

# Perspective

*Canberra Region Presbytery*

Pg 3 : After the fires.  
Greenhills -Ten years on

# View from the First Floor



Image by Brian Rope

## Parting words from the Editor

It has been a privilege to be the editor of *Presbytery News* for the last five years, but it is now time for me to move on. I took over the reins from Bronwyn Hendy in February 2008 which means that this is the 20th issue of *Presbytery News* I've edited. I advised the *Presbytery Communications Committee* early in the year that this would be my final issue. As it happens the time is also right for the office to take over the task.

Editing the magazine I've learned a lot about the Canberra region over the last five years. It's been a privilege to work closely with *Presbytery* officers and staff, along with a committed communications committee.

This year I've enjoyed the challenge of commencing the transition towards a new style of magazine. Bronwyn won an ARPA award for Best News Item in 2004, on the Greenhills Facing the Challenge of Rebuilding. I look forward to the *Presbytery* winning more awards in the future, maybe for most improved magazine.

- Brian Rope

## *Alistair Christie reflects on the life of the Canberra Region Presbytery in 2012.*

I remember words written in February *Presbytery News*...

'I hear some people saying that nothing has changed in the church in the last thirty-five years. I wonder if they really knew the stories of what God has been up to in the lives of people in those years, if they would still say nothing has happened.'

Certainly this year has brought changes for each of us personally, for the congregations and communities of which we are a part, for the life of our *Presbytery*. There are changes within the life of our *Synod*, the church nationally and ecumenically, indeed in every nation.

Some of these changes have surprised or shocked us. Some have turned our lives individually or as the church, in different ways that we would never have dreamed happening.

In February we welcomed the Rev Dr Brian Brown, Moderator of the *Synod of NSW/ACT*, who spoke with a gathering of retired ministry agents and spouses, preached at the service in which Rev Kevin Dilks was inducted as *Presbytery Minister (P & A)* and the installation of Chairperson and Deputy Chairpersons. People attending the *presbytery* meeting also had the opportunity to hear and meet Brian.

Another focus of that meeting held at Reid was interactive discussion on multiculturalism in the life of congregations and the wider *Uniting Church*. We were warmly welcomed and graciously hosted by the *Canberra Korean congregation*.

Late last year some of those serving as chaplains within the *presbytery* began meeting together. Gatherings of people whose ministries are in defense, hospital, aged care, emergency services, tertiary (university) have allowed them to talk about the nature and importance of their particular ministries, and point up lessons for the whole church.

At *ADFA (Australian Defence Force Academy)* in May the *presbytery* was

welcomed by the *Commandant* and later met some of our *Defence chaplains* living and working within the *presbytery*. In the afternoon, the Rev Lindsay Cullen introduced the structure and responsibilities of the newly created *Uniting Mission and Education board of the Synod*.

One issue on the agenda of the *Synod* this year (and within the *presbytery*) diverting our focus and/or demanding our attention is the issue of *presbytery boundaries*. Are there too many? What size and shape should they be? Could we function better with one *presbytery* (as do the *synods of South and Western Australia*)? Consideration of and responses to various papers on this issue is an ongoing part of our discussions.

Early in August, the *presbytery* welcomed the Rev Professor Andrew Dutney, President of our national *Assembly 2012-2015*, who was accompanied by Matt Pulford, *Assembly Communications Unit*.

In addition to joining with and speaking to retired ministry agents at lunch, Andrew visited the exhibition of early *AIM* photographs part of the *National Library's* contribution to the *AIM/John Flynn centennial celebrations*, gave two press interviews, 'hosted' a *President's Table* gathering and attended the *Presbytery* meeting the following day at *Greenhills*.

In the morning he led an interactive session on *Insights from the 2011 National Church Life Survey* and was pleased to be a participant in the afternoon session on issues of the *Australian Government's Future Directions (Intervention) policy* in indigenous communities. We were grateful to have contributions from five people with experience working in this area.

I believe the *presbytery* is working well, blessed with the guidance, energy and experience of our staff and the giftedness of many people within committees and congregations.

- Alistair Christie  
*Presbytery Chairperson, 2012*

# After the fires

## Greenhills Ten Years On

Saturday, January 18, 2003, began as a usual day at Greenhills Camp and Conference Centre. Staff and volunteers were relaxing after renovating the Cotter Centre accommodation block with new curtains, bedspreads and insect screens. 90 firefighters, in Canberra to fight the fires in the hills, were stationed at the camp site, with half out on the field and half resting in cabins. Executive officer Harold Small was on site to help set up a telephone system. Site managers Paula and Ed Challenger were on site, along with volunteer Cyril Tresize.

News came that the fires were out of control and moving quickly towards Canberra, with Greenhills in their path. With Stromlo overtaken in a fire storm further down Cotter Rd, there was nothing to do but prepare for the worst.

Everyone moved into the downstairs auditorium, each person issued with a wet towel. The curtains were closed to minimize the risk of exploding glass. Two people stayed in the D Block, and another two in the one remaining fire tender.

The fire storm swept through with a deafening roar at 120 km/h. Harold peeked out through the curtains to see a wall of orange flames moving horizontally. The onslaught lasted 15 to 20 minutes. Somehow, the auditorium building was spared, as the flames came over the oval and leapt up the hill and over the top.

As the worst of the fire passed, the Greenhills staff and fire crew moved to the dining room upstairs to see what was happening outside. Paula looked out over the outdoor chapel area and saw nothing but the wooden cross in flames. Over in the Cotter Centre flames started to appear, growing in ferocity to totally destroy the dining room, kitchen, dormitories and hall.

The four fire crew outside the auditorium were able to emerge with hoses to put out spot fires around the Murrumbidgee centre. However it became clear that gardens and grounds were burned. Greenhills was now black, like everything in the path of the fires.

The next few weeks were ones of shock, taking stock, and recovery. A 3 phase generator was brought into provide lighting. Volunteers arrived to help with the clean up, dealing with smoke damage, ash and burnt vegetation. Synod insurance funding helped deal with the danger of 170 burnt pine trees.

A month after the fires, Greenhills was on the road to recovery. A team started work on planning for the new Cotter Centre, while volunteers from Rotary helped clean up the grounds. Funding from insurance, reserves and borrowing made it possible to develop the E, F, G and H accommodation blocks. Canberra Presbytery investment fund UCIF provided funding to supplement the generosity of Uniting Church congregations and Rotary clubs, making it possible to include what is now known as the Rotary Hall.

The new Cotter Centre was opened in November 2006, marking a new era for the camp site. The new buildings attracted interest from school groups visiting Canberra and bookings sky rocketed.

Ten years later, the Greenhills Camp and Conference Centre is looking green again, benefiting from the hard work of staff and volunteers, and the end of the drought.

Executive director Peter Badowski, managers Stephen and Kathy Schlenk, and their staff have the challenge of taking Greenhills into a new phase in the life of the site. Increasing standards of care are being supplemented with new services. Communication with clients and the community is being strengthened with a newly designed website and brochures.

Where will Greenhills be in ten years time? The Greenhills board, appointed by the Canberra Region Presbytery, continues to explore new possibilities associated with accommodation, creative use of land and partnership with other organisations.

Some aspects of Greenhills have changed over ten years, especially with the appointment of more staff. However one thing is constant: the vision guiding the actions and activities of Greenhills is to see lives enriched through memorable experiences.

The Greenhills board has clarified the ongoing purpose of Greenhills with a unifying purpose: "Building Communities". Core values have been identified: service inspired by Christ, hospitality - welcoming, safe and inclusive, stewardship - caring for Greenhills and its environment, partnership - working with community, schools, churches and service providers, and integrity in all we do and say.

**- Duncan Macleod  
Greenhills board member**



Alistair Christie visited Greenhills two weeks after the fires, in his role as Moderator of the NSW/ACT Synod. He spent some time alone in the outdoor chapel, named after his wife Connie Christie.

Despite the sense of desolation, Alistair saw signs of hope. The big tree, which he calls the Guardian, was showing signs of life. New growth was shooting from the upper branches, from the bowl and from the base of the tree - signs of new life - of resurrection.

The next week friends who had visited the centre, sent Alistair photos of the chapel including one of the pavers at the foot of the remnant of the cross. There was an image of a cross on the pavers.

Ten years later, Alistair takes heart from the healing of the Guardian and refurbishment of the Connie Christie chapel.

**Greenhills invites all to a service of thanksgiving and remembrance to mark the ten years since the 2003 Canberra fires. The service will be held at 11 am, Sunday 20 January, and will be followed with light refreshments.**

**Phone Greenhills now to let them know you're coming: 02 6288 1074.**

# The other side of Christmas

## Hospital Chaplain Jean Shannon reflects

People have very mixed feelings about Christmas. I think there is a lot of confusion both theologically and emotionally.

We're supposed to be happy yet we couch our conversations in expressions like,

'I *hope* you have a merry Christmas.'  
'I *hope* you have a good new year.'

We're anxious and stressed and worried about a lot of things including our friends' and family's safety. The birth of every baby is surrounded by fear and joy.

Will everything go easily?  
Will the baby be healthy?

Do we have the skills to be good parents?  
Do we have the money?

Christmas was not necessarily a happy time for Mary & Joseph. What family, in the last weeks or days before a birth, would choose to make a long, slow and dangerous journey to a husband's home town?

They were forced to travel because of the census. They did not *choose* to travel. They lived under an oppressive and fearful ruler. The consequences of not going were greater than the dangers in travel, even if it meant losing the baby.

It was a time of persecution and uncertainty. It was the beginning of something enormous and they had no idea where it would take them or how it would end. It was a time of fear and faith.

Christmas was also a time of paranoia. What do you think would have happened if the Magi and returned to Herod and told him where the baby was? Who else might tell?

As it is, this is a time of refugees. The baby is born, Christmas is over and just as the new year is about to begin.

Jump forward to Matthew 2:13 and we see Mary & Joseph fleeing with Jesus to Egypt.

They are forced to live in exile until Herod is dead. Immediately following their departure, Herod kills every child under 2 years old. That includes every child in the district; both friend's and family. Rachel is left weeping.

Is this a joyous story? Mary and Joseph may have been delighted that the baby was born, that they were safe but life was real and hard.

Many of us are refugees today. We have come to this region from other towns and other countries. Christmas reminds us of long ago celebrations somewhere else in our childhoods. It reminds us of other foods and old traditions.

Our once a year gatherings teach us how different we are from our children or our brothers and sisters. Christmas is decorated with the ghosts of Christmases past. The festivities remind us of loved ones lost or far away and we feel those empty spaces deeply.

Christmas can be a sad time for many and so we feel confused and sometimes, a little guilty. Like we *ought* to be joyous so what's wrong with us?

And then we add the New Year, which we *hope* will be better. We don't allow ourselves the time to reflect, or dare I say, grieve for the year that's passed.

But the fundamental message of this season is hope. We believe that from small things, even a baby born at the end of the world, big things grow. Like a ripple in a pond, no one could know at the time - where it would end - that a movement would be born ... so strong that it crossed thousands of years and is celebrated in all parts of the world.

The Christmas story can be our story. It's OK to feel things deeply: Compassion for refugee-ness; fear of the unknown; anxiety, grief for the missing; longing for old Christmases, a youthful sense of certainty or for a security that is no longer true.

Jacques Ellul says in his book, *Hope in a time of abandonment*, that 'hope only comes alive in the dreary silence of God, in our loneliness...for then it is up to us to tell the world that bleakness is not the end of the story.

We must insist that despite all appearances, God is active and drawing us into a brighter future. It is up to us to find *where* and *how* God is working in the world.

In the darkest hour - there is always a chance for a star, a heart, a new way. Forget about gifts, cards and tinsel and give thanks for small things that are wonderful. We take responsibility for finding God.

**- Sermon for the Sunday after Christmas  
Jean Shannon, Chaplaincy Leader**



Image by Duncan Macleod

Jean Shannon is Uniting Church Hospital Chaplaincy Leader for the hospitals in Canberra, supported in a half time position by Canberra Region Presbytery.

Jean is supported by a team of volunteers, including a team from South Woden Uniting Church who have undertaken to support the weekly chapel service at The Canberra Hospital.

Jan Thomas and John Blair have added their enthusiasm and talents to presiding at the Thursday 9.30 am service. Jean and her team are always looking for new people to help with presiding, music or just helping fill the numbers and keeping visitors company at the service. There is interest in starting a Thursday 3.30 pm service as well.

Hospital chapel Christmas services will be held in December:  
Calvary/John James Hospital, Deakin, Thursday, 19 December, 11 am  
The Canberra Hospital, Garran, Friday, 20 December, 9.30 am.

Jean's recent liturgies from the hospital chapel services are on the Canberra Presbytery website, available for use in other settings.

# Aimee's Journey

## Goulburn Springs Forward

### Spring Is Here

The Morning of Friday 12th October I awoke to a sight - pretty, exciting and a little inconvenient - Goulburn found itself lying beneath a sheet of white fluffy snow.

On any other day this would not have posed a problem but after our success with the Family Kite and Wind Festival earlier in the year, we had planned a Spring Festival for the following day in the grounds of Goldsmith St Uniting Church. My morning was filled with concerned phone calls – 'Will we go ahead?', 'Should we include a snow ball fight at the spring festival?', 'Will it be warm enough for the animals in the petting zoo, dry enough for ponies and jumping castles?'

As it turns out, we need not have worried as the weather warmed up as quickly as it had turned cold and we were more concerned about sunburn as the festival time arrived.

In the sweet sunshine we were glad to see that our next round of experiments was coming together. We had just as many people attend the festival based on the church property as we did at the more neutral North Goulburn School venue, with some coming from the invitations we posted and flyers strewn around town, while others responded to the brightly colored signs we hung on the church fence during the week leading up to the festival.

The weekend was a good chance to try and expand our partnerships with other groups and networks, working with the local Community Garden group (planting plants and making mosaics with kids); the fantastic team from Chain Reaction, a music, puppets and performing arts group who are connected with Weston Creek Uniting; and a number of other small local groups. I would work with any or all of these groups again. Not only were they a pleasure to work with, but visitors to the festival loved them.

There are of course always things you learn and plan to do differently next time. The big one for us this time around was admin. In the spirit of compliance and experimentation, we had a shot at the new volunteer agreement paperwork. We must admit our system for coping with this was an epic failure: time consuming, irritating and confusing. If you would like some lessons on what not to do feel free to give us a call.

### Plans for 2013

With the spring festival now completed and plans for our Kids Christmas Carols well under way, it is time for thoughts to turn to plans for next year.

Working with the Reverend Graham Anson, the New Initiatives and Congregational Development Consultant for the synod, we have been exploring what next year might start to look like. Rather than aim to begin one large faith community, we are going to try and work to one of the uniting church's strengths, that of strong small intimate faith communities.

We plan to grow a number of unique and diverse expressions of faith. Some of them may be based around interests, particular values or worship styles.

Each of these groups would have the opportunity to meet on whichever day or time suited them, and to engage with worship and discipleship in their own style.

Each would live out their Christian call in a unique way within the community. A few times a year we hope to gather everyone together for a night of feasting and story telling.

So it may be that we will find ourselves with a gardening church: a group who meet together to pray, reflect on the scriptures and care for each other whilst they tend the garden, giving excess produce to the local shelter in town.

**The Canberra Region Presbytery is supporting the development of a new faith community/ congregation in Goulburn, working with the local Uniting Church congregations to support new adventures in mission and ministry with people in the first third of life.**

**Aimee Kent was inducted as a deacon in January into the position of Minister: New Faith Community/Congregation, Goulburn. She is writing a regular column here sharing with us the highs and lows of building a new network of people living out the call of worship, witness and service.**

Perhaps we will have an art community, that gathers once a month to struggle together over a theological or social issue, committing over the subsequent weeks to continue their contemplation as they create a piece of art which could become the basis of a community exhibition.

Maybe we will end up with a walking church, a café church, a caving church, a messy church, a playgroup church, a church that is dedicated to inclusion and another dedicated to peace. That is all still to evolve.

For the moment people are excited and are catching the vision. Who knows were this next part of the journey may take us?

**- Rev Aimee Kent  
Minister: New Faith Community**



# Strategic areas

2011-2012 Report, Presbytery I

## ***Duncan Macleod reflects on two years in the role of Presbytery Minister, Canberra Region Presbytery.***

I began my work with Canberra Region Presbytery in August 2010, on a fly-in fly-out basis, before moving here to start full time in February 2011. I value deeply the opportunity to work with the Uniting Church in local and regional settings, encouraging fresh initiative and deepened insight for the sake of the Christian gospel.

### New Faith Communities

One of the key priorities for the Canberra Region Presbytery is the development of a new faith community in Goulburn.

2011 was spent preparing the ground for the project with prayer, position description and funding base for Aimee Kent. 2012 was focused on networking and action research.

2013 will be a year of experimentation with new faith community gatherings. Over the next five to ten years the Goulburn project will continue to be a hub of learning for the Presbytery and for other leaders across the NSW/ACT Synod. We've given Aimee a regular column in Perspective (Presbytery News) providing a progress report that encourages other congregations in the development of new faith communities.

### Mission Shaped Ministry

The Fresh Expressions movement in the UK, sponsored by the Church of England and the Methodist Church UK, has developed the "Mission Shaped Ministry" course to encourage local leaders as they establish new faith-inspired and mission-focused communities.

In 2011 I worked with Wayne Brighton, from the Anglican Diocese of Canberra Goulburn, and Lindsay Cullen from the Uniting Mission and Education team, to trial the MSM course over three weekends in Canberra. I've run weekend introductions to the course in Perth, WA (June 2012) and Montville, QLD (September 2012).

Wayne and I are happy to run the introduction course here with groups in the Canberra region in 2013, and hope to run the full MSM course again in 2014 over eight Saturdays. In the meantime we are running a series of ecumenical "Blessing Our Neighbours" evenings featuring stories from local mission initiatives.

Wayne and I are connected with an Australian network for MSM, including a Uniting/Anglican/Lutheran team running the course in Adelaide, and people trialing the courses in Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane.

### Tertiary Ministry

The Uniting Church in NSW/ACT has a growing commitment to resourcing the development of ministry with students and staff in tertiary education institutions such as

universities and TAFE colleges. Here in Canberra we have volunteer chaplains working with ANU and University of Canberra; Geoff Blackert, Arto Avakian and Myung Hwa Park. City Church has developed an intentional Christian community for students in a house in Campbell.

I am covenor of the NSW/ACT Synod's Tertiary Ministry Committee. Funding from the Synod is now allocated every three years in response to tenders from Presbyteries.

The recent life and witness review for Canberra City Church and St Columba's provided an opportunity to explore further the potential for a range of models of tertiary ministry, including student housing and networking across four university campuses.



Image by Brian Rope

# and plans

## Minister, Mission and Education

### Molonglo Valley

One of the strategic focus points for the Presbytery is the challenge of population growth in the Molonglo Valley over the next twenty years. The new housing area is currently growing as an extension to Weston Creek, and will eventually connect up with West Belconnen. I've spent time with Weston Creek Uniting Church exploring the strengthening and expansion their role as a lead congregation. St James, Curtin, Yarralumla and Kippax congregations will have opportunities to connect with this project. Work in this area will require people with practices of hospitality, prayer, communication and entrepreneurial capacity. UnitingCare connection with the new region is being considered.

### Christian Formation

Christian education is emerging again as a key priority for Uniting Church congregations. We have the challenge of inspiring and equipping a new generation of young adults, along with the opportunity of mobilizing people who are transitioning out of careers into "retirement".

Anne Ryan and I ran the Understanding the Sacraments course twice in 2012, in Canberra in February/March and in Cooma, August/September. We will run the course twice in 2013. This course is significant for all Uniting Church members wanting to deepen their experience of communion and baptism.

In August 2012 the Presbytery hosted a ministry retreat, open to all Uniting Church leaders, focusing on the practice of discernment, led by Ken Day from the Far North Coast Presbytery. In 2013 we're looking at running four one-day spiritual retreats for Uniting Church members, a winter theology retreat in the mountains, and a contemplative ministry retreat held on the coast in spring.

I am working with Anne Ryan on the development of a faith and communication course run on weeknights in Canberra, beginning with Old Testament in 2013. We're aiming at an audience of people in their twenties and thirties, but know that people of all ages will find the course energizing and helpful.

I am on the reference group for the Uniting Church Assembly's Christian education research project, led by Craig Mitchell, which will bring recommendations to the Assembly in March 2013 for resourcing in the future.

### NCLS

The National Church Life Survey, held in 2011, contains a lot of data that can be used to help local congregations in the development of their leadership capacity and mission. I am available to run workshops using this material.

### Gospel People

I am focusing my work in December 2012 on publishing a book on communities of the Christian gospel. I've run a number of workshops in the Canberra region and around the country on developing a deep and expansive approach to the good news of Jesus Christ, lived out in life-giving practices in community settings.

### Generations in Conversation

In 2013 I will be re-engaging in my Doctor of Ministry program with San Francisco Theological Seminary, writing up my research on generational values, theological reflection and ministry development. I'll be looking for congregations to try out an eight-week course I'm writing as part of the dissertation/project.

- Rev Duncan Macleod  
Presbytery Minister  
(Mission and Education)

### Duncan's Primary Tasks

**Helping to equip and enrich all congregations and agencies to engage in mission beyond the bounds of the church.**

**Engaging in regional planning for the life and work of the Uniting Church in the area through congregations, faith communities, Uniting Care agencies and chaplaincies.**

**Developing expertise in mission and theological discernment in congregations, faith communities and agencies.**

**Encouraging the development of local and Presbytery leaders for their ministries.**

**Advocating for the work of the Uniting Church throughout the Synod and Assembly.**

**Facilitating relationships between those in various ministries of the UCA.**

**Helping Presbytery establish and strengthen links with its agencies.**

**Helping congregations and agencies identify suitable placements for specified ministries.**

**Encouraging the development of lay education.**

### Duncan's role may also include:

**Relational Oversight of those providing-ministry undertaken within the congregations in the Presbytery.**

**Helping congregations and ministry agents to implement and evaluate their mission plans.**

**Developing, resourcing and supporting effective mission networks.**

**Promoting and encouraging national and world mission.**

**Developing mission leadership by ensuring effective teaching and theological teaching within the Presbytery.**

**Monitoring and researching emerging mission patterns and models throughout Australia.**

**Seeking ecumenical opportunities for-congregations.**

# Setting

## 2012 Report, Presbytery Minister



Image by Kevin Dilks

### ***Kevin Dilks reflects on his first year as Presbytery Minister, Pastoral & Administration.***

In appointing two Presbytery Ministers and an Admin Assistant the Presbytery of Canberra Region gave expression to its commitment to provide resources for our congregations and ministry agents in order that the mission and ministry of our church could develop and thrive.

I began as Presbytery Minister (Pastoral & Admin) in February this year, joining Duncan Macleod, Presbytery Minister (Mission & Education) who had been in that position for 12 months and Carolyn McAllister who joined the team as Admin Assistant in March.

### **A Vision for our Presbytery**

I have approached my first year in my position with the belief that my most important task, in partnership with Duncan and the Chairperson of Presbytery, is to set a tone for the Presbytery that is encouraging and supportive. In a previous life I learnt a little about “employers of choice”, i.e. becoming an organisation that people want to be part of because of its creativity, mutuality of support and engagement in things that actually make a difference to our world. This is a goal I have for our Presbytery and I will be working towards that for as long as I am in this role.

Canberra Region Presbytery will be at its best when ministry agents are:

- encouraged to be creative in ministry and mission;
- engaged in supportive relationships with other ministers;
- accepting educational opportunities to grow their understanding and practice of ministry; and
- participating with their congregations in the mission of Christ in ways that make a difference to individuals and communities.

Canberra Region Presbytery will be at its best when the members of our congregations are:

- encouraged to be creative in mission and ministry;
- engaged in supportive relationships with other members;
- accepting educational opportunities to grow their understanding and practice of discipleship; and
- participating with their ministers in placement in the mission of Christ in ways that make a difference to individuals and communities.

*Image by Duncan Macleod*

### **Pastoral**

By placing the word “Pastoral” ahead of “Administration” Presbytery affirmed the priority of health of ministers and congregations over administration. Therefore I have been devoting attention to personal contacts and the development of support groups for our ministers.

Our Presbytery has a wonderful group of people providing ministry leadership. Mutual support and encouragement are offered through five groups that meet regularly over lunch or around the Lectionary readings for the week. Each week of the month I attend



# the tone

## r, Pastoral Care & Administration

one such group. By and large the vast majority of our ministers are engaged in such groups and are offering each other genuine support and encouragement.

It should be acknowledged that our ministers on the south coast are far more isolated than those in the ACT. Finding ways to offer regular support and encouragement of ministers in this region is something that needs continual attention.

One on one meetings with ministers happen in a far more ad hoc way, depending on availability and need. In general I am seeing two ministers in a one on one way each week as well as in groups as mentioned above.

Our Presbytery has a significant number of retired ministers and spouses. Finding ways to make connections with them can be difficult due in large part to the limits of time.

Continuing twice-yearly retired ministers and spouses lunches is a small attempt to let these faithful people know they are not forgotten.

### Administration

Administration has the tendency to fill up all the available space. My view is that when administration is done well and is given its appropriate priority the mission and ministry of our church will be enhanced. Because our Presbytery has made it clear that administration must serve the mission and ministry of our church rather than the other way around I do my best to keep this part of my position in the background, trying to ensure that the things that must be done for the health and good order of the church are done with a minimum of fuss.

Preparing for monthly Pastoral Relations Committee meetings and then following up with actions arising from the meeting is a constant reality. Standing Committee meets less frequently than PRC but it too has considerable preparation and response requirements. And of course the full meeting of Presbytery four times each year is also a regular commitment.

In between meetings there are many incidental administrative tasks that come across my desk. Carolyn, our Admin Assistant, is

progressively picking up different administrative responsibilities, e.g. communicating permissions regarding lay presiders at sacraments, and is establishing her own protocols and procedures to help with the efficient performing of her tasks.

Of course there are periods of time when administrative responsibilities require concentrated focus and other times when pastoral care is able to take a priority. This is not a simple 50/50 split of time but a more nuanced dance in which each aspect of my role requires a flexible approach – at times Admin takes the lead, at other times Pastoral leads and at other times they let me take a lead.

### Connecting with Congregations

While my pastoral role is clearly focussed on our ministry agents I also believe it is important that I make contact with congregations with some degree of regularity. Consequently I have been setting aside one weekend each month to visit our non-ACT congregations and one Sunday a month to visit an ACT congregation. As I have moved around I have been impressed with the number of deeply committed members who are engaged in a wide variety of activities that carry the light of Christ into their community. Even our smallest congregations are sharing God's grace with each other and with the communities in which they live.

There are many matters of compliance and reporting that can be a burden for our congregations and the people who accept specific responsibilities on their behalf. In spite of that there is still energy and enthusiasm for things such as op-shops, courthouse hospitality, shared lunches, concern for the aged in the community, participation in religious education in schools, and more.

### Joy

As I write this I am conscious that I met yesterday with two people for my 4-month review (yes it is now the ninth month in this position but sometimes things just can't be dealt with according to schedule). During our conversation, as I shared the various aspects of my role, I became aware that the more I talked about what I am doing the more energetic I became. Yes, this position can be

tiring, even exhausting at times, but it is a role that energises me and one that I am thoroughly enjoying. I pray that my enjoyment will meet yours and together we will faithfully live out our calling to be Christ's disciples on this Presbytery in ways that contribute to the thriving of our members, congregations and the Presbytery as a whole.



### Kevin's position description

**The primary tasks (not exhaustive) include:**

**Exercising the role of Presbytery Secretary and supporting volunteer office bearers.**

**Exercising the functions of Secretary of the Pastoral Relations Committee.**

**Coordinating the work of the Presbytery Office.**

**Facilitating the work of the Presbytery by developing communications networks and strong relationships.**

**and in concert with the Pastoral Relations Committee:**

**Offer pastoral care to those in specified ministries and to lay pastoral workers and to congregations where appropriate, with an emphasis on the important preventative role of such pastoral care. It should be noted that Presbytery has resolved that the appointee should not represent it at ACOMP.**

**Ensure the proper functioning of its sub-committees (Candidates and Chaplaincy).**

**Deal with changes and crises which emerge for ministers and/or congregations.**

# Introducing Briony

## UnitingCare in Canberra Region

**B**riony Griffiths has recently commenced in the new Community Development Worker role for ACT.

Engaged by UnitingCare NSW ACT, Briony will work in cooperation with congregations, the Presbytery, UnitingCare and local service networks to build on local community service initiatives and existing capacity and interests to secure effective and sustainable services.

This position has been created as a direct follow-up to requests from congregations for assistance in identifying ways to engage with and support disadvantaged or vulnerable people within their communities.

Briony has 13 years experience in International Development with a focus on community development, capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and gender and development. She has worked in South Africa, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and the Philippines and has travelled extensively.

In PNG, Briony was a coordinator of the AusAID funded Church Partnership Program - a program which brought together seven PNG churches and their Australian counterparts to build capacity for advocacy and governance, institutional strengthening, and improved basic service delivery.

Over the coming months Briony is available to meet with congregations to better understand their current community service approaches and/or aspirations for the future. She is expecting to have lots of cups of tea!

Briony will also be planning an ACT Community Service "Round-up" for early February 2013, at which updates on new ACT legislation and support for compliance will be discussed, along with updates on changes at UnitingCare NSW ACT.

Briony is based at the Presbytery office Mon-Wed and contactable on: Ph: 6248 9311 Mb: 0427 038 180, Email: bgriffiths@unitingcaredisability.org.au.



Image by Duncan Macleod

# Homeless Connect

## First time in Canberra

**B**uilding on the success of Homeless Connect elsewhere in Australia, local community groups organised the first Canberra Homeless Connect on 9 August 2012. It was a one-stop-shop for clients of the providers of services for homeless people and people at risk of homelessness. Around 200 clients attended this happy and crowded event.

At the opening, Aboriginal Elder Auntie Agnes Shea rightly forecast a fun and memorable day. Nicole Lawder, Chief Executive Officer of Homelessness Australia, the national peak body working to prevent and respond to homelessness in Australia explained that homelessness can be triggered by many events. There thus needs to be a range of holistic strategies for dealing with it.

As at the 2006 population census, there had been 105,000 homeless people around Australia, or 53 per 10,000 persons. Of these 60,000 were male and 45,000 female. In the ACT the count in 2006 was 1364, with a lower than national rate of 42 per 10,000.

The Chief Minister of the ACT, Katy Gallagher MLA, acknowledged the diverse needs of the homeless and noted the many forms of assistance available.

Free food, clothing, household items, eye tests, hairdressing, personal grooming, massage and information about services such as housing, welfare, employment, government pensions and benefits, electoral enrolment, legal assistance and rights, health care and pet care were available. Commonwealth and ACT Government agencies as well as church-related and secular, national and local

NGOs and some private sector businesses participated.

Chris Stokman, Director of UnitingCare Canberra City was one of those at the forefront of the day's organisation.

**- Jenny Rowland  
Canberra City**



Image by Jenny Rowland

# Exciting initiatives in Cooma

**S**t Andrews Uniting Church in the historic Soho St, Cooma is a modest but friendly place with perhaps more going on than meets the casual eye.

Rev Noel Williams finishes his time as minister in November and the Presbytery and congregation are looking for a new minister or pastor to start in 2013. Here are a few exciting initiatives that have been happening in the church this year.

## Sacraments Course

This course, run over two weekends in May and June 2012 by the Rev. Duncan Macleod from Presbytery and the Rev. Anne Ryan of Tuggeranong, was attended by ten people, including members of the local congregation and others from the region. The course covered the basis and meaning of the celebration of the sacraments in the Uniting Church - the whys and hows of the celebration of communion.

Keith Shoobridge from Cooma found the course informative, especially the theological background information, and was intrigued with the different styles of service that could be used; as he put it "Everything from very formal to coke and bikkies."

Jane Stevens of Cooma thought the course was interesting, intense and informative, and liked the approach to practicalities and ideas for celebrating the sacraments. She found the use of "Uniting in Worship" as a resource for services very helpful. As part of the course Jane visited communion services in the local Catholic and Anglican churches to observe the traditions and approaches of other Christian denominations.

Keith, Jane and other participants found the course very worthwhile. They all now have the option to undertake future studies to become qualified Lay Celebrants.

## St Andy's Café

A new fellowship activity at St Andrew's has become popular in recent months: St Andy's Café. Members and friends get together in the pleasant upper room of the church hall. This friendly get-together has the additional dual attractions of refreshments and a speaker.

The café starts with a prayer & Bible reading specially chosen to be relevant.

Speakers have included a local representative from the Department of Primary Industries, wonderful singer Robert Shearer who is known locally, having recently sung the title role in the opera Albert Herring in Canberra, and further afield, as well as travellers to topically and culturally interesting places such as Syria and Russia.

After the speaker a light lunch or afternoon tea is enjoyed by all. This is flexible due to time constraints on speakers and guests. Up to thirty people attend St Andy's Café, both from within the church and from the wider community, and enjoy a light lunch or afternoon tea. For details or if you would like to be a speaker, please ring the church office on 02 6452 1431.

## Breakfast Club

This exciting community initiative has been run by an enthusiastic team from the church for six years.

At the time it was noticed that some children attending the primary school across the road from St Andrews arrive at school early by bus, perhaps without having had breakfast. There was a strong urge within the church to connect more with this large school community, which is an important part of our town.

The seventeen-strong Breakfast Club team of (great) aunties and uncles provide a free, healthy first (or second!) breakfast and games to early arrivals at the school on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings.

The Breakfast Club is a beautiful connection with the community, both the school and volunteers from outside the church. The club is of genuine benefit to the children, not only filling a need for hot milo in winter and cereal and toast all year round, but also provides social interaction with interested adults.

The club complements the work of scripture teachers in the school, who are regularly accosted by children who want to introduce the teachers to their parents.

**- Rowena Evans  
Cooma**

*Monaro Uniting Church  
(Cooma/Bombala)  
is seeking a person,  
lay or ordained,  
for a part time  
ministry position  
focused on  
preaching/teaching,  
pastoral care and  
leadership development.*

*Initial inquiries may be  
directed to Keith Shoobridge,  
shoobridge@ozemail.com.au  
02 64544038*

Applications should be addressed to Kevin Dilks  
GPO Box 221, Canberra 2601.

**Applications close  
5 December 2012**

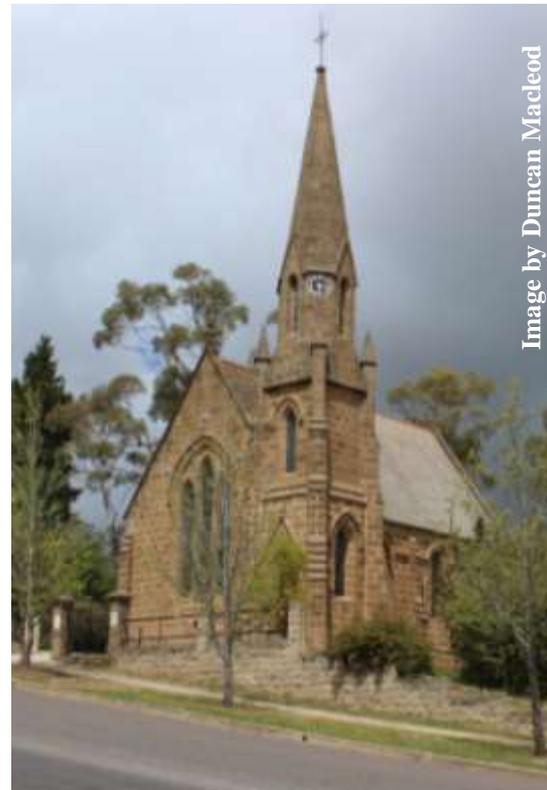


Image by Duncan Macleod

Perspective (*Canberra Region Presbytery News*)

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**Contributions, advertising and enquiries regarding editorial guidelines:**

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**Presbytery Website: [canberraregion.unitingchurch.org.au](http://canberraregion.unitingchurch.org.au)**

**This issue's cover image by Brian Rope.**

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# Pearce Community Christmas Carols

*The Gospel Folk* is a community choir based in Canberra, and South Woden Uniting Church is an outward looking congregation based in Pearce. With a small overlap of members the two groups embarked on a collaboration five years ago to bring Carols Under the Stars to the Pearce community.

Each year since, several hundred people have gathered to sing favourite Christmas carols, enjoying the leadership of the Gospel Folk and the privilege of hearing solo performances by Louise Page and the fine harmonies of the Credo quartet. On some occasions, primary school choirs and bands have also participated, broadening the scope of the event. Even in 2011 when the event went ahead on a rainy evening, and some of the sound system had to be disconnected for safety reasons, people gathered under the awnings of the Pearce shops and sang the songs of Christmas.

South Woden Uniting greatly values its connections with *The Gospel Folk*. We have been delighted to have them sing in our worship services a number of times. Choir director Brian Triglone is a member of our congregation and holds a wonderful vision for the way in which music can bring joy to both the singer and the listener.

The choir's repertoire of old hymns, spirituals, bluegrass and folk music carries its own depth as they bring new life to some old songs. The commitment required of members in *The Gospel Folk* means that the experience of singing together is a time of connecting and community-building within the choir. This value is reflected in their work to build-community beyond themselves as well.

The collaboration for Carols Under the Stars reflects the values of both the choir and congregation. For the congregation, which for 45 years has worshipped without owning a building, the carols are an opportunity to be highly visible in the community. Our role in the carols includes providing some logistical support to the event with photocopying, staging, chairs and sound. As the minister, I have two or three opportunities to speak on the evening – to offer a Christian perspective of Christmas, to promote our Christmas services and events, and to invite people to donate to the Christmas Bowl. Our members are present on the night, helping with programs, collecting for the Christmas Bowl and making connections with individual people.

In terms of the congregation's mission, we are taking our faith literally into the marketplace, giving voice in song and in words to the celebration of God's coming among us in the person of Jesus. We are giving the community a gathering point, and a joyful shared experience. We are offering people an opportunity to take the edge off the consumerism that Christmas often provokes in our culture, by giving to people in need. And, as is crucial in any Christian mission project, there is a strong possibility that this might, or

indeed already has, changed us. We are part of a relationship with the choir and with the community and we expect this to be mutually life-giving and sometimes mutually challenging! We also expect to encounter Christ already at work in the community around us.

**- Rev Rachel Kronberger  
South Woden Uniting Church**



## Music Calendar Wesley Music Centre and Wesley Uniting Church

### Wednesday Lunchtime Live Concerts:

Wednesdays, 12.40 – 1.20pm. \$2. Refreshments \$1.

### Other Concerts:

**Saturday 17 November 7:30pm Masterpieces for the Grand Piano.** \$25/20/10/5.

Tickets available online at [trybooking.com/CBGF](http://trybooking.com/CBGF) or at the door. Wesley Music Centre.

**Sunday 25 November 3pm Art Song Concert - "Ophelia and the Art (Song) of Madness".**

\$35/30/25/15. Enquiries: 02 6156 2604 or [artsongcanberra.org](http://artsongcanberra.org). Wesley Music Centre.

**Sunday 9 December 3pm Free Organ Recital.** Enquiries: 6232 7248. Wesley Uniting Church.

**Saturday 16 February 2013. 2-3pm "Fantasia".** Followed by tea & biscuits. \$25/20/10/free.

Tickets at door. Enquiries: 6232 7248 Wesley Music Centre.

[wesleycanberra.org.au/music](http://wesleycanberra.org.au/music)

**Enquiries: Garth Mansfield, Director, Wesley Music Centre**