

## MIRACLE REPRIEVE FOR CHURCH BUILDING



# The Northern Light

journal of the Presbytery of Far North Coast NSW

**The Uniting Church at Ballina will not be demolished**

**Instead the building will be repaired and is likely to be back in use as soon as next month**

Ballina UC Minister Rev Maggie De Leeuw said at the last minute a heritage builder, who had heard of the possible demolition through the local paper, came forward and after inspecting the church declared that the building was in good shape.

**WHO SAID  
GOD WORKS  
IN  
MYSTERIOUS  
WAYS?**

“He said the building was doing exactly what this style of building was made to do, ~ allowing for a bit of movement.

He recommended a heritage engineer in Queensland be engaged to make a new assessment of the building. “

But that’s not all!

Rev De Leeuw said the day before council voted whether to demolish the building, the church received a substantial amount of pledges for the repairs.

“Strangely enough these pledges equalled exactly the engineer’s new quote for the repairs needed for the church”

It all happened so fast.

One minute the church was about to be demolished because there were not enough funds to pay for the restoration and the building deemed a possible threat to falling down and injuring people and property.

“Now we may not even have to call in any of the pledges because the new quote is significantly less than originally quoted, though the final costings won’t be known until the work is completed.

The Ballina Church is preparing to turn the reopening of the church into a special community event towards the end of July.

“It has been an amazing turn of events! God rescuing the church building is great, but in comparison to what He can do with our lives, the church building is a small thing.

God is into miracles, the biggest one being resurrecting, not just of dysfunctional buildings, but even more so, in resurrecting us out of situations that steal our life.

He is into resurrecting us out of addictions, harmful relationships, depression, hopelessness, grief, illness, shame and guilt.

He is into resurrecting us from spiritual death to eternal life.

God is able to resurrect us out of anything, if we will come to Him and ask for His help”, Rev de Leeuw said

## YAMBA ~ CENTRE OF THE PRESBYTERY ....TILL NEXT MEETING

**Reminiscent of recent Federal Political Parties, the Presbytery has a new leader, albeit until the next election.**

**Presbytery has agreed to come under the leadership of Rev Robert Griffith, minister of Yamba until the next election due at the August meeting of Presbytery.**

Robert takes the helm from Rev Peter Boughey who accepted the leadership role from John Thornton at last August's meeting.

Peter stepped down from the position at the last Standing Committee meeting citing family and work commitments.

Robert comes to the role after only two years in the Uniting Church but sees it as a return to his roots.

Robert was born on a farm just outside Orange, NSW and is one of five children. He was born into a Christian family and spent his childhood years at St Johns Presbyterian Church in Orange where his father was an Elder and his mother was Sunday School superintendent for 26 years.

At the age of 14, having drifted from church and not embrace a faith of his own, Robert was invited to a Churches of Christ youth activity on Friday night. It was on that very first night after a BBQ when he was presented with the gospel in a way he had not recalled. He embraced God's gift of salvation that night and was baptised by immersion on 4th February 1973. As Robert rose from the waters of baptism, he had a deep sense of God's call and knew then that he would one day find himself in full time ministry.

After serving as a youth leader and lay presider for several years, Robert felt a call back to the Church of his youth, just prior to Church Union in 1977. He can still remember reading the Basis of Union multiple times and feeling incredibly privileged to be a part of this miracle of God and the birth of the Uniting Church in Australia. He quickly put his hand up for leadership and joined the inaugural UCA State Youth Council as Mission, Outreach and Evangelism Convenor.

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## BUT NOT JUST A CHAIR BUT A TREASURER AS WELL

Presbytery, meeting in Lismore last month resolved to accept the appointment of Guy Williams as the new treasurer.

Guy, also from Yamba, has been a practicing accountant for many years and was the treasurer of the Pennant Hills Church in Sydney for over 20 years.



Downsizing in the company he worked for, has brought Guy to the far north coast.

"I am looking forward to tackling the financial needs of the Presbytery and serving the church in this way."

Guy will be working with the Presbytery and the Congregations in changing the payrolls over to the Synod.

This was to have happened with the change of the financial year but it has been postponed to allow Standing Committee to investigate further

## FROM PAGE 2 REV ROBERT GRIFFITH NEW PRESBYTERY CHAIR

Then love struck! Whilst serving as a Study Leader at a local ISCF camp, Robert met Michelle and it was love at first sight. Michelle was a newer Christian at that point and so rather than pull her away from her support group, Robert moved to the Baptist Church. After many years serving as a Deacon, Lay Preacher, Choir master and lay presider, Robert entered theological college and was ordained as a Minister of the Word in 1993. He served at Auburn, Chatswood, Blayney/Millthorpe and then fifteen years as the Senior Minister at Orange Baptist Church. During this time he was also Chairman of the local Ministers Association for many years and served nine years on the Board of Orange Christian School, four of those as Chairman. Robert also served two years on the National Board of Christian Parent Controlled Schools Ltd., overseeing the work of 85 schools across the nation. In 2008, Robert stepped out of the front line and entered a long-awaited sabbatical. This was to last a year or two, but it lasted six years, during which time Robert completed some more studies at the UCA Centre for Ministry in North Parramatta. It was during this time that he felt a strong pull back to his roots and he was accepted into the Uniting Church and moved into his first placement in February 2014 at Yamba.

Robert has always felt a call to the region, not just the local Church and so he became involved in the Presbytery immediately and helped re-launch the Lower Clarence Ministers Association after a very long period of inactivity. Robert's vision for the Presbytery is the same as God's vision for us all – to advance the Kingdom of Heaven, by God's grace, for God's glory, through God's Spirit. John 5:19 has been a defining verse of Scripture for Robert for many years. This is where Jesus said that He only did what He saw the Father doing and later in John we read where He said He only spoke the words the Father gave Him to speak. Robert's greatest passion is for us to discern what the Father is already doing and saying and has been doing for years. This involves taking an audit of our people, their gifts, their passions, their willingness to serve and allowing the ministry of the Presbytery to be shaped around the parts of the Body which God has already arranged and given us.



## PRESBYTERY CAFE CALLS ITS QUILTS

### Lismore's Just Grounds Cafe has been sold.

It seems the cafe, an activity of the Presbytery has not been the financial breadwinner it was thought to be, and a decision was made at the last Presbytery that it should be offered to the staff to run it.

Standing Committee has reported that the chef has taken on a lease and it will now be a vegetarian cafe.

## DON'T FORGET SYRIA

April's "Syria Sunday" service at Yamba Uniting Church raised over \$1000 towards World Vision's Syria Crisis Appeal.

Anne Schaeffer, who organised the event, was delighted and said "The response from the community was a great encouragement, particularly when we remember that many others also donated directly online.

"The refugee crisis in Syria is the largest since World War 2 and the situation is desperate.

We wanted to show in a practical way what "Love your neighbour" means and to bring the situation to the community's attention."

People can still donate online at [worldvision.com.au/Syria](http://worldvision.com.au/Syria) or by phoning 13 32 48."

## NEW KIDS ON THE BLOCK

**As mentioned in last Northern Light the Byron Shire has caught not one but two young leaders**

We are Phil and Greer Dokmanovic - with our three

kids Ruby (10), Tim (7) and Arya (3).

We've been married for 16 years and have most recently been living in Pymble whilst Greer was the Chaplain at Pymble Ladies' College and Phil was the Music Minister at Terrigal Uniting Church.

Prior to church ministry we were both High School teachers (Phil in music, Greer in Drama, English and Legal Studies).

We moved up here to the lovely Far North Coast in January to begin as Pastors in the Byron Shire Uniting Churches (Byron Bay, Bangalow, Brunswick Heads and Mullumbimby).

We both grew up in strong Christian families and attended Baptist Churches, coming to faith in our childhood and teen years.

We were both baptised in 1991 - although we didn't know each other yet.

We have also been members of Churches of Christ and it is here Greer did her Bachelor of Theology (at Australian College of Ministries). Phil completed his Masters of Divinity through the Baptist College (Morling College).

For some time we have been feeling drawn to enter into ministry together. In exploring the possibilities we were very keen to stay near family. With Greer's sister and two children living in Bangalow, it was very much an answer to prayer that all unfolded as it did and we find ourselves here together.



## IT WAS NO BULL AT CASINO UNITING

It was an afternoon of Christian-based easy-listening music at the Casino Uniting Church on Sunday May 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Casino Uniting Church would like to thank everyone who attended its 7<sup>th</sup> annual 'Songs of Praise', which is run each year in conjunction with Beef Week.

The audience was treated to entertainment from The Messengers, St Mary's Primary School Choir, Kyogle Citizens Brass Band, One Voice Choir, Rainbow Harmony & the Casino Uniting Church Choir.

The concert was followed by a delightful afternoon tea

At the conclusion of the event a 'retiring offering' was collected, raising in excess of \$400 to be donated to local charities. Some charities which have benefitted from this in the past include Casino SES, Rescue Squad, Cancer Council & Windara.



FROM PAGE 4 GREER & PHIL  
We are excited about being able to further use these gifts and others, in facilitating creative spaces for people to worship and grow in faith.

It has been great to start to get to know the communities of the four churches within which we are ministering.

The people here have a heart to worship, to grow in faith and to serve others.

The community and social justice initiatives that have been operating here for some time are inspiring - the Food Box, Op Shops, Playtime, Cooking classes, Sewing groups, Friendship and Fellowship Gatherings...

We hope to be able to support these communities to not only sustain what they are doing and who they are being, but also to grow - in faith, in depth and in size, reaching out to the local communities and connecting with the many people who travel to the area every year seeking spirituality of some form or other.

## THANKS TO EVELYN

Standing Committee acknowledged the valuable assistance given the Presbytery when Evelyn Daley stepped in as treasurer following the resignation of the previous treasurer. The Committee acknowledged this was an answer to prayer  
Thank you Evelyn!

## SYNOD NSW/ACT 2016

Synod meets on an eighteen month cycle and this year saw Robert Griffith, Peter Overton and myself attend on behalf of the Presbytery. On behalf of us all, we found the experience of Synod this year worthwhile and there were a number of significant decisions made that will have a genuine impact on the church and the community in the years ahead.

The moderator, Myung Hwa Park is a great woman of prayer and that was very evident throughout the meeting in the way that she continued to call the meeting back before the throne of God. It was certainly in step with the theme of Synod this year which was 'Come, Holy Spirit: Renew Our Hearts' The worship was central to the theme this year, with an excellent group of musicians and some through provoking input from a number of speakers throughout the four days.

Fr Steven Bevins who reminded us that "The Spirit in the beginning with Jesus is now with us. It is moving us like it moved Jesus to do the same things - to tell people good news. We have to work at that which is part of contextual theology."

How do we talk about the good news today, how do we talk about the Spirit? Stephen suggests, "We need to work with one another to be open.

Unfortunately we don't see the expression of Jesus. One of the greatest challenges is how do we talk about the gospel to convince us that it is worth sharing?"

This year's Synod also saw the election of a new Moderator who will be inducted at the next Synod meeting in September, 2017.

## MISSION TO POTTSVILLE TO WAIT

Ministry in Pottsville is on hold awaiting the appointment of the Mission Development Officer.

The profile for a Mission Development Officer was presented and agreed upon at the Presbytery meeting. Presbytery Chair, Rev Robert Griffith told the meeting that he hoped the new appointee could be on the job as early as October.

The profile hopes the new Minister 1. would train and enabling teams in churches across the Presbytery to establish viable mission outreach, including regular evaluations, follow up and support in their ventures.

Three candidates were presented to the meeting. All were excellent, but Peter, Robert and myself felt that the meeting got it right when Rev Simon Hansford, who is currently in placement at South Tamworth, was announced as Moderator-elect. It seemed good to us and the Holy Spirit that he takes on this role, and we believe that he will do an excellent job.

We believe that one of the reasons why he was elected was that he offered a vision for the church that was positive and uplifting, which was a point with some contrast to the other candidates. Please pray for him over the next 18 months as he prepares to take on this significant position of service within the life of the church.

UIACC was represented at the Synod by Pastor Ray Minniecon, Resource Worker for the Congress.

In his report he said "First Nations peoples are serving the Lord and filled with his Spirit, that our Creators love and grace is brought to bear our

2. help initiate new ventures that enable the local congregations to work in conjunction with their local communities in genuine areas of need.

3. encourage and enable congregations to grow in their faith and sense of call and purpose.

4. ignite vision and renewed hope in the movement of the Holy Spirit in what God is calling congregations into.

5. work closely with PRC/SC in sharing ways forward in mission and accountability.

Robert told the meeting that it was important that the new MDM have input into the new Pottsville experiment

He added that they were already looking at a particular person

community challenges at every level; that our First Nations peoples are ministering to other First Nations peoples and to the whole world; that the First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous peoples working and standing together in Christ's Church. "Our First Nations peoples are achieving spiritual, economical, social, political and cultural independence," Ray continued. "Our destination hasn't changed either and that is to grow authentic holistic models of Christian First Nations peoples ministry, churches, centres, leaders within and among our people right throughout NSW and the ACT.

So we invite you to be a part of our destination."

Next year Indigenous peoples will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the referendum in 1967.

Rev James Annersley

## TWO MORE CANDIDATES FOR MINISTRY

Presbytery has agreed to send two more folk to the Synod Selection Panel in a bid to receive the OK to begin studies towards ministry

Pastor Phil Greer, newly commissioned pastor in the Byron Shire and Ann Philpott from Lynch's Creek near Kyogle have been given the green light to take the next step towards ordination.

Both have completed their Period of Discernment (POD)

and at the Presbytery meeting, after hearing their story, the meeting felt they should take the next hurdle which is to meet with a sub committee of Synod who will determine whether they too think they are ready for commence the formation course which leads to ordination.

Phil follows his wife, Greer, seeking ordination. Greer put her application into the Kuringai Presbytery, before coming to the far north coast.

Both are seeking to become



Anne is seeking ordination as a Deacon

She told the meeting that God has always been there

"I have always been God's child and to come to Him and seek ordination is the fulfilment of God's leading of me."

Anne said she had been involved in a myriad of activities in the church including chaplaincy and scripture, cafe church, and preaching.

"My POD was done in conjunction with Alstonville Uniting Church which involved Messy Church and Aged Care."

Phil said he came to Christ when he was 4.

"Being a Christian has been part of my life's journey and serving God is part of that.

I received encouragement from God to study and during that time I felt a strong call to serve the church.

I accepted a call to Terrigal as their Music Minister and the minister there, Richard Harris, gave me opportunities to explore my gifts.

It was a wonderful time for me.

Now that I have completed my POD I am ready to take the next step.



## CDW's FOR THE FARNTH COAST

Community Development Workers could soon be in the Presbytery

Uniting Representative on the North Coast, Alan Hosking told the Presbytery meeting that CDW's have been in place on the Mid North Coast for some time, mainly on indigenous projects.

But he said, there was a change happening and with a new grant system enabling Presbytery and Congregations to apply for grants CDW's could be employed in our area as soon as August.

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOODBANK

Lismore's Foodbank turns 4 this year.

Alan Hosking from Lismore Mission told Presbytery that the Foodbank is going from strength to strength.

We have joined now with St Vincent de Paul and have been working with a school in Lismore to provide breakfast for the students.

"Many of the kids come to school without breakfast and intend skipping lunch

We hope that we might be able to work together with 15 other food banks that operate within the Presbytery.

Spending \$20 at our Foodbank is like spending between \$70 and \$80 at Woolies, so its a good deal for those who have nothing.





# NOW YOU CAN HELP

Northern Light

7 June 2016

We see the problem; young people without any direction or future, but we don't know what to do about it, or where to start, so we do nothing.

We remember what it was like for us when we were young.

We needed the support of older folk to help us on our journey and find the right niche.

Well, now you can help.

A new initiative, 'Pathways to Employment' has begun on the North Coast in the hope that this will be the catalyst to wayward youth finding hope and ability.

The programme is the brainchild of Rev Peter Boughey, Chaplain to Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre and has the support of Uniting, our church's social welfare agency.

Peter has formed 'Keeping Our Freedom Youth Corporation' to relate to disengaged young people with the view to teaching them

- ✓ that work is not a charity
- ✓ how to work to enable them to be employed
- ✓ how to work to a timetable
- ✓ how to understand instruction and direction
- ✓ how to stay employable

The programme deals with all facets of work employment and is open to post release 17 to 18 year olds from a detention centre who want to change their lives.

The expectation is that at the end of the course they will be referred to suitable employers

All young people entering the course will be paid up to 20 hours a week and they will also be given opportunity to undertake courses.

At the moment we are manufacturing & assembling wooden toys and cutting rags for mechanics, car dealers, detailers & painters We are also looking for other contract work to enable another suitable income stream. The boys are supervised while at work and mentors are available 24/7 as required.



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