


# COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

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

**e-news May 2008**

To read this newsletter online, visit <http://nsw.uca.org.au/e-news>



*Community Connections* is a monthly email which contains news and announcements from the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, along with items of social, religious or cultural interest and information on upcoming events. Its primary aim is to promote the wider work of the Uniting Church, and how you can support it through the Living is Giving program.

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 [emmah@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:emmah@nsw.uca.org.au).

## NEWS AND INITIATIVES

### From the Moderator

Will the Uniting Church be around in 100 years time? In May *Insights* the Moderator, the Rev. Niall Reid, reflects on what the future may be for the Uniting Church, and says our primary focus must be on living and sharing the faith and discovering ways in which we can best do that in this 21st century environment – ways that will allow it to live and flourish into the 22nd century. Read more from the Moderator in May *Insights*.

### Burma cyclone appeal

Tropical cyclone Nargis hit Myanmar (Burma) last Friday May 2. Hundreds of thousands of people have been killed or rendered homeless and the destruction caused by the cyclone continues to reveal itself in areas all around the country as new information comes to light. The National Council of Churches has set up a cyclone response appeal. Please call 1800 025 101 if you would like to make a donation.

### UnitingCare Indigenous Employment Strategy

UnitingCare NSW.ACT last month committed to taking on more than 140 new Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff over the next 12 months as part of its recently developed Indigenous Employment Strategy.

The strategy, developed in partnership with the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, will provide employment, learning and development opportunities for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in all occupation levels. To read more about the strategy, visit <http://unitingcarenswact.org.au/>.

### “Uniting Earthcare” website

A new “Uniting Earthcare” website will be launched in May. This website will link up the different things to do with environment and ecology that are happening across the Synod of New South Wales and the ACT, and will provide a “one stop shop” of resources. The website will cover eco-theology, teaching and learning (for example sermons, Sunday School resources, Bible studies), prayer, worship resources, wilderness experiences, book reviews and more. Organisers are now collecting material for the website, and contributions are welcome! If you would like to contribute something, please contact Miriam Pepper on [m\\_d\\_pepper@yahoo.com.au](mailto:m_d_pepper@yahoo.com.au).

### NCYC registrations

Be quick! NCYC09 might still be a few months away, but the registration fees go up on Thursday May 15, 2008. You can visit [ncyc.org.au/registration](http://ncyc.org.au/registration) to see what more you can do in addition to being a delegate – for example, being involved in the planning of NCYC09, becoming a small group leader or an adult volunteer.

## EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

### **Heritage Day at Ebenezer Uniting Church, May 11**

Ebenezer Church is 200 years old in 2009 but across the road from the church stands something much older still — the Historic Tree. It is believed that under the shade of this tree the pioneers of Ebenezer Church held their first services in 1803.

Like the tree, the life of Ebenezer Church will continue into its third century. Bicentenary celebrations of Australia's oldest existing church are planned for June 2009 and everyone is welcome to attend. Lead up functions are also planned, the first being a Heritage Day on Sunday May 11, 2008. This will be a day when people can hear the fascinating story of the beginning of Ebenezer Church and to participate walk-and-talks through the colonial graveyard. For the more energetic there will be walks to the quarry from which the stone was cut to build the church and to the sandy beach into which the pioneers pulled their rowing boats. The church barbecue will be fired up and the usual Devonshire teas will be in full swing. Starts at 10.30 am. A Sunday morning church service commences at 8.30 am, and all are welcome to come along and be part of the congregation. More information can be found on [www.ebenezerchurch.org.au](http://www.ebenezerchurch.org.au).

### **Pitt St Uniting Church celebrates 175 years! May 25**

All are invited to celebrate Pitt Street Uniting Church's 175th anniversary at 10 am on Sunday May 25, when the Rev. Gregor Henderson, national President of our Uniting Church in Australia, will preach in the presence of New South Wales State Governor Professor Marie Bashir. Drama cameos during worship will invite us to relive aspects of Pitt Street's history. *Pride of Place*, a newly published history of Pitt Street Congregational Church (its first 144 years), will be launched at 11.00 am by Minister Emeritus the Rev. Dorothy McRae-McMahon and will be available for purchase (\$44.95 hard back or \$29.95 paper back plus \$5 postage). RSVP and enquiries: 9267 3614 or [pittstuc@bigpond.com](mailto:pittstuc@bigpond.com). Please alert anyone you feel would like to know of this celebration. Location: 264 Pitt St, Sydney (three doors from Park St in the direction of Central).

### **South West Rocks Worship Centre's 20th Anniversary, May 25**

The linked congregations of the Lower Macleay River will be holding a day of celebrations to mark the 20th Anniversary of the current Worship Centre. The day will commence at 10.00 am with worship. Those interested can contact Janette Wickham on 0428 372 114 for more details.

### **Seminar Week 2008: 'Faith in Leadership?', June 13 to 17**

How does faith interact with leadership? How do we grow leaders within our churches, both lay and ordained? How do we lead the church into the 21st century?

Renowned author Professor Robert Banks will speak on these and other issues at Seminar Week, Friday June 13 to Tuesday June 17 at the Centre for Ministry, 16 Masons Drive, North Parramatta. People based outside Sydney working in Uniting Church Specified Ministries in New South Wales and the ACT are eligible for financial assistance for travel and accommodation.

For more information, contact Robert McFarlane on (02) 8838 8935 or [robertm@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:robertm@nsw.uca.org.au).

## LIVING IS GIVING: PRAYER POINTS AND RESOURCES

### **Living is Giving April 2008 updates**

Your congregation should have received update posters on the Living is Giving projects you are supporting this financial year. If they haven't already been placed on display in your church for congregation members to read, ask your treasurer to do so!

You can also find the updates online at <http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/missionfocusareas.htm>.

### **Prayer point: Mission focus area 15 General contribution (undesignated) and the work of the assembly and its agencies**

- Pray for the Assembly's Young Ambassadors for Peace program, which is helping communities in some of the most troubled countries in our region — including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, the Solomon Islands and Burma — to resolve conflict.

- Pray for the work of Uniting Church Overseas Aid (UCOA) in the Milne Bay Province of Papua New Guinea. UCOA is working to provide rural villages with access to clean, safe water. This dramatically reduces the instance of waterborne disease, and reduces the time women need to spend collecting water, freeing them up to send their children to school on time and earn a living.

For the latest update on this mission focus area, visit

<http://livingisgiving.nsw.uca.org.au/updates/april08updates/updates04-08mfa15.pdf>.