



The Downs Presbytery Newsletter

JUNE 2025

COLD SEASONS, WARM HEARTS

IN BRIEF:

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Harding p3*

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**Please contact
the Winter
Shelter Co-
ordinator,
Shaaron Currie,
if you would like
to assist in some
way**

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St Stephens Uniting Church is one of nine churches in Toowoomba opening up again for a night each per week to house homeless people in Toowoomba over Winter.

The Stable One website has lots of info about this organisation; Facebook has a multitude of photos from groups in Victoria & Toowoomba. Now the new ministry in Gympie shares with us the love, laughter & care which is a huge part of the program.

The story of its beginnings is best told by the people themselves:

"Stable One was born out of the personal journey of our founder, Jenny, and the prayers of the Church...

"In 2016 while volunteering at a foodbank in Lilydale in Victoria I had the privilege of meeting and assisting people who were struggling to make ends meet and had my eyes well and truly opened to the issue of homelessness in my community. It turned out that there were men, women and children, who were my neighbours, sleeping in cars, in parks and reserves, on friend's couches, or in sheds and on porches. An ecumenical prayer group came together to ask God what we could do to make a difference.

❖ **We believed God was showing us three things:**

- ❖ *Be the Church – work together (1 Cor 12: 27)
- ❖ *Love Like Jesus (Matthew 25: 35-40)
- ❖ *He cares about the 'one'. If you help only one person, it's still worth trying (Luke 15)

"Research highlighted great work already happening in our community - 26 emergency relief services were offering food parcels, meals, clothing, assistance with bills, etc. The critical need that was not being met was for safe, affordable housing. We continued to pray regularly and became aware of projects in other places around the world. Three different projects in three different countries were brought to our attention, all doing similar things – offering crisis shelter to people experiencing homelessness using church buildings. We gleaned all we could from their experiences, shared the vision with local pastors and plans were begun for a Winter Shelter pilot the following year.

Our guests were offered 'more than a place to stay' through the building of community, connection, care, belonging and the love of Jesus.

Stable One was born out of prayer, and that is how we continue to operate. We want to follow God, one step at a time. Since we began, I have met many more people experiencing homelessness. Their stories, their courage, their resilience and their hearts inspire me. Seeing the Church respond to their needs and show God's love for them in such practical ways fills me with joy."



Image from Queensland Synod Website

GOD IS NOT FINISHED WITH US YET

Moderator Rev Bruce Moore

The river of Christ life flows through this land. The challenge facing us is to reject the image of the church sitting on the riverbank wondering where the river has gone, and to recognize where God is at work and follow that flowing.

Our call is to abide in the presence of Christ



Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.

John 15:38 - from the bible study led by the Rev Noah Kim

The rivers of living water – spirit life – are not static but like the river in Ezekiel's vision, the stream starts small, grows deeper and brings life wherever it flows.

Yet I wonder if sometimes we feel more like disconnected ponds rather than rushing rivers.

So where is the blockage?



SEE I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW Rev. 21:1

Assembly President Rev Charissa Suli

Using Jesus' interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well, and the discussion about living water, Jesus said 'the water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.' The Samaritan woman ran to tell the good news.

God also calls the church to endurance. So-

Don't lose heart. Don't water down your witness to God's goodness. Don't give up when it's hard to believe. Remember, it's about faithful witness – **until all things are made new.**

"GOD ISN'T FINISHED with us YET"

Celebration of Ministries Service

Synod-in-session began in Brisbane at Albert Street UC on Thursday 15th May with the Celebration of Ministries service. A number of ministers from the Darling Downs were recognised and celebrated.

The retirement of 15 ministers, including Rev Dona Spencer, who until February served faithfully and with community-reaching creative flair as the Bush Chaplain for Bottle Tree.

We were introduced to four newly ordained ministers, including Rev Anne [Annie] Baker, who was honoured to deliver a response on behalf of all of her newly-ordained colleagues.

We remembered twenty-two ministers who passed away, including much-loved Rev Ian [Jim] MacLean and Rev Dr Noel Kentish.

Family and friends attended and the singing was joyous. The service was held on the birthday of Rev Jim MacLean, and we can only hope he looked on with joy.

This service was streamed online and you can still watch it if you copy and paste this link into your web browser:

<https://ucaqlid.com.au/synod-in-session/38th-synod-celebration-of-ministries-thursday-15-may-livestream/>





Let's Pray! [and thank-you so much for doing so!!]

Give thanks for:

- ❖ All of God's faithful Volunteers across the entire Presbytery
- ❖ The freedom we have to pray and express our faith
- ❖ Pray we can all put distractions aside and listen to God through his Word and by his Spirit
- ❖ For the whole Presbytery as we navigate our way forward; there has been so much growth already
- ❖ For the Presbytery leadership team
- ❖ Domestic and Family Violence service providers & clients, including at WillowTree37 in Warwick
- ❖ All the Ministry Agents across the region
- ❖ Pray for all congregations who are looking to the future and possibly new ministries.
- ❖ For Revs Ansie and Willie Liebenberg & family seeking permanent residency - a long journey
- ❖ For ALL those renting UCA property – halls, manses, Cambooya UC etc
- ❖ Giving thanks for the Presbytery Support Unit, especially as they roll out Safe Church training
- ❖ To see the whole Church working together

Please contact the Presbytery Office if you would like specific prayer.

Presbytery of Downs

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Gems from the Old Testament

God rejoices over us: Zephaniah 3:17

Music is the most immaterial of all the art forms. We can't see music, we can't grasp it in our hands, but we can feel it working through us and the world. Music represents our connection to God, to each other, to everything. Music is a wordless prayer that opens up our imaginations to God, the source of all life. If we open our mouths and sing our imperfect songs, can we connect to the Lord of all the earth?

The bible says we can. Check out just these few verses - 2 Kings 3:15; 1 Samuel 10: 5-6; Ps 96:1. And then, Zephaniah 3:17 says that God will rejoice over us with singing a song of praise.

Do you ever find yourself suddenly just singing some song of praise or worship? And find yourself connecting with God. Remember the old movies where the hero is wandering in the forest searching for his beloved. And he hears her singing off in the distance. He begins to follow her voice, singing back to her. Then the hero finds his beloved – who has been tied up by some villain.

The hero appears in all his splendour and the villain cowers and flees, leaving him alone with his beloved.

God is singing out to you searching for your heart. When you sing back to him, he resonates with you and you start to sing in harmony with him. When that happens the villain flees from you – from the presence of God – and the villain doesn't stand a chance to succeed in his temptations.

As you worship God, do you hear him singing back to you? Have you considered singing back in harmony with God, rather than just singing to Him?

