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UNITINGCARE ANNUAL REPORT

"Despite the impact of the floods and cyclones, UnitingCare has continued throughout the year to deliver services to many thousands of people." **Anne Cross**

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CRICKET ON THE FRONTIER

"When you get a visit from Frontier Services it just brightens up your day."
Amanda Bowen

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REMEMBERING DIGGERS - P3

AWARD WINNING PLAYGROUP - P11

NOVA B LEVER - P12

29TH SYNOD:

TOGETHER ON THE WAY, ENRICHING COMMUNITY



By Mardi Lumsden

AFTER FIVE days, members of the 29th Synod of the Uniting Church in Queensland closed the meeting in worship on Wednesday 12 October, 2011, at Alexandra Park Conference Centre on the Sunshine Coast.

More than 340 voting members from all over the Church in Queensland joined visitors, staff and volunteers to celebrate the work of God through the Church and discern the direction of the whole Synod.

Members of the 29th Synod made several big decisions that impact the whole Uniting Church in Queensland in an effort to actively live out our 2020 Vision.

Proposals passed to assist the Synod to be better organised for mission included a "re-invigoration" of the Synod Standing Committee (SSC), adopting a new model for the Standing Committee based on competence rather than representation.

Ordained ministers elected to the new SSC were David Baker, Linda Hamill, Garry Hardingham, Lu

Senituli, and David Won Kim.

Lay members elected to the SSC were Greg Adsett, John Agnew, Geoff Batkin, Allan Hanson, and Roberta Stanley.

Ex-officio members are the Moderator, General Secretary, chair of the UnitingCare Board and the chair of the Synod Finance, Investment and Property Board, Chair of the Board of Christian Formation and, to reflect the covenanting agreement with the Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress, a nominee of Congress in Queensland.

In passing the proposal for a Governance Nomination Remuneration Committee (GNRC) the Chair of this committee will also be an ex-officio member of SSC.

The 29th Synod nominated Rev Dr Anita Monro and Rev Dr Chris Walker for the position of President-elect of the National Assembly.

These names will be added to the list of worthy nominees for the position of President-elect which will be determined next July at the 13th National Assembly in Adelaide.

Continued P.4

MONTHLY PRAYER
 MORE INFO ON PAGE 4

God in community,
 may our worship, witness and service
 be instruments of your grace and peace
 in the Church and the world
 in the name of Jesus. Amen.

On the way, together

WHEN I was in Year Seven at Moggill State School I started attending the Rays Group at the local Methodist Church.

One evening we played a game in which we were issued five matches each. We were given the challenge of circulating the hall asking questions. But the rule was that you could not answer using either "yes" or "no".

If a person answered using one of the forbidden words they had to give you one of their match sticks.

At the end of the game the people with only a few matches left had them taken from them and given to someone who had tricked the other girls out of their matches.

The ones who had only a few ended up with none and the ones with many ended up with even more. It didn't seem like a fair way to end.

For devotions that night we were reminded that life is like that sometimes. We were reminded of that often quoted, and sometimes

misquoted dictum, "To whom much is given, much is required".

I have often thought that my life has been a bit like that.

I was born in Australia at a time when childhood diseases were mostly preventable.

Our parents loved and nurtured us and encouraged my sisters and me to get a good education.

Mum and Dad had grown up in Christian households and taught us to pray, to be thankful and to ask God's blessings on all our loved ones each day.

We have inherited a rich and diverse heritage but we have the freedom to bring a fresh slant on that heritage.

They loved to sing and we learned some of the songs of faith at home and at school.

I attended university for free and by the time I had a sense of call to ministry, women like Rev

Dr Norma Spear had already blazed the trail to ordination in the Methodist Church in Queensland just a few years prior to the formation of the Uniting Church in 1977.

The Uniting Church practised affirmative action before it was fashionable, regulating that, in its first six years, one third of all appointments to Councils would be filled by women.

As I take up the role of Moderator of the Queensland Synod I realise what a privilege it is.

The opportunity to respond to a call to ministry and ordination is not available to women in some other Christian churches.

By and large my colleagues in ministry have accepted me and affirmed me.

Being appointed as the first female Army Chaplain in Australia in 1992 has helped me to build networks and friendships with clergy of other denominations.

I bring to the role a strong

Message from the Moderator

Rev Kaye Ronalds



pastoral heart and a capacity for listening and seeking to understand the perspective of others. Nevertheless, I have some firm opinions about some matters that I will bring to the table for conversation.

I like to read biographies because it gives me an insight into how other people deal with the complexity of life and manage the joy and grief of relationships.

My favourite book of the Bible is the Gospel of Luke because it provides such riches for a preacher. Not everyone makes meaning of life events in the same way but we can provide an atmosphere that allows discussion about that.

Not only do I feel that I have

personally been given much, I also think that the Uniting Church in Australia has been given much.

We have inherited a rich and diverse heritage but we have the freedom to bring a fresh slant on that heritage. Our witness to Jesus can be given voice in whatever group that we meet.

We have many riches for our pilgrimage together on the way enriching community.

Luke 12:48b

"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked." (New International Version)

Signs of consensus

TWAS THE night before Synod and all through the house everyone wanted to hear how the consensus model of voting worked.

After a fascinating day at Pilgrim Learning Community's REFUEL: School of theology, at Caloundra Uniting Church, I spent the night with family who have never been part of the Uniting Church.

Perplexed by what I was about to embark on, they were fascinated to hear that if the whole voting group (in this case over 340 people) didn't agree on something the voices of those who disagreed were heard and further thought and discussion is required until all members were happy to proceed.

It really is a remarkable feat and, when the consensus model works well, it can be quite moving to witness a sea of orange cards held high to offer support for a proposal.

This was evident at the 29th Synod on multiple occasions, most memorably when the members endorsed a proposal to make an apology to former residents of church owned orphanages, particularly in

Aurukun, far north Queensland, who are still living with the pain of trauma from that time.

There was a hush in the room as 340 people held their orange cards high.

The support of the proposal regarding tuberculosis clinics was a proud moment where the church looked beyond its immediate business to make a difference in the world around us.

The Synod meeting was centred around the 2020 Vision (the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey) and this Synod meeting felt different to others I have attended.

There was a sense of prayerfulness, peace, and a focus to continue to discern God's will for the Uniting Church in Queensland by heading on the journey to enrich our communities together.

It was a pleasure to have the interaction of the FUN (For Under Nineteens) Synod members who brought insight into the meeting and creativity into worship.

We posted stories, photo galleries, audio files, tweeted

and facebooked as many updates as possible to make sure people felt part of the meeting, even if they couldn't be there.

An edition of *Journey* will never capture every moment of a Synod meeting, but I hope in these pages you find the essence of what is possible when such a varied group of people share a common goal.

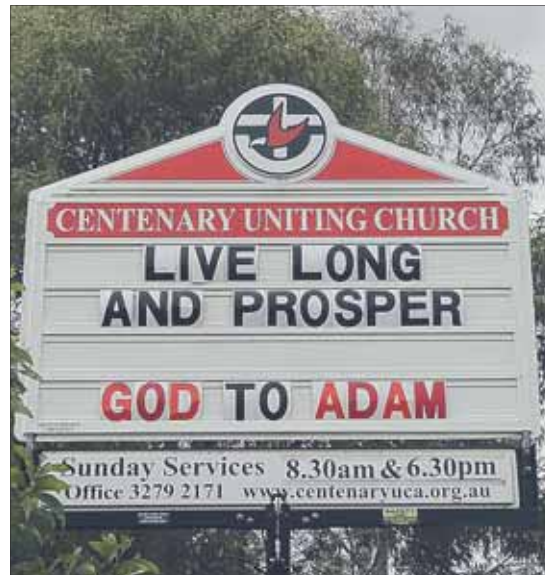
It makes me wish the consensus model was used on the floor of our parliament instead of the insult shouting matches we currently see.

Imagine the changes in Australian society if our parliament was filled with listening and discerning. Maybe we could teach them a thing or two?

Mardi Lumsden
Editor



Sign of the times



CENTENARY UNITING Church in the western suburbs of Brisbane has been doing a series of signs throughout October based on movie quotes.

Joshua Green posted this sign on the Uniting Church Queensland Facebook page and it instantly struck a chord with us. Thanks Joshua for sending this in.



Art celebrates belonging

By Jane Moad

THIRTEEN ARTWORKS by young people aged between five and 17 years old have been chosen to feature in the 2012 Synod calendar.

Throughout 2012, the calendar aims to encourage the whole of the Uniting Church in Queensland to reflect on what it means to belong as part of the *Together on the way, enriching community* journey.

A panel of expert judges was formed to choose the artworks to be shown in the calendar, with the panel itself demonstrating the theme "Belonging, together as Church".

Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, was joined by Tony Anderton, Coordinator of Wesley Mission Brisbane's Art from the Margins, and Maureen Hansen, Curator

and Healing Arts Coordinator at The Wesley Hospital in Brisbane.

Ms Ronalds commented on the joy of viewing all the artworks, saying that the young people had given expression to what it means to "belong, together as Church".

"Each entrant has a different angle on the competition theme," said Ms Ronalds. "Some are saying that the church is about people coming together. Others are about the church being outward looking, in particular focusing on the environment. And some have taken a more symbolic approach to the theme.

"Their creativity reminds me that human beings reflect God's creativity."

Fellow judge, Mr Anderton, said artistic expression gives voice to the basic need to communicate. "It puts into images a person's

reflection on the world that might not otherwise be spoken about," said Mr Anderton.

"There are some excellent scenes of groups and communities coming together, with a lot of thought put into the structure and composition, with both the words and images used."

Artist, Maureen Hansen, was inspired by the vitality and freshness of the works.

"Being introduced to the way children think about Church is enlightening and vivifying," said Ms Hansen. "Some of the ideas in particular are quite mature.

"There's great originality and expression in these works that can often be lost in adults' work."

Winning entrant, Finn Jewell (age 11) said that belonging to the Uniting Church was about being connected.



Finn Jewell and Gillian Watson with their artworks which will feature in the 2012 Synod calendar. Photo by Holly Jewell

"I enjoy playing games and learning at Discipleship [Sunday School] and being with friends at Girls' Brigade," said Ms Jewell.

Gillian Watson (age 11) said church was about being with God and community.

"My artwork is about the environment and people and community being connected as God's creations," said Ms Watson.

The Queensland Synod will donate \$100 to the chosen charity of each of the winning entrants.

Winning entrants were Amelie Toop, Andie Lang,

Finlay Niemi, Finn Jewell, Gillian Watson, Isabella Lamb, Kiara Taylor, Kimberley and Taylor Randall, Krystal George, Lillian MacGregor, Sarah Hancox, Shania Dekkers, Tahlia Hanson, and Xavier Dekkers.

View all the entries at the www.journeyonline.com.au photo gallery.

The calendar can be ordered for only \$2 each. Order by the end of November at www.together.ucaqld.com.au/artcompetition

Remembering those who serve

UNITING CHURCH Minister, Rev John Saunders, is on active service as a Chaplain with the Australian Army in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan, where he has been since mid-June this year.

When he arrived in the Middle East it was the height of summer with temperatures between 40-



Australian Army Chaplain, Rev John Saunders, in Uruzgan Province, Afghanistan. Photo courtesy of Defence media

50C. By the time he leaves he will have been through a winter with temperatures as low as -15C.

In 2001, when he was an Educational Corps officer in Darwin, Mr Saunders heard the call of God into ministry and military chaplaincy.

From his post in Afghanistan, he said that going on deployments to exotic, but dangerous, places is par for the course in military service and represents the ultimate goal of serving in the Defence Force – to be on active service, defending the nation and helping bring peace and stability to places in the world where such concepts exist only in dreams and hopes for the future of war-weary people.

Back in Australia Mr Saunders has a very patient and accommodating family.

His wife Jan, son Michael and daughter Jessica, live in Brisbane while John works in Townsville as Padre of 2 RAR when in Australia.

"To say it's not easy is an understatement," he said.

But this is the reality of the sacrifice many Defence Force

families make on a regular basis.

Going on deployment and the resultant dislocation from loved-ones is something many members have to endure and it can take an immense toll on family life.

When it comes to military ministry Mr Saunders said he ministers to people, just like he did at home in congregational ministry. The only difference being that his "flock" wear a uniform, are often not all that religious, and work in a dangerous environment thousands of kilometres away from home.

"I help people with personal problems, family needs, work stresses, dealing with combat, and the spiritual explorations which these hardships inevitably throw up," he said.

He is also actively involved in inter-religious dialogue with local Muslim leaders, a very rewarding and enriching part of his role.

When asked why he has Christians in military service and how relevant it is to have military chaplains in the modern army, Mr Saunders said despite Australia existing as a post-

Christian culture, that in no way means the search for meaning and spirituality is diminished.

"The fact is we are there ministering to men and women, bringing comfort, hope, and a listening ear, irrespective of whether the people we serve are religious or not," he said.

"This is an exciting thing – to live on the cutting edge of faith in a world where many see faith as out-dated and unnecessary and to hold the beacon of that faith to men and women who literally put their lives on the line to serve the interests of others."

With Remembrance Day around the corner (11 November), Mr Saunders asked Church members to not only grieve for the loss of lives cut down in their prime in wars past and present, and pray for peace in our world, but to also remember to support those who continue to serve, believing that they are making a difference and making life safer and more stable for the people in the lands they serve, through prayers, letters, emails, and care packages.

According to news reports 34 Australians have been wounded in action in Afghanistan this year, most recently five in Uruzgan Province, including the death of young Private, Matthew Lambert.

"Both Remembrance Day and Anzac Day are significant days for those of us who serve and those who have served," Mr Saunders said.

"We will mark the occasion with memorial services here at Tarin Kot and in the bases throughout Uruzgan Province.

"To those who have lost loved-ones both over here and in past conflicts, particularly Matty Lambert's partner and family, the most I can say is that we who are on active service feel your loss in that we have lost a mate, a co-worker, a fellow-soldier and it hurts us.

"The difference is people at home can grieve – we cannot, yet. We have to gather ourselves, go outside the wire and do it all again the next day."

For more information on Defence chaplaincy contact Rev Gale Hall, Convenor, UCA Defence Force Chaplaincy on 0410 346 573 or gphall@hotmail.net.au



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REV KAYE Ronalds, moved a minute of appreciation for the work, dedication and faith of past Moderator, Rev Bruce Johnson.

"The Synod has been nourished by his writings as he reflected on his encounters with people and with the books he has been reading," she said.

"Bruce, we thank you for your ministry of leadership which you have exercised with courage and compassion. We want to record our deep gratitude to your wife, Heather, (above with Mr Johnson) for giving you understanding and support as she has partnered with you in this journey."

DURING THE 29th Synod Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, launched an initiative to encourage people to say a short prayer at midday each Monday.

The initiative comes out of the Priority Direction B group looking at promoting a discipline of prayer and spirituality (both individually and corporately).

Each month a new prayer will be printed in *Journey*

(see page 1) for you to cut out and put in your wallet.

The Communications team also designed prayer card holders. Ten of these were in the congregation packs available for every congregation at the Synod meeting and a limited number of additional card holders are available on request.

To request these please email tara.burton@ucaqld.com.au



THE SUMMER Madness crew kept Synod members alert and raised funds to help provide Summer Madness 2012 attendees with a copy of the *Skey* devotional. A huge thankyou to their volunteers, especially Danica Patselis (above) who made delicious fairtrade Merlo coffee for more than 12 hours a day for five days.



ON THE first day of business, artist and minister, Rev Alan Robinson (left) of Beenleigh Region Uniting Church, drew as he spoke the Bible reading, Mark 2:1-12 (Jesus forgives and heals a paralysed man), in his own words.

Just as in the reading, people were amazed by the way Mr Robinson opened up a familiar reading in a new way. The resulting three drawings were displayed on the wall at the front of the meeting.



DR BEN Myers (left), Lecturer in Systematic Theology at United Theological College in Sydney, gave a fascinating Norman and Mary Millar lecture on Saturday 8 October challenging those present to experience the aesthetics of Christian mission through creativity, community, and culture.

29TH SYNOD:

TOGETHER ON THE WAY, ENRICHING COMMUNITY

From P:1

The Synod elected 18 representatives to the 13th Assembly.

Ministers going to the Assembly meeting are Lynette Burden, Stu Cameron, Michelle Cook, Heather Griffin, Peter Lockhart, David MacGregor, Viliani Mila, Josie Nottle, and Lu Senituli.

Lay members are John Agnew, Lauren Ash, Jenny Brecknell, Hayden Gaffel, Tegan Gaffel, Matt Gees, Andrew Johnson, Monique

Mawbey, and Elaine Rae. Ex-officio members are the Moderator and General Secretary.

Members of the 29th Synod also asked the SSC, as part of the continuing *Together on the way, enriching community* journey, to consider options for changes to presbytery structures to help resource mission, look at how the Synod can support a justice advocate (and what that might look like) and look into making specific funding available for youth and young adult events.

General Proposal 5 brought by Jan Bryde and Bruce Cornish (regarding lobbying the Government to maintain tuberculosis clinics in the Torres Strait) was made stronger and passed by consensus.

A moving moment was shared as Synod members made an apology to our Indigenous brothers and sisters who still live with the pain of past abuse or mistreatment experienced while living in institutional care provided by the church and its agencies in years gone by, particularly in Aurukun, far north Queensland.

Amongst the decision making, the meeting was filled with (and surrounded

by) prayer and worship as well as a celebration of those in ministry and the invaluable volunteers within the church.

Members heard of the struggles of our partner churches in Fiji and Tuvalu from UnitingWorld's Bruce Mullan.

Bible studies by Rev Dr Chris Walker, National Consultant in Theology and Discipleship, challenged members to equip people for deeper discipleship.

Old friendships were sustained, new friendships began and all present heard stories of God at work throughout the whole church in Queensland and the world.

The thankyou's included a standing ovation for

Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, General Secretary, Dr Shirley Coulson, and Business Committee Convener, Andrew Johnson.

Synod members were also very appreciative of all the volunteers and staff who planned and attended the meeting and the staff of Alexandra Park Conference Centre.

To the strains of the song "How then shall I live?" Moderator, Rev Kaye Ronalds, sent Synod members back to their own communities with the challenge to continue to live out God's call and the discerned 2020 Vision for the Uniting Church in Queensland.



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Synod finances on the way, but not there yet

By Jane Moad

THE SYNOD'S financial position was described as "at best stable" but "not out of the crisis" in the Finance, Investment & Property (FIP) Board report to the 29th Synod on 8 October.

FIP Board Chairperson, Andrew McBryde, stated that the Synod was "on the way, but not there yet" and outlined the direct strategies the FIP Board was pursuing to continue to improve the situation, but stressed the need for further attention on finances.

"The current funding model of the Synod is not sustainable," said Mr McBryde.

"Alternative funding models continue to be developed, and the FIP Board aims to have a proposal for the Synod Standing Committee by the end of the year.

"We need to focus on the utilisation of our resources, both property and people, and to give where we can."

Director of Finance & Property Services, Robert Packer, advised that there was both good news and bad news regarding the Synod's financial position.

He reported that while the draft financial results for the 2010-11 financial year show a small surplus for the Synod and a reduction in debt, there are still significant concerns that need to be addressed.

"The net asset position of the Synod must be improved, but there are only two ways of closing the gap—an equity injection and accumulating surpluses," said Mr Packer.

At the 28th Synod, a capital injection of \$20 million was requested through the transfer of

beneficial use of property to the Synod.

In their report, the FIP Board acknowledged the \$5 million in property which had been gifted to the Synod to date, with a further \$3 million to be added, pending valuations and best alternate use options.

The report noted that the need still existed for further properties to be transferred to the Synod, and for "de-cluttering strategies" to streamline systems, products and services, and to reduce costs.

"The surplus for 2010-11 does not add much to the net asset position," said Mr Packer.

"The Treasury operations have an imbalance between what is owed to depositors and the amount invested. In a falling property and equity market, the result of this has been that loan rates have increased and deposit



Director of Finance & Property Services, Robert Packer, presents the report to the Synod in session. Photo by Osker Lau

rates have dropped—a situation that neither the borrowers nor depositors have liked."

Mr Packer also advised that while the line of credit with ANZ was currently undrawn, the debt levels were forecast to significantly increase.

"Cash flow forecasts of agencies' capital programs will

require a drawdown on the ANZ facility, possibly as high as \$100 million," he said.

Mr McBryde also expressed the FIP Board's appreciation for the support provided by Mr Packer during the challenging financial circumstances and the work of Finance & Property Services staff members.



ON SUNDAY 9 October, Synod members experienced worship as Messy Church.

Led by FUN (For Under Nineteens) Synod delegates and the South-East corner youth and children's workers, people roamed between 13 different activities based on the reading John 15:1-17 (The vine and the branches).

Synod Bible study leader, Rev Wendi Sargeant, reminded members that "it's OK to be messy every now

and again!"

Synod members were invited to experience 13 creative stations around the space including a magnetic graffiti wall to write sorry prayers (some of which the young people later read out), chalk drawings on paths, learning a song, reading and discussing Wesley's notes, potato sponge painting, bookmark making, collage and many more activities to help people engage with the reading.



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For a full profile and enquiries contact:
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