



Allora Uniting Church, Eastern Downs Parish
44 Warwick St, Allora

23rd – 25th February, 2024

Presbytery Minister's Report

Prayer Points

I would invite you to prayer with me for:

- Anni Cramb and her family as they prepare to give thanks to God for the life of Anni's sister Liz.
- For the office of the Presbytery and for the people who have supported the work of the Presbytery during this time
- For other Presbyteries in Queensland as we share ministry together.
- For the ongoing ministry of chaplaincy in the hospital setting, for DDHS and the Pastoral Care Team.
- For the Moderator and General Secretary as they led this Synod in this renewal season.

Report

The theme of this Presbytery Meeting - 'Yesterday, Today, Forever' – the continuity of God's grace and love on each person, God's mercy for each person that's what I need to hear – 'the steadfast love of the Lord endures forever' (Lam 3:22); 'O LORD, God of my salvation, I cry out day and night before you. Let my prayer come before you; incline your ear to my cry!' (Ps 88:1); 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps 46:10).....It satisfies my soul to hold tightly to these holy words as I enter my fifth year of this role. I give thanks to God and am truly grateful to members of the Presbytery who pray for me, and with me to remind me of the hope we have in the gospel truth.

This Presbytery, alongside the season of renewal we entered into during the 37th Synod, I am reminded of Basis of Union (Par 4) that reads ***Christ Rules and Renews the Church*** - '*The Uniting Church acknowledged that the Church is able to live and endure through the changes of history only because its Lord comes, addresses, and deals with people in and through the news of his completed work. Christ who is present when he is preached among people is the Word of the God who acquits the guilty, who gives life to the dead and who brings into being what otherwise could not exist. Through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ reaches out to command people's attention and awaken faith; he calls people into the fellowship of his sufferings, to be the disciples of a crucified Lord; in his own strange way Christ constitutes, rules and renew them as his Church.*' I am pondering myself 'In what ways is Christ commanding our attention and awakening our faith in this season as a Presbytery?'

One of the obvious issues for the Presbytery to address (a common issue amongst other Presbyteries and most Councils of the Church) is the few nominations or reduce capacity or energy to take up leadership roles. I am wondering if the Holy Spirit is commanding the Presbytery's attention in 2024 to

have a robust conversation about what it means for our life together, are we 'fit for purpose'?. If we are courageous enough to address this as a priority for 2024 will be require much prayer and discernment but it will also require bod, practical action – not by a few but by the whole Council of the Church called Presbytery. I look forward to welcoming some new faces to the teams of Pastoral Relations Committee and Standing Committee and to listen together to the voice of the Spirit.

Here is some other information about what is happening around the role of Presbytery Minister:

Office Administration – As reported in the Standing Committee Report I am so pleased to have Anni Cramb join us as the office administrator in the Presbytery Office. Anni is a member of Lifeworks Uniting Church, she is passionate, has a pastoral heart and has a desire to serve God in her life. Anni had a trial time at the office before Christmas and demonstrated that she saw this role as a ministry, she has adequate administration skills, she showed initiative, she is pastoral and a blessing to have around, some of you would have already had contact with her briefly. Unfortunately, the day after she was formally offered the role sadly Anni's sister Liz entered palliative care given a short time to live. Understandable Anni has needed to be with her family in the final days of her sister's life. Liz passed away last week and Anni and her family are preparing to give thanks to God for her life. The Chair (her Minister) and I have offered Anni the space, for as long as she needs, to grieve. This has meant that the administrative work of the Presbytery, the preparation for this Presbytery has fallen back to me with the generous support of Jenny Noble and Kath Warner. I want to thank the Presbytery for your patience, especially this Presbytery meeting, as you have allowed for delays in the receiving of information. When Anni returns she will be working in the office on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, please continue to pray for her as she and her family go through this time.

Saltbush – while we are at a little distance from the Saltbush community, I know a few congregations are still access the resources and connection that this networks regularly.

Rural and Remote Committee (RRC) – A proposal for this committee has been developed, through the Pastoral Relations Committee, as our first attempt to formalise the support network for rural and remote ministries. It is possible that I will be a part of this committee, in the short term, to support getting an expectation framework/charter established. This committee will report to the Presbytery Standing Committee and at each Presbytery meeting.

MOU with Maranoa Parish – the draft MOU has been developed to formalise the use of the manse to support the Bottle Tree RAM. It is well on the way to being completed and I anticipate this will now be managed and reviewed by the RRC if the Presbytery agrees to this proposal.

Combine Presbytery Mission Pool (CPMP) – thank you to Jenny, the Presbytery treasurer, and all the treasurers in our congregations for your engagement in this process. The Presbytery Ministers across the all the Presbyteries work together to manage this pool of money. The timeline is moving along, we have all submitted our CPMP incomes (what we commit to give into the pool) and our CPMP expenses (what we will be asking from the pool). The summary for our first draft of the CPMP income and expenses for 24/25 across all the Presbyteries has resulted in approximately \$400 000 shortfall. So the

next step is for each Presbytery to go back to the drawing board each to review their budgets and make some difficult decisions.

Presbytery Synod Interface (PSI) – (met in November, December and February)

- **Complaints and Compliance** – consideration of best practice framework for supporting Pastoral Relations Committees and Presbyteries in this area is being offered. A presentation with a suggestion of 5 options was given by Bethany Masters (Legal Counsel) to the PSI in December. It was decided that Option 1 was the best option to explore further with PRCs and PSCs. More information about the progress of this discussion will come to the next Presbytery.

Option 1 - Synod Unit/person investigate and determine facts and determine sanction.

A central unit/person in Synod office would receive and deal with all complaints against Ministers. That unit/person would determine:

- (i) whether the complaint had been made out, in full or in part, and
- (ii) the disciplinary sanction (except removal of recognition which could only be determined by the Synod Committee for Discipline).

That unit/person must consult with the relevant Presbytery Chair/Pastoral Relations Committee regarding the sanction. Where that sanction involved such things as set out in Reg.5.4.2(a), (b), (c), (d) (excluding admonishing and correcting), (e) and (f), those actions would be referred back to the relevant Pastoral Relations Committee to administer and report back to that unit/person. If insufficient officers on the relevant Pastoral Relations Committee had capacity (e.g. conflicts of interest), another Presbytery Pastoral Relations Committee would be referred these responsibilities by the unit/person.

- **Minister Wellbeing** – General Proposal 3 adopted at the 37th Synod regarding the wellbeing of Ministry Agents has been on the agenda at the PSI and a process is being developed for a Synod-wide conversation, also the Minister's Convocation for 2024 will follow up on the previous convocation which began to address this issue.
- **Hospital Chaplaincy** – the UCA Hospital Chaplains across Qld addressed the PSI and shared their passion and concern for the future of this ministry. This is an ongoing conversation as we draw closed to the June when the funding will end.
- **Queensland Churches Together** – we had a presentation by Rev David Baker regarding the future strategic direction of QCT. A Summary of the RI work being done across the state and the Domestic Violence Training offered online by QTC.
- **Mission Accompanying Team** – The General Secretary shared a new Synod office approach to Mission (I understand the Moderator my bring some more information to this meeting).
- **PSI Retreat** – held at Emu Park in Yeppoon 28th Jan – 30th Jan and led by Rev Tom Kerr – unfortunately I arrived and tested positive to COVID and returned on the next flight home. Feedback was that it was a positive and productive time away.
- **Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress (UAICC) Update** - Regional Council and Executive formed in Qld. Rev Roberta Stanley is the Chair of this Regional Council. The Moderator is an Ex-Officio member.

Pastoral Care Oversight Committee – The Synod Standing Committee's decision to no longer fund public hospital chaplaincy has now become real for the Pastoral Care Department at DDHS with the

conclusion of Rev Jenny Potter full-time position at the Base Hospital in mid March. A report will be shared during the Presbytery in Session. On a positive note - it was an absolute delight to offer an Ecumenical Service of Commissioning of Pastoral Carers on 12th February 2024 at Middle Ridge Uniting Church. There were 34 staff and volunteers present for the service. See in your papers Dr Stephen Hughes', (Pastoral Care coordinator) report of the Pastoral Care Oversight Committee.

Wider Work of the Church – I continue to participate in the Synod Reception of Ministers Committee; Learning and Development Reference Group; Advisory Committee for Ministerial Placements; and Synod Selection Panels.

Self Care – since the last meeting I have had two holidays. One short break in November to move house, this is the first time **in my life** that I have lived by myself – a new experience. The other break over Christmas was a good rest and settle time in my new home – both times have been refreshing. I continue to be involved in handbells weekly and love the connection with other musical folk. I also enjoy my time with my family when I can.

Supervision and Continuing Education for Ministers (CEM)– I have had two sessions with my supervisor since the last meeting we continue to work through my Healthy Ministry Review. I attended a Future Church Conference in Sydney that if you would like to spend time hearing about I would be glad to share with you my reflections and learnings. I am reading and listening to Podcasts and audiobooks around the theme of Emotional Healthy Ministry and being Trauma Informed and ageing would be happy to share my reflections and learnings.

Health and Spiritual Wellbeing – my health is going well (except for the COVID interruption). I have a full schedule at the moment as we transition to a new team and sometimes feel overwhelmed by this but spend quality time silently in my prayer space. I have a regular exercise routine which has become a health habit. I am grateful again for your encouragement and prayers as I continue in this role.

Recommendations:

1. That my report be received.

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