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# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

 Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, Uniting Church in Australia

e-news March 2010

Welcome to Community Connections.

To keep *Community Connections* of interest to the widest possible readership, we welcome for consideration news and information about initiatives, events and activities from all parts of the Synod. Regional contributions, and stories of how your congregation supports Living is Giving, are especially welcome. Send your material (maximum 150 words) to [kima@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:kima@nsw.uca.org.au).

Click here for Community Connections in a PDF that you can print off and distribute, or email to others in your congregation and community (requires Adobe Acrobat reader — click [here](#) to download).

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## **NEWS AND INITIATIVES**

### **Message from the Moderator**

As you may have noted in the letters column of *Insights*, my mother corrected some of the “facts” of my birth as set out in my column in December. In so doing she really reinforced the point I was seeking to make. [READ ON](#)

### **Living is Giving Handbook for 2010-11**

Living is Giving is the major fundraising program of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT. It links congregations' giving and mission planning with the mission and ministry of the whole Uniting Church, at home and abroad.

Now is the time to start planning for your Living is Giving journey with this year's Living is Giving Handbook 2010-2011. The new Handbook is stitched into March *Insights* and contains information on the 15 mission focus areas your congregation can choose to support.

Your role in this process is crucial! Please make sure to work alongside your treasurer (who will shortly receive the Leaders Guide & Planning Form) by

encouraging your congregation, and by assisting with the completion and submission of the Planning Form by **June 30, 2010**.

You can also download a copy of the Leaders Guide and Planning Form online at <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/documents/LIGleadersguide.pdf>.

Make it your congregation's resolution to support the many ministries of the Uniting Church through Living is Giving. For more information, visit [www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au](http://www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au) or contact the Living is Giving Administrator, (02) 8267 4393 or [livingisgiving@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:livingisgiving@nsw.uca.org.au).

### **Executive Director's appointment extended**

The Standing Committee of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT has extended until 2012 the appointment of the Rev. Harry Herbert as Executive Director, UnitingCare NSW.ACT. [READ ON](#)

### **Leadership from rich nations 'can build common agenda'**

Rich and powerful countries must accept equity as the basis for international climate change negotiations and if they do, they can help bring all nations to a common agenda, says Kenyan theologian and ecologist Jesse Mugambi. [READ ON](#)

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### **Moderator seeks renewed support for drought appeal**

Despite some regions recently being declared disaster areas because of flooding and the possibility that rain from southwest Queensland may make its way south to refresh the Murray-Darling system, Uniting Church Moderator Niall Reid has called for renewed impetus behind the church's drought appeal. [READ ON](#)

### **Church leaders voice concerns for asylum seekers**

The President of the Uniting Church in Australia, the Rev. Alistair Macrae, and Anglican Archbishop of Perth, the Rev. Roger Herft, have voiced concerns for the wellbeing of asylum seekers on Christmas Island. [READ ON](#) Refugees get visas just as another boat arrives. [READ ON](#)

### **Water project perseverance pays off**

The Moderator of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, the Rev. Niall Reid, has praised Springwood Uniting Church for its Community Water Project. [READ ON](#)

### **Band together to get rid of Clean Up Australia Day**

The Executive Director of UnitingCare has praised Clean Up Australia Day but says it would be great if Australians could embrace the principles behind it 365 days of the year rather than one. [READ ON](#)

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### **WCC offers condolences and prayers to the people of Chile**

The general secretary of the World Council of Churches (WCC), the Rev. Dr Olav Fykse Tveit, has offered his condolences to the people of Chile, after a powerful earthquake struck along the coastline of central Chile on Saturday, February 27. [READ ON MORE MORE MORE](#)

### **CSU theologians return from Vatican talks**

Two leading Australian theologians from Charles Sturt University (CSU) have returned from discussions at The Vatican in Rome about ecumenical and other issues confronting the world. [READ ON](#)

### **Climate activists rally against new coal power**

Protestors, including representatives from the Uniting Church, rallied in front of Parliament House in Sydney on February 25, protesting against new coal-fired power stations to be built in New South Wales. [READ ON](#)

### **UnitingCare wants Abbott to spend week with homeless**

The Executive Director of UnitingCare NSW.ACT wants Tony Abbott, Leader of the Federal Opposition, to better understand the challenges experienced by vulnerable Australians before making glib comments about people choosing to be homeless. [READ ON](#) Bible bashing the homeless, Tony Abbot Style. [READ ON](#)

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## **EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

### **Bushchapel present: *Return of the Little Prince*, March 5-27**

This work is a beautiful retelling and sequel to the famous French story, *The Little Prince*, written over fifty years ago by Antoine de Saint Exupéry. Since the story of an innocent boy visiting a crashed pilot in the Sahara was first published, in the years after the Second World War, it has become a classic among young and adult

readers.

A story of innocence, the imagination and the planet with some comic social satire  
Featuring outstanding performances by Erin Brookhouse, Irene Kokotatsios and Jack Michel.

A funky, fast retelling to the classical French story that is full of fun and a feast of original and playful music, songs and rich visuals. The event is guaranteed to please all ages and tastes.

*The Return of the Little Prince* will be held on Friday and Saturday, March 5,6,19,20,26,27, 7.30 PM at the Bushland Chapel, 94 Parkes Street, Helensburgh. Tickets cost \$18 and \$12, family \$45. Bookings and inquiries can be made on 42941695 or visit [www.bushchapel.com.au](http://www.bushchapel.com.au).

### **Women of faith dinner, March 14**

The Women of Faith Dinner includes talks from Keynote speaker, The Hon. Virginia Judge, MP, will be held on Sunday March 14, at Bosphorous Lounge, 7 Station Street, Auburn from 5.45 pm for 6 pm start. The dinner includes a three course meal at \$35 per person. For more information click [HERE](#).

### **John Jegasothy: a celebration of service, March 20**

We invite you to join us in celebrating the service of the Rev. John Jegasothy to the displaced people in Sri Lanka (1981 to 1986), and the asylum seekers and refugees who have come to Australia in the past 15 years. (1996-2009).

This event was mooted by young men and women helped by him, and others in the community who have felt the need to express gratitude to John for the unstinting service he has rendered so unselfishly and humbly in the last 15 years.

In October 2009 STARTTS (Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors) and The Refugee Council of Australia recognised his contribution by naming him an Outstanding Australian Helping Refugees, and before that, Amnesty International Australia nominated him for Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) Human Rights Award for 2003.

We warmly invite you to this celebratory event on Saturday, March 20, 2010 at the Red Gum Function Centre, Lane Street, Wentworthville 2145, from 5.30 pm (for a 6.00 pm start).

Please respond to this invitation by email ([macdorothy@bigpond.com](mailto:macdorothy@bigpond.com)) or telephone 0449652389 by March 1, 2010.

### **John Stainer: The Crucifixion, March 21**

John Stainer, the Crucifixion plus works by Bach, Schütz, Sweelinck & d'Anglebert will held Sunday, March 21, 2010, 2:30 pm at St Stephen's Uniting Church, 197 Macquarie Street, Sydney (opposite Parliament House) For more details click [HERE](#).

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### **Earth Hour 2010, March 27**

As climate change escalates and action to address it lags far behind, new hope is needed to lift our spirits. So as the lights go out across Sydney this Earth Hour, let's turn on the light of hope within us. Join in this candle-lit multi-faith vigil of song, prayer, dance, reflection and meditation at Observatory Hill, and go home refreshed and renewed. People of all faiths and none are welcome.

This includes Tapestries of Sound (world music band), Baha'i choir (20 member mixed voice choir), Deepa Gupta (Indian Youth Climate Network), Patricia Corowa (Pacific Calling Partnership's Copenhagen delegation), Trish Watts (InterPlay Australia), Rabbi Jeffrey Kamins from Emanuel Synagogue and many more.

This event will be held on Saturday, March 27, from 7:30pm – 9:30pm at the Observatory Hill, Corner Fort St and Watson Road, The Rocks, Sydney.

Organised by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), [www.arrcc.org.au](http://www.arrcc.org.au).

Contact 02 8239 6299 for more information or [info@arrcc.org.au](mailto:info@arrcc.org.au).

### **Join the Festival ... and come to Synod 2010! April 9-13**

You are invited to a night of worship, celebration and inspiration with Uniting Church President Al Macrae and others at 7.30 pm on Friday, April 9 at Ravenswood School in Gordon. Book your tickets NOW for this special pre-Synod celebration and supper using the coupon here [HERE](#).

"Generous ... as God is" is the theme of the meeting of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT at Canterbury Park Race Course from April 10-13. For more information click [HERE](#)

### **NCYC11 discount registration period extended, April 11**

The last discount registration period for the Uniting Church's National Christian Youth Convention has been extended until April 11, 2010.

Register now for nyc11 at the Gold Coast to take advantage of attendee registration at \$290.

From 12 April 2010, prices are as follows:

Attendees (registered bulk group of 10+) \$320

Attendees (individual registration) \$349

Adult volunteers remain at \$150 each.

Visit [www.ncyc11.com.au](http://www.ncyc11.com.au) for full details and additional accommodation options.

## **Adult Fellowship National Celebration, April 21 – 25**

The Adult Fellowship National Celebration will be held at Greenhills Centre, Canberra from April 21 – 25. Please contact Denise and Allan Secomb for more information on 02 4951 68855, or [allananddenisesecomb@gmail.com](mailto:allananddenisesecomb@gmail.com).

## **Engaging the Basis: Theological Directions of the UCA, July 9-11**

This conference sets out to explore the theological commitments and responsibilities of the Uniting Church of Australia. It is to be held at the Centre for Theology & Ministry, Melbourne on July 9-11, 2010. Please visit the conference website for more information [www.engagingthebasis.ucaweb.com.au](http://www.engagingthebasis.ucaweb.com.au). Full details of the conference aims, its programme, and the various presenters are available there - together with a downloadable registration form.

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## **LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES**

### **Find your calling inside the Living is Giving Handbook 2010-11**

Don't forget to start planning for your Living is Giving journey with this year's Living is Giving Handbook 2010-2011. The new Handbook will debut in the March edition of *Insights* and contains information on the 15 mission focus areas your congregation can choose to support.

Remember to work alongside your treasurer by encouraging your congregation, and by assisting your treasurer with the completion and submission of the Leaders Guide and Planning Form by **June 30, 2010**.

You can also download a copy of the Leaders Guide and Planning Form online at <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/documents/LIGleadersguide.pdf>.

Sadly, contributions to Living is Giving have fallen, which means a leaner Synod budget and an uncertain situation for many of the church's ministries in the coming year. If you believe these activities of the Uniting Church matter, please make it your congregation's resolution to support the many ministries of the Uniting Church — all of which make our church so special.

For more information, visit [www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au](http://www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au) or contact the Living is Giving Administrator, (02) 8267 4393 or [livingisgiving@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:livingisgiving@nsw.uca.org.au).

### **Host your own Living is Giving presentation in 2010**

Start your new year's resolution by challenging your congregation to be more active in discipleship and stewardship. Living is Giving provides you and your congregation with the opportunity to share the Christian message of hope and love with your

community within and beyond the Uniting Church. To find out how you can become part of the bigger picture and learn how your congregation can make a difference to the lives of others, we invite you to host a free Living is Giving presentation. Our passionate presenters are happy to come to worship service and speak about their work or Living is Giving in general. This is a great way to connect with the mission focus areas you support. For more information please call Kimberly Almarza on 8267 4475, 8267 4475.

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### **Prayer points and praise points**

Each year Living is Giving continues to advance the church's mission work in ways that have changed many lives for the better. The current year, 2010-11, already looks exciting, with new ventures and significant achievements. Contributions by congregations and individuals through Living is Giving have helped make these activities possible.

Pray and give thanks for:

- UnitingCare Children, Young People and Families who have a number of programs designed to encourage and support new fathers from the beginning and as their child continues to grow. These programs include Men in Families (I'm a Dad Program), Newpin Fathers' Centre, Fathers' Support Service and Men and Family Relationships.

These services emphasise the positive role fathers can have in the lives of their family, supporting the journey of men through fatherhood and providing information and access to additional services.

Designed to make contact and assist first-time fathers at antenatal classes as well as with literature and information, the I'm a Dad Program encourages fathers to be involved with their children from birth while developing a teamwork approach to parenting.

The I'm a Dad Program and other UnitingCare programs designed to assist fathers with support and encouragement rely on the generosity of the public to further their work — helping fathers to build solid foundations to achieve the best relationships they can, with and for their families.

- Our farming community who have had it tough — drought, frost, fire, heat extremes and then flooding — and all in the space of one year!

Sadly for the average farmer in the central west of New South Wales, the continuing drought has meant reduced numbers of stock or near failed crops. Elation over surviving crops is usually short lived as international crop markets and escalating costs for farming inputs continue to siphon critical cash income.

Bringing their message of hope to people who sometimes feel there is none, are Rural Chaplains Julie Greig and Kel Hodge, who help out practically by

running workshops, paying bills and helping congregations by building skills like grant application writing.

While in the skies, the flying padre John Blair carries on his vital ministry work; finding hope in the enthusiasm of the people who continue to meet in worship. The need remains great.

You can read more about these mission focus areas and other activities by clicking [here](#).

To find out more about Living is Giving visit: <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au>.

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***Studying journalism, graphic design or communications and would like to offer your skills to Insights? Go to <http://news.nsw.uca.org.au/employment/2009/graduates-students.htm> to learn how.***

***Don't forget about the [Moderator's Drought Appeal](#). Your donation will help provide counselling, chaplaincy services and emergency relief to drought-affected people.***

**CONTACT US: [unitingcreative@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:unitingcreative@nsw.uca.org.au)**

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