rank.

I asked my minister, "Why dress up like a fifth century monk or a Catholic priest in a 21st century protestant church?"

She doesn't wear vestments, other than a long scarf for baptisms and communion.

She asked me if I found it useful for police officers and fire fighters to wear uniforms, but I couldn't see the analogy linking a sermon with a burning house or a random breath test.

She reminded me about a recent adult baptism. The person in the pool wore a white cotton robe over his swimmers: an alb.

I thought that was for modesty.

She said it symbolised purity and was a baptism tradition dating back to the very early church.

I have enough Latin to get that: alb, alba, white.

Although it still seems culturally strange to me for a man to dress that way in suburban Australia.

Apparently I used the wrong word for the neck decoration.

It's a stole not a scarf, because the preacher was ordained as a Minister of the Word.

The idea is that the stole is like a plough animal's yoke: a symbol of service.

I know Jesus said, "My yolk is easy," but I just can't imagine the disciples wearing anything except the average clothing of a fisherman or a public servant or whatever when he sent them out to speak in the villages.

I had to Google the rope around the waist.

It is a cincture. Roman Catholic priests wear it as a symbol of chastity.

This guy had a wedding ring on, so it simply didn't make sense to me.

There are things about church that are quite strange when you walk in off the street.

Long-term church folk assume everyone understands, but if symbols don't have clear meanings, and no one bothers to explain, newcomers can't make sense of what's going on.

Construction begins on lifestyle communities

By Hayley Campbell

CONSTRUCTION HAS begun on Blue Care's new resort-style retirement residences, the \$60 million Azure Blue Lifestyle Community at Redcliffe, following a sod turning ceremony on 19

January.

Redcliffe is the first of six Azure Blue Lifestyle Communities planned for South-East Queensland in the next five years and almost 40 per cent of the 122 apartments have sold ahead of construction.



UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross, centre, took part in a sod-turning ceremony to mark the start of construction of the Azure Blue Lifestyle Community at Redcliffe. Photo courtesy of Blue Care

Blue Care Retirement Living Director, Fred Huckerby, said the village's modern amenities and location – two blocks from the Redcliffe Peninsula foreshore, and close to the hospital, restaurants and other services – appealed to buyers.

"The development is appealing to retirees from Redcliffe and surrounds who want to enjoy active, independent living," Mr Huckerby said.

"The majority of purchasers are aged 65 or more and are looking for an improved lifestyle where they can still age in a place close to their social networks and recreational interests.

"This development has been strongly sought-after locally, with more than 80 per cent of buyers from the Redcliffe Peninsula and the remainder hailing from the wider Brisbane area."

Blue Care drew on its expertise in the retirement living, residential aged care and community health sectors to create the Azure Blue brand.

Azure Blue Redcliffe will be an integrated village featuring all three components.

It will feature 100 one, two and three bedroom apartments and 22 serviced apartments flanked by a swimming pool, barbecue areas, gymnasium, recreation centre, hairdresser, DVD and book library, cinema and cafe.

Residents have access to the range of services, which include meals, laundry, cleaning as well as the option for in-home care.

The site also offers the benefit of a collocated 96-bed residential aged care facility.

Somerville House commemorates founders

By Elizabeth Macpherson

SOMERVILLE HOUSE, a girls' school in South Brisbane, has unveiled two new glass mosaics at the front entrance of the school's Chapel depicting the Uniting and Presbyterian Church logos.

The mosaics were a joint initiative between school chaplain, Chris O'Gorman, and art teacher, Trish Honeywell, as there was a concern that students did not properly understand the school's relationship with the two denominations.

Somerville House is run and owned by the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools Association (PMSA), a joint mission between the Uniting and Presbyterian Churches.

"Although, of course, the school is accepting of everyone, we wanted to highlight the link between Somerville House and the Uniting and Presbyterian churches," Ms O'Gorman said.

The mosaics were commemorated at a special chapel service led by Ms O'Gorman, where she explained the



A chapel service was held to commemorate the new mosaics. Photo by Elizabeth Macpherson

symbolism of the churches' logos to the school community.

PMSA Executive manager, Michael Willis, said the PMSA was delighted to hear about the installation of the mosaics.

"These symbols of our Christian heritage will serve to remind future generations of Somerville students about the school's history and its Christian mission and identity," he said.

Stages of disaster recovery

By Rev Dr Stephen Robinson

THE FLOODS which have affected so many people in Queensland have touched the hearts and minds of Australians in an outpouring of grief and concern.

The media has brought saturation coverage of every aspect of the event; yet in the months and years that follow, the process of recovery will continue unseen.

What is that process, and how might the church be engaged with it?

Ray Scurfield, Associate Professor of Social Work at the University of Southern Mississippi, studied recovery of communities including New Orleans post-Hurricane Katrina and built a schema of stages of disaster recovery.

This has been very helpful in understanding and addressing what communities go through post-disaster.

It is similar to Kubler-Ross' stages of grief, in that communities may move

through these stages at different paces; skipping stages, or returning to them on the way to a new future.

The Heroic Stage

This describes the time of initial impact. It is during this time that neighbours help neighbours and locals, fuelled by adrenaline and concern, perform wonderful acts of bravery, altruism and care.

In the heroic stage people use their energy to save the lives and property of others, and the most important resources are family groups, neighbours and emergency teams. Here the church is in the community and is as affected as much as anyone else.

The Tunnel Vision Stage

When the adrenaline has passed, many people will be in a state of shock, or general

numbness. People are overwhelmed, tired and emotionally numb. They can only deal with one thing at a time: cleaning mud out of a house or arranging the next meal, operating on a moment-by-moment basis.

This is not a good time to make major life decisions.

During this stage, the most important resources are family, friends, work colleagues, church and prayer (allowing people to focus and meditate). Just being with people and walking through this with them is invaluable.

The Honeymoon Stage

This stage can last from one week to six months after a disaster's impact.

There is a strong sense of having survived and come through a catastrophic event together.

People are buoyed up by promises and expectations from agencies and politicians.

Here people clear out debris and wreckage, witnessing and expecting help to get things back on track.

The church's great strength here is its being a pre-existent part of the community.

The Disillusionment Stage

This can begin within days of a disaster, but commonly starts around the third week post-disaster and may last from a few months to up to two years.

This holds a strong sense of disappointment and disillusionment, even anger and resentment where there are delays or unfulfilled promises.

Media attention will move on to other things; people will feel forgotten.

Here is where the spiritual need will be most pronounced.

There is often a breakdown in community at this time as people lack the

energy to connect with other people and look after their individual problems.

A focus on cross-Presbytery and congregational support and signs of love are important.

My congregation has intentionally knitted and sent "wraps for love" to congregations in fire-affected Victoria many months and even a year after the fires hit.

The feedback was that they were delighted that "someone remembered us".

I have observed that six-months after a disaster is a time when ministers experience some level of burn-out or compassion fatigue. They need to be urged to go on leave and get right away and ensure they take their days off.

Reconstruction / Recovery Stage

This lasts for several years after a disaster. In this phase, affected people realise the need to take hold of their own future, encouraged by visible recovery efforts.

The strength of this phase is in people seeing progress in recovery efforts, and their belief in their capacity to recover and hope for the future.

The most important resources during this time are community groups with a long-term investment in the community and its people.

Here the church needs to be consciously determined to be there for the long haul.

Perhaps the greatest gift the church can bring through these times is a commitment to being there for the long haul as an agent of hope within the community.

Rev Dr Stephen Robinson is the Disaster Recovery Coordinator for the Synod of NSW and ACT



Beesley Street, West End, Queensland. Photo by Lewis Yu

TIDES AND OFFERINGS

From P.1



Several vehicles have also been damaged by flood waters.

While the Synod office in Auchenflower was cut off for two days, the building was not flooded and staff were sent home to avoid getting cut off from family.

In Central Queensland the effects of rain and flooding also mean the loss of crops and stock in yet another blow for Australia's farming community.

Uniting Churches throughout the State have been working with other churches and organisations to provide for affected communities.

In Central Queensland members from the Banana and Biloela congregations are just two of the groups to provide assistance in Theodore.

People from all over the State have travelled to Chinchilla, Emerald and Rockhampton to provide support and a

helping hand.

In Brisbane's western suburbs the Moggill Uniting Church was set up as an evacuation centre providing food and company for many people in the suburbs of Moggill, Bellbowrie and Anstead which were cut off for four days. Many residents were without power for over a week.

The Sherwood Uniting Church and hall provided short-term emergency accommodation. Congregation members were also organising food and bedding for people in need in their community.

The Wellers Hill-Tarragindi Uniting Church, around 7kms south of Brisbane's flooded CBD, was just one of the many church groups who registered as volunteers with Volunteering Queensland and partnered with their local evacuation centre to provide bedding, food and a friendly face.

Many church groups were also instrumental in clean up efforts and supporting volunteers.

And from Ipswich to Toowoomba and beyond congregation members have been working hard to restore a kind of normality to life.

At the time of printing the Uniting Church in Australia Flood Appeal has raised over \$112,000 for flood affected communities all over the country.

The Assembly has donated \$50,000 from its Disaster Relief Fund to assist this important work and many Synods have also offered financial assistance.

While people carry on with the clean up, the pain of this event will be felt for years to come.

To donate to The Uniting Church in Australia Flood Appeal go to <http://ucfloodappeal.gofundraise.com.au>

Wesley Hospital faces flood crisis

By Julia Austin

THE SAFETY and wellbeing of patients, staff and visitors were top

priority for the Executive of The Wesley Hospital, Brisbane, as they faced complete isolation during the recent flooding crisis.

On Tuesday 11 January, with floodwaters surging towards the hospital and predictions of the worst flood in living memory,

Gerard Wyvill, the Wesley's General Manager, put the crisis management plans into action to ensure the hospital remained operational.

"We'd entered uncharted territory as the hospital was built in 1977, three years after Brisbane's most devastating flood in 1974," he said.

"Thankfully, the hospital Executive had reviewed their flood crisis plans in October in preparation for the extreme weather patterns that were predicted this summer," said Mr Wyvill.

"We knew hospital buildings would be fine, however, it's the impact from having services cut off that is our greatest challenge."

The hospital managed for four days, virtually inaccessible with only pedestrian access via a local railway station, until waters subsided and the main road accesses re-opened.

During the height of the flood, over 280 patients were cared

for by about 200 staff who had volunteered to stay overnight and throughout the crisis, sleeping in vacant wards.

The staff included the Executive, nurses, doctors, and other clinical and essential support services staff, as well as anaesthetists, obstetricians, surgeons and physicians.

"We are proud and deeply appreciative of all our staff who tirelessly worked throughout the crisis, providing care and services to our patients," said Mr Wyvill.

"The spirit of camaraderie and compassion was phenomenal and overwhelming, with theatre nurses and radiographers pitching in to push food trolleys and pastoral care staff working on the front desk."

The homes of over 40 Wesley staff were impacted by floodwaters – some have lost everything.

"We have been doing everything we can to ease some of the heartache and grief," said Mr Wyvill.



The Wesley Hospital as floodwaters peaked. Photo by Bruce Long for *The Courier Mail*

Esk community in shock

By Rosemary Wycherley

AFTER CONSISTENT rain for some months, and five inches that morning, the town of Esk, north of Wivenhoe Dam in the Brisbane Valley, was inundated with water at around 2pm on Monday 10 January.

Sandy and Redbank creeks broke their banks, ripping up trees as they converged and tore through the railway bridge, sweeping vehicles into the street before flooding the centre of town.

The old railway bridge, which stood for a hundred years, now

hangs forlornly over the muddy water.

A number of people were rapidly evacuated as the torrent raced through the Esk Caravan Park and down Russell Street.

One local couple clung to a picnic table before they were winched to safety.

Three members of the Esk Uniting Church congregation also had miraculous escapes.

Graham Rutherford escaped through a window as the creek came rushing through his unit.

Lay Preacher Helen Winter was rescued by her husband George, a

church elder.

They were pinned to the fence of the Esk Motel as the water swept up against them.

They raced over the Sandy Creek Bridge with seconds to spare before it went under.

As expected the people of Esk have rallied together with working bees to clean up.

Blue Care was the central point for donated goods and helped to meet the needs of the reeling community.

On the Sunday after the flood many people at church were still stunned that such a thing could



Esk's Brough Bridge after it was used as an escape route. Photo by George Winter

happen in Esk but as one member said, "We got off lightly compared to so many."

Rosemary Wycherley is an Elder at Esk Uniting Church

Call for halt of material donations

MAJOR COMMUNITY agencies in the Brisbane area are urging people to hold off donating items of material aid specifically for people affected by the floods.

Lifeline Community Care, The Red Cross, The Salvation Army, St Vincent de Paul and Volunteering QLD asked people to delay donating material goods intended for flood affected people because they currently lack the capacity to collect or distribute the items.

Lifeline's State Communications Manager Elissa Jenkins said the scale of the disaster has impacted on their ability to collect and distribute material donations.

"At the present time these five agencies do not have the facilities or people power to take donations of furniture, clothing, linen, etc.

"Donating material aid to any of our shops, offices or centres right now may actually hinder our recovery process because of the sheer volume of goods we are receiving and our lack of resources at present to process them."

The major charities from Brisbane will be advising the public in the next few weeks when they will be ready to take donations, what kind of donations they will need, and how to go about donating them.

The problem is also felt outside of Brisbane.

Rural Ministry Coordinator Karyl Davison recently spent time in Theodore helping volunteers sort through a huge shed of donated goods at the showground.

"People have been generous,

but there are some significant downsides to such generosity for the flood affected places," she said.

"Firstly, there is so much stuff that it can never all be used by the people of Theodore, so much of it will have to be sent on somewhere else.

"Secondly, some of the goods are so stained or worn that they are only good as rags, or will end up at the tip.

"And thirdly, all the goods have needed to be sorted.

"In Theodore (and this experience has been echoed in Emerald), large numbers of people, including a team of interstate SES people, were tied up sorting rather than helping people clean their homes and businesses.

"It is estimated that dealing



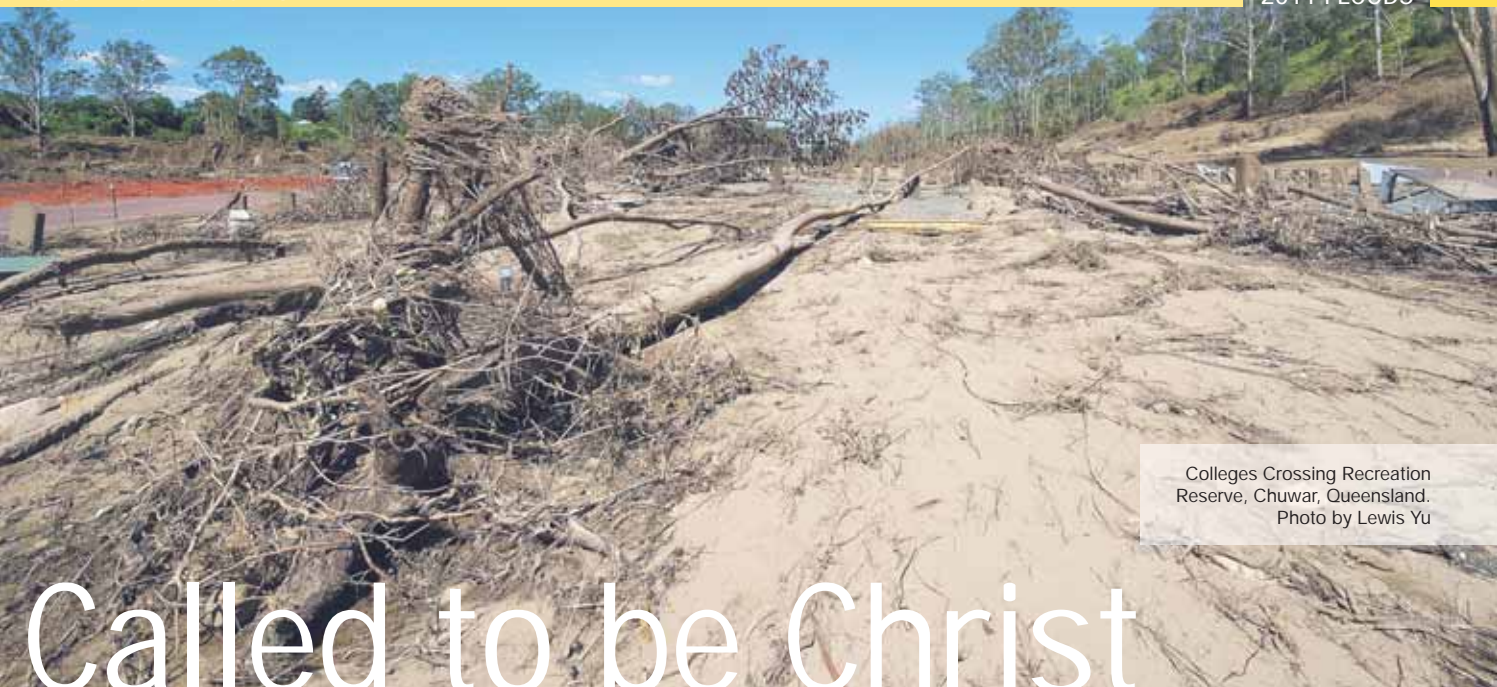
A few of the donations that have arrived in Theodore. Photo by Karyl Davison

with all the donated goods will cost the community over double the amount it is worth to sort and dispose of it.

"Finally, for those people who have lost everything, it is critical to enable them to maintain their

dignity and not expect them to sort through truckloads of second-hand clothes, linen and shoes in order to start again."

If you or someone you know is experiencing an emotional crisis, call Lifeline on 13 11 14.



Colleges Crossing Recreation Reserve, Chuwar, Queensland.
Photo by Lewis Yu

Called to be Christ

By Sharon Kirk

THE 12KM line of single vehicle traffic snaked its way back up the Toowoomba range. Usually the ascent takes five minutes. This time it took an hour. The great scar, from the huge wave of water that had assaulted the main street of Toowoomba, continuing unstoppable down the range, was visible all around us.

Who knows when things will be usual or normal again. Experts in disaster management and psychologists tell us that they will

and that most people will recover well, but it will take time ... years.

Like my drive up the Toowoomba range everything that was usual will take much longer.

Recovery will not be able to be hurried; there are no overtaking lanes.

It will require great patience, respect for where everyone else is on the road and the hope that just around the corner the road will open up and the congestion will clear.

In time it will.

Our communities will put

themselves back together again, but they will never be the same.

There will be gaps where people and things once were. This will be even more noticeable in small rural communities.

Some people may become even more isolated and disconnected from community life.

Divisions that were always there will emerge again as inequalities become evident when insurance and government payments are made.

The euphoria of the shared experience of surviving this

disaster will dissipate and so too will the abundance of goodwill.

What does the church need to be doing in the flood's aftermath?

We need to be doing what communities of faith do best.

The church is called to be the body of Christ; a community that is a sign of Christ's presence amongst all people.

We are called to make Christ visible; Christ who says come to me all who are weary and heavy laden and I will bring you rest, Christ who stretches out hands of welcome, acceptance and healing,

Christ in whom the power of resurrection and new life is embodied.

Is it a coincidence that the Uniting Church in Queensland has committed to the statement of call: Uniting in Christ, acting with love, living with hope, witnessing in faith, working for justice? I don't think so.

For the sake of the gospel, for the sake of our recovering communities, we must live it well.

Sharon Kirk is The Downs
Presbytery Minister

Churches face global similarities

By Smaraki Samantaroy

THERE MAY be 5000 miles between India and Australia but there are similar stories of survival and faith over the past six months.

In July 2010 the flood in the states of Haryana and Punjab, in North India, affected more than a million people.

Most of the farmers lived in weakly built houses. They were asked to evacuate but couldn't leave their homes, families and livestock. They had nowhere to go.

Transport services, water and power were cut off for more than four days.

The downpour claimed 15 lives and about 14,000 homes

were damaged. More than 8000 livestock perished in the flood.

The stagnant water killed most of the paddy and maize crops, the largest grain contributors to the country.

The state government and district authorities were criticised for not carrying out timely flood protection work to prevent flooding.

They were also criticised for lack of response after the damage was caused.

Bishop P.K.Samantaroy, the Diocese of Amritsar, North India, said Indian people have faced such a situation before.

"In India we frequently face floods, cyclones, drought and

other natural disasters but all that experience does not lessen the degree of suffering."

In the midst of all the madness caused by the floods we witness God's miracles of joy.

The tales in Queensland are not much different.

The manager of a small unit in Sherwood, in Brisbane's west, knocked at 4am on Wednesday 12 January to tell one tenant to grab necessary medication and a change of clothes and evacuate.

The tenant was unaware of the impending floods as English was her second language.

A taxi dropped her at the Sherwood Uniting Church, one of the only places open at that

hour, and she spent the next three anxious days with other evacuees in the Church premises.

Later in the week a woman rushed in, praying to find her missing sister.

Everyone had gone to hose flooded houses apart from her missing sister.

Her sister had been searching everywhere.

Her biggest worry was the troubled state of her sister's mind, a result of persecution in Iran; her crime was being a Christian.

Given Australia's advantages, flood affected communities will return to being habitable environments sooner than in many villages in India which

struggle with basic issues such as health and education, even without the natural disasters.

The church in both countries responds to the needs of the people in such situations.

At Sherwood Uniting Church on Sunday 16 January it was clear that disaster brought people together into a bigger family.

And we hope for the dove to find an olive branch soon.

Smaraki Samantaroy is the Communications Assistant in the Diocese of Amritsar, Church of North India. She is visiting Australia for two months and working with the Synod Communications Unit

Oxley members get their hands dirty

OXLEY UNITING Church members, in Brisbane, and ncyc11 volunteers (pictured right) took to the streets distributing bread and 400 bags of ice to those without power. Seven Oxley Uniting Church families were flooded.

The congregation set up an

impromptu creche/child drop-in centre for parents needing to clean flooded homes, offered food and drinks to the community and volunteers, and acted as a backup to the *youthonthestreets* counselling team from Sydney.

Minister Rev David

MacGregor said it was "a humbling example of the church being the hands, feet and heart of Jesus in their community."

Mr MacGregor has also written a song as a reflection. Music is available at www.journeyonline.com.au





A street in Sherwood, in Brisbane's west.
Photo by Lissa Foley

God and nature

Biblical reflections on the Queensland floods

By Rev Dr Rob Bos

THE FIRST creation story in the Hebrew Bible tells us: "God saw everything that he had made and indeed, it was very good." (Gen 1:31).

Yet the creation was not good for the people who died in Toowoomba, the Lockyer Valley and elsewhere, or for the people who were friends and relatives of those who died.

Nor was it good for people who suffered loss of income or property.

For some, the worst was losing those tangible objects associated with treasured memories.

Creation turned against people in these floods and proved to be chaotic, destructive and evil.

If we do not see God as merely the originator of the creation, but as the sustainer and life-giver, as the best wisdom of countless

generations of people testifies, what happens when creation becomes deadly?

Has God forsaken God's creation?

Some do not see God as involved in creation at all, confining God to the human or the personal, but that is not part of the Jewish or Christian scriptures or tradition.

Parts of Scripture and those traditions envision God as vertically above the earth on the clouds, from which, of course, Queensland's deluge has come.

Of course, we no longer hold to a three-storey universe, with heaven above, a flat earth in the middle and the underworld below.

This is mythical language, not literal or scientific language. In fact it is likely that the ancients from whom these stories come were not literal or scientific

thinkers, but knew full well that they were using metaphors to speak of mysteries.

Perhaps these metaphors of height point to the fact that we recognise the greatness or authority of God.

But if so, has God forsaken authority? Was God asleep when the floods hit?

Or, reminiscent of Elijah's taunt to the prophets of Baal, perhaps God was taking a siesta? (1 Kings 18:27).

As post-Enlightenment Western Christians, naturalistic explanations are part of our world view.

We know that the vast quantity of rain which has fallen on this State was caused by a La Niña effect.

But does that exhaust our explanation?

Is it not possible to understand the science of climatology, and also see God as being at work in creation, perhaps as "persuasive love"? (Charles Birch)

A treasured story in the gospels is that of Jesus stilling the storm (Matt. 8:23-27; Mark

4:36-41; Luke 8:22-25). We may interpret this psychologically, as Jesus stilling the turmoil in our own lives, but that was probably not the original writers' intention.

Whatever its symbolic meanings, it is likely that the Gospel writers saw this as Jesus, with God's authority, stilling the destructive powers of nature. But God did not still the deluge in Queensland.

Pastor Daniel Naliah of Catch the Fire Ministries thinks the flood is God's judgement on Queensland, because Foreign Minister, Kevin Rudd, a Queenslander, spoke against Israel.

Such a view overlooks the fact that Jesus refused to agree that there was a simple link between wrong-doing and judgment (Luke 13:4; John 9:2,3), and that he saw the forces of nature as not being selective (Matthew 5:45).

It also presumes that God is a God of judgement.

Many scientists see a link between human-caused global warming and extreme weather events.

If that is so, then there is reason to repent, not of criticism of Israel, but of our profligate lifestyle.

Such repentance of course entails actual, costly change.

But if God's primary quality is compassion, as Jesus asserted, I see God in those who helped neighbours, in those who sheltered those whose homes were flooded, in the efforts of emergency services and defence force personnel, in those who opened and attended church halls, those who gave money, prayed, counselled, phoned words of encouragement and emailed messages of concern.

What we do know is that God says to us, "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you" (Isaiah 43:2).

As for the rest we are left with the mystery of how God is present in creature, when nature turns against us.

Rev Dr Rob Bos is Director of Pilgrim Learning Community

Called to stand in community

By Phil Smith

THE UNITING Church in Queensland comes from a great tradition of giving to help the poor.

The prophet Agabus didn't have the Bureau of Meteorology to help forecast a famine in Palestine when he warned the early church leaders in Antioch.

The area around Jerusalem was hit hard in 46 AD and the church responded generously to an appeal by Paul, Barnabas and others on behalf of "the saints in Jerusalem".

Like the Uniting Church in Australia Flood Appeal, the efforts of the churches around Antioch, Macedonia and Acha'ia were far more than a mere fund raiser.

Paul told the Galatians that the Assembly office/Jerusalem Council had told him "not to forget the poor", but it's clear he is not simply passing the hat around, rattling the can for a worthy charity.

This project occupies a place in his letters to the Romans and the Corinthians as well. It may have taken as long as 18 months, with the apostles and others travelling huge distances to encourage the Christians' generosity.

In the end Paul was prepared to risk his life to personally deliver the funds.

His appeal for the poor in the care of the Jerusalem church was central to his vision of church and understanding of worship: our lives as a living sacrifice.

For him the collection was a ministry; a service in which grace would abound and overflow, providing a clear demonstration of what it is to be a uniting church; a body of believers growing together under the headship of Christ.

In Queensland this is our opportunity to show that in Christ there is no South-East corner, no regional Queensland.

There are no city and country Christians, there are no large congregations and small, but we

are all one in Christ, called to live out our faith in daily service.

There has always been criticism as well as praise for the way the church ministers to those in need after a disaster.

In the first two or three centuries Christianity forged the

modern western understanding of charity for the poor and afflicted. How we loved others drew astonishment and some misunderstanding.

The so-called Cyprian Plague from approximately 251 AD to 266 AD was labelled with the

name of Bishop Cyprian who led his church to care for the sick and dying.

We have a commitment not to stand by, but stand in hard-hit communities, taking our place with the congregations who will live and serve there in the months and years to come, opening our purse strings long after the TV news images have stopped tugging at our heart strings.



Colleges Crossing Recreation Reserve, Chuwar, Queensland. Photo by Lewis Yu

Rural churches muster faith

THE MARY Burnett Presbytery will host the Rural Muster in Nanango from 13-15 May.

Rural Muster is a three-day gathering of Uniting Church ministers and lay people from country Queensland and smaller urban congregations to seek God's direction for ministry in their communities.

Previous Rural Musters have been held in Mundubbera, Roma and Oakey.

Organisers encouraged people from all over Queensland to attend the event and listen to keynote speaker Julie Greig (a New South Wales rural chaplain) speak of her experiences connecting congregations and the community.

Electives will include: music in small congregations; involving children in worship; depression and suicide; using food in the

context of worship; photography and worship; chaplaincy in the community; coping with the aftermath of natural disasters and many more.

The organising committee considered postponing the event due to the financial and personal hardship suffered by people on rural properties and towns due to Queensland's extreme flooding.

They decided, however, that these traumatic floods made it more necessary to go ahead with the Rural Muster.

Motels and caravan parks are available in local towns and local congregations will provide accommodation where necessary to make attending the Muster more affordable.

Organisers asked for people to pray for the event, for those who attend and those who provide the seminar content.



For more information contact Nev Bischoff (Nanango/Blackbutt/Yarraman Church Council secretary) on (07) 4163 1325

or nevbish@big.net.au or Rev Sue Algate on (07) 4163 1493

Camps Farthest Out welcomes new leader

By Mardi Lumsden

FORMER TRINITY Theological College principal and current Grace College principal Rev Dr Sue Fairley will be the first female World President of Camps Farthest Out (CFO) International.

"Becoming the first female World President is quite daunting but at the same time extremely exciting," said Dr Fairley.

"I feel very humbled to have been chosen for this position.

"When I made my speech at the board meeting in Malvern, England, after I was installed I quoted that wonderful verse from Esther 4:14.

"I truly believe that God has chosen me for this position for 'such a time as this'.

"Roles like this one do not depend on whether the person is male or female.

"It is the gifts the person brings

to the job and I have always believed that God equips me for whatever role I have undertaken in ministry.

"I also think that as women we approach leadership from a different perspective and the test of that will be when I have to chair the International board meeting next year."

Dr Fairley has been involved in CFO since a friend and former World President, Colin Ray, invited her to attend one of the very first CFO camps held on the Sunshine Coast in the 1970s.

"Roland and Marcia Brown came from the States to lead this camp and it changed my understanding of prayer forever," she said.

"The camp program had a wonderful rhythm on 'inner' and 'outer' activities which involved both the right brain and the left.

"I loved the movement of

the program during the day and found myself being totally immersed in it."

CFO International is now in eight regions of the world: Europe, South Asia, East Asia, North America, East Africa, West Africa, South Pacific and Latin America.

The next International Camp will be in August 2012 in Lima, Peru.

"It is exciting to see the growth of camps in Africa and Asia.

"My challenge will be to see how many of these regions I am able to visit during my five-year term as World President," said Dr Fairley.

CFO International is a non-denominational ministry founded by Glenn Clark, an American College professor and athletics coach.

"He was totally convinced that prayer could change the world

and he was very open to a wide variety of Christians coming to the early camps.

"In Queensland there is only one camp each year on the May long weekend at the House of Happiness on Bribie Island.

"Our campers come from a variety of churches including Uniting, Presbyterian, Anglican, Catholic."

Dr Fairley encouraged people to attend the Queensland camp.

"Anyone interested in deepening their relationship with God, discovering more about prayer and how to pray, living in a Christian community for a weekend should come along," she said.

For more information contact local chairperson Julie Price on 3300 4583 or price_3@optusnet.com.au



Rev Dr Sue Fairley. Photo courtesy of Dr Fairley

Commemorating Walter Taylor

A NEW book on one of Brisbane's seminal builders, Walter Taylor, will be launched at Graceville Uniting Church on 13 February at 2pm.

This date is almost 75 years since the opening of the Walter Taylor Bridge.

The book, *The Remarkable Walter Taylor*, was written by Rev Dr Noel Davis, the grandson of Walter Taylor, and a Uniting Church minister.

Walter Taylor lived from 1872-

1955 and built an amazing number of structures around South East Queensland including the bridge which bears his name and the Graceville Uniting Church Hall, where the launch will be held, and also the church next to it.

Mr Taylor was a devout Methodist, a local preacher, circuit steward, synod and conference delegate on a number of occasions.

He was also a buildings adviser for the Presbyterian and Methodist Schools

Association for a number of years.

Noel Davis was ordained into the Methodist ministry in 1959 and served as a minister in Oakey and Fiji before spending eight years in America.

On his return to Australia he spent 21 years as a school chaplain, the last 11 years at Somerville House in South Brisbane.

The Remarkable Walter Taylor is available from Dr N Davis, 21/123 Cemetery Rd,



The Walter Taylor Bridge at Indoorsopilly. Photo by Osker Lau

Raceview 4305 and will cost \$25 plus \$4.50 for postage.

For more information phone 3202 3660

March 4, 10.30am

World Day of Prayer, Brisbane City ecumenical service.

World Day of Prayer Brisbane City ecumenical service at Albert Street Uniting Church.

The World Day of Prayer is observed in more than 170 countries. Come and be enriched by the Christian faith of other cultures. The featured country for 2011 is Chile.

Refreshments will be served after the service.

For more information visit www.worlddayofprayeraustralia.org or contact Rosemary Hiley on 3031 3030 or email r.hiley@wmb.org.au.



February 4, 7.30-9.30pm. Australian Christian Meditation Community seminar. Fr. Laurence Freeman, Director of The World Community for Christian Meditation, presents a series of talks entitled *The Nature of Forgiveness – Healing and Reconciliation in the light of Meditation*. \$35 or \$70 for both sessions. Clairvaux MacKillop College, 4 Klumpp Rd, Upper Mt Gravatt. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or 0488 592 770.

February 5, 9.30am-3.30pm. Australian Christian Mediation Community seminar. Fr. Laurence Freeman, presents a series of talks entitled *The Nature of Forgiveness: Healing and Reconciliation in the Light of Meditation*. Cost Saturday only \$45, both sessions \$70. BYO lunch, other refreshments provided. Clairvaux MacKillop College, 4 Klumpp Rd, Upper Mt Gravatt. Contact Gabby Nelson on 3711 4227 or 0488 592 770.

February 12, 9am-12pm. Church Treasurers workshop at Redcliffe Uniting Church. A training and networking session for church treasurers. Session leaders include experienced accountants and business managers. An excellent morning of enrichment for current and future treasurers. 1 Richens St (cnr Anzac Ave). Contact Dr Aaron Ghiloni on 3369 8929 or email aaron@moretonriverspresbytery.org.au.

February 15, 9.30am-12.30pm. UnitingWorld Synod Support Group Qld meeting at Wesley House, 140 Ann St Brisbane city. Speakers: Ken and Val Wakeling who have worked in Korea. Contact Judith Finau on 3711 4622 or email ljfinau@gmail.com.

February 18-19, 8am-3pm. Giant two day Garage Sale! Bargains Galore. Pre-loved clothes, books, knick-knacks. Uhl Hall, Wheller Gardens, 930 Gympie Road, Chermside. Contact Barbara Wood on 0418 157670 or email trevorjwood@bigpond.com.

February 19, 9.30am-4.45pm. Human Rights and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders in Queensland at the State Library of Queensland Auditorium, South Brisbane. Indigenous leaders and experts in legal and social policy give an accurate, current picture on the human rights of Murri people in Queensland today and work for a better future. Contact Dr Wayne Sanderson on 3351 6571 or email reimagineassoc@bigpond.com.

February 20, 10am. Geebung Uniting Church Celebrates 50 Years. Conducted by Minister Rev Sandra Jebb. This service will be followed by light refreshments. Everyone who has been part of our journey over the past 50 years is invited to join us on this occasion. Cnr. Simla Ave and Mayflower St Geebung. Contact Ian Caitens on 3265 4396 or email ian.caitens@bigpond.com.

Upload your 'What's On' entries at www.journeyonline.com.au. Items may be shortened due to space limitations.

UnitingCare Queensland thanks communities

By Lea Kingdon

UNITINGCARE QUEENSLAND Chief Executive Officer, Anne Cross, extended her overwhelming thanks to the people of Queensland for their support of its services Blue Care, Lifeline Community Care and UnitingCare Health during the recent flood crisis.

"I am extremely proud and grateful to all our staff and volunteers who worked so tirelessly to provide care to our clients, residents and patients and to ensure their safety and continuity of care," said Ms Cross.

"Many suffered personal losses, yet they worked in extremely difficult circumstances throughout this prolonged disaster to ensure care was maintained to those who rely on us."

UnitingCare Queensland is one of the largest non-profit health and community service providers in the state.

"Our staff did whatever they could, whether it was using Blue Care's laundry facilities to wash the clothes of people in evacuation centres, working extra shifts, evacuating 30 people with disabilities from their homes or staying at various facilities for several days when some employees were unable to get to work," she said.

Lifeline Community Care has deployed trained staff and volunteers into community recovery centres in every location where there was severe flooding, providing support and psychological first aid.

"We currently have 95 staff deployed in dozens of centres across the state, providing psychological first aid.



UnitingCare Queensland CEO Anne Cross. Photo courtesy of UnitingCare

"As the recovery and clean up continues our thoughts remain with those who have suffered loss or hardship during the floods and we are offering whatever support we can.

"We will continue with this support over the longer-term as we know that the recovery from the loss and trauma will not occur over night."

Geebung celebrates 50 years

AN OLD farm house in Geebung, was the setting for the first worship service of what is now the Geebung Uniting Church in February 1961.

In 1977 the local Methodist congregation joined with the Presbyterian congregation at the present location.

In October 1983 the current church was opened.

The Zillmere Uniting Church closed in 1993 and joined with Geebung.

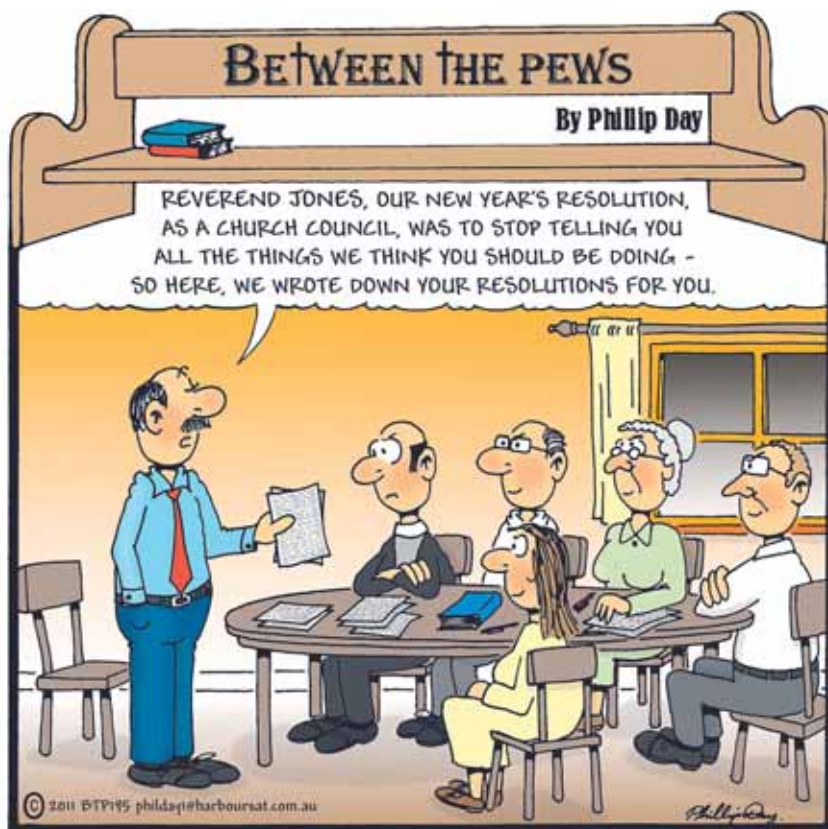
They are now one of five congregations that came together in 2009 as Kairos Uniting Church. A 50th Anniversary celebration

service will be held at 10am at the Geebung Uniting Church on Sunday 20 February, followed by a light lunch.

Everyone who has been part of the journey over the past 50 years is invited to join the celebration.

One of the organisers, Ian Caitens, said, "We give our thanks to God for His goodness to us over the past 50 years and we look forward, confident in the assurance that God will continue to guide and lead us according to his will."

For more information contact Ian Caitens on 3265 4396 or ian.caitens@bigpond.com



Where the Hell is God?

By Richard Leonard, SJ, HiddenSpring, 2010, RRP \$17.95

Reviewed by Karyl Davison.

READING THIS little book while much of Queensland struggles with the devastation of unprecedented flooding gives added poignancy and relevance to its contents.

When Fr Leonard's sister suffered catastrophic injuries in a vehicle accident, his own response and that of other Christians, forced him to think through the age-old question "Where the hell is God?"

In the months that followed the accident, Mr Leonard received "some of the most appalling and frightening letters" from "some of the best Christians" he knew.

Many of us will be familiar with such responses in the face of suffering and loss: the person, the community, the group of people, must have done something that deeply offended God and must accept God's punishment; the person is building up a mansion in heaven for when they die;

or you must be really blessed because God only sends such suffering to those who can bear them.

Others tried to be comforting by suggesting that "it's all a mystery" or "it's part of God's plan".

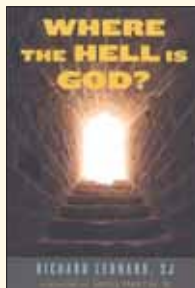
This book addresses the terrible theology behind such responses which, rather than drawing us closer to God, often alienates us from God.

In each of the seven chapters, Mr Leonard outlines his steps to spiritual sanity when we ask "Where the hell is God?"

Drawing on his own experience and wisdom, he argues that God is not out to get us by directly sending us pain, suffering and disease.

God does not send accidents or loss to teach us things (although we can learn from them) and natural disasters are not God's will.

Mr Leonard urges Christians to prayer, not because we can change God's mind, but to change



us so we can change the world.

As Christians in Queensland at the very beginning of 2011, it is critical that we too think carefully about our responses to people's heartfelt question, "Where the hell is God?"

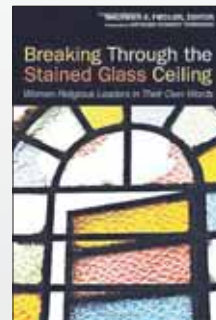
Christian platitudes have no place at any time, but particularly at times of great grief and loss.

Not only will this book force you to assess your image of God, but it will help you address the inevitable questions about the goodness of God and the existence of suffering and evil that suffering raises. Everyone involved in pastoral ministry should read this book!

Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling: Women Religious Leaders in Their Own Words

Edited by Maureen E. Fiedler, Seabury Books N.Y., 2010, RRP \$37.95

Reviewed by Rev Dr Marian Zaunbrecher, Queensland Synod Associate General Secretary.



MS FIEDLER has taken radio interviews with women whose faith is their driving force and turned it into a very readable and inspiring book.

The interviews cover a variety of women; denominational leaders, academic scholars, theologians, activists, leaders in spirituality, social justice causes, the media and interfaith dialogue.

These are women from all faiths, not just the Abrahamic ones, Judaism, Christian and Muslim, but Buddhists, Hinduism, Baha'is and indigenous people.

Unfortunately, most of the faith dialogues are from North American people, but there is one gem of a story of how Muslim and Christian women united in prayer and non-violent resistance to bring an end to the 15 years of violence in Liberia.

Now Liberia is the only African country to have a democratically elected woman leader, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

What was so inspiring about this book was that these are the voices of very ordinary

people who through their faith have become extraordinary leaders.

Yet all of them exhibit common traits of acceptance of diversity, the struggle against ignorance, poverty and injustice, openness to interfaith dialogue and a passion to serve humanity.

Their aim was not so much to be women leaders and path blazers but people who wanted to use their own gifts, abilities and passion to serve the divine and humanity.

If you want to be moved and challenged read *Breaking Through the Stained Glass Ceiling*.

Laugh your way to Grace: Reclaiming the Spiritual Power of Humour

By Rev Susan Sparks, Skylight Paths Publishing, 2010, RRP \$27.95

Reviewed by John Ruhle.

IN A HIGHLY readable and enjoyable book "America's only female stand-up comedian with a pulpit", Rev Susan Sparks explores the theological and practical implications of humour and laughing in our lives and worship.

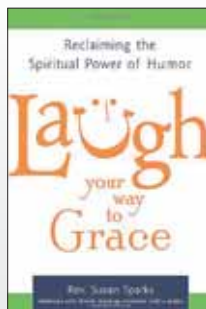
While the book is an enjoyable read it is not a side splitting laugh-a-thon. Rather it presents clearly how and why humour is essential to who we are as people and who we are as followers of Christ.

The opportunities that arise from bringing laughter into a situation are many and varied and Ms Sparks explores these from her own life experiences as a financial lawyer turned comedian and ordained minister.

Theologian Conrad Hayes said: "Faith without laughter leads to dogma, and laughter without faith leads to despair".

This quote sums up what *Laugh Your Way to Grace* is attempting to achieve.

I highly recommend this book for all followers of Christ and specifically for those of us who



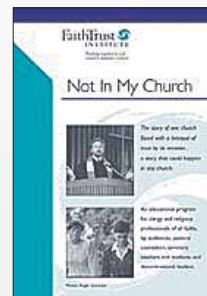
are entrusted with bringing leadership into our churches and communities.

To be able to provide this leadership with humour and grace is a huge gift not only to ourselves but to all who are involved.

Not in my Church (DVD)

Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention Project, 2008
Copies available from jcdvpp@qct.org.au

Reviewed by Denise Secomb, a member of Magnetic Island Uniting Church and a victim of domestic violence.



ACCORDING TO a survey in *Not in my Church*, a myth-busting CD Rom and DVD, domestic violence is as prevalent in the church as it is outside the church. This DVD is worthwhile for parishioners and ministers alike.

A joint churches domestic violence prevention project, the DVD does not seek to judge those who are going through domestic violence, or those who have done so, but rather to help them recover.

Victims and perpetrators are interviewed in a bid to throw light on the secret epidemic of family violence within churches.

Among the ministers interviewed is one who recommends that if, as a minister, you don't have the skill base to help such people, you need to acquire it or to acknowledge you are out of your depth and refer people to domestic violence workers who do.

One woman talks of the grief at losing church support for using a Domestic Violence

Apprehension Order, another of how difficult it was to take on a woman with nine children who was rebuilding her life.

The mother of nine tells of the many times she's broken up with her husband. In the end he came at her with a shotgun.

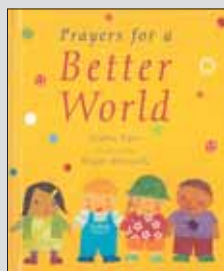
Perhaps with church support she would not have gone back to him.

A Christian domestic violence worker takes viewers through the stages in the cycle of abuse, a useful tool to begin understanding why abusers are accepted back by their victims.

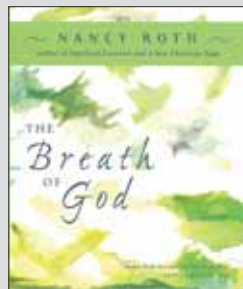
A common theme comes through: that many Christian men use scripture to stand over and abuse their wives, claiming authority over them, yet Ephesians says that a husband and wife have authority over each other.

More reviews online at www.journeyonline.com.au including:

Prayers for a Better World
By Sophie Piper, illustrated by Mique Moriuchi, Lion Children's, 2010, RRP \$14.99

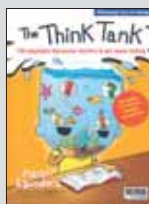


The Breath of God
By Nancy Roth, Seabury Books, New York, 2006, RRP \$21.95



The Think Tank: 100 adaptable discussion starters to get teens talking

By Martin Saunders, Monarch Books, 2010, RRP \$24.99



Books available from ...

Many of the titles reviewed in *Journey* are available from St Paul's Bookstore or Christian Supplies in Brisbane city. Books can usually be ordered from Vision Books at Broadwater Road Uniting Church, Mansfield, or may be available from www.mosaicresources.com.au

Card makers support World Vision

By Rev Peter Lockhart

THE ST LUKE'S congregation in Hamilton, north Brisbane, celebrated a key goal at the end of 2010 by raising \$1250 for a maternal health program run by World Vision in the Jima region of Ethiopia.

The funds were primarily raised through a card making group who surpassed the target.

Each month a group gathered to be tutored in card-making by Charmaine Gutasukas, who donated most of the materials as well as her time to lead the group.

Over time the group attracted people from the local

community as well as the congregation.

The project has had numerous flow-on effects, building links with the local community and strengthening the worshipping life of the congregation as well.

Many of the cards produced were sold in the foyer of the Clayfield and Hamilton congregations but there were also cards sold in community venues, including a local pharmacy and school.

The congregation looks forward to another year building on this project and gives thanks to God that from small ideas new life and hope can grow.



St Luke's, Hamilton, card makers display their work. Photo courtesy of Peter Lockhart

On Sunday 27 February please pray for Paradise Point Uniting Church

PARADISE POINT Uniting Church (PPUC) is located on the northern end of the Gold Coast. Five thousand people call the suburb home.

The area has the third largest retirement population in Queensland; however, more and more young families are moving into the area.

Worship is held every Sunday morning and every other day of the week a variety of fellowship and bible study groups operate.

We give thanks for the vision of those who went before us to provide for the worship centre and property we use at PPUC.

Please pray that we will honour God in the way that we use it for praise, worship, prayer, fellowship and the sharing of the Word.

Our vision is "to make a difference in our world by being a welcoming, caring, growing Church, reaching out with the love, compassion and grace of Christ".

Please pray that we will be

true to our vision.

May God show us how to reach out to the young families moving into our community.

Our pastor Rev Col Shenfield (and the ministry teams) minister to three aged care facilities in the area.

Pray that in the twilight of life the Gospel will be shared and heard in these places.

Pastor Col seeks God's face, preaches the truth of the Bible and brings joyful worship to our lives.

Pray that God will uphold him as he seeks to shepherd us and will bless his wife Lesley in her ministry as an elder.

Pray for God's guidance for our elders and councillors as they make decisions on behalf of our congregation.

Pray that God will provide for our multimedia team and bring forth a new treasurer.

Pray for the spiritual growth of each person at PPUC. May they know the love, joy, peace and assurance brought by Jesus Christ.

On Sunday 6 February please pray for North Rockhampton and the Caves Uniting Church

THE FITZROY Parish covers Rockhampton, north of the Fitzroy River that has been flooded this last couple of months, and the Caves community which is about twenty minutes drive from Rockhampton.

We seek to be a community that trusts and joins with God in mission being a faithful, vibrant, and open Christian community.

Respecting and accepting our differences and working together with understanding is vital for sharing the love of Christ in worship, pastoral care, outreach, growing spiritually and service.

Please pray for:

- our men's group. Having

begun meeting again after Easter in 2010 we undertook to grow together in faith through our regular Saturday morning breakfast meetings. Its aim is to get to know each other better as we serve together. Please pray that God would direct our path in becoming more involved in the needs of our congregation and community.

• Doorstep Ministry. This involves working with the chaplain at North Rockhampton State High School across the road. Please pray for God's direction as we seek to be further involved with the students in particular and further work with young people in 2011.

- the ecumenical planning

work we're doing with All Saints Anglican church for our combined Pentecost picnic.

- hearts and minds to be open to the renewing work of the Holy Spirit in our witness and service in the community.

Most of all pray for recovery from the devastation of the floods and the many people in the community of Rockhampton affected by it.

Fortunately, most of the members of the parish were not affected by the floods as such.

The restoration and reconstruction work that lies ahead will be big.

Pray that God will strengthen the resolve of the whole community to see this through.

On Sunday 13 February please pray for the Churches in the Lockyer Valley

IN THE WAKE of the unprecedented flooding in Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley, please pray for:

- comfort and healing for those dealing with the emotional and spiritual impact of the trauma of seeing loved ones, friends and neighbours disappear in the floodwaters while they were helpless to save them.

- those grieving the loss of homes, pets and irreplaceable family treasures, and wisdom for future action.

- God to sustain the indomitable spirit of farmers dealing with the loss of crops, stock, machinery and productivity. Many have seen crops totally destroyed, valuable topsoil stripped away and/or piles of rubbish dumped on their land.

- those involved in the gruesome task of the recovery and identification of bodies.

Give thanks for the:

- readiness of people to help in a variety of ways.
- friendships that have been built out of incredible shared trauma.
- prompt response of government and community organisations and groups
- hope we have as Christians in the midst of disaster.

Not so many years ago the church in Gatton was going very well.

There were also viable congregations at Helidon, Flagstone Creek and Mt. Sylvia.

Changes in the rural economy, farmers retiring and some other factors resulted in the closure of the congregations at Flagstone Creek, Helidon

and, just before Christmas, Mt Sylvia, leaving only Gatton.

Gatton is made up now of aged people, who are amazingly loyal and, for their age, industrious.

There are no young people regularly part of the church. Those who have remained are almost entirely on a fixed income. With an average attendance of about 30, the Church can afford only part-time supply ministry.

It would be wonderful if there was someone with a real sense of call to working alongside younger people and families who still identify with the Uniting Church.

There is potential there, so please pray for someone who can develop that.

On Sunday 20 February please pray for Albany Creek Uniting Church

THE CONGREGATION at Albany Creek Uniting Church, Brisbane, continues to grow together as they live out the questions of their faith journeys.

The church has seen evidence of unification in the completion of the fourth phase of the Natural Development Survey program.

The results of the survey undertaken by church members showed significant growth in various areas of church life.

This gives us encouragement to continue to strive to live out

our faith in practical terms.

One area in which the church has shown strength is in the youth ministry.

Leaders of our youth groups and activities ask for prayers as they experience an increase in numbers across all age groups.

The church gives thanks for the success of the Christmas activities, where many members of the congregation have given their time and talents.

We are also grateful for the opportunity to work alongside the Seventh Day Adventist

congregation, sharing our facilities to celebrate the Christmas story.

The New Year will also see changes in the local community.

The church wishes to pray for the incoming chaplain for Albany Creek State High School, and will continue to support this ministry.

As the church enters the New Year, we pray for a deepening of our understanding of what it means to live out our faith together in our community.

Letters from our partner churches

LOVING GREETINGS from Amritsar!

We are aware of the devastating flood that has wreaked havoc in the lives of the people in East Australia.

We are deeply concerned and are constantly praying for your safety.

Being so far away we cannot do much but we are keeping you in our prayers.

Bishop P.K.
Samantary
Diocese of
Amritsar, Church
of North India



ON BEHALF of the UCSI Church leaders and people, I would like to convey our sympathy for your people who lost their homes, properties and members of their families during the great flood.

We are praying for the situation in flood-devastated Queensland and also for the safety of the people and their properties.

May God be your shelter and comfort now and forever.

Rev David Barakana
Havea
Moderator, United
Church in Solomon
Islands



I AM NOT unfamiliar with disasters because so many hit my country, Indonesia.

I am so sad to watch the flood in Queensland which takes so many victims.

We pray deeply for the people in Queensland and convey our sympathy to all uniting families.

Rev Kuntadi
Sumadikarya
Moderator
Indonesian
Christian
Church, West
Java Synod/
Head of the
West Java GKI
Humanitarian



WE SEE that climate change is making a huge influence on the world now.

The Protestant Church in East Timor expresses solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Australia.

We simply pray for those

brothers and sisters who have lost family and resources.

We express our sympathy to those families who have lost loved ones and to those families who still have members who are missing.

May the Lord who is the source

of all our comfort help those impacted by this difficulty.

Rev Moises A de
Silva
Moderator,
Protestant
Church in East
Timor



Letters of hope

These are just a few of the comments posted on the Uniting Church in Australia's online Flood Appeal. To donate visit <http://ucfloodappeal.gofundraise.com.au>

WE ARE thinking of you all at this disastrous time. If only we could help more.

Steven Dick

MY PRAYERS and thoughts are with all the families who have been affected by this. Our prayers are with you.

I can't imagine how traumatic it must all be for you. May you continue to find courage.

Jenny Missen

MAY GOD pour his love and power upon you and send His Angels for comfort.

All in the sweet name of Jesus.

Phil Kickett

MY PRAYERS are with you all. May God uphold you in this difficult time.

Katherine Buchan

TO SEE MY home state in so much devastation is beyond comprehension. You are in the prayers of our churches here in the USA.

Revs Ron and Lisa Cook

FROM ALL at St Michaels our thoughts are with you.

St Michaels Uniting
Church

THE FLOODS have been devastating as TV has been showing us. But being in the middle of it all has to be so much worse. I trust that this small donation helps in some way.

Donald Edgell

THINKING AND praying for those in Queensland who have been devastated by the floods.

May they see the flicker of hope through the love and support of people.

Dorothy Ferry

OUR THOUGHTS and prayers are with those who have suffered so much in that beautiful part of our country.

Colin Turner

PRAYERS FOR support and courage in the face of such devastating floods.

Jean Leeman

We pray that the peace and presence of our great big God will fill your hearts everyday in all circumstances.

Helen Meinel

PRAYING YOU will sense God's love through the caring of others to move through the recovery process.

Eileen Pridham

DON'T LOSE your faith in God - he is still there caring for you.

Lyn Whitmarsh

PART OF this donation is from my grand daughter who, after watching the heartbreaking images on TV, wanted to donate all her pocket money.

Robin Davies

HOPE MY donation helps someone grieving from the terrible flooding in QLD. My prayers are with all states in Australia suffering from these floods.

Margaret Morris

GOD BE with all of the flood victims in need.

Yvonne de Souza

OUR PRAYERS for God's strength in your massive recovery task.

Port Stephens Uniting
Church Indoor Bowls
Group

OUR THOUGHTS are with all our colleagues and the people of Queensland. We are here to help when needed.

Susan Turner

Thoughts and prayers

AS I WRITE this letter (11 January) a light drizzle is wetting the pavers at our house. Inside, the TV news is bringing graphic images of the devastation caused by the SE Queensland floods. By the time this letter appears Australians will know the full extent of the damage caused by these tragic events.

Having never encountered a flood I can't imagine the heartache and sense of loss being felt by those so closely impacted.

The physical and structural damage will be assessed in monetary terms however the emotional damage to people's lives can never be costed.

To our friends in UC Fellowships across the state, and indeed to all Queenslanders, our thoughts and prayers are with you.

Allan Gibson
Cherrybrook,
NSW



President backs Appeal

IN RESPONSE to the devastation caused by the flooding in Queensland, a national Appeal has been launched by the Assembly in co-operation with the Queensland Synod and Lifeline Queensland to enable the Uniting Church to play its part in the care and recovery of affected communities, families and individuals.

UCA members have always shown extraordinary generosity in supporting our fellow Australians. The amazing Uniting Church response to the bushfires in Victoria last summer remains fresh in my memory.

I have also encouraged congregations to support the Appeal by holding a retiring offering in the next few weeks.

The proceeds of all monies raised through the appeal will be used by the church to:

- provide emergency assistance to flood affected victims who have missed out on the immediate help they need;
- provide for longer-term pastoral support, rehabilitation and recovery programs for individuals, families and communities devastated by floods.

The Uniting Church has developed expertise over many years in responding to

community needs in times of crisis in both the short and longer term.

Sending teams of trained ministers and counsellors into traumatised communities at a time when other assistance is dropping off has been a very effective contribution.

Following that up by providing longer-term support, sometimes by appointing a counsellor to be present in an affected community for months or even years later, has also proved to be of enormous help.

The Synod of Queensland is already working for the immediate assistance of victims and is planning for its long-term role.

I ask that we join together to pray that further losses from these disastrous floods will be minimal; that those directly affected and those with families affected are able to quickly restore stability in their lives; for emergency services personnel and for those with other heavy tasks and responsibilities in the response effort; and for our church members to generously support the Appeal.

Rev Alistair Macrae
President, The
Uniting Church in
Australia



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Email your classified advertisements to journey@ucaqld.com.au

Send your letters to journey@ucaqld.com.au or Journey GPO Box 674, Brisbane QLD 4001.

Please keep letters to a maximum of 250 words. Letters may be edited due to space limitations.

Preference will be given to letters responding to articles or letters in the most recent edition of *Journey*.

What are you optimistic about?

Most answers were collected at Family Camp at Alexandra Park Conference Centre December 2010 – January 2011.

Berry Kerr, Deception Bay

I'M HOPING for a stress-free life in retirement, as we enjoy doing the things we can still do for others and ourselves. In March we're travelling on the Indian Pacific. We're looking forward to our parish hosting a presbytery meeting. We're also organising the visit of the National Chairman of the UCA Adult Fellowship, Alistair Christie, when he visits Queensland.

Margaret Adsett, Redcliffe

I'M LOOKING forward to our business and family life as our children pass milestones: Joel in Year Twelve and Eloise in Year Eleven. We'll be chasing Jacob around soccer as he plays at interstate level. From sport and other connections we have seen Home by Six (our accessible church gathering at Woody Point) grow and in February we'll have our first camp with that group.

Craig Bamford, Kallangur

IN 2011 I have been accepted into a mentoring programme that will enable me to study Maths at TAFE, two classes each week. I will enjoy the friendships I have found at Pine Rivers and I will write more poems and songs. I hope Chris Brindley will put music to *When we see Jesus*.

Donna Turnbull, Sunnybank

THE NEW year offers opportunity for a new beginning. I hope and pray that my relationship with Jesus will deepen; and that I may demonstrate love to those at the margins, leading many to know Jesus as Lord and Saviour. His grace will be sufficient for me.

Luis Woodrow, Graceville

THIS YEAR I begin Year Eight at Indooroopilly State High, in the Spanish Immersion programme. There will be plenty of homework and all the lessons are in Spanish. I'll turn fourteen and I'm looking forward to pilot training as soon as I'm old enough.



Peter Harvey, Frontier Services, and Karyl Davison, Rural Ministry Coordinator

SO OFTEN we hear the churches bemoaning the lack of values within our society. From our experiences working in flood affected areas of Central Queensland over the last few weeks we are highly optimistic about the values that motivate so many in our communities, and indeed our state and nation.

In addition to the visible generosity of those giving to assist flood victims in a variety of ways we have seen a deep sense of community, belonging, care and concern for the neighbour and stranger.

Whether it be in small country towns, regional centres or even our state capital, people, young and old, from different backgrounds, cultures and social groupings have come together without expectation or prejudice.

To us this is a true reflection of God's reign here on earth.

Peter Harvey, is a Frontier Services Patrol Minister currently providing short-term pastoral care in Theodore and Karyl Davison is Rural Ministry Coordinator for the Presbytery of Central Queensland.



It's always easier when you have a plan...

We all make plans as we go through life; each time we plan we make things easier for ourselves and for others. South East Qld's most comprehensive funeral guide the *"Executor Funeral Plan – A Guide to Thoughtful Funeral Pre-Planning"* has been designed for you, as a simple, convenient way to preplan your funeral arrangements. For your **free** copy of the guide, call us on **3852 1501** or complete the coupon and mail to us.

Post the coupon to: Alex Gow Funerals,
56 Breakfast Creek Rd, Newstead, 4006

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Address: _____
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