



NORTHERN LIGHT

THE HOLES ARE BEING FILLED IN

New faces are filling the holes throughout the Presbytery, left with the departure of ministers to other ministries and to retirement.

In January Rev Ron French took up the role as minister of Kingscliff Uniting Church on the Tweed in the north eastern part of the state. Ron was last the minister of Menai-Illawong Uniting church in the Sutherland Shire but came north when his wife Janie was inducted to the Banora Point Uniting Church, the southern most part of the Queensland Synod. In the past two years Ron has served as supply minister at Burleigh heads, Southport and Beenleigh as well as serving at St Andrew Hospital in Brisbane as chaplain. Ron is also serving as supply chaplain to the Blue Care Aged Complex at Kingscliff



A beautiful Aboriginal painting has been given to our Presbytery Chair.

The painting was presented to Rev Peter Boughey by the painter and his family as a thank you for his work at Acmena Juvenile Justice Centre at Grafton.

Peter was stoked by the gift which he says is notice that some folk can be rehabilitated.

Peter has recently introduced a programme at the Centre whereby he works with the residents on how to find work once they leave the Centre.

He has been successful in obtaining a small grant which will enable the facility to house a small workshop.

This will teach the residents some skills which will make them more job friendly.



A NEW PASTOR has begun ministry with the Marmung Congregation at Coraki.

Pastor Malveena Walsh has begun her work and is quite excited about the prospects. "I come from the indigenous church and so I am looking forward to serving on the other side of the fence", she said.

"As well as the Coraki church I am working on Cabbage Tree Island and with a new 'Rise n Shine' Church at Lismore which has just joined the Congress."

Malveena said she was glad to be following Rev Dorothy Gordon, whom she had looked up to for some time.

"She is our aunty and will always be in our hearts."

Pastor Walsh said we need spiritual elders who are pillars of the church.

She added that she was delighted there were 30 to 40 folk attending with youth and there were already young men and women training for ministry at the college in Cairns

Pastor Walsh said the funding for the ministry has been secured till June 2017 from UME and the Congress



Plans are already in hand for a bus trip west to sell a number of wooden toys which the boys have assembled from parts that I worked on in my home.

Having the machinery shop in use at the centre will enable the boys to make their own parts.

The toys which include steam trains, bull dozers and a working cane toad and kangaroo, have been a hit with the boys and we hope will be used to brighten the lives of folk who are doing it tough out west.

As well as what is happening at the Centre a number of boys meet with me at my home weekly to work on continuing projects.

Peter said the painter was one of the success stories of the programme.

He went through many interview sessions for a job and did not give up.

Today he is learning new skills as an apprentice.



BALLINA CHURCH AT CROSS ROADS

Ballina Shire Council has resolved to give the Ballina Uniting Church 30 days to find the money to fix the building.

Presbytery, meeting in Casino last month was told the church building was in a major stage of decay.

It was structurally unsound.

But the minister Rev Maggie de Leeuw, said the building was heritage listed.

The Presbytery was told that no one wanted to quote on the repairs needed because no one knew exactly what they would find once they began the restoration. It was hoped that council might intervene and call for the demolition of the building.

But instead have given the church a month to find the money to restore.

Meantime it is believed a buyer for the property has come forward.

GOD'S VISION FOR UNITING CHURCH STILL THE SAME

God's plans for an Australian Church are still the same this year as they were in 1977 when the Uniting Church in Australia was launched.

So said Rev Robert Griffith at the Presbytery of FNC meeting in Casino last month.

Robert was spurring on the Presbytery to think more deeply about ministry and God's purposes for us.

"I was at the inaugural gathering back in 1977 and I can still remember thinking that if God could pull off a miracle like this, then what did He have in store for this exciting new ministry?"

That excitement continued for quite a while but then we ran into some speed bumps.

Personally, I believe we took our eyes off Jesus and the key purpose of the Church to preach the gospel and advance the Kingdom of God on earth.

Our focus shifted, we allowed some fringe issues to become central issues and we made some poor decisions on a number of occasions.

As a result we lost thousands of members and many really good leaders and Ministers.

But in spite of all that, God never let go of us and the vision He birthed in us back in 1977 is still right here in our midst."

Rev Griffith spoke about the recent meeting of ministers from the FNC Presbytery.

He said he was challenged by the meeting.

"We spent almost the entire day sharing our journeys and our heart for ministry on the Far North Coast.

What became apparent to me during this very special day is that God has been deliberately and specifically gathering a team of leaders together in preparation for the next chapter in our journey in this region.

I truly believe that the next couple of years will be pivotal for our Presbytery and for the whole Uniting Church and it will not be a time for retrospection or procrastination – but for vision and action moving forward.

We have a great team of people in a number of key roles in our Presbytery and some of those people are working really hard over and above their own placement or calling.

If we are to step up and move forward to embrace the exciting opportunities God will provide in the days ahead, then we need to do more than our current set up allows.

Rev Griffith then proposed that the Presbytery move forward to replace Rev Ken Day who was the Presbytery's Resource Minister.

Not too long ago we had a full time Presbytery Resource Minister who worked very hard in partnership with the Presbytery Chairperson, the PRC/Standing Committee and the Ministers in Placement.

That position went to half time and then disappeared completely.

However, the needs within our Presbytery have not decreased.

If anything, they have increased when we consider the challenges we now face.

Presbytery voted to proceed with this appointment and to negotiate with appropriate Synod personnel about freeing up some Presbytery funds for this purpose.



NEW PASTORS FOR BYRON SHIRE

A husband and wife team have taken up in Byron Shire ministering to the four Byron Shire Uniting Churches.

A packed church at Bangalow last Sunday afternoon welcomed Phil and Greer Dokmanovic into the Shire

Hailing from the Central Coast most recently, the couple and their three children, have already been taken in by the members of the four churches.

They are a breath of fresh air.

The Commissioning Service was led by Rev Robert Griffith assisted by many members of the four churches.

Presbytery Chair Rev Peter Boughey led the congregations in prayer for Greer and Phil.

The couple are quite at home in ministry, after having served in many roles in the Terrigal Congregation.

As well, Greer was previously chaplain at Pymble Ladies College

THANKSGIVING FOR DAPHNE

A Thanksgiving Service was held in the Alstonville Uniting Church to honour Daphne Lydia Noble nee White.

She was a great lady who reached out to many people both within the church and in the wider community.

Daphne was a skilled musician and singer. Aged 14, she was chosen to perform at the Methodist Young People's Conference held at the Lyceum Theatre in Sydney.

At 17 she moved to Sydney to study piano, singing and elocution at the

Conservatorium. She won many awards and prizes.

In 1941 Daphne returned to Alstonville and was involved in War Work through CWA and Red Cross.

She performed at many significant events in the district during the war years, and later at Welcome Home celebrations for returning servicemen and women.

She set up business teaching piano, singing and elocution and continued teaching until she was 95.

Almost every child in Alstonville was one of Mrs Nobles' pupils.

She remembered and was interested in their progress in their later lives.

Daphne and Ralph Noble married in September 1950.





They had three children, John, Peter and Jennifer.
 She was a strong Christian lady, committed to God and to the Methodist (later Uniting) Church.
 She conducted the church choir for 30 years; and was a Sunday School leader for 42 years.
 Daphne continued to support Red Cross until she reluctantly moved to Maranoa hostel.
 Daphne Noble was an encourager - a lady of great faith linked to practical determination to get things done well.
 Alstonville Uniting Church is the poorer with her passing.

PANCAKE DAY 2016

In 2005 UnitingCare NSW.ACT arranged for a sponsor and encouraged Congregations to hold a Pancake Day on Shrove Tuesday just before the beginning of Lent, with the proceeds to be paid to it to support its work or to support a local social outreach. Some ladies of the Casino Congregation took up the challenge. The State wide effort and the sponsorship ceased after several years, but in Casino, Pancake Day has lived on and continues to provide support for the UnitingCare Casino Transport Team.

This year the day was held a week late as a key organiser was away, but the day provided a valuable contact with the community.

Sweet, savoury and gluten free pancakes were sold. The first people to attend arrived at 9.30 am for breakfast, though the advertised time of commencement was 10. For the rest of the morning till after lunch groups of people came and went, buying and eating pancakes and sharing free tea coffee and cool drinks. Several groups of business people had orders delivered to them. There were also visits from Uniting's Day Groups from Casino and Goonellabah. The hall was filled with people, chatter and laughter





OTHER MATTERS AT PRESBYTERY

- Every congregation to receive a book, "Gaining By Losing" as a resource towards understanding how to grow a church today
- Synod Reps were confirmed as Robert Griffith, James Annesley, Peter Boughey, Evelyn Daley, Gordon & Alwyn King, Peter Overton. Synod will be held at Knox grammar from 16 – 19 April 2016
- Robert Griffith will be Presbytery's nomination to Synod Standing Committee
- Safe Church Seminars will be held at Kyogle, Mullumbimby and Alstonville
- Lismore Market Day May 7
- Viability of Bonalbo and Drake Congregations will be assessed over the coming months

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