



# The Downs Presbytery Newsletter

May 2024

Smile for Peace, Click for Unity



## Contents:

Community  
event updates

Winter Shelter  
details page 9

Prayer Points  
pages 3 and 6

Highlights from  
Bush Chaplains  
pages 3 - 4

May is DFV  
[Domestic &  
Family Violence]  
Awareness  
month page 5

## The Holy Spirit is moving in this place

**As we approach the celebration of Pentecost 2024 we have an opportunity to reflect where we are seeing the movement of the Holy Spirit in our world today.**

Over the last couple of months I have had the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with people from diverse cultures and religious traditions all passionate and committed to creating a world where all can live in peace and harmony. The Holy Spirit is truly moving in places where we least expect, often in places where Christianity is the minority tradition but where the message of Jesus is being proclaimed in the love, hope and peace that is being lived out.

In March I attended the Global Spirituality Mahotsav (which means 'gathering') in Hyderabad, India where

over 70000 people gathered to listen and learn from each other and to pray together for peace and harmony in the world. This week in Malaysia I have attended the International Religious Leaders Conference on Unity in Diversity.

The second speaker this morning was Cor Episoa Philip Tomas the Chairman Christian Federation of Malaysia who reminded the over 2000 people present that 'diversity is a gift from God' he quoted from Paul's letter to the Galatians 'we are one body in Christ' Thanks to God for the many ways that the Holy Spirit is moving in the world and may we all in our own lives listen to the Holy Spirit, living within you and live the way of Jesus so that all may know that 'you are my disciples' (John 13:35)

*Rev Yvonne*

## Please consider submitting a prayer from your heart!

Would you like to use your gifts to help us pray together for our past, present and future? The Act2 team is calling for prayer submissions for the daily prayers which will be shared across the national Uniting in Prayer event from 19 May-22 June 2024. Prayers are invited in a variety of creative styles including poetry, song and art. Use the sign-up form on the Act2 website to let the team know you'd like to contribute.





see p.4 for more on the 120+ Rural & Remote young artists who helped create this design

## Rural and Remote Committee

On Monday 22 April, 15 passionate supporters and interested parties - members of churches in the Downs, Presbytery leaders, ministers from Brisbane, Frontier Services [interstate], Connect100+, also another denomination, and of course the RAMs Bush Chaplains - joined together for a Zoom meeting to create a Rural and Remote Committee. Rev Dona Spencer and Ps Jennie Feldmeier, the RAMs Bush Chaplains, are to have support teams. Aims were reviewed in a draft Charter, which had kindly been drawn up by Dr Warren Midgley during his Easter break.

It was decided that a smaller working group [not yet named] would give support to the Bush Chaplains more often, and a larger group would meet biannually to oversee budgets & wider strategy.

Many key points were made, e.g. the desire to:

- allow flexibility in the different expressions of ministry by different Chaplains
- pivot to meet changing community needs
- work alongside other ministries & agencies so as not to replicate services
- invite community members for their input
- increase the profile and success of RAMs in spreading love & the message of the Gospel

IF you somehow were missed in being invited to that meeting, and you wish to contribute to the oversight of our Bush Chaplains, or you know someone who may have much to give, please don't hesitate to contact Rev Yvonne McRostie at the Presbytery Office.

## Containers for Change

Well done to all Donors - keeping recyclables out of landfill & nominating Rural & Remote Ministries -

**you raised \$498.50** in 2023

**Scheme ID C10090389**

*Let's see if together we can beat \$738, our 2022 total*

*Thank-you!*





## Birdsville Update with Ps Jennie Feldmeier, Bush Chaplain CBW

Pastor Jennie Feldmeier, Bush Chaplain at remote area CBW, shared about a trip with Gordon Preston, a volunteer from Outback Links, to Birdsville on April 17th for a massive effort to clean, repair and restore the old Australian Inland Mission [AIM] hospital. Various rebuilds of the AIM served the community "for 101 years until 2005 when the last nurse walked next door to the new QLD Health Clinic. It then operated as a museum until 2017, when it was sold. Jenna Brooks, a Birdsville identity, acquired it in 2020, determined to again open the hospital so that tourists can marvel at its resilience and role in the community's health needs."

Ps Jennie writes, "we have had some locals come through, some walked the corridors with tears in their eyes as they remembered being cared for by nurses, telling us stories of broken arms, birthing babies and having the 'birds & bees' explained to them by the nursing sisters."

"It is clear to see the positive impact Frontier Services is having in the community by once again being back in Birdsville." Ps Jennie quotes a local who said, ***"Thanks for turning up, we are a long way out here and don't see many helpers and others volunteering to look after our community. Hope you are gonna stay!"***



### Prayer requests for Cunnamulla Burke and Wills remote area

- For continued safety while travelling on the roads
- For open doors and hearts to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ
- Pastor Jennie asks to continue to remain sensitive to the Spirit in His leading as to where to go.
- For the Outback Links projects that are being planned in 2024/25

*Thank-you!*





## Mural Update at Wallumbilla with Rev Dona Spencer, Bush Chaplain

Mariangela Bonasia Lewis, Artist-in-residence at Wallumbilla Primary, above left, is hard at work with Rev Dona Spencer, the Bush Chaplain from the Bottle Tree RRM, to coordinate the students designing & painting a large mural in 8 panels - **which will be 9.6m long and 1.8m high!** [right above] Rev Dona says, 'We have collected drawings from all children!! 120...or thereabouts. Grades 1 to 10.' An element of everyone's designs will be incorporated, and all 120 will help with the painting. Mariangela's husband, Chris Lewis, is also

assisting. Perhaps it's just 'all in a day's work' for mural artists, but to most people, it looks like a *massive* undertaking needing artists' eyes to compose the design from the wealth of choice in the children's 120 original artworks, then project the images by overhead transparency, then to artfully transfer outlines and prepare paints to be ready for the children when they started painting on 22nd April.

**Watch this space** for a 'big reveal' of this masterpiece/community engagement project - when the 120+ artists have finished!

### Toowoomba Interfaith Working Group National Peace Forum Register [HERE](#)



### 12 - 19 May 2024 Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

You are invited to come together on

**13 May Time: 9-10am**  
St Theresa's Parish Centre  
55 Curzon Street,  
East Toowoomba

**14 May Time: 7-8pm**  
St Anthony's Parish Centre,  
Memory Street, Toowoomba

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# Domestic & Family Violence [DFV] Awareness Month May '24

with Rev Tanya Richards, Community Chaplain and Connect 100+ Toowoomba

Catherine J. Foote reflects & prays about rebuilding her trust after Domestic Violence.

“God, I’m learning to trust you. I’m learning to put into words things I have been afraid to tell you. I’m learning that your steadfast love endures forever, that you will not abandon me, that you do not lie to me. I’m learning that you do not hurt me, call me stupid, run out of patience, forget to do what you said you would, change your mind, change the rules.

God, I’m learning to trust the truth. I’m learning its power, its freedom. I’m learning that I can speak truth, believe truth, believe me. Amen.”

Catherine J. Foote, Survivor Prayers  
Westminster/John Knox Press



Past President of UC National Assembly Dr Deidre Palmer and Rev Charissa Suli offered the following reflection on the reading from Luke 24: 13- 35, about the role of the church and Christians as we support and listen to people and families experiencing DFV.

On the road to Emmaus, Jesus comes alongside the disciples in their fear, confusion and brings a message of hope that the impossible may in fact be possible. As families and individuals live in sadness, confusion, distress and isolation, the risen Christ comes alongside and reminds us that we are his beloved children, we are created in his image, and we are of infinite value.

As Christians we are called to walk alongside, to listen, to offer hope and compassion as we “notice the suffering of another and to take action to alleviate that suffering.” Like the Good Samaritan, we are called to attend to our neighbours, friends and family. We have a narrative of hope to which we witness, of a God who loves us infinitely and desires us to be in loving, life-giving relationships with others. We have a responsibility, as followers of Jesus, to be bearers of this hope.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP!

**CHECK IN.** Check in with anyone you know, or suspect has experienced DFV and see how they are doing but do it sensitively and carefully. Make sure it’s a safe space for the survivor whilst checking in with them.

**LISTEN.** Be open to learning from others who have more expertise and experience before you speak, think: have you really listened?

**SPEAK OUT.** Join the conversation and use your voice to speak out against DFV. We all have role to play in ending violence.

**ACT.** Give your time to an organisation or group that works to prevent and address gender-based violence. Raise the awareness in your local church community and where to get help.

**Domestic and Family Violence support services:**

**1800 RESPECT National Helpline: 1800 737 732**

**Lifeline (24-hour crisis line): 131 114**

**Women’s Crisis Line: 1800 811 811**

**Men’s Referral Service: 1300 766 491**

**Emergency: 000**

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## Prayer Points



### Farewell to Rev Kaye Ronalds

The Downs Presbytery and the people of Granite Belt Uniting Church invite you to a service to mark conclusion of placement for Rev Kaye Ronalds after 10 years of ministry in the region. We pray for the people of the Granite Belt region and for Kaye and Owen as they say their farewells.

**Sunday 26 May at 9.30am  
Stanthorpe Uniting Church**

### Induction of Rev Jenny Potter

**Date: Friday, 17th May 2024**  
Location: Barcaldine Uniting Church, 7 Maple Street, Barcaldine.

"Yes," Jenny says, "not Longreach!"

If you can't be there you can send a greeting to the Presbytery Minister Scott [cqpresmin@centralqldpresbytery.org.au](mailto:cqpresmin@centralqldpresbytery.org.au) and he will pass it on to Jenny.

## Other Prayers...

- Kerrie Neale and extended family and the St George Community
- Karen and Paul Dunmill from Goondiwindi UC
- Karen and Greg Gaskell from Chinchilla UC
- DFV service providers
- Families & children experiencing DV
- Rev Kaye and Owen Ronalds and Granite Belt UC and surrounding community
- Presbytery Meeting at Lifeworks UC 14-16 June
- Bush Chaplains Rev Dona Spencer and Ps Jennie Feldmeier and their communities.
- Warwick Killarney UC as they begin their housing project.
- The President-Elect Rev Charissa Suli and the UCA as the team prepare for the Assembly meeting in July.
- The Synod office team, UnitingCare team and Wesley Mission Qld in their decision and structure changes.
- Rev Linda Hansen as she begins her role as Qld Synod Associate General Secretary.



## Chappy Week Bush Dance

When: **FRIDAY 24th May 6:30pm**

Where: **FE LOGAN MEMORIAL HALL, Clifton**

Cost: **\$10 Adults \$5 Children \$30 Family**

Music: **Ridgy Didge Bush Band**

**Supporting School Chaplaincy**

Contact: **Christine 0418 308 786**

**Food available from Lions' BBQ**

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## People of Presbytery - Standing Committee (PSC)



Rev John Case

John has been involved in this and other Presbyteries in various roles since 2002, with just a small break from 2022-2023. He found the Good Friday service at Cambooya UC very inspiring - the church was so full, many stated that this was not the end of ministry in Cambooya. Far from it! Another thought-provoking idea he read recently is that the universal church 'is more interested in worshipping Jesus than following him.'



Rev Dylan Miegel

Rev Dylan has recently joined [& surely blessed!] the Uniting Church and the Presbytery after 8 years of ministry in another denomination. One of the most inspiring things Dylan has read this year is John Caputo's *Spectres of God*, in which he says:  
'Today, religion cannot save anyone. Someone needs to save religion from all the harm it does...'



Ms Allison Kahler

Allison has faithfully served the Presbytery in many ways since 2008 and was elected as secretary in 2020. She is a woman of few words who gives many hours of service. This in itself is inspiring to us all.



Mrs Kath Warner

"For the 6 years I have lived in Nobby as a member from Eastern Downs & 4 years on the PSC [& Synod]...I also attended Downs Presbytery meetings as a Youth Rep when my Dad was [there], when I was a teenager!!  
Inspo x 2: "International Women's Day breakfast at Humeridge; & in travelling I have experienced the sunrise/ sunset at 80 Mile Beach & Broome recently which was incredible!"



Ps Jenny Noble

Jenny started in Dalby in 1992.. 'Had a break 1997-2002 whilst living in Pittsworth to educate our kids.....but have been constant as either Parish Rep, Ministry Agent or Executive since 2003.'  
"Hope" is the thing with feathers - That perches in the soul - And sings the tune without the words - And never stops - at all"  
(Emily Dickinson)



Rev Yvonne McRostie

...is looking forward to the next Presbytery meeting in Toowoomba, themed *Growing Together*. I am inspired by the young adults in my life like Connie, Fatima and Jackson. They are interesting to listen to, they are kind-hearted, they have a deep love for the world and they enjoy sharing life with people like me.

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# Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC)



Rev Yvonne McRostie

"I started with the Presbytery of the Downs 4.5 years ago. Previously involved in PRC in Moreton Rivers. So far in 2024, sublime moments included playing in the puddles in the sunflower fields with Phoebe, my granddaughter, and praying for peace with 70000 people in India in March!"



Ps Jenny Noble

*No, it's not a double-up, Jenny was on the previous page too. Jenny is also the Presbytery Treasurer until 2025. She finds assisting in finance most fulfilling, and **is keen to train up someone to learn the ropes for when her term finishes.** Please don't be shy if you sense you are being called to serve in this way, or would like more information.*



Rev Dona Spencer

Rev Dona says "I became involved in this Presbytery in February 2023 when I was inducted into Bottle Tree RAM. Previously involved in PRC in Bremer Brisbane. The most inspiring event I have experienced this year was 'Easter in the Country' in Roma where people from afar, & [various] denominations came together to celebrate Easter - whether all were aware of the real reason for Easter or not, I am sure that the risen Christ was in our midst, enjoying our celebrations."



*Notetaker, story writer for PRC and PSC is Anni Cramb. She is inspired by: her kids, God's boundless grace, the Overcomers, & the fact that creation is both beautiful AND practical. (Gen. 2:9)*



Mr David Prestridge

*"Not sure when I joined the Pastoral Relations Committee. Must be more than 3 years, I think."*

As for David's inspiration: "At Lifeworks recently we sang, 'Because he lives, I can face tomorrow. Because he lives, all fear is gone...'"



Dr Warren Midgley

"I've been on the Pastoral Relations Committee for a little over 2 years. Something inspiring I have seen this year: The newest stained glass window in Stanthorpe Uniting Church."

## NEXT MONTH'S NEWSLETTER

- What's happening in Warwick, Killarney, Freestone, Highfields, Granite Belt and Wilsonton.
- More getting to know the members of Presbytery
- Stories and good news

Please send good news stories and photos of your events, people, prayer needs, happenings to [admin@downspresbytery.org.au](mailto:admin@downspresbytery.org.au) by 25th May.

*Thank-you.*

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## Winter Homeless Shelter at St Stephen's Uniting Church (SSUC)

From Venue Coordinator, Shaaron Currie - 5th June is first night at SSUC

St Stephens UC is once again opening our Church Hall to the most vulnerable in our community who are sleeping rough. Every Wednesday afternoon we welcome up to 12 Guests.

On a typical afternoon:

- 3pm - The team arrive to set up, make beds and prepare the evening meal.
- 5pm - The Evening Shift arrives ready for the bus to arrive at
- 5.30pm Guests arrive and are welcomed with a hot cuppa and home baking - which is sometimes their first meal of the day. Soup is served. Guests will shower or just lie down & relax. A game of UNO or chess is played.
- 6.30pm - we share a meal together.
- 10pm - the church hall is locked and the Night Shift come in to take over.
- 6am - Breakfast is prepared, beds are packed ready for the bus.
- 8am Guests are taken into town.

*'I honestly didn't know what I had signed up for. 4 years on I have met some amazing volunteers & made some amazing friendships...one of our Shift Leaders...is a past Guest who has since found housing.'*

*Shaaron Currie*

The Guests are so appreciative of the hospitality. It's a very rewarding experience being involved in WinterShelter.

*How you can be involved:*

- Do some home baking
- Prepare a dessert or
- Help out with the endless amount of washing we get. [Each week 3 Volunteers are rostered on to do the washing. Some Volunteers have an outing to the local laundromat together.]
- We are in desperate in need of NIGHTSHIFT VOLUNTEERS. This shift has 3 Volunteers rostered on with 2 Volunteers awake at all times. There is plenty of home baking & chocolate on offer to get you through the night. In the past we've had a uni student who studied all night & slept all day... If you know anyone whom you think may be interested, please pass on Shaaron's contact details.

***If you would like to be involved we would love to hear from you. Thank-you.***

*Shaaron Currie*

Venue Coordinator, WinterShelter  
St Stephens Uniting Church, Toowoomba  
Ph: 0428 130 038

(anytime except Monday/Tuesday Daytime)

*Thank you for reading!*

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