



The Downs Presbytery

Newsletter

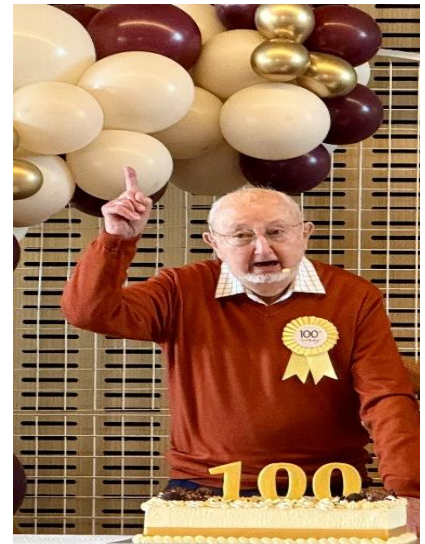


Older Persons Month

October 2025

The Uniting Church in Australia has been shaped and sustained by the quiet, steady faithfulness of people like the Rev Don Pederick. Recently, Don celebrated his 100th birthday and 69 years of ordained ministry, recognised recently at the Western Australia Synod. Raised on a farm in WA, Don was the eldest of six children. Life on the land was simple and grounded in faith, thanks to the strong Christian example set by his parents.

"I felt the call of God to ministry. Full stop. I followed". That sense of surrender carried Don through decades of full-time ministry. Don's pastoral care left a lasting impression on the many communities he served. "The things I'm proud of are things that happened in little ways," he says. "Even today, I bump into people who say, 'You helped me through so-and-so,' and they remind me of a situation I had almost forgotten. Their life was changed by that."



The world has changed dramatically during Don's lifetime – from the way we live, to the way we communicate, to the way we do church. He notes that the shift from minister-centred leadership to a greater emphasis on lay leadership has been significant. "We're drawing on the lay leadership and being more biblical in our approach to church fellowship," he says.

Technology has played a surprising role in Don's ministry. "I.T. has taken over," he grins. "Unless you are I.T. literate, you're behind." Don has embraced technology in his later years and these skills have helped him stay connected and engaged in ministry, even in retirement.

When reflecting on moments of difficulty, Don's answer is always the same: trust in God. "My faith was tested on several occasions," he says, "but the way I got through it was simply trusting Him every day. It might have been a simple trust, but it was a sure trust."

Don offers straightforward advice: be faithful. "No one expects you to be like your neighbour. You are unique. You have a special ministry to give and what God requires of you is faithfulness. If you believe in God and believe in Jesus Christ, you give your life to them and follow their path – whatever anyone else may dictate. There'll be many side tracks but faithfulness is the thing that's going to count at the end."

Don Pederick's story is not just one of longevity, but a legacy of faithfulness, service, humility and love that continues to ripple through the lives of those he's touched.

From UCA National Assembly News



OAKEY UNITING CHURCH WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

is hosting a **HARVEST FESTIVAL MORNING TEA**

@ Oakey Uniting Church Complex 16 John Street

Thursday, 13th November, 2025 at 10.00 am

Entertainment, Great food and fellowship

RSVP Valma 0487 319 899

Admission - \$10.00



“A man throws seed on the land. Night and day, while he sleeps, and when he is awake, the seed is sprouting and growing; how, he does not know.”

Mark 4:26-28

A statement of faith....

I believe that the word of God has many times been planted in my life, often because of another who received the seed in ready soil, brought forth a harvest, and shared that goodness with me.

I believe that the call to be a sower of the Word is a privilege and a blessing, that no one can earn the right to, or claim the duty, that it is a gift freely given and a ministry to be constantly celebrated in gratitude.

I believe that great things can come forth from even the tiniest seed planted in love and cared for tenderly in the heart of another.

I believe that usually only God knows what sprouting and greening will come from the word planted through me. I am content in knowing that I have tried, with the sower's grace to seed that word in faith with joy.

I believe that even the most insignificant moments of life can be the seed of God's gifting, that deeper faith can root and mature in very ordinary soil.

I believe that some dying of the seed has to take place before it can give itself over to life, that every heart has its germination time, its' dark moment, before the future harvest comes. It takes much patience to sow a seed, and allow it to grow in its own good time.

I believe in the Sower of all seeds, the Giver of all good and growing things, my Lord and God. And I trust you O God, in whose image I am made, to bring life to the seed of my soul.



Downs & Toowoomba Churches Together

Our Annual Ecumenical Seminar, “Spiritual Ecumenism” was a great time of sharing and fellowship. All present were very appreciative of the information presented by our speaker Dr Antonia Pizzey.

Some of the points that we covered were:

Spiritual Ecumenism as the soul of the ecumenical movement;
 God's work and will that we all be one, is an ecumenical imperative;
 Spiritual Ecumenism as a “change of heart”;
 Focus on how we can better reflect Christ's light in the world.
 Virtues, such as hope, humility, love and faith;
 And prayer - Spiritual Ecumenism as listening to the Holy Spirit.

As it is the 1,700 anniversary of the Nicene Creed, in one session we looked at the Nicene Creed.

A very enlightening Seminar. The challenge to all of us is applying Ecumenism to our personal and Congregational life.

John Agnew, Chair Person



Toowoomba Carnival Flowers 2025

October Presbytery Meeting -

October 24th - 26th @ Crows Nest Uniting Church.

Everyone is welcome to attend, but please **RSVP for catering purposes**. If you require meals on Saturday, the cost is \$15, which includes lunch, morning tea, and afternoon tea. While tickets to attend are free, meals require payment. If you need assistance with the form, please contact Anni: admin@downspresbytery.org.au Office: 4638 9989
 We look forward to seeing you and hearing about the work of God in your region.

OPENING UNITING PLACE WARWICK and KILLARNEY

by Margaret Wells, WKUC



We want to extend a heartfelt thank you to our entire Presbytery family, Synod representatives, and everyone who played a part in bringing affordable homes to Warwick and Killarney. Your support, encouragement, and hands-on help have made a real difference, and we could not have reached this milestone without you. This achievement is a testament to the strong bonds and shared vision that exist within our community.

The openings were joyful celebrations, with a warm welcome as folks arrived and registered, catching up over a cuppa before the formalities began. Each gathering was marked by a real buzz of excitement and pride, as speeches were shared by key contributors, each one highlighting the journey and the hopes for these new homes. The ribbon cutting moment brought smiles all round, symbolising not just a new beginning for the residents but a shared victory for us all.

We then unveiled the commemorative plaque, a lasting reminder of this special day, followed by a tree planting ceremony—signifying growth, renewal, and the roots we're putting down together in these communities. Guided tours gave everyone a chance to see firsthand the thoughtful design and care that's gone into each home, sparking conversations and plenty of positive feedback.



Later, our Church Council gathered for a time of prayer, offering thanks for the journey so far and seeking guidance for the future. A vision was shared—one of ongoing collaboration, compassion, and hope, as we continue to work together to make a real impact in the lives of those in our region. It was a moving reminder of the values that bring us together and inspire our ongoing mission.

This project is proof of what can be achieved when we pool our resources, ideas, and hearts. The legacy we're building is not just in bricks and mortar, but in the spirit of community and care that will last for generations. Thank you again to everyone who has contributed, whether in planning, funding, praying, or simply cheering us on from the sidelines.

As we look ahead, we do so with hope—trusting that the seeds planted today will grow into lasting change and greater opportunities for all. Let's keep working together, supporting one another, and building a community where everyone can feel at home.



The Beginnings of Millmerran Uniting Church



In 1977 the Presbyterian Church in Millmerran voted not to join the union, and as there was no Methodist or Congregational churches in the area, those who wanted to be part of the Uniting Church, had nowhere to meet. For the next 5 years they worshipped in the Lutheran Church under the leadership of Rev Joan Johansson, and began to build a new congregation. One of the earliest efforts was the establishment of a Girls Brigade, which continued for 44 years.

In 1982 they were officially recognised as a congregation of the Uniting Church and the Church

Council began a search for a building. The worship centre for the Parish of Millmerran was formerly a Masonic Lodge in Cecil Plains. It was purchased and relocated to Florence St, Millmerran in June 1989. The land and building costs were funded with grants from Qld Synod, the Wagner Estate from Pittsworth Parish, as well as Blue Nursing so that a subcentre of Toowoomba Blue Nursing could be set up with a treatment room and office at the church.

The church building was refurbished to include the Worship Centre, vestry, kitchenette, meeting rooms, Blue Nursing treatment room and office, wheelchair accessible toilets and shower. Later on, a storage room was added to store the resources needed for the various activities using the church building. Our Worship Centre was dedicated on 17th March 1990 by the Moderator Rev. Don Whebell.

The church became the meeting place for the Millmerran Girls Brigade, Ladies fellowship group, Blue Nursing Auxiliary and Millmerran Uniting Church Social club. In 1993 Millmerran and Pittsworth parishes amalgamated to form Central Downs Parish with a minister based in Pittsworth. The Millmerran manse was no longer needed as a minister's residence, so we have chosen to rent it out as affordable housing, which we are still able to do, thanks to our willing members who assist with maintenance when necessary.

As years went by these activities folded but this enabled the building to be used in alternative ways. It is currently used by Blue Care Respite, Mainly Music, morning exercise classes for a range of ability levels as well as an Employment agency for people who find it difficult to seek out suitable employment opportunities. Only Mainly Music is run by our parish volunteers, all the other activities are run by other agents within our community. It is great to see people availing themselves of these activities on most days of each week. It has also become a significant source of income to our parish.

Our Mainly Music ministry to young families has grown amazingly and we were fortunate to be gifted a play fort from a Kindergarten in Pittsworth. We were also approved for a grant from Millmerran Power Agencies to erect a child safe fence around the play fort. Located in front of our church building on the grass area, it makes our Worship Centre an inviting multi-functional activity hub.

Resurrection Sunday

