

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

e-news September 2009

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.

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:

At times I find people who are despondent about the church or disgruntled about something, sometimes with some validity but at other times it seems to have become a pastime.

In such instances, one can almost see the energy draining out of a church. A grumbling church is unlikely to be a growing church, a whining church won't be a witnessing church, a moaning church won't be a motivational church. If we must have a grumble, a whine or a moan, for Christ's sake let it be direct, quick and focused, in a private corner, not spattered all around. [READ ON](#)

New preamble a watershed moment

It is likely that many, if not most, members of the Uniting Church have never read the short preamble that comes before the church's Constitution. Yet it is also likely that the decision made at the 12th Assembly to change that preamble may come to be seen as a watershed moment, in which the Uniting Church came of age as a truly Australian church. [READ ON](#)

WCC urges freeze on Israeli settlements

The World Council of Churches has called upon the Israeli government to "implement an open-ended freeze" on all settlement construction and expansion in the West Bank and East Jerusalem "in preparation for negotiating peace in good faith" in the region. [READ ON](#)

Volunteer without fear or favour

UnitingCare NSW.ACT is currently launching phase two of its "without fear or favour" campaign, which raises awareness for the organisation and encourages people to help with its work in one of ten ways, including volunteering. [READ ON](#)

WCC urges Pakistan to repeal blasphemy law

The main governing body of the World Council of Churches has called on the government of Pakistan to repeal the section of the country's penal code which carries a mandatory death penalty for anyone found guilty of blasphemy. [READ ON](#)

"No Ordinary View" wins Book of the Year Award

The 2009 Australian Christian Literature Awards were presented in Sydney on August 26. The winner of the 2009 Australian Christian Book of the Year Award for a work by an Australian author and published by an Australian publisher was *No Ordinary View: A season of faith and mission in the Himalayas* by Naomi Reed (Ark House Press). [READ ON](#)

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Patriarch urges prayers for UN climate talks

The global crisis offers an opportunity to deal in a different way with problems it has revealed, says Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomeos I, a spiritual leader who represents Eastern Orthodox Christianity, in a message to mark a day of prayer for God's creation. [READ ON](#)

Norwegian Lutheran elected to lead WCC

The Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, a pastor and theologian in the Church of Norway, has been elected as general secretary of the World Council of Churches. [READ ON](#)

Israeli occupation a 'sin against God' says global leader

The general secretary of the World Council of Churches has said that Israel's occupation of Palestinian territories should be declared a "sin against God". [READ ON](#)

Lutherans approve full communion pact with Methodists

Even as their churches are riven by internal debates over homosexuality, two of the largest Protestant denominations in the United States have agreed to share ministers and resources in a "full communion" accord. [READ ON](#)

Study and Faith: Does Literature 101 lead to unbelief?

A new study suggests that certain academic majors can influence students' religiosity - positively or negatively - over time. [READ ON](#)

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Handing on the Vision, September 9

A day conference on Ecumenism, will be held with Dr Geraldine Smyth OP (Irish School of Ecumenics) and other distinguished speakers, at the Australian Centre for Christianity & Culture in Canberra on Wednesday, September 9. For more information please click [here](#).

Geoff Bullock, September 13

Geoff Bullock, well known writer of much loved music will be at Kippax Uniting Church (cnr Luke St and Hardwick Cres Holt) in Concert on Saturday, September 12 at 7.30 pm and in worship on Sunday, September 13 at 10.30 am. The concert will be a café style setting and include supper. Tickets are \$20 or \$60 for a family. Call 6254 1733, or email kuc@kippax.org.au. Tickets will also be available on the night if it is not sold out before hand.

Geoff will be sharing his story of God's grace and inspiration, and the way in which he has experienced in new and most profound ways the abundant grace of God.

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Asian Diaspora in Australia Symposium, September 14-15

The symposium titled "Making Space for Christ: Second Thoughts on *Crossing Borders*" is hosted by the Association of Asian-Australian Theology and Ministry and The Korean Society of Sydney. Guest speakers include: Dr In Jin Yoon (Head of Sociology Department, Korea University) and Dr Clive Pearson (Principal of United Theological College).

The event is held on September 14-15 at CFM, 16 Masons Drive North Parramatta 2151. For bookings please email yangmd@nsw.uca.org.au by September 1. For more enquiries about the symposium please contact Dr Myong Duk Yang 02 8838 8905 or 0418 223 261.

John Holbert talk, September 11-14

All are welcome to attend and hear John Holbert speak on leadership, grace and the art of preaching. Please join any of the events listed below:

Friday, September 11, at 11.30 am- 1 pm

At St Andrews Chapel, CFM, 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta

Please contact joannes@nsw.uca.org.au or jhavea@csu.edu.au.

Sunday, September 13 (7 pm- 8 pm)

At Parramatta Mission, 119 Macquarie St, Parramatta

Please contact Keith Hamilton on keith@parramattamission.org.au or Jione Havea jhavea@csu.edu.au.

Monday, September 14 at 6.30 pm- 8.30 pm

UTC Faculty Colloquium (includes Pot-luck dinner) at 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta. Please contact joannes@nsw.uca.org.au or jhavea@csu.edu.au.

Jesus All about life, September 14

September 14 will see the launch of the Jesus. All about Life campaign across multiple media platforms including outdoor, TV, radio, print and online.

<http://www.jesusallaboutlife.com.au/media-room.html>

Climate Change: The Ethical Issues - September 16

In September the CES will be holding a public forum that addresses the ethical issues around climate change. The speakers will be Dr Paul Collins and Vanessa Morris.

The event will take place on Wednesday, September 16, 7.30 pm at the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture, Barton.

Please contact Heather McLaren for more information on 02 6291 4537 or chair@ces.org.au, <http://www.ces.org.au>

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Theology Art Imagination, September 16-19

Hosted by the Institute for Theology and the Arts, Supported by United Theological College, Communitas, Asian Christian Art Association and the Alan Walker College for Evangelism, this event will be held September 16-19, at the Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Dr, Nth Parramatta.

Theology and Art Forum with artist talks, presentations exploring the interaction between art and theology will be held on September 16-17. Costs: \$50/\$35 (artists) including lunch.

There is also an Art Exhibition opening at 7 pm on September 17. 'Life in Gaza' & 'Peace on a Postcard' will be opened by Dr Ron Kraybill. Trish Watts singer and songwriter presenting 'Voice Travels'.

Art, Theology and Imagination will be held on September 18-19. A two-day seminar exploring cross cultural theology — looking at the role of images in the diverse cultures of the region. The seminar costs: \$50/35 (artists). Artists include Emmanuel Garibay, Soichi Watanabe, Jason Dy, Meredith Brice, Miriam Cabello, Stephen Copland, David Capra; theologians Jione Havea, Rod Pattenden, Geraldine Wheeler, Katalina Tahaafe-Williams; art historians Rosemary Crumlin, Rene Javellana; and arts organiser Christina Rowntree.

Please contact Rod Pattenden - pattenden@bigpond.com - 0418 861267.

Sons of Korah, September 20

Kippax Uniting is proud to bring – in partnership with the Bible Society – a concert by Sons of Korah on Sunday, September 20 at 7.30pm. The Sons of Korah are a particularly dynamic Christian group, whose music is drawn from the Psalms. They bring a combination of light rock, acoustic and folk music with a sense of joy that is infectious. From lamentation to songs of jubilant praise, from battle cry to benediction, from exclamation of awe and wonder to reflections of tranquillity and perfect wisdom, Sons of Korah provide a compelling portrait of the world and experience of the psalms.

Tickets can be reserved at the Bible Society website

<http://www.biblesocietynsw.com.au/sonsofkorah>. \$15 per head or \$50 for a family

International Day of Peace, September 21

September 21 is International Day of Peace, which is observed around the world with prayers and thoughts on peace. The "Peace bell" at the United Nations Building in New York is rung on this day at 12 noon.

Like the past years, St. David's will celebrate the day as Interfaith International Day of Peace with prayers offered by people representing twelve different faith/cultural backgrounds for peace and harmony. The service will be held at St. David's Uniting Church Main Hall (454 Pacific Highway, Lindfield 2070, cnr. Provincial Road) on Monday, September 21 at 11 am. Light refreshment will be served after the service.

Please contact (02) 94162746 or mnghosh@people.net.au

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The Year of Luke, September 21-22

This event is for all those engaged in preaching, teaching and leading worship and who share an interest, enthusiasm and passion for ministry in the church.

'Windows into the Text' is an opportunity to engage with Bill Loader, a well-respected commentator on the Lectionary. Through seminars and workshops we will gain insights that will inform our preaching and teaching ministry and enhance our worship in readiness for 2010. A list of recommended reading on Luke will be provided on registration. Hosted by The Urban Mission Network, the aim of the network is to encourage each other in ministry and mission.

This event will be held on Monday, September 21 and Tuesday, September 22 at the Effective-Living Centre on 26 King William Road Wayville SA.

For further information about the conference and the Urban Mission Network contact the Coordinator

Please email connect2me@urbannetwork.org or phone 8332 8339 or go to the [website](#).

Regional Meeting of the Local Initiatives Commission, September 26

You are invited to the Regional meeting of the Local Initiatives Commission of the NSW Ecumenical Council. Hear about trends in ecumenism as well as ecumenical activities in your area and share your own ecumenical experiences.

It will be held at Our Lady of the Rosary Waitara Parish School Hall (23 Yardley Avenue, Waitara) on Saturday Sept. 26. Please aim to be there at 9.00 am for a 9.30 am start. This meeting will go until about noon.

Social Justice Sunday, September 27

September 27 is national Social Justice Sunday and the NCCA has produced some resources for this occasion called 'Hope for the Common Good: Beyond the Global Financial Crisis.'

Please download the resources [here](#) or for more Info: <http://www.ncca.org.au> or contact dporter@ncca.org.au

"All are precious in His sight", October 8-18

A Photographic competition and exhibition titled "All are precious in His sight" will be held at St Stephen's Uniting Church.

There will be a \$300 prize for a winner in each of the following sections: Senior Amateur, Junior Amateur, and People's Choice.

For entry forms and competition rules contact: (02) 9221 1688, office@ssms.org.au, or collect from the front vestibule at St Stephen's Uniting Church, 197 Macquarie Street, Sydney.

Deadline for entries: September 11, 2009

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LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

Think big – think 1 per cent ...

It doesn't seem like much – but 1 per cent can make a huge difference. If every Uniting Church congregation in New South Wales and the ACT contributed 1 per cent more of its total annual expenditure to Living is Giving, there could be up to \$600,000 more that goes into mission work.

That's an extra \$600,000 for mission initiatives in new housing areas, training people for ministry, bringing the gospel to schools and universities, supporting drought-affected rural communities and the day-to-day administrative and legal tasks that keep our congregations, faith communities and agencies running.

Unfortunately, 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. Many of these ministries offer people hope in hard times; providing shelter, care, sustenance or spiritual support where otherwise they may have none.

If you believe the mission work of the Uniting Church matters, make Living is Giving a priority in your congregation this financial year. Can your congregation or faith community commit to an extra 1 per cent per annum to help keep the many ministries of the New South Wales Synod strong and viable?

Please, think big by digging deep and continue to support these mission initiatives. We need to make Living is Giving a priority in the financial year ahead. Let's face the challenges ahead with renewed vigor and make a difference.

For more information please contact Kimberly Almarza on kima@nsw.uca.org.au or call 8267 4475. Make sure you visit the website for more information and resources on <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/>

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Hope makes a difference: Living is Giving presentations

Hope springs from humble origins! Learn how your small or large congregation can make a difference to the lives of others by hosting a free Living is Giving presentation.

Speakers are available to talk about Living is Giving and stewardship — whether at a Sunday service, a congregational meeting, a small meeting with key leaders from your congregation, or in another appropriate setting, presentations are especially tailored to your congregations needs.

Depending on the mission focus areas your congregation supports, we can also arrange for a speaker from that area of ministry to visit your congregation and talk about their work, and how your congregation is supporting it.

Please contact Kimberly on (02) 8267 4475 or kima@nsw.uca.org.au if you'd like to arrange for a speaker to come to your congregation.

We want to hear your Living is Giving stories!

On June 4, 2009 the children of West Ryde Uniting Church Congregation had no idea of the surprise that awaited them as they arrived to their Thursday afternoon children worship service called "Charged".

For some time, the children have been saving up their hard-earned pocket money in a "petrol bank" — a piggy bank in the form of a petrol bowser — with the purpose of "fuelling Gods kingdom". They chose to do so by selecting rural ministry as their mission focus area for Living is Giving.

This is just one of the awe-inspiring stories we come across where congregations give above and beyond their own means. Yet, it's the unique fashion that the children of West Ryde Congregation went about raising money for Living is Giving that's exceptional — by "fuelling God's kingdom".

How does your congregation "fuel Gods kingdom"? We want to hear your fundraising stories. Send your story to the Kimberly Almarza on kima@nsw.uca.org.au or call 8267 4475.

Prayer point and praise points

Pray and give thanks for:

- Students like Adrian White who benefit from the encouragement and support offered by Tertiary Ministry (in university). Through regular university-level Bible studies, social activities, conferences, retreats, and interactions with other UCATSA groups around the Synod - students are able to make friends, ask questions about life and faith and thus grow as Christians.

"Here was a place where questions could be asked, where we could really struggle with what it means to be a disciple of Jesus," says Adrian about his experience with the Christian Students Uniting group.

Please keep supporting young people at a critical time in their faith journey. To read more on Adrian's faith journey please click [here](#).

- UnitingCare hospital chaplains like the Rev. Bruce Slater and the Rev. Jennifer Kivikko who minister in the most challenging environments. Hospital Chaplains share Christ's compassion at a time when people are facing a crisis point in their lives – a tough but often very rewarding ministry.

Like all hospital chaplains, Bruce Slater from Westmead Hospital is considered an integral member of the healthcare team. From Monday to Friday he makes his daily rounds and is available 24-hours a day to provide pastoral care for patients, family and hospital staff — offering support, encouragement and guidance for people facing some of life's most distressing experiences.

In the hospital wards, Bruce sees what can only be described as God's grace in action where he often finds himself in the sensitive role of confidant and friend — he rarely gets knocked back or turned away when he meets a new person.

Please pray that this vital ministry work continues and that God's grace in action continues to flourish in the hospital wards.

To find out more about Bruce Slater's work please click [here](#).

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For more on these mission focus areas please visit:

<http://www.livingisgiving.uca.org.au/missionfocusareas.htm>

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

Studying journalism, graphic design or communications and would like to offer your skills to *Insights*? Go to <http://nsw.uca.org.au/cu/internships.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.

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