
OPEN FORUM

Proclaiming Christ and Serving the Community

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Who? What? When

Not Change but Innovation

The Uniting Church is an interesting denomination of the Christian church. It encompasses a wide range of views and church service styles. It emphasises that 'Christians in Australia are called to bear witness to a unity of faith and life in Christ which transcends cultural and economic, national and racial boundaries' (Basis of Union p9).

As a Congregation we are under the same banner and over the years we have endeavoured to live up to this. But times change, traditions evolve, new expectations confront us and at times there is a feeling of loss or regret. However it has been very heartening to attend recent congregation meetings which have been held after church on a Sunday. The small hall has been full and many people have contributed to the discussions.

The recent requirement by Presbytery to look far ahead regarding property and resources showed an amazing positive response from our congregation. We are very blessed with a visible physical presence on the corner of two busy streets, with lots of space both inside the building and outside for car-parking. We consider the area is ripe for a population increase. Also unlike many other congregations we are debt free.

This is the time for new ideas, for embracing the modern technology world and for having the faith and vision to listen to and act through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Your ideas are valuable.

As our Minister Alex quoted the other day, "There is a slice of genius in everyone." How can you help? Please look at the questions on the next page and come up with some suggestions.

Church Fund-raising Team



At the last congregation meeting at the end of May, we decided to set up a working group to look into ways of increasing income for the church. The Group, consisting of Allan Bellamy, Peter Dunn, Karlene Hale, John Hale, Norman Lees, Lyn Mealey, Tom Nowland, and Gordon Selig have already had their first meeting on 4 June, and you'll be hearing more about this in the next few weeks.

This Group does not have all the answers. If you have any ideas for raising more money for the church, no matter how wild they might seem, please talk to one of the above people. It's always good if people with ideas can also either organise whatever activity they think of, or be actively involved in doing the work. But don't let that deter you from coming up with ideas.

We are looking for your ideas and comments.

OUTREACH

What are the people in our community looking for?

What do they need?

Are there any gaps in support, care, assistance we could fill?

How can we bring people into our church?

PROPERTY

Are there ways we could utilise our halls more for the community?

FINANCE

How can we increase our income?

How can we best use our property and resources from a financial perspective?

Who or what would be a realistic person or organisation to approach to sustain our viability?

You can write your comments and

- post to PO Box 902 Pennant Hills 1715
- drop in the letterbox next to the central steps.

Or - email: admin@pennanthillsuniting.org.au

Or - have a chat with the Congregation Chair, Secretary, any Church Councillor or Elder.



Manodo, Sulawesi

INNOVATION ON FRIDAYS

Instead of holding a Wednesday communion service each month it has been decided to hold a worship service a few times a year on a Friday morning.
Please think about any friends you could tell or bring along for a morning tea and fellowship and show them this flyer.

FRIDAY CHURCH PLUS!!

WHAT'S THIS?	An informal church service	
PLUS?	Morning Tea	
WHEN?	Friday 3 July 2015	
WHERE?	Small meeting room -behind kitchen	
WHAT TIME?	10.00am	
WHO?	Anyone and Everyone	
COST?	Free!	
ENQUIRIES	Christine	9487 8323
	Peg	9484 4523

SONGS OF PRAISE

Come along with a friend on Sunday 28 June at 2.00pm
Lots of singing. Lovely Afternoon Tea.

LEISURE & LEARNING

Term Three begins on Friday 17 July.
Look out for a new computer class - it could be for you!

INNOVATION - RELAXATION

So often after the Church Service people rush away to other activities. Many spend the time arranging or discussing church issues. Others are busy in the kitchen and some just feel unable to join in a conversation as it is so noisy. When we do meet together it is usually for a formal meeting.

How about coming to a RELAXING Morning Tea on Sunday 9 August?

Following the church service we will move to another hall, sit down and get to know each other better. If you feel like bringing a boost to the usual biscuits I am sure it will be appreciated.

More details: Christine 9487 8323

INNOVATION – CONNECTION

A year has already passed since Alex and Elizabeth arrived! How time flies. They were particularly impressed by the way we introduced ourselves to them, by having small group lunch and tea parties.

Elizabeth suggested it would be good to use this idea again for two reasons.

1. Small groups can get to know each other in an informal way in someone's home.
2. There could be a boost to our income by a small financial contribution for attending the meal. Look out for more details later.

INNOVATION FOR INCOME

Interest rates are down! Everyday expenses are up! Buildings need repairs! Purses and wallets seem lighter.

Does this seem familiar to you at home? Well it's the same in Pennant Hills Uniting Church. At the Church Congregation meeting the budget was presented. Oh dear! We may be debt free but there is a lot of essential expense and not as much coming in.

Do you have an envelope arrangement? You can put your offering directly into the dated envelope when convenient and bring it along on any Sunday.

Do you do a direct debit arrangement? This works for many in the church who don't have to search for collection money each week. They know that wherever they are in the world their offering is going to the church on a regular basis. Talk to Treasurer Wendy for more details.

AN 80 YEAR OLD LINK WITH CHRISTIAN MARTYRS BY BARRY BAIRD

“ They went up the great river in May of 1935, and they didn’t return.” Some of our congregation heard the story of the Three Freds when Fenton Sharpe presented ‘Pioneering in the Amazon’ at Leisure/Learning in August of last year. Sometime in May 1935 they were massacred in Brazil. The following is a summary prepared by Rev G Chamberlain. Fred Roberts, the nephew of Barry Baird’s grandmother was one of the three Freds. The story of Fred’s wife who died in mission in Brazil in 1929 is equally compelling. However this story for another day.

THE THREE FREDS. They were three good soldiers of Jesus Christ, two came from Australia and one from Ireland. God called them to take the Gospel of Christ to the wild and violent Kayapo Indians of South America. They met in the city of Para, at the mouth of the river Amazon in Brazil and Fred Roberts, who had already done ten tough years for the Lord in the jungles outlined his plans to Fred Dawson and Fred Wright.

They were to travel miles up the great Xingu River, a very dangerous journey, for the Xingu is full of rapids and cataracts. But these young men were ready for anything for Jesus. The Brazilians were very interested in these three strangers, who were coming to the Xingu, not for gold or rubber or nuts but to tell wild Indians about the Saviour. It was a terrifying journey...after 600 miles the trader said he would go no further and turned back his launch. They found a half-built boat and began to shape and fit planks and then out of one of their trunks, pulled out a small motor which absolutely amazed the onlookers. They extracted teeth, treated fevers, tropical ulcers and other sickness with the same skill as they made the boat.

They were known as ‘The Mad Britishers’ and at each stopping place they treated the sick, gave out Gospel tracts and scripture portions to any who could read. Leaving the main Xingu River they turned into the River Fresco and after two days they reached the end of civilisation, where they knew that they were absolutely alone except for wild, unsaved Indians and the promise that God would never leave them nor forsake them. After writing their last letters and storing the bulk of their equipment, they turned their motor boat into the Little River.

Little River was a river of mystery - narrow, winding, swift-flowing. Dense forests came right down to the water’s edge on either bank. At almost any point Indians hidden in the foliage could have ambushed the tiny boat and the three Freds. But nothing happened. They pressed on mile after mile. Travel was gruelling, insect pests made life unbearable, swarms of stinging sandflies by day and hordes of droning mosquitoes by night. There were rapids where poles and ropes were needed to get the frail craft past and two cataracts which no one could pass so they had to drag it overland. There were no Indians when the missionaries moored their boat at the foot of Smoke Falls. They decided to climb the steep rocky bank, and there at the top of the falls found a well-trodden Indian trail.

But the Indians knew they had arrived. To them it was ‘Thundercanoe’. Eventually a party of warriors set out to meet the white men. The only white men they had known were robbers and plunderers. They had never known good, kind, smiling white men who loved them so...the white men must die.

AND SO DIED THE THREE FREDS - victims of a score of Kayapo war clubs. After this brutal killing the Indians raced to the moored motor-boat thinking it would be full of rich booty, but there was very little useful to them and in their boiling anger they smashed and burned the boat. After waiting for months of news, an appeal was made for volunteers to search for these brave young men and Jack Johnstone and Horace Banner were selected. When they came to Nova Olinda they found Fred Wright’s will in one of the trunks. ‘Remember,’ he wrote, ‘Jesus, too, died for the Indians of South America.’ Clues discovered were a charred piece of wooden wheel that the Freds had made for towing the boat overland and a tree with the initials ‘FR FW FD’ cut into the bark. But sons of the Smoke Falls killers soon became saints as new missionaries had the joy of leading them to Jesus.

LET’S REMEMBER THEM- FRED WRIGHT, FRED DAWSON, FRED ROBERTS.

BOOMERS ARE BOOMING!

Look at their noticeboard for past and future events

Everyone save the Date! Bring your friends!

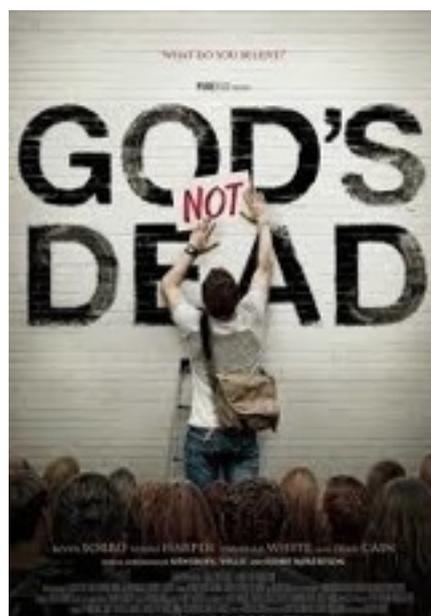
Sunday 20th September
5pm at Pennant Hills Uniting Church

- Enjoy a light meal together
- See the movie *God's Not Dead*
- Share your thoughts, questions and comments on the film

Seeing this movie provides an opportunity for you to:

- invite someone to hear reasons for belief in God
- let the Big Screen present God to your friends instead of you having to find the words to say
- think about how you could share your faith with others

For more details see the notices over upcoming weeks or contact
Caryn Kneale - 9876 1611.



The "Boomers" group continues to meet on the second Saturday of every month and enjoys a variety of activities. Our recent event celebrating 50 years since The Sound of Music came to the big screen inspired some creative costumes, including Geoff Smithson coming as a distributor cap (remember when the Germans attempted to leave the convent at the end of the movie!)



A short guide to the Uniting Church structure

This article was prompted by discussion at the last Congregational meeting. I hope that it may be found useful. Certainly I found it quite hard to grasp what was required and what was expected of a congregational meeting when I first became its chairman.

Bruce Graham

The UC was created in 1977 after a long time in discussion and negotiation. It brought together three denominations, Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational, though some Presbyterian and Congregationalist congregations stayed outside the union.

The Basis of Union shows that all the core beliefs of the joining denominations are represented in one way or other. However, the Congregationalist principle of autonomy of each church, the Presbyterian emphasis on the role of elders and the Methodist emphasis on personal salvation and “no frills” meetings had to be reconciled and the new agreements documented. Further, since the new denomination would be much larger than any of its components, some management structure had to be set up.

The result is a four-tier structure, but it is not a structure of managers. There is no position of bishops or other higher authority and the heads of each tier above the congregation only hold their positions for a short time. There are Regulations, in fact 97 pages of them, to set out how the organisation is to work. Much of the regulations deals with the ministry: obviously the various ways in which the three existing churches previously appointed ministers and related persons had to be harmonised and codified. The next major sections deal with Congregations, Presbyteries, Synods and the Assembly, the four tiers.

The notion of the ministry and the congregation needs no explanation to the readers of Open Forum. However, it is important to note that the responsibilities of the congregation are set out in the regulations, though in rather general terms. It is clear that the congregation shall “fulfil the ministry of the church” and shall call a minister and appoint Elders and a Council to assist it in this duty. There is no requirement for a Church Council to form committees: it is only stated that Councils may form them as it wishes.

The Ministers (and certain other clerical persons) in the presbytery area, (ours is Ku-ring-gai) together with a lay representative from each area form a body set up chiefly to look after candidates for ministry (and finally accept them) and exert oversight of its ministers and congregations. But it has many other duties such as forming and dissolving congregations, arranging “supply” ministers and conducting “consultations” with congregations. These are things that congregations cannot do for themselves. It meets quarterly but works to a large extent through committees. Most of the work is done by ministers as volunteers. A “staff” of 1 is employed. Nevertheless the Ku-ring-gai presbytery is running out of funding.

A State synod to coordinate the activities of the presbyteries is the next tier up. The NSW Synod comprises an elected Moderator, appointed ministers from the 14 constituent presbyteries (up to a cap value of 54) an equal number of lay members of congregations and certain others. Of course this is unwieldy so much of the work is done using a Standing Committee. Synods look particularly at community services, to ensure that they are logically provided.

In turn, an Assembly coordinates all matters at the national level. The President of the Assembly acts as a leader for the church as a whole and speaks for the church on public issues. Social justice and issues of equality get attention here on the wider scale. The Synod can and does form institutions such as aged care organisations, in fact the UCA is the largest non-government provider of community services in Australia, employing 40,000 staff. The Assembly appoints the corporate trust and Property Board and has many other “big picture” functions. The congregations, by the way, do not own property and may only make recommendations regarding the erection, demolition, alteration or enlargement of buildings and so on.

Finally, a word about committees. There are standing jokes about them, not without good reason because without good chairmanship a committee can indeed take minutes and waste hours. But on the other hand if there is no committee to discuss, resolve and organise on a given topic, a group will form of itself and be even less efficient and less accountable. It’s just human nature. At a good committee meeting, ideas can flow and inspiration flourish.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

June 28	Sunday Morning Preacher - Rev Gary Holdsworth of Cherrybrook U C
June 28	Songs of Praise. At 2pm
July 3	Friday Church Plus! At 10am
August 9	Getting to know you - Morning Tea following church service.
Sept. 20	Film with Food Night
Sept. 26	Spring Fair
October	Hospitality Month -details later.
November 15	Congregation AGM

CONTACTS

Minister: Rev Alex Thomas 9484 1039

Prayer Chain: Mrs Marj Ebb 9481 0089

Bible Study: Mr Peter Kneale 9876 1611

Room Hire: Mr Allan Bellamy 9875 4416

Chair of Congregation:

Mr Bruce Graham 9989 8992

Treasurer:

Mrs Wendy Boughton 9481 8818

Elders/Councillors:

Mrs Heather Baillie, Mrs Betty Graham, Mr Norman Lees, Mr Peter Kneale, Mr Tom Nowland, Dr Fenton Sharpe

Councillors:

Mrs Christine Lees, Mrs Caryn Kneale, Mrs Dianne New, Mrs Maureen Rees, Mr Gordon Selig, Mr Geoff Smithson

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Prepared by Christine Lees.

Disclaimer: This content does not necessarily express the opinion of the Uniting Church, its agencies, the Minister or Congregation

In Memory of our Loved Ones

He Is Gone

*You can shed tears that he has gone,
Or you can smile because he has lived.*

*You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,
Or you can open your eyes and see all he's left.*

*Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
Or you can be full of the love you shared.*

*You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
Or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.*

*You can remember him and only that he has gone,
Or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.*

*You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back,
Or you can do what he'd want, smile, open your eyes,
love and go on.*

Jesus says,
'I am the way, the truth and
the life.'

