

**PITTSWORTH UNITING CHURCH
2022**

4th – 6th November

13 Briggs Street, Pittsworth, Queensland.

Hospital Chaplaincy

- I am thankful for your prayers. I'm very aware that it seems like no time at all since the last Presbytery because I've had time off for surgery and recovery since the last one. I am thankful that the pathology was benign and my recovery has been good. Then this week I tested positive for Covid.
- Dr Stephen Hughes was employed by the Synod office as part time supply while I was on leave. Steve is one of our volunteers and was really grateful for the opportunity to increase his exposure to the work we do. Most volunteers don't go on the after hours roster, visit in the Critical Care ward or get referrals to end of life situations. As Steve's previous experience is in counselling and teaching I knew everything was in good hands.
- We have a volunteer in Stanthorpe undertaking Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) at the moment via an experimental hybrid online/intensive format. This brings the number of UC volunteers in the public hospital space to a grand total of 1. I'm very excited. There has also been some interest in the Toowoomba course in 2023. I'm hopeful. Applications closed at the end of October, but as of writing there may still be a space remaining if you applied as soon as possible.
- In the public hospital space we are preparing ourselves for the introduction of Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) starting on the 1 January 2023. The basic process is outlined by the legislation and the more detailed procedures are being organised locally. The Uniting Church have provided resources for ministers and pastoral carers which are available on the Synod website <https://ucaqld.com.au/vad-2/>. The book *Remaining in Lament and Hope: A pastoral response for a Voluntary Assisted Dying pathway* was launched at the minister's convocation in September. A PDF can be downloaded from the website, and offers the opportunity to reflect

on the subject. There are constraints around the practice in Qld: A person must have a terminal illness and be expected to die within 12 months (this is signed off by 2 specially trained doctors); they must have the ability to make the decision themselves without coercion or obstruction from others; there are also citizenship and residency requirements. I expect that considering VAD as an option will become part of the experience of people nearing end of life as we draw nearer to that date. It may come up in conversations.

- Our Education and Nurturing program has included sessions on Understanding Addiction in August, led by Maxine O'Brien from the hospital's Alcohol and Other Drugs (AODs) unit and Dr Stephen Hughes who gave a theological and pastoral perspective. In October we had a day about VAD with input from the Clinical Governance team from the Darling Downs Hospital and Health Service, Annie Baker from a Pastoral perspective and Dr Mark Copland from St Vincent's Hospital.
- On the 16th October I led worship at Wilsonton Uniting Church, describing the work I do at the Hospital. If you'd like me to come and preach at your church, just let me know.
- The palliative care Bereavement Support group has met in the Place of Prayer twice. It is open to people who have used the DDHHS palliative care service as either in patients or out patients. Our last meeting had 5 relatives who had lost a loved one between a number of weeks and 12 months ago. It is also attended by a mix of people from social work, psychology, pastoral care and the palliative care teams. It ends with a cuppa and people can stay and talk as long as they like.

Rev Jenny Potter

Hospital Chaplain

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