



Presbytery of The Downs

# Living Water for a Thirsty Land

Newsletter - December 2023

## From the Presbytery Minister

So many signs tell us that it is Christmas AGAIN (where did 2023 go?) - we are singing carols, admiring Christmas lights, decorating Christmas trees and eating lots of Christmassy foods. And as wonderful and delightful as that all is, the signs we are really looking for are ones that lead us to embrace the hope, joy, peace and love of Christ Jesus again? I wonder what will lead us this Christmas to embrace the Christ-child into our daily living?

At Christmas we celebrate - God with us - Jesus Emmanuel. In the story of the birth of Jesus, we see God in human form. Jesus - an innocent little human being born as one of us. Long before his was born others told that he would be the light of the world...hope, peace, joy and LOVE.

Hearing the ancient story of Christmas differently each year is sometimes hard to do, we are so used to it but I would encourage you to spend some time pondering (as Mary did) what it all means for you today - can you see, in all that you have experienced in your world, even in the last couple of weeks, this story as a story of hope for a world.

This baby Jesus came to show us what the love of God is really all about. He came to ordinary people getting on with their lives...he interrupted the ordinary and made them see something different happening in the world. If we see ourselves as ordinary people - then our lives will be interrupted and surprised again this Christmas.

This is a story that our world desperately needs and one that is not just for one day - sharing this and embracing the gifts of Christmas into our lives and intentionally being people seeking and following Jesus .

As you celebrate with your people remember to be thankful for the love that God showed us in this wonderful baby Jesus who is almighty God, wonderful counsellor, the prince of peace. Remember to see the hope of Christ in the world – in the good news stories of peace and goodwill and return to God the love and praise.

As we look forward to 2024 and all that God has in store for this Presbytery may you know the grace and peace of God, Jesus living in you and the Holy Spirit moving around your community.

Merry Christmas!  
Rev Yvonne McRostie



## Thanks Marg

After five years as the coordinator of the Toowoomba Hospital Pastoral Care Service, Marg Thorpe, member of the Life Works Uniting Church, has retired from that role.



The baton is passed from Marg Thorpe (left) to Stephen Hughes at the recent thankyou morning tea.

Marg was thanked and honoured at a recent morning tea by representatives of the hospital staff, the pastoral care team, and the incoming coordinator, Dr Stephen Hughes. Alongside her pastoral and coordination skills, Marg was recognised for her care of and hospitality towards the pastoral care team.

The Toowoomba Hospital Pastoral Care Service is an ecumenical success story with volunteers and chaplains sourced from multiple denominations. It has been used as a model for pastoral care in other hospitals and is the “birthplace” of the Clinic Pastoral Education course.

In a recent article Marg said of her successor, “I am... grateful to be able to hand those responsibilities across to someone who comes with energy, enthusiasm and wisdom.” After a short break, Marg intends to return to the Pastoral Care Team as a carer.

Thanks Marg for your watch over the pastoral care team and your service to Christ.

## Finishings & Beginnings

Maybe there’s something in the water or perhaps it’s just that time of year, but our Presbytery will see a few personnel changes next year.

- Rev Adam Tipple will conclude his term as Presbytery Chairperson in February.
- Rev Ansie Liebenberg has indicated that she is stepping down as chairperson for the Pastoral Relations Committee.
- Rev Rob Callow finishes as the (Supply) Presbytery Resource Minister at the end of this year.
- Mrs Margaret Spinks wraps up many years as Middle Ridge UC Administrator.

In addition to this, the “almost reverend” Annie Baker, member of Middle Ridge UC, has accepted a call to ministry at St Paul’s Uniting Church Stafford (Brisbane). Annie has completed her student requirements, and having received the Presbytery’s approval last month, will be ordained as a Minister of Deacon at Middle Ridge UC on Saturday 16 December at 3.00pm.

Annie has been the Toowoomba facilitator for the Clinical Pastoral Education course for many years and reports that she will continue this role next year alongside her ministry at St Paul’s. In light of recent changes to hospital chaplaincy, Annie feels it’s essential to keep the CPE course going.

Annie’s departure from our region also signals the departure of partner Sharon. Sharon Baker, also a member of Middle Ridge congregation, has been working in pastoral support with Blue Care for many years and has also served on the Presbytery Standing Committee.

We are grateful to all who have served in different roles and we are always saddened when our people leave. However we celebrate the potential of new ministry opportunity that these departures present.

The Council of Presbytery will seek to elect/appoint people into the regional vacancies at the February gathering next year and asks all within the Downs to consider serving through these roles:

- ♦ The presbytery office by providing administrative assistance to the presbytery executive and congregations.
- ♦ Presbytery Standing Committee and keeping the operations of our district running well.
- ♦ Pastoral Relations Committee which oversees the pastoral and relational aspects of the presbytery including ministry agents and congregations.

Further details will be out soon. In the meantime, those would be interested in these roles, or other regional roles, can contact the Presbytery Minister, Rev Yvonne McRostie, 0427 962 781, or Presbytery Chairperson, Rev Adam Tipple, on 0434 622 975.

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**UP RISING**

**easter  
MADNESS**

**5TH-8TH  
APRIL 2024**



## Congratulation Rev Annie Baker

A wonderful celebration was held on Saturday 16th December at Middle Ridge Uniting Church to mark the ordination of Annie Baker as Minister of Deacon.

Annie's wide network of friends and family sent greeting or attended as well as people from across the Presbytery and people from her new congregation of St Paul's Uniting Church, Stafford where she will begin on 1st February 2024.

We pray for Annie and Sharon as they transition into this new ministry that God will richly bless and guide them both.



## Calendar 2024 Snapshot

**27th Dec - 15th January 2024**  
**OFFICE CLOSED**

27th December - 2nd January  
Family Camp at Alex Park

10th January 2024 @ 10am  
Messy New Year  
@ Middle Ridge Uniting Church

21st January 2024 @ 5pm  
Induction of Rev Tanya Richards  
@ Lifeworks Uniting Church

23rd January, 2024  
Presbytery Standing Committee

6th February 2024  
Property Committee Meeting

23rd - 25th February 2024  
Presbytery Meeting  
@ Allora Uniting Church

5th - 8th April 2024  
Easter Madness

14th - 16th June  
Presbytery Meeting  
@ Lifeworks Uniting Church

22nd June, 2024  
Anniversary of the UCA

11th - 16th July  
17th Assembly in NSW

1st - 3rd November 2024  
Presbytery Meeting  
@ Warwick Uniting Church

## Wilsonston turns 72

On Sunday 12 November, the Wilsonston congregation gathered for worship and to celebrate 72 years as a church congregation.

This church first gathered in 1951 on the land that is now part of the Wilsonston shopping centre. They moved into their current "residence" (corner of Tor and North Streets) in 1968.

The anniversary was marked with corporate worship, floral arrangements, stories from the past, prayers for the future, and a luncheon.

Happy birthday Wilsonston. May you continue to meet and serve faithfully.



Long-term Wilsonston member, Brian Henman, recalls names and tales from the past.

## A mission of hope

The most recent *Markets for Mission November 2023* event at Middle Ridge Uniting Church raised an amount of \$3,000 that will be forwarded to the Cunnamulla Burke and Wills Patrol ministry. Recently inducted Bush Chaplain Jennie Feldmeier will be able to use these resources at her discretion, "to be used wisely to give back to my community and those who need an extra hand". From our fund raising team outlook, this is also a confidence sponsorship to Jennie in her new role.

Millar Alletson  
Team Co-ordinator

If you want to know more about any of these events, you could:

- Check the Presbytery Website [www.downspresbytery.org.au](http://www.downspresbytery.org.au)
- Talk with your Presbytery Delegate
- Contact the Presbytery Office





We are excited to welcome to our Ministry team in The Downs Rev Tanya Richards as the Connect 100 Community Chaplain, Lifeworks Uniting Church. Here's a little bit about Tanya:

'I was born in Bundaberg and grew up in Redcliffe, as a young adult during my training I moved around northern suburbs of Brisbane. I have family in Hervey Bay and Caboolture. Along with many more around QLD, my mum is one of 14 children. In 2022 I had to say goodbye to my Labrador (Ebony) who was just on 12 years old. She was a big part of my life and I still miss her. Although I'm enjoying the freedom of travel and seeing new parts of Qld.

I was ordained as a Deacon of the Uniting Church in 2008, during my training I had an opportunity to do a field placement in Bali Indonesia, where I worked with and supported the mission of the local English

speaking congregation who is one of our partner churches through Uniting World. During this time I volunteered with Young Adults and as a Chaplain in the prison. This was the start of 10 years of visiting Bali and volunteering with the local church.

My first placement after my training was with Qld Churches Together in the ACT for Peace program (Christmas Bowl) as I traveled around QLD I was privileged to meet many communities, faith communities and Uniting Churches. I was also able to see a bit more of the world as I lead trips to Sri Lanka and Timor Leste.

After 3 years of this, I moved into Public Hospital Chaplaincy working at both The Prince Charles Hospital and just recently at the Sunshine Coast Hospital and Health Service. In these spaces I worked with Senior Leadership to see change and recognition of Chaplaincy in the Public Hospital space, creating state wide Framework of how Chaplains work, I also worked on many new programs and expressions of Chaplaincy.

I'm excited to be joining the Lifeworks congregation and the wider Toowoomba area in this new role of Community Minister, I'm looking forward to meeting you all. I have recently brought some new coats and blankets, as I hear it gets cold in Toowoomba'

We pray for Tanya as she finishes up her current role and moves to Toowoomba to begin this new role in January 2024.

You are invited to join The Presbytery, UnitingCare and the Lifework congregation at **5pm on Sunday 21st January at Lifeworks Uniting Church** for the Induction Service of Rev Tanya Richards - join us for a light supper after the service.

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**Messy New Year**  
 Wed 10 January 2024  
 10am



Activities Songs Food  
 Crafts Games Stories

**Messy Christmas**  
 Wed 13 December 2023  
 10am

School Holiday Activities for Under 8's accompanied by parent / carer.

**FAMILY CAMP**  
 relax | connect | rejuvenate

27 December 2023 to 2 January 2024  
 fully catered  
 family-friendly  
 onsite accommodation

<https://alexpark.com.au/alexandra-park-family-camp/>


