


COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

e-news October 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).

This issue includes:

NEWS AND INITIATIVES

- [Message from the moderator](#)
- [UnitingWorld launches Samoa Tsunami Appeal](#)
- [Celebrating the work of ecumenism, done and undone](#)
- [Australians vote Jesus most significant figure in history](#)
- [Your report's generous!](#)
- [Two gold awards: best in web and art](#)
- [Violence escalating in South Sudan, warns church leader](#)
- ['House' church razed as 60th anniversary approaches](#)
- [The creation in music](#)
- [UnitingWorld responds to Zimbabwe food security crisis](#)
- [Jesus is coming to a screen near you](#)
- [Uniting Church unveils new moderator](#)
- [Poverty and Justice Bible launched by Prime Minister](#)

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- [Wesley Fair 2009, October 8](#)
- [Wesley's scrapbooking competition/exhibition, October 8](#)
- [Genes r us? Ethics and identity in the age of Genomics, October 8](#)
- [Indigenous treaty: A Framework for the future, October 8](#)
- [A celebration of inclusiveness, October 8](#)
- [The books of Samuel in context by Prof. Graeme Auld, October 16](#)

- [The ethics of global warming: a talk by the Rev. Dr John Bell, October 20](#)
- [18th craft show at Weston Creek Uniting Church, October 24](#)
- [‘Hope’ is our song’ — peace, justice, creation, October 23-26](#)
- [2009 Cross-Cultural Gathering, October 26-27](#)
- [Multi-faith choirs for council choral concert, October 31](#)

LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

- [Hope makes a difference: Living is Giving presentations](#)
- [Think big – think 1 per cent](#)
- [We want to hear your Living is Giving stories!](#)
- [Prayer and Praise Points](#)

[Return to menu](#)

NEWS AND INITIATIVES

Message from the Moderator:

I have had the good fortune to spend some time in England at Greenbelt — a three-day Christian festival where I was exposed to all sorts of music, a wide range of alternative and more traditional worship, speakers many and varied and, for a bit of fun, participated with about 60 amazingly talented young people in a “scratch panto” (*Cinderella*) in which I played the wicked step-mother. [READ ON](#)

UnitingWorld launches Samoa Tsunami Appeal

In response to reports of the devastating impact of the Samoa tsunami and the enormous relief effort our partner churches face, UnitingWorld has launched an emergency relief appeal. [READ ON](#) Sydney Samoans unable to contact relatives. [READ ON](#) Prayer resources. [READ ON](#)

Celebrating the work of ecumenism, done and undone

Roman Catholic, Lutheran and United Methodist leaders in the United States have marked the 10th anniversary of a milestone agreement on the long, slow and often painful road to Christian unity. The October 1 celebration at Old St Patrick's Church in Chicago paid tribute to the signing of the Joint Declaration on the Doctrine of Justification by the Vatican and the Lutheran World Federation on October 31, 1999. [READ ON](#)

Australians vote Jesus most significant figure in history

Believer or non-believer, 54 per cent of Australians ranked Jesus as the number one most influential person in history beating Albert Einstein who came in at

second place (16 per cent) and Charles Darwin who was ranked third (9 per cent). [READ ON](#)

Your report's generous!

The 2009 annual report of the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, *Generous ... as God is* was distributed in congregations this month. The report outlines the extensive work of the Synod and how congregations' contributions to Living is Giving and the Synod Fund have enabled this work to happen. *Generous ... as God is* will also be the theme for the Synod meeting to be held at Canterbury Park Race Course from April 10 to 13, 2010. [READ ON](#)

Two gold awards: best in web and art

The Synod Communications Unit team received two Gold Awards — one for best website and one for best original artwork — in the recent 2009 Australasian Religious Press Association Awards (ARPA). It also received Highly Commended in the best editorial category and a commendation in the best feature category. [READ ON](#)

[Return to menu](#)

Violence escalating in South Sudan, warns church leader

Violence in southern Sudan is rife, with many women, children and the elderly among the victims, the new head of the Sudan Council of Churches, the Rev. Ramadan Chan Liol, has warned. [READ ON](#)

'House' church razed as 60th anniversary approaches

A religious freedom advocacy group has called on the international community to put pressure on China to respect the rule of law after the destruction of an unofficial Protestant church in the country's Shanxi province. Hundreds of people in uniforms and civilian clothes raided the church in Fushan County in central China on September 13 after local authorities claimed it was housed in an illegally constructed building and was not a church, the Texas-based group ChinaAid said. [READ ON](#)

The creation in music

Ten of Australia's leading young composers are taking part in a unique project at St Ives Uniting Church to mark the coming Christmas season. *All heaven shouted for joy: Stations of Creation 2009* is a musical celebration of the mystery of being, or creation, through birth. [READ ON](#)

UnitingWorld responds to Zimbabwe food security crisis

UnitingWorld has launched a Food Relief Appeal for the people of rural Zimbabwe in response to worsening issues of food security. [READ ON](#)

Jesus is coming to a screen near you

September 27 marked the final phase of the *Jesus. All About Life* campaign when the highly anticipated TV commercial premiered on primetime TV. To see it click [here](#).

[Return to menu](#)

Uniting Church unveils new moderator

The Uniting Church Synod of Victoria and Tasmania has installed Isabel Dobson as its new Moderator. [READ ON](#)

Poverty and Justice Bible launched by Prime Minister

The Prime Minister, Mr Kevin Rudd, was joined by the Leader of the Opposition, Mr Malcolm Turnbull, for a historic launch at Parliament House, Canberra. [READ ON](#)

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Wesley Fair 2009, October 8

Australian's longest running fundraising fair (now in its 96th year) is bigger and better than ever: Wesley Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney on Thursday, October 8, 2009 (9.30–5.00 pm). Amid lots of stalls — cakes, sweets, jewellery, bric-a-brac, art and craft, books and fashion — there will be palate-pleasers like international food, the Lindt chocolate fountain (all 20 kilos of chocolate) and a health bar.

Children will be entertained in their own fully supervised activity room. For the adults there is: flower arranging, two cooking demonstrations (Banquet cooking on a budget and a dessert extravaganza) and a gardening panel. The scrapbooking exhibition and expert demonstration will keep the crafters happy and the fair closes with some bargains at 5 pm. Be there and tell all your friends. Inquiries to Rosemary Cottrell, 9263 569, wesleymission@wesleymission.org.au

Wesley's scrapbooking competition/exhibition, October 8

Calling all scrapbooking enthusiasts! Craft your entry in Wesley's inaugural [Scrapbooking Competition](#). There are two age groups and three topics for each: Under 18; "Holidays", "Sports" and a gift card and 18 and over; "Babies", "Celebrations" and a gift card. Paper mounted entries must be lodged in person on the day of Wesley Fair from 9.30–11 am. The winners will be announced along with an expert presentation at 2 pm (entry by gold coin). Entries will be displayed throughout the day and are to be collected after 3 pm. There are great prizes of scrapbooking resources. The event is held at the Wesley Conference Centre, 220 Pitt Street, Sydney on Thursday, October 8.

Deadline for entries fall at 11 am on Thursday, October 8 (entries can be lodged from 2 pm 7th October). \$5 per entry or 3 for \$10.

[Return to menu](#)

Genes r us? Ethics and identity in the age of genomics, October 8

Another not-to-be missed Council of Christians and Jews Luncheon Club event on one of our era's most pressing and debated subjects, one which you will be fascinated to hear and to discuss the issues following the presentation. Featuring bioethicist and author Sally Gibbons. The event will be held at the Great Synagogue Hall, 166 Castlereagh Street (just up from Park Street) on October 8. Admission is free (gold coin donation will be appreciated). A (kosher) sandwich lunch will also be served. Please RSVP for catering purposes to William Szekely, President: 9290.3222 or 0418-464056, szeklex@szeklex.com.au

Indigenous treaty: a framework for the future, October 8

On Thursday October 8 the Wayside Chapel will host a public event, Indigenous Treaty: A Framework for the Future, as part of its Wayside Speaks series.

Dr Sarah Maddison, author of *Black Politics*, and Larissa Behrendt, Professor of Law and Director of Research at the Jumbunna Indigenous House of Learning at UTS, will speak about the social and legal implications of a treaty and then open up to questions.

"There is so much focus on policy and service delivery in Indigenous affairs, but until we get the framework right, policies and programs will not make a difference to Indigenous lives. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples need a solid legal footing from which to negotiate and from which they can take control of their lives," Dr Maddison said.

The event is held at the Wayside Chapel, 29 Hughes Street, Potts Point, Thursday October 8 at 6:30 pm–8 pm.

Wayside Speaks is a regular series of debates and events about issues affecting the community, with a focus on social justice and welfare issues. The next event will be a talk from Mark Gable, lead singer of the Choirboys speaking about his depression (October 22).

A celebration of inclusiveness, October 11

On October 11 at 10.30 am, St James Uniting Church at Curtin will be holding a special themed service "A Celebration of Inclusiveness". Canberra Gay and Lesbian Qwire will be singing and Warren Talbot from Sydney Uniting Network will be speaking. St James will be assisted by their new minister, the Rev. Niki Francis. Come and join them on this happy occasion and for lunch afterwards!

The books of Samuel in context by Prof. Graeme Auld, October 16

United Theological College presents a seminar on reading the books of Samuel. This will be held at the Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Drive North Parramatta, on Friday October 16, 2-4 pm. For more information please contact Jione Havea on 8838 8929 or jhavea@csu.edu.au.

[Return to menu](#)

The ethics of global warming: a talk by the Rev. Dr John Bell, October 20

Throughout the Christian era, there has been ambivalence as to how to relate to nature. Is it there just to be admired, or to enable us to prove our virtue as we tame and exploit it? The answer — at least as regards to scripture — is probably neither. However it may be that, at this juncture in human history when the ecology of the globe is in danger, Christians should be sharing some biblical perspectives necessary for our times. The Rev. Dr John Bell is a native of Kilmarnock, Scotland, who lives in Glasgow where he studied Arts and Theology. After spells of voluntary work in London and Amsterdam, and engagements in student politics, he was ordained by the Church of Scotland. For ten years he worked in youth ministry with his colleague, Graham Maule, before transferring to concentrate on music and worship. He is a hymn writer, author and occasional broadcaster on national radio and television, but retains a primary passion for congregational song. He and the work he shares with his colleagues has been honoured by the Royal School of Church Music, the Hymn Society in the USA and Canada, and the University of Glasgow, the first and second of which bestowed on him the status of Fellowship, the third a Doctorate. This is held at Newington College, 200 Stanmore Road, Stanmore, on Tuesday October 20, Prescott Hall at 5.30 pm. Admission is free for everyone with tickets available from Mrs Jane Franks. For more information call 9568 9324, fax: 9568 9522 or email: j.franks@newingtoncollege.nsw.edu.au.

18th craft show at Weston Creek Uniting Church, October 24

It's on again! You are invited to the 18th Craft Show at the Uniting Church in Weston on Friday October 23 at 10am-9pm and Saturday October 24 at 10 am-4 pm. There is a record-breaking number of entries this year featuring creative work from across the community, including children's clothes and toys, silk scarves, Christmas gifts and food, glass work and pottery to name a few. Lunches, morning and afternoon teas are available both days and on Friday night there is a delicious supper after the opening by well-known crafts person Jenny Bradford. All proceeds will be allocated to assisting community development within the church. Please let everyone know about this excellent opportunity to get-together and enjoy the atmosphere of a well-organised community event. Flyer available on request from Presbytery office, 6248 9311.

'Hope Is Our Song' — Peace, Justice, Creation, October 23-26

"Hope is our song" – Peace, Justice, Creation, is the theme title for a three day conference in Palmerston North, New Zealand, from October 23 to 26, 2009. The New Zealand Hymnbook Trust invites those seeking further information to make email contact: info@hymns.org.nz.

Keynote presenters include: Clive Pearson, Principal of the United Theological College, Australia; Mary Pearson, member of the Iona Community, hymnwriter and liturgist; Shirley Erena Murray, New Zealand hymnwriter; Colin Gibson, New Zealand hymnwriter.

Focus of the conference is on the key 21st century public issues and how the indigenous hymnwriters of New Zealand are writing hymns that address these

issues. In so doing, the New Zealand hymnwriters are making a significant contribution to the global search for hymns relevant to contemporary realities. A new collection of 160 hymns by New Zealanders, titled Hope is our song, will be published in May 2009.

For further information, email info@hymns.org.nz or visit www.hymns.org.nz.

[Return to menu](#)

2009 Cross-Cultural Gathering, October 26-27

The NSW and ACT Synod Board of Mission invites you to its 2009 Cross-Cultural Gathering at Collaroy in Sydney on Monday October 26 and Tuesday October 27. Its theme will be Living Water. Registrations to attend the Gathering close on September 30 with the UCA Board of Mission, PO Box A2178, Sydney South NSW 1235. Please contact Jenny Rowland, convenor of the Presbytery's Cross-Cultural Committee, jdrowland@hotmail.com.au, for further information about the Gathering.

Multi-Faith Choirs for council choral concert, October 31

The tradition begun three years ago of presenting multi-faith choirs in one evening's presentation is being continued this year by the NSW Council of Christians and Jews.

This year's concert will feature the Jewish, Gospel and Greek Orthodox ensembles. The first of the three will be the Sydney Jewish Choral Society. With internationally-acclaimed operatic tenor, Daniel Sloman, who is also an accomplished synagogue cantor, the choir will highlight the Jewish component of this year's interfaith concert.

The 2009 concert, featuring the Jewish Choral Society, the acclaimed Elementals Gospel Group and the Australian Byzantine Choir will be held at the Paddington Uniting Church on October 31 at 8.10 pm. Bookings can be made at 9980 8670 or [here](#).

[Return to menu](#)

LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

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.

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 vigour 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/>

[Return to menu](#)

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 God's 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 God's 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:

- **Jesus. All About Life** — More than 1,500 churches from just about every Christian denomination, including 157 Uniting Church congregations, united as the Bible Society's *Jesus. All About Life* (JAAL) campaign kicked-off in early September. The message of Jesus was indeed a hard one to miss. Media used in the six-week campaign included television, print, radio and internet messages, all encouraging people to consider what Jesus had to say and how relevant his message is in our lives today.

- **Affordable housing for older Australians** — The recent global financial crisis has led to disturbing reports about older Australians doing it tough. In an inflated property market, many older people find that a large portion of their income goes into housing (rent or mortgage payments) with insufficient income left over for other basics. It's not surprising that many older Australians are vulnerable to homelessness.

UnitingCare Ageing recently gained approval under the National Rental Affordable Housing Scheme to build 167 affordable dwellings, many of which will be available to older Australians at risk of becoming homeless.

[Return to menu](#)

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.

CONTACT US: cu@nsw.uca.org.au

RECOMMEND US TO A FRIEND: Recommend *Community Connections* to a friend. Forward it on, or direct them to <http://nsw.uca.org.au/e-news>.

You are receiving this email as a member of the community of the Uniting Church in Australia, Synod of New South Wales and the ACT. If you would like to unsubscribe please click [here](#). If you would like to update your contact details, including email address, click [here](#) and provide us with your new details.

[Return to menu](#)