

Northern Light



March 2015 ~ Far North Coast Uniting
Presbytery Synod of NSW & ACT

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Your New-look Northern Light Newsletter— March 2015

It has been a busy start to 2015 but a good one nevertheless!

Harking back to 2014 briefly, it was a great pleasure to host the Retired Minister's lunch at the House with No Steps in December.

A good time was had by all as colleagues still active in ministry and those now enjoying retirement years had a fabulous meal and exchanged many stories and laughs. Santa Claus even paid a visit!

Since the New Year we have had the great pleasure of welcoming Pastor Mark Callaghan into ministry with the McLean, Brooms Head, Brushgrove and Lawrence congregations.

Mark's induction service was held on the weekend of the Queensland cyclone and the subsequent soaking rains hitting the north coast. Despite the weather a good number turned up to welcome Mark to McLean and the Far North Coast Presbytery.



With our presbytery resources more stretched than ever these days it has been a while since an issue of Northern Light has been seen. To keep this important means of communicating across the presbytery alive and well, why not send some of your good news stories and photos to Joá in the office and that way we can all better share in our various journeying.

Honouring our People

Several of our people were honoured across the Northern Rivers with Australia Day Awards. Mr Ken Eldridge was awarded an OAM by the Tweed Shire. Rev Aunty Dorothy Harris-Gordon was awarded the Debra Rhodes Aboriginal Citizen of the Year Award by the Lismore Shire. Margaret Ryan, was awarded the Alstonville Senior Citizen of the year and Adrienne Shepherd from Mullumbimby was awarded the Byron Shire Citizen of the year.

Well done to all of these people!

Moderator's visit!

It was great to host our Moderator Rev Myung Hwa Park at our February Presbytery meeting. Rev Park challenged those present to ask: 'How do we respond to the community around us as the body of Christ? We need to let go of our old ways, to change the face of Church, to become an alternative Community of God, How often do we remember Jesus' call? How do we witness to the community around us, and how do we connect the spirit of the people with God's spirit. Connecting peoples spirit with god, cannot begin to happen unless we first transform ourselves.

Rev Park was able to meet with our ministry agents at the Just Grounds Café after our meeting for a very encouraging time of sharing and challenge.

Over a very busy weekend the Moderator was able to visit the Caroon Aged Care village, spend some time exploring Nimbin and attended worship at Lismore and with the Marmung congregation at Coraki.



Macleans
Uniting Church
GOD'S CALL TO A TASK
INCLUDES HIS STRENGTH
TO COMPLETE IT



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KYOGLE
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Uniting for the common good

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A SIGN OF THE TIMES!

It is good to see a number of our churches giving their buildings some TLC and many now have new signs out front!

We can hardly expect our communities to care about us if they see buildings looking dowdy and uncared for and with signs that have seen better days.

McLean have had a great refurbishment of their worship space inside and out. Well done church!

Retirement of Rev Ron Law

At our February Presbytery meeting we formally - in an informal way - recognised the retirement of Rev Ron Law. Ron has had a significant ministry in the Far North Coast Presbytery and this was very strongly affirmed by the number of people who spoke of the impact of his ministry. Ron and Coralyn responded to the many kind and appreciative words and the Moderator and presbytery members laid hands on them both as we gave thanks for his ministry and prayed God's blessing upon their future.



Marmung Gathering

At the Marmung gathering on Sunday February 15 the Moderator and presbytery chair Rev John Thornton enjoyed a great time of worship with our Indigenous brothers and sisters. Rev Ray Milliken from NSW/ACT Synod spoke powerfully about Aboriginal theology and at the end of the service the Moderator, Presbytery chair and Marmung leaders laid hands on Pastor Malveena Walsh as she was commissioned as Pastor / Leader of the Marmung ministry.



Community Engagement Workshops

The Far North Coast Presbytery and Uniting Care combined to offer the presbytery a series of workshops at Lismore in early March. These workshops were a follow on from a similar program at Mullumbimby late last year, giving an opportunity for the more southerly based congregations to spend time in sharing stories and building resources and networks. Led by Chris McAlpine and Jon O'Brien from Uniting Care we looked at ways of building stronger community connections and the issue of social justice advocacy.

On Monday evening there was a table discussion on the matter of Affordable Housing. We also heard from David Mitchell, Business Development Manager with Uniting Care Children's Services and Tim Allsop Community Services Manager for the Clarence valley. A really good and informative time and thanks to those able to attend.



OUTREACH TO ACMENA JUVENILE JUSTICE IN GRAFTON

The Kairos Prison Ministry has been given permission to conduct a Kairos Torch program at Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre in Grafton, and are looking for committed people to be on team. 'Kairos Prison Ministry' has been active for many years in Grafton Corrective Centre until this goal was rationalised some years ago. However it is hoped the Kairos Torch programme will be able to be conducted within the Grafton based Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre; but we need a team to conduct the program. The 'Kairos Torch Program' aims to increase the sense of self-worth within young offenders through understanding their own values of power loss, victimisation, loss of identity and other non-social values and replacing them with Christian based values of forgiveness, increase of self-worth, and spiritual awareness.



The program has been conducted at the Frank Baxter Juvenile Justice Centre for some years, as well in South Australia and the United States, with positive results. Now there is a chance for the program to be held in Grafton Northern NSW. A recent workshop about the Kairos Torch Program was recently held at Grafton and the following outcomes were agreed on:-

That we make the "Kairos Torch Program" at Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre a personal prayer point.

That a list of people who are sincerely committed to helping young people to be on team, and to be prepared to do the required training of over forty hours be assembled. That Christian Aboriginal and Torres Strait island people be encouraged to be part of the 'Kairos Torch team'. If there is anyone who feels they may be interested in this Christian outreach work, be sincerely committed to helping young people as well be prepared to do the rigorous training of over forty hours (including working with children screening prior to conducting the Kairos Torch program may contact or more information. :

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A reflection

Did you hear the story about the man who fell out of his pram when he was just a little boy? Well, it seems the story originated in the Bible. Okay, he didn't actually fall out of a pram; but why let facts spoil a good story.

The boy's name is Mephibosheth and he figures in one of the best examples of grace you can find in the Scriptures. King David is in a good place having conquered his enemies and the nation of Israel is at peace. He begins to reflect on life and asks if there is anyone left of the house of Saul and Jonathan that he might show kindness to.

Read of Mephibosheth in 2 Samuel 4:4 and 2 Samuel 9:1-13 and you might like to consider how your congregation is reaching the 'crippled', derided, marginalised and oppressed of your region.