

PRESBYTERY UPDATE



DATES 2021

Dependent on the lifting of COVID Restrictions

Induction of Rev Stephen Everist

Gerringong UC
Saturday, 11 September

Commissioning of Gedeon Rutabura and Justin Ndengeye as Uniting Church Pastors

Wollongong Mission UC
Sunday, 26 September

Illawarra Presbytery AGM

Bowral-Mittagong UC
10am Saturday, 13 November

Presbytery Retreat 2021

16 – 18 November

UME Events

For more events click this [link UME](#)

Supervision Across Cultural Diversity

9.30am to 1.00pm Thursday, 14 October on Zoom
Professional development session which provides an opportunity to hear from a panel of ministry leaders from different cultural backgrounds.

We acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which our office and congregations stand and we pay our respects to Elders past, present and emerging.

We acknowledge the sorrow of the Stolen Generations and the impacts of colonisation on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

We also recognise the resilience, strength and pride of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Amalgamation of Bowral and Mittagong Congregations

On 1 July 2021, Mittagong and Bowral congregations amalgamated and the new congregation of Bowral-Mittagong Uniting Church was formed.

Through a series of processes and decision-making events, it has taken, and will continue to take, tremendous energy, time, skill, leadership, and faith to envision what is possible together.

The new shared mission will translate both congregations' considerable heritage into a foundation for a new generation with expanded outreach.

Services of worship continue at each of the Bowral and Mittagong centres of the newly amalgamated congregation.

All current activities of each of the former congregations continue until a review of all activities is done by the new church council.

The new congregation's church council is made up of members from both Mittagong and Bowral Church Councils. When there is opportunity for a new Church Council to be elected, it will initially consist of at least three people each from the former Mittagong and Bowral congregation membership to assist with ministry context and bringing the former congregations together as one community of faith.

Property is consolidated under the beneficial Stewardship of the two congregations to the new congregation.

With the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit, the new congregation is moving forward together, nurturing each other to health and vitality and supporting each other in the Ministry of God.



Services go Online during Covid-19 Restrictions

Once again, COVID-19 restrictions have forced congregations to stay at home but, following on from innovations in 2020, Illawarra UC churches are meeting virtually through online video platforms.



If your congregation is uploading, streaming, Zooming or communicating in any other online or offline way, update Vi by email admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

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All underlined, blue items in this newsletter are active links. Click to connect

Presbytery News

Rev Josh McPaul – Northern Illawarra Uniting Church



Presbytery recently welcomed Rev Josh McPaul and his family to Northern Illawarra UC, with a Commissioning Service in June. Below is an introduction by Rev McPaul.

“Coming to the Illawarra is a homecoming 25 years in the making. I grew up in the Sutherland Shire where, thanks to a great home church and loving, faithful parents, I grew up studying the Bible and serving in the church. I always knew that the church was a community with enormous potential - where people from all kinds of backgrounds could meet together on common ground and find hope, purpose and community.

After graduating from Wollongong Uni with a degree in Commerce (with a little Japanese thrown in) I made a spur of the moment decision to move to California and see the world a little bit. Although I felt called to ministry, I wasn't yet ready to settle down in ministry in Sydney. I didn't realise that it would be more than 25 years before I returned.

I eventually settled in Oakland (near San Francisco) and found myself serving an incredibly diverse community. I worked as an intern in a large, academic Presbyterian Church near the University of California, Berkeley and helped out in homeless shelters around the city. During this time, I began the ordination process in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

I moved to Princeton, New Jersey for my ministry studies and once again, I served in communities as diverse as the urban poor in Trenton and the well-heeled Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York.

I moved back to Berkeley and served as a University minister. During that time, Robin and I got married, and we became foster parents to two beautiful girls from Oakland, eventually adopting them. We added our little guy a few years later. Robin is a teacher and playwright from California, but feels right here at home in Australia.

Serving in Oakland led us to join a church planting in 2009 and I led that church for 11 years - a church committed to reconciliation and anti-racism. But in 2020 we decided that our family needed a change, and to be closer to my family. I'm so grateful that God opened the door to serving back here at Northern Illawarra Uniting Church.

I am new to the Uniting Church, but find myself right at home in this theologically broad, socially active, deeply rooted, biblical tradition. And it's good to be near family, near the best beaches in the world, and near great places to kayak.”

Below and next page from Presbytery Secretary, Arthur Ball, published in NUC AMENtion Newsletter, and from the Illawarra Mercury.

Presbytery Minister, Rev Grant Bilbey

At the August Presbytery meeting, the Presbytery resolved that Rev Grant Bilbey will continue in a Presbytery Minister placement for a further 5 years (to 31/7/2027).

Presbytery had previously determined that the role of Presbytery Minister was too great for one person. With this in mind, the role of Presbytery Minister is to be replaced by two new positions - Presbytery Minister (Vital Ministry) and Presbytery Minister (Mission).

With Grant starting his fifth (and final) year of his current placement, and a desire by Presbytery for him to continue on, Grant was asked to discern which, if either, position he may be called to continue in going forward. Rev Bilbey and the task group discerned an ongoing call to the position of Presbytery Minister (Vital Ministry). His position description will be amended to reflect this change. The Presbytery endorsed this at the August meeting.



The search for someone to fill the role of Presbytery Minister (Mission) will now begin.

We look forward to Grant's invaluable contribution to our Presbytery for at least five more years.

Presbytery Bookkeeper, Pauline Doyle

The Presbytery has appointed Pauline Doyle as the part-time Presbytery bookkeeper.

The Presbytery Bookkeeper will not be an authorising signatory on any accounts and will eventually replace the use of contract bookkeeping services within the presbytery.

Pauline has experience in roles ranging from General Manager to Financial and Business Services Manager. Pauline also has had teaching positions in TAFE and university and worked in her own consulting business establishing new accounting systems.



Presbytery News cont.

Minister of the Word Candidate, Joanne Barnes-White

Joanne Barnes White, NUC member and Uniting Pastoral Practitioner at Nowra's Osborne House, has completed her 12 month Period of Discernment with mentor Rev Janice Freeston. During this period, Jo discerned that she has been called to seek to become a Minister of the Word in the Uniting Church.

Jo has completed her Lay Preachers study, Lay Presidency and has undertaken further study at UTC as part of her POD. She spoke at length to the PRC about her sense of call.

Jo's Application for Candidature was presented for approval at the August Presbytery Meeting. The Presbytery unanimously supported "the application of Joanne Barnes-White to candidate as Minister of the Word and enter 2nd stage formation."



Passing of Rev Annette Hawken

It was with great sadness that the Presbytery announced the passing of Rev Annette Hawken.

Annette passed away peacefully at home surrounded by her loving family on Tuesday, 3rd August 2021. She died following a four year battle with cancer, where, according to husband Nigel, she had faithfully and steadfastly been "living with cancer" rather than "dying from cancer".

Annette had served Christ in the Illawarra Presbytery for a long time. She had been a youth worker at Berry and Albion Park Uniting Churches. She served in ministry at Keiraview Uniting Church from February 2014 to April 2020.

Annette's faith gave her great strength, hope and resilience. Sharing her journey has been a blessing for all who knew her.



The funeral for Annette was held Friday 13 August, at Keiraview Uniting Church. Sadly, a maximum of only 10 people could attend the funeral as Keiraview is in lockdown. The service was streamed online and can be viewed anytime using this link [FuneralRevHawken](#)

Please keep Nigel, Nathaniel, Samuel, Andrew, Timothy and Chelsea along with Annette's family in your thoughts and prayers.



Corrimal Region name change to Corrimal Uniting Church

The Corrimal Uniting Church Council held lengthy discussions at its April meeting, regarding a name change from 'Corrimal Region Uniting Church', back to 'Corrimal Uniting Church'.

The Presbytery has supported the name change.

Ordination of Lyall Reid

Presbytery congratulates Lyall Reid on his ordination in the Ballarat Uniting Church on Saturday, 28 August.

Lyall was a member of Bay and Basin Uniting Church some years ago and has been an In-service Trainee on the pathway to Navy Chaplaincy. Lyall will do his pastoral placement in Ballarat and will move into Navy Chaplaincy at the conclusion of his season gaining pastoral experience.

Treasurers and Property Officers Meeting

The 2020 Zoom meeting of Illawarra UCA Treasurers was very successful and well attended. The Presbytery recently held a second Zoom meeting, this time for Treasurers and Property Officers.

Linda Johnson from Uniting Financial Services, Daniel Saaghy, Synod Finance Projects Manager and Luke Lee, Director of Strategic Property attended to answer questions and talk about changes to Annual Financial Reports and the Synod Future Directions Resourcing Framework.

Chaired by Presbytery Treasurer, Ross Johnson, the meeting was attended by Presbytery Assistant Treasurer Julie Watts, Presbytery Property and Finance Chair, Andrew Hunt and over 20 congregational treasurers and property volunteers. The Zoom meeting was recorded for those who could not attend. Please email Vi if you would like to receive the link to the recorded Zoom meeting. Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Congregation Missional Activities Can You Help?

In 2020 the Tertiary Minister reached out to congregations for help with supporting international students at the University of Wollongong. Many congregations were able to make donations to this missional program.

There are many missional opportunities across the Presbytery seeking donations and volunteers. If you would like your congregation's activities in the next IP newsletter, email Vi.

Summary of Needs (details below)

Donations

- Non-perishable foods Dry food items (Bay and Basin UC, Wollongong Mission)
- Toiletries (Bay and Basin UC, Milton-Ulladulla UC)
- Kids Activity items (Milton-Ulladulla UC)
- Clothing, Manchester for Op Shops (Bay and Basin UC, Corrimal UC)
- Money or grocery gift cards (Hats for the Homeless, Corrimal UC, Milton-Ulladulla UC)

Volunteering

- Serve Meals (Wollongong Mission)
- Craft Shop one day per month (Wollongong Mission)
- Op Shop (Corrimal UC)
- Enz Meet Café (Corrimal UC)

UCA Wollongong Mission

Wesley Community Centre – 3 Court Lane, Wollongong

Provision of lunch at 11.30 am Monday to Friday for people from throughout the Illawarra who, for whatever reason, are unable to feed themselves. Food parcels are provided to those in need, as well as blankets and clothing when they are available.

Volunteers who are willing to help serve the meals one day per week (9.00 am -1.00 pm) are always welcome. Congregations are welcome to collect dry food items for inclusion in our food hampers.

For more information contact Karen Zaini on 4229 2117.

Court Lane Craft Shop

The Craft shop sells on consignment high quality craft items made by members of the Illawarra Community.

The Shop is open from 9.30am -3.00pm Wednesday to Friday.

Volunteers who are willing to help serve in shop one day per month are always welcome.

Information, contact Rachael McGarry on 4229 2117.



Corrimal Uniting Church



The Op Shop operates primarily to help us connect with our community. Many people and families are struggling, and our Op Shop aims to offer dignity in tough times, through good quality, re-usable and recycled clothing. Monday to Friday, 10am to 4pm. (02) 4284 5356

We are always open to donations of good quality clothing in all age ranges. We are also open to anyone who would like to consider volunteering.

Enz Meet Café, Wednesdays 11am-1pm.

We offer a welcoming community cafe environment, with music, laughter, nutritious meals, activities, friendship and companionship. Our partnership with Hats For The Homeless makes this a hub for doing good together.

We hope to extend the services of this activity with a shower facility nearly finished, and access to a washing machine almost finalised. Monetary and grocery store gift cards are always welcomed, as are volunteers who share a vision of being part of community 'with', more so than charity 'for'.



Living English Classes

These are free to anyone, especially those for whom English is not their first language, and those who would like to improve their English language skills. It is a friendly, mutual-learning environment, aimed to reduce the marginalisation and isolation that comes from being cut-off, through not understanding language.

Thursdays 12:45-2:45pm in school terms.

Please feel free to refer people for whom this might be relevant.

Corrimal Men's Shed

This is a fully equipped workshop, where men of varying skill levels engage in personal and community projects, while swapping yarns. The Shed's motto of 'Creating and Restoring with Mateship' highlights the belonging and community that grows through 'shedders' working together.

Monday to Thursday, 9am to mid-afternoon. (02) 4283 4994

Congregation Missional Activities cont.

Bay and Basin Uniting Church

Huskisson Op-Shop

The shop is open every weekday and Saturday mornings to provide affordable second hand clothes and to minister to the community. It is operated by volunteers who are in teams that either work a full day or half a day. This has been a thriving ministry for years and more recently with the interest in the community to reuse garments and with the concern for the environment, the shop has been even more successful. Good quality clothing and manchester donations are welcome.

Community Food Pantry

The Food Pantry operates Thursdays from 12 noon to 2 pm at the church in Meriton St. It is run by volunteers and the food is free. Income from the Op Shop buys the basic food items that are purchased fortnightly from local supermarkets. Uniting has provided a freezer and so we can offer some bread from Bakers Delight and margarine and sausages or mince. The food is offered free and after 11 weeks we are assisting 36 households. Donations of non-perishable foods and toiletries etc are very welcome.

Milton Ulladulla Uniting Church

Reaching Out Group

Supplying hand knitted beanies, scarfs, blankets, and hygiene packs to Southern Cross Community Housing for the homeless and the less fortunate in the Community. Also, handmade bags filled with different activities e.g., coloring in books, stickers, pencils, fun games and a toothbrush in holder and toothpaste for boys and girls.

Uniting Outreach

Continues to give clothing and household goods and \$100 gift vouchers to those in need.

- We continue to give good quality goods for men to the Hope Hostel for Men in Parramatta.
- One Ten bags, approximately 80 per week are picked up to be sent to Africa for women to buy and start their own business selling clothes, shoes, and handbags.



- Yumaro employing people on the NDIS scheme collect each week our flattened cardboard boxes and plastic bags. This is a win, win enterprise, it takes away our excess and they make money through recycling and gives the disabled a sense of purpose through working. Costing us only \$245 per year.

Hats for Homeless 2021, Winter Postage Fundraiser

Sydney lockdown is imposing large postage costs in getting Hats for Homeless beanies out to those in need and wool to the knitters and loomers.

Over 500 beanies have been posted to delivery partners in Sydney, Canberra and South Coast since lockdown commenced.



Hats for Homeless are thankful to St Stephen's in the City and Woollahra Double Bay UCA for their recent \$100 donations for postage.

Are your church or individuals able to support this project by donating towards postage costs?

Mustard Seed Uniting Church will accept direct debit donations on behalf of HFH.

Mustard Seed UCA BSB 062 020 Account 10048150

Description: HFH Donation (your church or name)

Enquires: Pastor Susan Russell 0439 320 347

Presbytery Grants for Mission

The Presbytery Investment Strategy was developed to assist the Illawarra Presbytery secure ongoing revenue, and income, and to pay for significant positions and activities within the Presbytery. One such activity is the Grants for Mission program.

The Presbytery recently funded nine congregations who submitted applications for the Woden Grants for Mission program. Projects ranged from repairs to church buildings and grounds to audio-visual equipment used to broadcast services, an outdoor community space, a reflection garden, and a school breakfast program.

A total of \$90,000 was given and the same amount will be available in 2022. Applications will open in February 2022 for congregations that are up to date in Presbytery and Seeds of Growth contributions for projects that are new and unfunded (have not commenced prior to receiving funding), and have demonstrable beneficial missional outcomes, which are based in research.



Synod 2021

(story published Saturday 7 August Insights website)

Synod Accepts Ambitious Renewal Program



Synod 2021 has approved a 10-year renewal program and a resourcing framework that aims to liberate \$30m each year to invest in key ministry areas.

Please view the [video](#) introduction to the Resourcing Framework using this link: [VIDEO](#)

The approved renewal blueprint, Future Directions for the People of God on the Way seeks to prioritise and fund:

- Rural and regional ministry
- Ministry with people in the first third of their lives
- Walking together with First Peoples and to the covenant with Congress
- Stewardship of the earth
- Working with Presbyteries to organise ourselves to promote growth within and through our congregations

Moderator, Simon Hansford, highlighted the transformation this plan would bring to the church. "It will shift on what we focus on as a church, as it should," he said.

Synod 2021 also approved the Resources Framework that commits the church to liberating \$30m each year, or around 0.3 percent of the church's property and financial assets, by redeveloping and sharing the income from approximately 20 of our 2500 properties over the next 10 years.

Property redevelopments would primarily involve commercial buildings. They would exclude buildings such as dedicated worship centres, Ministers' residences, schools, and cemeteries. To maximise the income raised through each redevelopment, the developments would generally be large, multi-storey buildings.

The Congregation (through the Church) would continue to be the responsible body for the buildings and would rent out sections of the new buildings for ongoing income. This income would be shared with the wider Church to enable Future Directions. Areas in the new building would also be set aside for the Congregation's and the wider Church's mission and ministry activities.

Previously Synod had heard that for Future Directions to succeed and for the Church to continue to grow and fund its mission, it will need:

- People with the vision, skills and experience to grow the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit;

- Programs that help our witness to Jesus Christ flourish;
- Money to pay for the people, property, and programs; and
- Property that supports the delivery of mission and ministry.

The Resourcing Framework paper states: "We propose that the Church commits to our shared sense of purpose as a living Church in mission together and commits to sharing and using our resources to strengthen the Church, as a whole and as individual Congregations, to enable us to continue to bear our unique and transformative witness of the gospel."

Illawarra Presbytery members to serve on Synod Standing Committee

(Published NUC AMENtion Newsletter, Saturday 7 August)

Synod Standing Committee (SSC) will include two members of the Illawarra Presbytery.

Ross Johnson and Sharon Flynn have been elected to serve on the next term of the Synod Standing Committee (SSC).



Ross is the Illawarra Presbytery Treasurer and member of Keiraview Uniting Church. He has been on various Synod Boards including Board of Education, Board of Finance & Property, Uniting Resources Board and Chair of the Uniting Resources Board Audit & Risk Committee.

Sharon is member of Wollongong Mission "Church on the Mall" and completed the first of her two terms on SSC.

The Synod Standing Committee meets monthly and is elected during the Synod meeting every 18 months.



Having climate conversations with your MP: Come and hear about it.

Are you interested in participating in a conversation about your climate concerns with your Federal Member of Parliament? Are you open to bringing others together to help a conversation with your MP happen?

If you said 'Yes' to either question, we would love to see you at on-line gathering about how these important conversations can take place. The aim is for the conversations to happen in the lead-up to the next Federal election (probably early next year). This could be through a meeting with your MP, a candidates' forum or other gathering.

The Uniting Advocacy team is keen to support Uniting Church members to share their concerns, express their care for creation and help shape our nation's climate policies. We will offer some guidance, resources and training to assist you.

To find out more, please join our initial Climate Conversations briefing: 7.00pm – 8.15pm Wednesday, August 25 Via Zoom.

You can register for the Climate Conversations briefing [here](#). The Zoom link will then be emailed to you.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Jon O'Brien on 0477 725 528 or at jobrien@uniting.org

Why this matters

Climate change poses a big challenge to our nation and world. We see its impacts happening here and around the globe.

The most recent [IPCC report has reinforced the need for urgent action](#).

Because its big and affects all of us, we want to know our political leaders have a plan for how we respond, a plan that will enable us all to flourish.

That's one of the benefits of living in a democracy. Ultimately our political leaders, whichever party they belong to, are accountable to us the people. That's what elections are about.

As Christians we have a responsibility to assess candidates' policies not just in terms of our own interests, but in the light of the values of the reign of God and the common good. Having Climate Conversations is one way we can do that.

The Uniting Advocacy Team



Special Religious Education (Scripture)

The Synod is preparing audits for the Department of Education and needs to check that every congregation involved in the delivery of SRE is complying with the required standards.

We are requesting your assistance to ensure are records are up to date.

Synod Special Religious Education team has recently sent an email to congregations with an SRE review form attached. If you have SRE teachers in your congregation please make sure you have contacted Tara and Monique at the SRE team at email: sre@nswact.uca.org.au

Qualified SRE teachers needs to have a Working With Children Check, have an up to date Safe Church certificate, endorsement from clergy, recognised by the training, and be up to date with child safety.

Illawarra SRE teachers need to check with the Synod SRE team that they are up to date.



CONGREGATION GOVERNANCE TOOLKIT

THE TOOLS YOU NEED TO PROTECT YOUR PEOPLE, AND PLAN RISK, ADMINISTRATION AND COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Congregation Governance Toolkit

Each quarter, Synod will be sending out a new resource to Congregations - the [Congregation Governance Toolkit](#).

This toolkit will contain resources to help Congregations to plan risk, administration and compliance activities throughout the year with ease, helping to free up time to focus on more mission and ministry related activities.

This quarterly toolkit will complement a [new webpage](#) on the Synod website that Synod has created to house all related resources in one place.

Presbytery is pleased to share this exciting new resource with you, and we encourage you to discuss this toolkit with your Congregations at Church Council meetings.