



OCTOBER 2020 ISSUE 1

## PRESBYTERY OF THE RIVERINA

Discipleship and Education Committee



Removing the stops and roadblocks to learning. Like a roundabout, D&E strives to allow for the continuous journey forward in your faith through engagement and learning.

### **PASTORAL NOTE - Presbytery Minister Rev Nigel Hawken**

This has been an incredibly challenging year across the world, within our nation, states and territories, Riverina region and local communities. People everywhere have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic maybe amongst other matters like their own health or the health of other loved ones. Many have been suffering through the impact and consequences of necessary actions to keep people safe and avoid further spread of this terrible disease that has brought death and harm to people's health, with communities struggling significantly.

The church has had to change in the light of all that has been occurring and at times like these some can be tempted to lose hope, yet we can draw on words of faith by and to people of old, like in last week's lectionary reading where God spoke these words to Moses from Exodus 33:14 (NRSV) **'My presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.'** Are these not the words we need to hear at this time? – we are not alone, God is always with us, going with us, before us, beside us and behind us. The rest God offers, holds that peace which passes understanding. Maybe you may take up the invitation to join the Riverina Presbytery Retreats led by Rev. Carolyn Thornley with the theme 'Where do you find God?' on 4<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> November via Zoom, or another education opportunity offered. I am about to have a few week's leave myself, from Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October, spending time away with my wife Annette before returning from 8<sup>th</sup> November onwards.

Whatever we do in different ways, whether we meet together safely for church or receive gifts of faith resources in paper or electronic form until we can gather once more, my prayer for you all is for deep heavenly peace and a sense of God's presence, as we continue to adjust to challenges and as we change to adapt to the unfolding world we now live in.



### **Register now - Leaders Retreat led by Rev. Carolyn Thornley**

Two opportunities to reflect and retreat via Zoom.

#### **Where do you Look for God?**

Open to anyone in Leadership in the Riverina.

Wednesday 4th November or Saturday 7th November, 10am - 2pm.

RSVP to Carolyn via email: [revcarolynthornley@gmail.com](mailto:revcarolynthornley@gmail.com)

or Ph/text: 0460 854 906

### **TASTER COURSES**

#### **GRIEF & LOSS**

Rev. Yvonne Ghalvalas & Lorraine Hoffman have been working hard developing this new course. They have been facilitating some taster sessions in readiness for the launch of the 6 session course which will address all forms of grief, loss and management of self.

#### **MISSION SHAPED MINISTRY**

UME, Canberra & Riverina Presbytery are looking to run a 90 Min taster via Zoom on Mission Shaped Ministry. The taster is being proposed for early November 2020 with a view to running a 10 week course beginning mid April to June 2021. More details soon.





## **SALTBUSH - A 'GATHERED IN THE SCATTERED COMMUNITY' EXPERIENCE**

Hillston Gunbar multi-linked congregations became a Saltbush Congregation long before Covid-19. Our congregations are on the northern border of the Riverina Presbytery, 740 km west of Sydney. As part of Saltbush's Mobilizing Ministry Plan, which linked urban and rural congregations, Northmead UC adopted Hillston-Gunbar for their rural mission plan. 8 members of Northmead's congregation visited us in January 2019, experiencing the effects of a long drought during a blistering heatwave.

We connected by a smart phone 'on speaker' in worship time, praying for the needs of each other, and one time shared the beginning of worship. The Rev Niall Read and wife, Paula, returned later in the year and spent 9 days encouraging us, exploring different ways of worship and being church.

Our congregations had access to Saltbush on-line resources, a printable PDF liturgy and Lectionary – based video "The Word around the Bush" by Saltbush ministers, Mark Faulkner, Geoff Wellington and Tim Jensen. This could be downloaded and used in a Power Point presentation on Sundays or used for personal devotions.

Six months later Covid-19 arrived. When churches closed we had weekly Saltbush@9 worship. This was a wonderful experience for those who could manage ZOOM. The worship was inter-active and uniquely Saltbush style. We had break-out rooms to share the peace, and discuss and reflect on the message.

Belonging to Saltbush gives us smaller and remote congregations a real taste of 'connectedness and belonging' to the wider church. We made new friends, Saltbush friends. The Saltbush team have provided Saltbush Cafe's which run approx. 4-6 weeks. We study the Word, building relationships of trust, and we learn and grow together as we share life and faith experiences.

The Cafés are safe and intimate spaces where God's presence is known and celebrated. The present café with Rev Mark Faulkner called "Water for the Journey" is just that, where one can be nurtured, inspired, refreshed and enriched.

Thanks be to Mark, Geoff and Tim, for the great ministry of Saltbush. May God continue to bless you all. The new Saltbush gatherings of Christian Communities provide an essential need during Covid restrictions and will remain vital to the rural church post Covid and into the future.

You can see more of what Saltbush do including Ruminations, podcasts and the weekly visual messages by visiting their website – [saltbushcommunity.uca.org.au](http://saltbushcommunity.uca.org.au)

Jenny Rose





## **ZOOM INTO SALTBUSH—REVIEW**

The Saltbush Zoom programs have been really vital for me – in fact I think of them as being a lifesaver. Just previous to COVID 19 being declared, I had knee surgery resulting in a series of complications, nearly five weeks in hospital and a long convalescence to follow.

I was just starting to think I could start attending worship again when we were placed in lockdown and advised to close the church doors. After months of being virtually confined to home (apart from Dr appointments etc.) this was the last straw for me.

Then along came Saltbush@9 each Sunday morning. What a blessing this was and so timely for me. I loved the welcome from the leaders Mark Geoff and Tim; also, from the other people who joined in. In addition I met up with people from all over who I hadn't seen in such a long time – two of them were from my younger days growing up. The chat rooms which we broke into during the service were an added bonus where we could share our thoughts with each other – a very special time.

Next, I took the plunge and joined in with one of the cafes, which again I found to be very beneficial and interesting. One was an afternoon café the other an evening one. Once again, we were given the opportunity to contribute to the discussions. These times of sharing were so good after being in a very socially isolated space.

Mark, Geoff and Tim, I thank you for the wonderful way in which you host these services and cafes; for your dedication to the needs of those who attend; and how you make everyone so welcome in a nonthreatening way. No one should feel not included. I have found that your presentation and format is very encouraging and informative. The sharing of Holy Communion is a very special time for me.

I thank God for you all and long may the Saltbush programs continue across the Synod of NSW/ACT.

Blessings

Myra Cowell

If you would like to join the Saltbush community or find out more please email [Saltbush@nswact.uca.org.au](mailto:Saltbush@nswact.uca.org.au) or check out their website <https://saltbushcommunity.uca.org.au/>

## **SAFE CHURCH ONLINE COURSE**

Safe Church face to face courses have been suspended until 2021. In the meantime we encourage members to enrol in online courses being offered by UCA NSW & ACT Synod or the Anglican Church.

<https://nswact.uca.org.au/about-us/safe-church-for-children-vulnerable-adults/safe-church-training/>

<https://safeministry.training/online-training-information/>

## **ATTENTION SRE (SCRIPTURE) TEACHERS**

The Discipleship & Education Committee are seeking to put together a data base of all Scripture Teachers in the Riverina, regardless of their church denomination, in order to better equip and support this vital ministry in the lives of our young people.

Could you please email Wendy Frazier [wendyelizabeth60@gmail.com](mailto:wendyelizabeth60@gmail.com) with a list of names and contact details of all SRE teachers working in your local schools ASAP. Thank you.

## **TRANSFORMATION PROPOSAL AND THE TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP TEAM**

*Presbytery Minister - Rev Nigel Hawken*

Some of the significant ways the Riverina Presbytery has developed in 2020 is by having its various committees (Standing, Pastoral Relations, Finance & Property, Discipleship & Education) and the Presbytery Meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> October, all meet via Zoom, the online video technology that connects many people together these days. In fact, the NSW.ACT Synod has just released its plans to hold its 2020 Synod meeting via Zoom over four separate days two months apart, which is radical and yet offers us great opportunity to be and do church differently, connecting through technology instead of physically.

Having seen, over the past 8 months, the challenges of maintaining the role and function of the Riverina Presbytery, the pressures and strains this places on the few lay people who take on responsibilities above and beyond their local congregations, and the confronting experience for the few Ministers trying to cover large regional duties, I have wondered how sustainable our structure is. I honour those who have served the Presbytery in recent years like former Presbytery chair Sheila Ayliffe, and former Pastoral Relations Committee chair Janet Elliott and many other servants of the church who have stepped up to help support the church across the Riverina.

I have also been part of several conversations with other Presbytery leaders especially Macquarie Darling, New England North West and the Far North Coast who have all been experiencing the same strains and struggles on its members and ministers. Alongside the Saltbush team, we have all wondered if there is a better and different way of being the church in a regional way without the same burdens of governance and responsibilities, so that the local congregations can thrive.

At a recent meeting in Bathurst with Synod, Saltbush, Western and Far North Coast Presbytery representatives, we heard a Synod proposal being explored, that has been implemented for several months in the Far North Coast, to potentially change the way we operate on a regional level. I felt this proposal warranted further investigation and consideration and so I made the following Transformation Proposal, accepted after questions and discussion by the 35 people who gathered online for the Presbytery Meeting.

**1) A Transformational Leadership Team be empowered to work with the Synod Proposal around a changed presbytery structure in the following ways:**

**Gather information and enable the presbytery to discern a new Presbytery structure**

**Bring proposals to the Standing Committee and Presbytery around any new structure**

**Work with Standing Committee and Presbytery on any transitional proposals and arrangements**



**2) That the Transformational Leadership Team be made up of the:**

- a) Chair of presbytery**
- b) Treasurer of presbytery**
- c) Pastoral Relations Committee Chair**
- d) Presbytery Minister**
- e) 1 lay member of Presbytery**
- f) Saltbush/Synod representative**

**3) The Standing Committee appoint the Lay Member of the Transformational Leadership Team**

So, our Transformation Leadership Team consists of both our newly elected Presbytery Chair, Dorothy Creek, and Presbytery Treasurer, George Thomas, alongside our Pastoral Relations Committee Chair, Rev. Matthew Stuart (Army Chaplain at Kapooka in 2020), with the Synod Saltbush representative Lay Pastor Geoff Wellington, with me as your Presbytery Minister, with the sixth lay member of this team, to be appointed soon by the Standing Committee. This team will commence meeting from the week of my return from leave, probably Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> November. Your prayers for the work of this team will be appreciated.

## ***“ESSENTIALS” - SRE TRAINING***

All people engaged in SRE need to undergo training that covers the context of SRE, Child Protection and Classroom Management. Some of the training requirements are dependent on the role a person has within SRE. All SRE roles involve some kind of initial and ongoing training and can be completed in a couple of different modes of delivery.

SRE Essential training is the initial training required for people involved in SRE. It includes seven modules in total including Module 6 which is an observation lesson. This course follows the ICCOREIS Framework and is run and approved by: ACC, Baptist, UCA and Presbyterian providers.

**D& E have resolved to pay the \$70 full course or \$20 per module for anyone wanting to train or refresh their training as an SRE teacher.**

Please contact Wendy Frazier to organise payment/reimbursement.

For further information reach out to [essentialsretraining@gmail.com](mailto:essentialsretraining@gmail.com).



## ***EXPLORING THE NEW TESTAMENT***

How exciting that 45 people across NSW, including 8 people from the Riverina are currently exploring the New Testament via Zoom, for accreditation as a Lay Preacher. There are also some lay preachers participating in the course for their ongoing education. The course is being run by John Squires & Elizabeth Raine.

It is hoped that Exploring the Old Testament will be able to be offered in a similar way early next year!

## ***PRESBYTERY LIBRARY***

There are a large number of books available to borrow from the Presbytery Library located in the back room at Wesley Uniting Wagga Wagga. Please contact Betty Loiterton Ph 6931 1219 email: [betty.loiterton@bigpond.com](mailto:betty.loiterton@bigpond.com)

## ***PRESBYTERY WEBSITE***

For all the latest info on courses and worship services check out the new look Presbytery website. <https://riverina.unitingchurch.org.au/>



## ***D & E CONTACT INFO***

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