

PRESBYTERY UPDATE

Dates 2024

Ethical Ministry – Tentative Dates

- 1:00pm Thursday, 18 April Bowral UC
- 9:30am Tuesday, 30 April Keiraview UC
- 1:00pm Wednesday, 1 May Shoalhaven Central UC – Nowra

Mission Plan Writing Workshop

9:30am Saturday, 4 May
Corrimal UC

Presbytery Meetings

Saturday 11 May Shoalhaven Central –
Bay & Basin Worship Centre

Saturday 10 August
Keiraview UC

Saturday 9 November
Kiama UC

9:30am morning tea, 10am start

Treasurer & Property Officers

7:00pm Wednesday, 22 May
Zoom

IP Gathering of UCAF Synod Committee

10:00am Thursday, 23 May
Shoalhaven Central UC – Nowra Worship Centre.

SoulCare [Link](#)

12-13 September
Wesley Conference Centre, Pitt St Sydney

Presbytery Retreat

Tuesday to Thursday 15 – 17 October
Hartzer Park

Message from the Co-Chairperson

Rev Janice Freeston



The New Year has well and truly begun, and our lives are once again filled with regular commitments. Schools are in full swing, church committee meetings are filling up our diaries, and the season of Lent is here.

I have over the years struggled with the concept of “giving something up for Lent”. Recently I have been challenged with a slightly different question: “What change do I want to make in my life for Lent?” for that matter, not just for Lent, but what can I change permanently. Sureka Goringe from Uniting World challenges us to think about this question in relation to our response to the issue of Climate Change. Can we stand with the churches of the Pacific and do more in this area, recycle, advocate, pray?

Perhaps we could be better listeners, not so concerned with how we are impacted by a situation or decision but rather about hearing where others are coming from? I recently went to a new place for a medical appointment and when the receptionist rang to confirm the appointment the day before, we had a very confusing conversation because she wouldn't listen to my answers. She had already decided what I was going to say. Consequently, when I arrived for my appointment, she had the wrong name and birth date in her system.

Perhaps we need to be more generous with our time, our energy, our resources.

Perhaps in our busyness we skimp on our preparation for worship services or meetings or those difficult conversations we know we need to have with someone.

What changes do you and I need to make in our lives for Lent and beyond?

Rev Janice Freeston
Co-Chair

All underlined, [blue](#) items in this newsletter are active links. Click to connect

Presbytery Update

The newsletter of the Illawarra Presbytery
Published quarterly. Your input is welcome.
Send your ideas or articles to:
Vi Richardson, Presbytery Administrator
Mobile: 0491 185 320
Email: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au
PO Box 163, KEIRAVILLE NSW 2500

Presbytery Website

The Presbytery website is now more user-friendly and includes resources to support congregations in areas such as finance, property, and compliance. There is also a Venue section where we can include your spaces for hire. Contact the Presbytery Administrator to have photos, hire rates and a description of your spaces added to the site.

Visit the Presbytery website at <https://illawarrapresbytery.uca.org.au/>

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.

News from the Presbytery Meeting—17 February 2024 at Moss Vale UC

Illawarra Presbytery thanks Moss Vale Uniting Church for hosting the recent Presbytery meeting. The service of MVUC volunteers enabled the meeting to focus on the essential work of the day. Special thanks are also due to minister Rev Kathryn Wyndham for managing the meeting's IT needs.

Three Co-Chairs Elected

At the February 2024 Presbytery meeting, the Presbytery elected three Co-Chairpersons for 2024, to share the role of Presbytery Chairperson:

- one to “constitute, preside over and generally direct the business of the meetings of the Presbytery” and the Standing Committee
- one to exercise pastoral oversight and be responsible for the line management of Presbytery staff, and
- one to exercise responsibilities under Reg 5.4.1 and share in the responsibility of pastoral oversight if required;

The three Co-Chairperson willing to serve are Rev Kath Merrifield (role A above) Rev Janice Freeston (role B) and Rev Diane Anderson (role C). Kath and Diane served as Co-Chairpersons in 2023.

Rev Janice Freeston is a retired UCA Minister of the Word, ordained for 30 years.

She has served in the Parramatta Nepean Presbytery as a member of Standing Committee, a Deputy Chairperson (including conducting Ordinations), the Secretary of Standing Committee, and a member of the Ministry Committee (interviewing candidates for ministry and presenting them to the Presbytery meeting). She was also the co-ordinator of the Period of Discernment for the Parramatta Nepean Presbytery.

A volunteer Ambulance Chaplain for almost 10 years, Rev Freeston describes herself as “a problem solver. I am compassionate and a good listener. I work well in teams and enjoy encouraging others to use their God given gifts to build up other people. I have a heart for people in both the church and the wider community. I have a strong calling to seek justice for all people and am committed to lifelong learning. I have some trauma training and enjoy chaplaincy work.”

Rev Diane Anderson is a retired UCA minister of the Word and has previously held the position of Illawarra Presbytery Chairperson.

Diane brings experience, wisdom and a deep passion for ministry in many years service in congregations, presbytery and synod positions. She has almost 30 years experience on PRCs in different presbyteries and has experience and understanding of what is involved in ministry oversight.

Rev Kath Merrifield is the Minister of the Word at Kiama-Jamberoo UC. Ordained in 2003, Kath has Degrees in law, science and theology, and a Master of International and Community Development. She has experience across local congregations, presbyteries, Synod and Assembly and has particular interest in equipping people to participate in the mission of God. She brings skills in strategic thinking, mission, pastoral care and theology; as well as practical skills in community development and collaborative projects. She is committed to developing partnerships between congregations and between congregations and other agencies and groups in their local communities to better serve their communities.

The role of Chairperson of the Presbytery fulfils a vital role not only in administration and compliance but also in the leadership of the Presbytery. At the Annual General Meetings of the Presbytery in November 2022 and November 2023, the Presbytery was unable to elect a Chairperson as there were no nominations received for the position. Sharing the role worked successfully for the Presbytery in 2023. Sharing the role allows the Co-Chairs to serve the Presbytery and continue to serve the Church in the many other roles they fulfil.

The Presbytery thanks all those who volunteer their time as office bearers, chairpersons, convenors or members of Presbytery committees for 2024.

We are reminded that there are various ways of serving God and that God works through people in different ways, but it is the same God who is served and whose purpose is achieved through them all.

May God give strength to those who fulfil these roles in our Presbytery.

News from the Presbytery Meeting continued

Congregation Sharing Time

Each Presbytery meeting for 2024 will include sharing time from four congregations. The February meeting heard from Moss Vale, Keiraview, Bowral-Mittagong and Shoalhaven Central.

Moss Vale UC celebrated the arrival of new families to the congregation and prayed for people facing health challenges.

Keiraview UC shared news on the congregation's focus of "growing young", including the developing ministry with Wollongong West Primary School and the University of Wollongong with Rev Doo Ah Leeming. Keiraview are seeking to develop and grow young leaders.

Bowral-Mittagong UC spoke of their partnerships with schools including food drives for their pantry program, for SRE, and the exchange of BMUC volunteers for school breakfast clubs and social welfare programs, and school volunteers for the BMUC pantry and community lunches.

Shoalhaven Central shared news of their SRE teachers in primary and high schools and the success of the annual Care Corner program at the Nowra Show. There is goodwill for joining together of the three amalgamated congregations but finding ministers for the approved placements is a challenge.

Thanks for Ross Johnson and Andrew Hunt

The Presbytery meeting acknowledge the work of former Presbytery Treasurer, Ross Johnson and outgoing Presbytery and Finance and Property Committee Chairperson, Andrew Hunt in a motion of appreciation for each. From the Minutes of Appreciation:



Ross Johnson has been actively involved in the Illawarra Presbytery for several decades. He has served 4 times as Treasurer of the Presbytery and been active in leadership of the Presbytery, especially on the Standing Committee and Finance and Property Committee.

Ross has been proactive above and beyond what the role of Treasurer requires. He has enjoyed working with Congregations and their Treasurers to support them in their work, ensure that audits are done and on behalf of the Presbytery, monitor their financial position.

One example of this was in the early part of lockdowns for COVID where he worked with congregation Treasurers through the complex and ever shifting government support programs to ensure that they could appropriately apply for grants and programs that they were entitled to.

Ross is a big picture person. He looks for opportunities to develop income for the Presbytery and congregations to assist the resourcing of Ministry. Ross was a key person in the restructuring of the finances of the Presbytery following the withdrawal of the Synods Presbytery Resource Grant.

This has included being a key part in the team that worked towards the purchase of the Woden property.

Ross has also been active in assisting the Presbytery in its role of oversight of property in the Presbytery.

Beyond the Presbytery, Ross has been active in his congregation and served on Synod Committees. Currently, he is a member of the Synod Standing Committee.

It is with great appreciation that we recognise Ross' work and commitment, and the Presbytery extends its thanks to Ross for his service in the name of Christ.

We thank God for the service of Ross Johnson and pray that God will continue to bless him into the future.

The Illawarra Presbytery records its appreciation to **Andrew Hunt** for his valuable contribution to the Illawarra Presbytery, particularly during his tenure as Chairperson of the Finance and Property Committee (PFPC).

Of particular note was Andrew's practical approach to the conduct of the activities of the PFPC and the considerable time devoted behind the scenes. This resulted in smooth consensus based resolutions by PFPC.

During Andrew's tenure many issues relating to compliance were dealt with and in many cases pro-forma formats introduced to enable Congregations to make their own assessments. These pro-formas were obtained not only from outside sources but some of the best were sourced from within the Presbytery Congregations.

Andrew introduced visitations to Congregations, starting with a visit to Austinmer. These visits have been particularly successful, especially in removing the "them and us" tendency in Congregations. The first cycle of these visits has now been completed.

Andrew oversaw the completion of a number of major property matters, including, The Lloyd Reese Property sale, Glider Avenue sale, Pony Drive purchase, the major remedial work at the Wesley Crown Street property, including its daily administration, together with assistance to Congregations - sourcing Grants, Funding, Sales, Leasing matters, Volunteer Insurance, maintenance of Cemetery Registers, and various other Congregation focused matters.

The Presbytery Office has moved twice in recent time, firstly to Shellharbour Village and more recently to the Church at Jamberoo, in both cases, with considerable personal hands on involvement and management by Andrew.

Presbytery has been a significant benefactor for what Andrew referred to in his Annual Report as the privilege of serving Our Lord and Congregations in matters of Property and Finance.



News from the Presbytery Meeting continued

Presbytery 'Mission' priorities

As a part of the upcoming Synod/Presbytery Summit each Presbytery has been asked to come up with '5 top mission priorities' to share at the summit. Attendees of the February Presbytery were asked to consider, converse and discern what Illawarra Presbytery might present to the Synod Summit as the Presbytery's 'five top mission priorities'.

Presbytery Minister – Mission, Rev Dr Matthew Wilson included the following in his report to the Presbytery:

"In thinking about this, it is important for us to realise a few key things:

- 1) It is God's mission. Church planters and mission agents all make a similar point – mission initiatives work best where we identify where God is already at work, and get on board.
- 2) Presbytery exists not to do mission, but to assist congregations and agencies to live out their mission, and to facilitate and encourage where that mission requires co-operation between congregations and/or councils of the church.
- 3) In mission, foundations are important. If we don't have the people, the necessary gifts and skills, appropriate equipment or sufficient funds, then we need to work on the foundations before we can build the missional opportunity on top.

In Luke's gospel Jesus tells a story about two people who build homes – one on sand and one on rock.

Often in the church we have hoped/thought/acted as if it was the case that if we simply found enough money we could accomplish whatever mission we dreamed of (or thought God was calling us to).

Money, rather like sand, has a great tendency to flow away or subside when large structures are placed on top.

The wise person looks to their foundations, and builds on rock – not sand.


If we are to do new things as congregations, then where are the leaders to come from?, how will they be equipped?, who or what will resource, support and encourage them?, how will we work together to discern where we best place our limited people, skills and resources? How can we build the Presbytery to be able to make these decisions and sustain these needs?"

Following the discernment of those present at the meeting, the following were put forward as the 5 top mission priorities for Illawarra Presbytery:

- 1) Assess and stabilise finances with the desired impact of establishing a sound financial base for Presbytery's activities and support for congregations.
- 2) Source finance for staffing needs allowing the Presbytery's Mission and Operation plan to be implemented.
- 3) Resource and equip lay and ordained leadership seeking to grow skills for mission and ministry and to identify and develop human resources across the Presbytery.
- 4) Regionalise compliance to allow congregations to have better governance and focus on mission.
- 5) Common understanding of role and governance of Presbytery with the aim of a greater focus on oversight of ministry and mission and less on restructure and functionality.

Lifeline looking for Board Members

Lifeline South Coast is seeking Expressions of Interest from members of the Uniting Church who are interested in joining the Board. Please assist Lifeline by including the following in newsletters or any other way you think is appropriate. Lifeline need to attract UC members to meet constitutional requirements and that also meet their skills matrix. Link for more information: [Link](#)

**Expression of Interest
BOARD POSITION(S)**

Lifeline South Coast has been providing suicide prevention and crisis support services to our local communities in the Illawarra, Shoalhaven, and South Coast for 55 years as an entity of the Uniting Church. We are seeking Expressions of Interest to join our skills-based Board and contribute to the strategic direction, financial stewardship and good governance of the organisation. For more information see <https://www.lifelinesouthcoast.org.au/about/governance/> or contact Renee Green (CEO) on 0409 912 391 or Rhonda O'Donnell (Board Chair) on 0415 843 197.

Mission Planning Workshop

ILLAWARRA PRESBYTERY



SATURDAY 4 MAY

AT CORRIMAL UCA

RUSSELL STREET, CORRIMAL

FACILITATED BY
REV GRAHAM ANSON &
REV DR MATTHEW WILSON

9:30-12:30 WORKSHOP AND DISCUSSION

1:00-3:00 OPTIONAL STAY AND WORK ON YOUR MISSION PLAN
IN CONSULTATION WITH THE PRESENTERS.
BYO LUNCH (OR PURCHASE FROM NEARBY CAFES)

COME:

If you want to know more about Mission Plans, what they are, how to put one together, and how you might use it to shape the life of your Church Council meetings and Congregational life.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME

You will get the most out of the session if you bring 3-5 people from your congregation.

You will get time to start work on a plan on the day, and to work further if you want to.

BRING WITH YOU:

- Any previous/current Mission Plan
- Documents or thoughts that will help you think about your congregation's values, what they are good at, what are their skills
- Documents or thoughts that help you understand the flavour of your congregation and community



FOR MORE INFORMATION EMAIL: ADMIN.IP@NSWACT.UCA.ORG.AU

Community Meals Program at Wollongong and Lifeline South Coast

Lifeline South Coast has recently been selected as recipient for a substantial grant under the Community Benefits Payment Scheme (NSW State Government grant).

On receipt of the grant funding, LLSC were asked to submit a program/activity that the funding will be used for. Such a program needed to be identified as mental health and crisis intervention or similar.

Wollongong Mission had been operating the Wollongong Community Meals Program for some decades. However, since that transition of the Congregation at Wollongong Mission into two Faith Communities, the Presbytery had already identified that we have a limited ability to provide oversight the program requires.

LLSC approached the Presbytery proposing to take oversight of the Community Meals Program at Wollongong and utilise the funding for the Meals Program.

In addition to meeting the grant criteria and aligning with the values of LLSC, the Meals Program is provided from the ground floor of the LLSC office building.

Lifeline South Coast will take responsibility for the operations and service delivery of the Wollongong Community Meals Program from 1 March 2024 – 28 February 2025. This will be a 12-month trial period.

During the trial period Lifeline South Coast will

- assess and understand the daily operations
- assess and understand the infrastructure (kitchen facilities etc)
- engage with other similar service providers
- consider service promotion
- consider other funding opportunities
- consider additional uses of the physical space
- regularly report to Presbytery

At the conclusion of the trial period the Presbytery and the Lifeline South Coast Board will make a determination as to the permanent transfer of the Program, including all assets and liabilities, or the return of the Program to Presbytery.

There are many strengths and opportunities for LLSC taking oversight of the program. LLSC have:

- Extensive experience in volunteer management including policy, procedure and IT infrastructure that is easily adaptable.
- Understanding of crisis support, challenging interactions, de-escalation, trauma informed delivery etc.
- Additional skills and capacity to train others in these areas.
- Access to support and supervision for operational and administrative needs, planning, service collaboration, and debriefing
- Physical location and increased utilisation of the space
- Capacity and experience in financial management, risk management, change management and governance within a volunteer based not-for-profit organisation. Existing frameworks as easily adaptable to include a new program.
- Lifeline South Coast brand
- Experience and capacity in pursuing funding opportunities
- Sufficient funding to run the program operations for at least 2 years.

Lifeline South Coast and Presbytery see the opportunities as:

- Increased engagement with local community through local in-person service delivery
- Opportunities to broaden engagement with other services (e.g. health, financial counselling, headspace) to benefit current service users, increase service usage, and broaden general collaboration with LLSC.
- Service growth and expansion
- Increased volunteering opportunities
- Potential for volunteers to move through different areas of the organisation
- Site capacity and utilisation
- Expanding funding/fundraising opportunities

By 30 November 2024 Lifeline South Coast will advise the Presbytery of their intention to take permanent responsibility for the operation of the service or return the operation of the service to the Wesley Mission Benevolent Service and the Presbytery.

For the trial period, financial donations may continue to be received. Lifeline South Coast will allocate donations to costs associated with the Meals Program where this is the intent of the donor. Contact the Presbytery Administrator if you would like to make a donation.

During the trial period Lifeline South Coast will promote the Meals Program as an activity of Lifeline South Coast. LLSC may seek partnerships, financial or other donations, funding/grant agreements.

Community Centre Coordinator, Karen Zaini and her dedicated team of volunteers will continue to provide a free lunch 5 days per week from the community kitchen. Karen has welcomed LLSC CEO Renee Green into the kitchen. Renee has already volunteered time to preparing meals and serving the community and Karen was impressed with Renee's hands on approach.



News from around Illawarra Presbytery

Lay Leaders Retreat at Kiama UC held on Saturday 3 February



The recent Lay Leaders Retreat held at Kiama UC was a day of renewal and inspiration for all who attended. Led by the Principal of United Theological College, Rev. Dr Peter Walker, the retreat provided a space for lay leaders to recharge, reflect, and deepen their spiritual connections.

Peter's guidance ignited participants' enthusiasm and fostered a renewed sense of hope and vision for the year ahead.

Rev Dr Walker based the theme of the retreat on "In Joyful Obedience", from hymn 626 *Lord of creation, to you be all praise* by Jack Copley Winslow, particularly verse 2:

*Lord of all power, I give you my will,
in joyful obedience your tasks to fulfil.*

*Your bondage is freedom; your service is song;
and, held in your keeping, my weakness is strong.*

Feedback from the event highlighted the positive experiences shared by attendees. Many expressed feeling refreshed, encouraged, and spiritually challenged by the retreat's content. For some, it was their first time attending such an event, and they left with newfound enlightenment and motivation.

The value of the Lay Leaders Retreat was affirmed by attendees, who were seeking it to be a recurring event. Its timing at the start of the year was particularly praised, setting the tone for the months ahead.

While the idea of a weekend retreat was floated, the majority of participants expressed satisfaction with the current format, indicating that the one-day retreat format effectively met their needs.

Upcoming Events at Dapto Uniting Church, 122 Princes Hwy Dapto

Monthly Community Gathering

Please come along and invite your friends and family to the next Community Gathering in the hall on Friday 15 March from 5PM. This is a time to get together and enjoy a fun social time of friendship and a meal provided by church members and others. We meet the third Friday evening of each month, so if you miss this one, the following date is 19 April. All age groups are welcome!



Monthly markets

Dapto UC holds markets on the first Saturday of each month except January, all morning until 1PM. Enjoy delicious BBQ or Devonshire Teas, browse a variety of stalls and catch up with friends.

Next market is Saturday 6 April with "The Shed's Little Big Band" playing music for the enjoyment of all.

Save the Date!

Dapto UC are having a **Mother's Day High Tea** Saturday 11 May at 2PM. Cost is \$20 per head with funds raised going to our Development Fund.

Men are welcome too, as it is hoped they will bring their mother or wife!



Save another Date!

Dapto UC's famous **Op Shop Fashion Parade** will be held in the church hall on Saturday 25 May from 2PM. This is a cheery event with amusing men and women models and entertainment, as well as afternoon tea. Clothes will be available for sale after the parade. One not to miss! All are welcome.

For more information about any of the above events please contact Janet on mobile 0431 410 189 or email exercisecare@gmail.com

April-May Art Show at Berry Uniting Church

Easter is here! The Berry Uniting Church will be hosting an art show inviting people to reflect on a change in perspective on life, death, suffering and struggles. It is called Stations of the Resurrection. Each piece of art (a 'station') has a reflection to go with it, accessible by QR code or hard copy. They will gradually appear through April and into May along the fence on our property as you walk between North St and Albert St. There will also be a show inside the main hall of the same pieces. A half-day retreat on Saturday 13 April (9am-1pm) will also be available to take time out to explore and dig a little deeper in response to these different and startling images. If you are interested in participating in this retreat then please email us at berryuniting@gmail.com to register.



The artist is Scott Erickson and these are some of his words introducing the show:

Did Jesus' resurrection do anything? I mean that's kind of a scandalous question. I'm not arguing that it didn't happen. I believe that it did. But my question is did it do anything? What does it do for us today? Did resurrection happen one time or is it still happening in our midst?

The most common response I hear is something about the afterlife. This art show is not about that... because what happens after this life is only something we can speculate, nothing we can really experience as we are alive. So let's side step resurrection as afterlife for now.

What does it mean to experience resurrection now?

The morning Jesus rose from the grave the first thing that happened was that Jesus changed. And then his resurrection encounters with his followers irrevocably changed them, and changed their communities, that changed the world.

The premise for these station meditations is that resurrection changes the way you see everything. Jesus invited his followers to undergo a complete 180 degree change of mind, heart, and perspective. And on the other side of his resurrection encounters, we see this about face change in his followers.

I believe we are still invited to a perspective change that changes the world. Each one of the stations draws from the story of the first Easter day onwards and invites us into a change of perspective: one that affected the followers back then, and one that invites us right now.

This Stations of the Resurrection art show is available for spiritual formation for all people.



Berry UC Coffee and Friends returned for 2024 with guest speaker, Emily McTaggart from Bundanon Art Museum.

Ms McTaggart gave a history of the property, gift to the people of Australia, and the building developments of the Art Museum that make it adaptable to fires and floods.

Emily also previewed some of the exhibitions coming up this year [picture above and below].



Berry UC in the Assembly 'This is my Uniting Church' Series

The Assembly communications team has invited Berry UC to be part of a brand new regular series, where congregations and faith communities share in their own words, what God is doing among them and how we can pray for their mission and ministry. Berry UC has been asked to share:

- What are some of the things happening that are really exciting for people?
- What energises the faith of this community?
- Where do you see God at work at the moment?
- Are there any challenges you are facing there?
- What can the rest of the Church pray for there?

If you would like to see what congregations have shared so far, view this page: [Link](#)



News from around Illawarra Presbytery Continued

News from Gerringong Uniting Church

Seeking a Discipleship Pastor

GUC is seeking a Discipleship Pastor, a missionary-hearted pastor with gifts and abilities in making disciples and forming new communities. They see this person beginning with youth but moving on to help make disciples in all generations.

The position is initially for two years part-time. Please pray that the type of person who God placed on the hearts of the congregation, sees the position and applies.

In other GUC news, the congregation recently held a **Mental Health night** with guest speaker renowned author, Maggie Dent. A wonderful outreach into the Gerringong Community and beyond, the proceeds of ticket sales were forwarded to Lifeline South Coast [photo left below].

GUC has started a new group, **Cuppa Chat & Craft**. Members of the church family and the wider community enjoyed fellowship at the inaugural get together and will meet every two weeks [photo right below].



News from Austinmer Uniting Church – Seeking a Voluntary Office Assistant

Austinmer UC is seeking a voluntary office assistant for 2-3 hours per week. As a Volunteer Office Assistant, you will play a crucial role in supporting the operations of the church office. This is a fantastic opportunity to make a difference while gaining valuable experience and connections within Austinmer UC community. Contact the Presbytery Administrator who will forward your message onto Austinmer.



Bowral-Mittagong UC Food Program



Bowral-Mittagong UC offers a community food pantry three times each week, Mondays at Mittagong, and a free community lunch every Wednesday.

Free fresh food and non-perishable essentials are available and everyone is welcome to stay for a cuppa and chat.

The bathroom and laundry service is open whenever someone calls in.

The pantry program sponsors include Oz Harvest, Rotary and Bakers Delight. At Christmas Coles supermarket opened their doors to local charities and BMUC were able to pick up food as well as gifts to bless the families they serve [picture left].

News from around Illawarra Presbytery Continued

Coming to Shoalhaven Central UC for an Event? Bring donations with you.

Shoalhaven Central will host three Presbytery events during April and May. Ethical Ministry (Nowra Worship Centre) the May Presbytery meeting (Bay & Basin Worship Centre 11 May) and the IP Gathering of UCAF Synod Committee (Nowra Worship Centre 23 May).

If you're attending one of these events, consider bringing a donation with you for the Food Pantry operating from Bay and Basin Worship Centre every Thursday.

Non-refrigerated food, toiletries, and good quality fruit and veg are welcome. Please bring them in shopping bags or boxes for easy transportation to Bay and Basin.

UNITING CHURCH ADULT FELLOWSHIP NSW ACT



**ANNUAL GATHERING
THURSDAY 23RD MAY**

**AT SHOALHAVEN CENTRAL
UNITING CHURCH
NOWRA WORSHIP CENTRE**
Corner Junction and Berry Streets, Nowra



GUEST SPEAKER:

MODERATOR, REV MATA HAVEA HILIAU

MORNING TEA 10:00AM

MORNING SERVICE 10:30AM - 12:00PM

**THE OFFERING ON THE DAY
WILL SUPPORT
PASTOR DAVID SHRIMPTON
FLYING PADRE BASED AT
BROKEN HILL**



**Please bring your own lunch
Morning Tea provided**

Information: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au



From the Tertiary Minister's Annual Report

Rev Doo Ah Leeming facilitates a vast array of activities through her Tertiary Ministry Program at the University of Wollongong. Her report to the Presbytery AGM was 11 pages and contained many photos of her ministry in action. Here is just a sample:

Tuesday free lunch and Life Skills Lessons:

"This program is very popular for the University students, especially some students who have difficulty making friends.

I encouraged three local students to have coffee together. It is an ecumenical gathering regardless of culture or religion.

A Russian student was very reluctant to introduce himself because he was afraid of telling his nationality in front of the group because of the war between Russia and Ukraine.

Twenty to thirty students join regularly. I have a big challenge to guess how many students might turn up, as I have to prepare some lunch or instant noodles in my office. International students have no idea about RSVP.

They are from different cultural and religious backgrounds, but they are open to listening and learning about Christian values and ethics."



Christian Bible Study group "This is a Bible reading, theological, historical, and Biblical discussion, sharing, and question time. We studied the nature of prayer. And two students joined the prayer meeting the following Monday. It will be a great opportunity to mentor these students. The challenge is how can I teach and facilitate the group with Christians and non-Christians who have different stages of faith or even no faith".

In 2023 other activities included:

- Prayer meetings
- Mentoring Program, with help from Kiama-Jamberoo UC member Aland Broad who assisted students with their resumes and interview skills.
- Singing group
- Yoga classes
- Christian meditation
- Korean BBQ at Keiraview UC and UOW accommodation kitchen
- Fauna and Flora Sunday service at the Botanical Gardens
- Ten-pin Bowling and dinner
- Full Moon Festival with Asian students at Keiraview Uniting Church
- Trivia night at Keiraview
- Pastoral care for students
- Celebrating with graduating students

Rev Leeming also said in her report:

"The students who I have a relationship with, including the COMPASS Club members, learn the Christian Bible and go to our Uniting Church more often than they go to their traditional religious temple.

I thank God for this great opportunity to meet students from many different religious and cultural backgrounds, as well as local students. They want to belong in a loving and caring community."

Piano Keyboard Needed

Needed: 1 piano keyboard in good condition for the University Chaplaincy at Wollongong. Doo Ah and Jacob run a singing group and could really use a keyboard. Currently, they need to book a lecture room with a piano, which is very difficult to do. Please contact Janice Freeston 0499785728 if you have one to donate or would like to purchase a keyboard for this great mission outreach group.

Mental Health First Aid at Keiraview UC—Participants Wanted

Keiraview UC is in the process of getting a Mental Health First Aid course up and running through Lifeline.

For financial viability they need at least 10 people, preferably 12. Keiraview have 5 people and Lifeline know of 2 other people who would like to do the course.

Tentative dates are 23 and 24 May. These will be full days - 6 hours each day.

The course teaches participants how to assist people who are developing a mental health problem, experiencing a worsening of an existing mental health problem or are in a mental health crisis, until appropriate professional help is received, or the crisis resolves.

NOTE: This course is not a therapy or a support group, nor is it a professional counselling qualification, merely a First Aid Tool.



Contact Vi Richardson if you would like to do the course. Email: Admin.ip@nswact.uca.org.au

Wollongong City Council Grant Programs



Catherine Major, Team Leader – Property Services, Synod Mission Services recently reached out to all local members of parliaments and councils seeking partnership opportunity and supporting community initiatives.

Wollongong City Council responded that WCC has a number of programs to help individuals or groups with financial or in-kind support. Information on these programs, including eligibility is available at: <https://www.wollongong.nsw.gov.au/book-and-apply/apply-for-a-grant>

Catherine has offered her assistance for anyone interested in applying for funding opportunities.

Explore the Synod Calendar of Events

The hub for all the events happening across the Synod, the 2024 Synod Calendar includes a full 12 months of events, training, camps, courses and conferences. Link to the Synod Events page [link](#)

Some Events in 2024:

- Disaster Recovery Chaplaincy Network Training 3 April
- Pulse Kids Camp Out 12 – 14 April
- Conflict Intervention Training 22 May
- Presiding at the Sacraments 1 June & Sep via Zoom
- Living Our Values 11 June via Zoom (2 Sessions)
- Living Our Faith Exploring the New Testament July - Sep Zoom (8 Sessions)
- Soul Care conference 4 September
- Living Our Faith Proclaiming Jesus Christ Oct - Nov Zoom (8 Sessions)
- Lay Preachers Code of Ethics Workshop 2 Dec Zoom (1 Session)



Information for Your Congregation

Volunteer Requirements for 2024



Presbytery Administrator, Vi Richardson recently asked Devin North, Risk and Internal Audit Manager at Synod what the requirements are volunteers **on an annual basis**.

If a congregation has previously had volunteers sign volunteer agreements, codes of conduct, volunteer manual and also fill in a form with their personal details – what needs to be done each year.

Devin's response was:

"Thanks for raising this with me, my position at this point in time would be the following:

If the congregation has a register of volunteers which include for each, Signed Volunteer Agreements, Codes of Conduct, Personal Details, Due Diligence checks as applicable (WWCC, NPC), this Register on an **annual basis**:

Should be reviewed against current volunteer workforce to determine the information is current, i.e. noting removal or addition of volunteers.

Ensure that any Due Diligence checks, such as WWCC are current. If expired or due to expire soon, these should be requested to be updated.

If the role of the Volunteer changes, then review must occur accordingly.

So, essentially unless the volunteer is changing role or has changed some personal details or circumstances, then no formal action is required".

A promotional poster for a Zoom meeting. The background is a vibrant blue and teal geometric pattern. In the top left corner is the logo for 'uniting church Illawarra Presbytery', which features a stylized cross and flame. The main text, 'YOU ARE INVITED TO Treasurer & Property Officers Zoom Meeting', is centered in white. Below this, there is a small icon of three wavy lines. The 'TIME:' section includes a clock icon for '7:00pm' and a calendar icon for 'Wednesday, 22 May'. To the right of the text is a laptop displaying a Zoom meeting grid with several participants. At the bottom, two lines of text state: 'A great way to learn about the latest requirements' and 'The Zoom will be recorded and a link made available for later viewing, for those who cannot attend'.



The Office of Children's Guardian (OCG)

10 Child Safe Standards

PRESBYTERY HELP IN 2024

During 2024, Presbytery will offer assistance to congregations to progress with meeting the requirements of the Office of the Children's Guardian (OCG) 10 Child Safe Standards.

To know which Standards should be the focus of Presbytery's assistance, please **email the Presbytery Administrator the 3 Standards that were noted as 'Higher priority' in your Self-Assessment** and Action Report from the OCG.

If you haven't yet done the **Self-Assessment** here is the link <https://cssa.ocg.nsw.gov.au/>

Illawarra Presbytery congregations who have started this process and have shared the following:

- The Self-Assessment is best done in a small team of 2-5 people. Minister inclusion is helpful. Presbytery Training and Education Committee recommends church councils set up a working group and offers of a Presbytery representative to assist where required.
- The time to do the assessment could be 30 mins to 2 hours.
- One congregation noted that they were already doing some of the activities in the Self-Assessment. When answering the questions they asked themselves "but are we doing enough or could we do better?"
- The report back shows the 3 Standards that need work initially, with tips and links to assist. These key starters make the process not overwhelming.

Background Information

In March 2023 your congregation was sent a poster to display. A child-friendly poster was also sent. Please contact the Presbytery Administrator if you would like these resent or you need help adapting it for use by your congregation.

The Office of Children's Guardian (OCG) requires religious organisations to adopt, implement and comply with 10 Child Safe Standards.

This is a government legislated requirement and is NOT related to UCA Safe Church Workshops.

Recently, a NSW/ACT UCA congregation was audited by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

From 1 February 2023, Part 9A of the [Children's Guardian Act 2019](#) will come into force, which will allow the Office of the Children's Guardian to take action to ensure organisations comply with the Child Safe Standards. This means where organisations do not comply with the Child Safe Standards, the Children's Guardian can:

- issue a compliance notice to the organisation, or
- accept an enforceable undertaking from the organisation.

Religious organisations are included in this scheme by state legislation.

THIS APPLIES TO YOUR CONGREGATION WHETHER YOU ENGAGE IN CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES OR NOT

THIS APPLIES TO YOUR CONGREGATION EVEN IF YOU DO NOT USUALLY HAVE CHILDREN ATTENDING WORSHIP OR OTHER PROGRAMS.

The Office of Children's Guardian will be taking an educative rather than punitive approach to implementation. In other words, they are seeking to help organisations, including religious organisations, to do the best they can, and be involved in continuous improvement, rather than having to be examples of best practice from the beginning.





Uniting



12-13 September 2024

Wesley Conference Centre

SOUL CARE 2024 CONFERENCE

Rediscover and Reimagine pastoral care

Who will benefit from SoulCare?

- Ordained church leaders
- Church and parachurch leaders
- Chaplains, counsellors, and professional pastoral care workers
- Anyone with an interest in pastoral and community care

Professional Development

Attendance certificates will be available on request for recognition of attendance at the Conference.

Discover innovative developments and practices

Understand community-based approaches

Explore existing ministries with opportunities for engagement

Get practical, with skills, tips and tools



For more information and to buy tickets go to:

www.nswact.uca.org.au/calendar/soulcare-2024-12-13-september