

Presbytery of the Downs

NEWSLETTER

August-September 2025



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Have you ever wondered about the church planting story behind the place where you now worship? Every church building in our Presbytery—where we gather to worship, witness, and serve—exists because the Holy Spirit moved someone, or a group of people, to disciple a community. That story might date back 150 years, or just a few decades.

What's your church plant story? Who were the people God used to bring others to faith in Christ, and how did they respond? Where do you see yourself in that story?

The Uniting Church Qld Synod is embracing a time of renewal requiring change. Denham Grierson's book, *Transforming a People of God*, first published in 1984, still speaks wisely into seasons of change. He encourages us to *value the past, claim the present, and seek the future*. As we take steps into something new, we do well to name with grateful hearts the faithfulness of God in our past, to honour the present—the customs and practices that shape our life together—without being bound by them, as we seek the future to which God is calling us.

Too often, we can let the past and present define our future. But in truth, it is *God* who defines it.

We're called to step forward with open and humble hearts, joining Christ in his mission every day. Why not take a moment to discover the story behind your church's beginnings—and ask yourself how you are participating in God's renewing work across your Presbytery today?

Rev Catherine Solomon

Our Newsletter needs stories of 'beginnings' as suggested by Rev Solomon as part of 'valuing our past'. But we also need stories of our life in the present, and the faithful people who continue to serve God and worship him, with joy. There are lovely stories out there, I have heard some of them. Please share with the rest of us, and who knows whom you might inspire with hope? Rev Ruth



GLASS IN GARDEN

On October 3rd, Come and be inspired by the beauty and artistry of the stunning Stained Glass windows in three of the oldest churches in Toowoomba – St Stephen's Uniting Church and St Luke's and St. James' Anglican Churches. The stories and symbols depicted and the history of each window will be explained. These works of art will dazzle and delight you as well as speak to your heart.

The cost is \$34 per person, which includes bus transport to the venues, afternoon tea and guided tours by Parish Historians. RSVP and pay by 29 September to Amanda at St. Luke's Parish Office. Tickets available ONLY from the St. Luke's Parish Office. EFTPOS and correct cash welcome.

Admin support to
PRC Chair, &
Presbytery
Leadership team

Answers
enquiries;
forwards info from
Assembly and
Synod Offices

Keeps records up
to date. Lay
Preachers and
Presiders lists.

Forwards donations,
sends out newsletter,
helps callers find their
way thru complex
paper work.

Organises
meetings, assists
training sessions
and events,
updates web site

Collects and
distributes mail and
emails to
appropriate person
for response

Takes PRC minutes,
undertakes care of PRC
members, making sure
they are well supplied
with coffee and cakes.

Is friendly, warm
hearted and
helpful.

Who does all these good things {and much, much more} to assist the Presbytery to run as smoothly as possible?

It's Office Administrator - Anni Cramb. She works 3 days per week in Presbytery Office, but carries our leaders and members in her heart and prayers, always. When you contact Presbytery Office – this is who welcomes you. If you're not sure what she does, checking the list above is a good start.



Warwick's Jumpers and Jazz in July

festival always presents a theme for the trees that are yarn bombed and they are quite spectacular. The theme this year was cascade – and I didn't want to just go with a waterfall – which I thought would be popular in the displays. So I googled and came up with the idea that things cascade from where they are to where they aren't. Then I got to thinking that for most of us our faith has been passed on to us from our ancestors – parents and grandparents etc.

As I sat for hours crocheting and thinking I thought this would be a wonderful opportunity for our members to acknowledge the great blessing we have been gifted. So I asked all our members to give me the names of three generations in their family through which they have inherited their faith. These were printed on grape leaves and strung together to witness to our faith story. The base of the tree was decorated with a large grape vine – as we are people of the vine.

I have included an image of our decorated tree – complete with our helper, Junior – who was young enough to stand on a box to fix the higher leaves. The cascade of leaves represented our faith which has cascaded down the generations. As they flap in the wind they activate a movement sensor device that is programmed to speak the bible verses that are fixed on the tree – all relating to how our faith and blessings flow from one generation to the next.

Sue Campbell Warwick UC

Roads of Life -

Stand at the crossroads and look, ask for the ancient paths; which is the good way? Take it and you will find rest for your souls. Jer. 6:16.

The **road of faith** that Sarah and Abraham travelled trusting that even in their old age God still had some **marvellous surprises in store for them** Gen 12: 1-9

The **road of forgiveness** that led Jacob's sons to their brother Joseph Gen: 37 – 45

The **road through the wilderness as the exodus** people wandered their way to the promised land, God's presence never failing them Ex 13: 17 – 22

The **star-marked road of the Wise Ones**, a road that could be travelled only in darkness Mt 2: 1-12

The **road to the empty tomb** where the surprise of God filled the morning with light. Lk 24: 13 -35

The **road to Emmaus** travelled by two sad and discouraged disciples who were transformed by a blaze of love and retraced their steps hurrying to share the good news. Lk 24: 13 -35

The **road to conversion** where Saul moved from arrogance to surrender Acts 9: 1-9

THESE PATHS ARE SOMETIMES OUR PATHS.

We have known our times of challenge and sorrow. Every now and again we need to stand and take stock. What are our inner resources? Do we need to refuel?

Are we prepared to carry on? Have our spiritual suitcases worn thin with all the clutter we've stuffed into them along the way? What kind of nourishment will we provide for ourselves, and others? Will we settle for only junk food for our hearts and minds? Are we aware of the people who are on the road with us? Do we stop to meet them, listen, learn from them?

As we go forward we trust God with our lives. We trust there will be enough strength and beauty amid all the pain to sustain us and to urge us forward. We trust that on this road we will come to greater wholeness and transformation.

Above all, be confident. Because, go where you will, your God goes with you. Joshua 1:9



Let's Pray

Give thanks for the freedom we have to pray and express our faith

- ❖ All of God's faithful Volunteers across the Presbytery
- ❖ Pray we can put distractions aside and listen to God through his Word and by his Spirit
- ❖ For Presbytery and Synod representatives as we navigate our way forward
- ❖ For the Presbytery leadership team
- ❖ All the Ministry Agents across the region
- ❖ Pray for congregations who are looking to the future and possible new ministries.
- ❖ Domestic and Family Violence service providers & clients. Families & children experiencing DV

Disaster Chaplaincy Training Be there when it matters

A special training event to equip chaplains and ministers local to WD region to join with **Qld Disaster Chaplaincy Network** to respond to disasters in your community.
Thursday 16th & Friday 17th October.

More info: Western Downs Council, Chinchilla Ph: 0483 835 198
chair@QDCN.org.au

Coming events to keep an eye on:

October 24 – 26 at Crows Nest - Presbytery meeting.
Be sure to be there – important information and discussions re future plans.



November 4th Abrahamic Faiths

Time: 5.45pm, followed by a light dinner Venue: St Anthony's Community Centre, 3 Memory Street, Harristown Qld 4350
For further information please contact Eric Donges – Phone: 0427 639 843 email: opaeric@gmail.com
OR John Agnew – Phone 4666 3225 email: agnewjj@yahoo.com.au



What is Follow the Star?

Follow the Star is an interactive walk-through experience that tells the true Christmas story in a creative, compelling way. Through dramatic storytelling, live animals, beautiful sets, and heartfelt hospitality, guests are invited to step into the night that Jesus was born.. The event runs for several nights in December and draws hundreds (even thousands) of people from all walks of life. It's a gentle, powerful way to share the love of Christ at Christmas. Following the walk-through, there will be a lovely market, food, free activities & dance.

And behind the scenes? A village of volunteers who make it all happen. If you ever longed to be part of something bigger than yourself – a story that brings light into darkness, joy into weary hearts, and truth to a busy world – this is your moment. If you can't assist, please DO come along with friends, family & neighbours!

Go to Follow the Star Toowoomba for more information. <https://christianeventstooowoomba.com.au/join-the-journey-become-a-volunteer-for-follow-the-star-%E2%9C%A8/>

THANK-YOU: A special thanks to Lifeworks Uniting Church Council for their faithful donation towards the fee for the farm animals petting zoo to enable it to be a free experience for children, families and all to enjoy.

