

## **RIVERINA PRESBYTERY**

### **UNITING CHURCH IN AUSTRALIA**

PASTORAL LETTER from the Presbytery Ministers.

23 February 2018

**(This letter is for all Uniting Church Members. Please copy it and pass it on.)**

Dear Presbytery Members, Church Council Secretaries and Congregations,

#### ***The Lectionary Theme moves from the Season of Epiphany (the Mystery of Call) into Lent.***

The word Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word 'lencten' (lengthen) which points to the longer spring days in the Northern Hemisphere. In Australia and the Southern Hemisphere it is the six-week season between Ash Wednesday and Easter Day in Autumn.

For the ancient church, Lent was a time for new converts to be instructed in the faith before being baptized on Easter Sunday. For us, Lent is to acknowledge our need for penitence, to grow in our relationship to God and to prepare spiritually for Easter Day.

There is a sense that on each Sunday we not only focus on our need for Jesus who invites us to follow him but on the joyful expectation of the Resurrection.

Lent Event 2018, organized by Uniting World, provides an opportunity for us "to champion the rights for women, overcome poverty and stand with our Pacific neighbours in their fight to save their island homes". See [www.lentevent.com](http://www.lentevent.com)

In our prayers through Lent, may we pray for the reconciling work of Christ throughout the world and in our local communities.

#### Presbytery Meeting, 17 February

Forty seven people attended this meeting, being one of the two meetings for 2018. We thank Narrandera congregation for their hospitality.

Rev. Mark Faulkner, the Rural and Remote Ministry Director, was with us on this day and spoke to us about Saltbush: Uniting the Scattered Community. Our Presbytery Resolutions from November 2017 sit within this concept - working in regions and sharing ministry across a region (Regional or 'Scattered Community Ministry', a meaningful description used by Mark).

Mr Kyle Moffitt from the Tumbarumba Congregation was unanimously endorsed as an Applicant for Ministry of the Word. This was a joyous, spirit-filled moment for our Presbytery. Kyle's next step is to the Synod Selection Panel later in the year.

'Living is Giving' is being phased out at the end of June 2018. Presbytery members viewed a short animated introduction to 'Seeds of Growth', the new Synod Stewardship Contribution. This was followed by decisions regarding the one congregational levy, bringing together the Presbytery and the 'Seeds of Growth' (Synod) contributions. Congregations will receive a letter from the Finance and Property Committee advising them of their particular contribution. Reports were read and accepted by Consensus. The Calendar of Regional Events and Continuing Education is an attachment with this email.

#### Regions

There are ongoing meetings with Church Councils, Leaders and Congregations regarding the resolutions of the November 2017 Presbytery Meeting. Many of these are linked to Worship on a Sunday morning. The meetings have been very positive and a sense of relationship and connection is building up between the congregations. It is always a joy for us to meet members of the congregations as we share in worship together and talk following the service.

Planning for the regions enables us to organise meetings and/or hold several activities together. There is a Central Regional Meeting this Saturday 10am to 12.30pm at Narrandera followed by a Northern Regional Day on Saturday 3 March (Three Seminars and an Inaugural Service) and an Eastern Regional Meeting 10am to 12.30pm on Saturday 10 March. The Southern Regional Day (Three Seminars and an Inaugural Service) is Saturday 24 March and the Western Regional Day (Three Seminars and an Inaugural Service) is Saturday 7 April.

Courses: (refer to the attachment)

*Lay Preacher Training*

New Testament: 12 and 13 May, 2 and 3 June

Proclaiming Jesus: 8, 9, 22 and 23 September

*SRE Training and Safe Church Training*

You are able to attend this training with another denomination who is hosting a day in your area. SRE training can also be done on line. Emma Parr will be visiting the Presbytery twice this year and will facilitate a day in four Regions of the Presbytery for Safe Church Training.

Riverina Presbytery Website:

The website information is updated regularly. Please send any information for the website to Paul Ballard or Carolyn and Andrew. If you have photos make sure you have permission to have them on the website. Could you please look at your congregation information and send on any updates or information to our Website Administrator John Milnes, [jmilnes@live.com.au](mailto:jmilnes@live.com.au).

Resources: MediaCom in South Australia, [www.mediacom.org.au](http://www.mediacom.org.au), provides resources for worship, study groups, messy church, etc. The outlet also holds all Uniting Church resources.

NSW ACT Synod publish a weekly 'Insights'

Write to [www.nswact.uca.org.au](http://www.nswact.uca.org.au) or [contactus@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:contactus@nswact.uca.org.au) to receive a copy.

Contact Information: Our contact details are landline 02 6932 0315, mobile 0448 110 407 (Carolyn) and 0455 537 036 (Andrew) and our email address is [thornley@exemail.com.au](mailto:thornley@exemail.com.au); an alternative email address is [revcarolynthornley@gmail.com](mailto:revcarolynthornley@gmail.com).

Do not hesitate to get in touch with us if your contact details need to be updated and if you have any other queries. We are as close as a phone call or an email message.

Below is prayer by St Patrick.

*Christ be with you. Christ within you.  
Christ behind you. Christ before you.  
Christ beside you. Christ to win you.  
Christ to comfort and restore you.  
Christ beneath you. Christ above you.  
Christ in quiet and in danger.  
Christ in hearts of those who love you  
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.*

Grace and peace,  
Rev. Carolyn and Pastor Andrew Thornley