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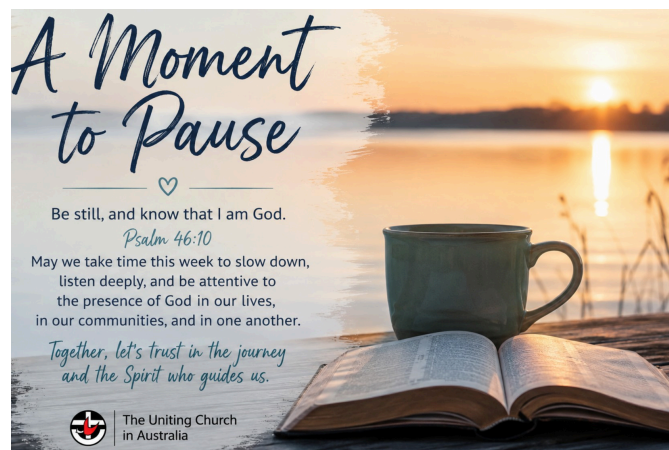
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Keep sharing your stories and events with us — we love to hear what's happening across The Northern Presbytery!

Contact The Northern Presbytery News Team



Reflection

Biographer and radio host Eric Metaxas is quoted as saying:

“In the west in particular, we have gotten so used to the idea of freedom and democracy and economic prosperity, we take it for granted. We have no idea that if it's a cut flower, it will continue to look beautiful for a season, but ultimately it's lost the connection to the source of life”.

This quote is part of a bible study which explores the relationship between religion and democracy and it suggests that this source of life which Metaxas refers is Christianity. The great truth that we are all made in the image of God and

that we all have equal worth and dignity is at the very foundation of western democracy. In a world where democracy seems to be struggling with movements towards totalitarians and autocrats, where freedom of speech, hate legislation and who is allowed to come to our shores, is so much part of the public debate, it is pertinent to be reminded the role which faith and the teachings of Jesus have influenced how our democracies have been formed and envisaged would operate.

The French philosopher Alexis de Tocqueville in visiting the United States of America in 1830 observed:
‘What is going to keep us from pursuing our own individual self interests?’

He believed that people, no question, were self interested, but for democracy to work, we had to get outside of ourselves, we had to get to know our neighbours, and we had to work together with our neighbours to make good community. Tocqueville said that Christianity was the faith that got us out of ourselves.

As people of faith the concept of thinking outside ourselves is something which we hear regularly from either our pulpits, speakers and devotional guides. It is at the heart of Christ’s message, be it for our love of God or the bloke next door. Paul encouraged the church at Philippi to have nothing to do with selfish ambition or vain conceit, but through humility to look to others as better than ourselves and therefore not look only to their own interests but also to the interests of others. (Phil 2: 1 -4)

If Tocqueville is correct, then I wonder if the reciprocal of his insight is correct also. Does a decrease in faith therefore open the door for a return to self interest and in turn, diminish the effectiveness of the democracy in which we live? The church is charged to speak into the public space as a counter to this, always seeking as our T shirts proclaim “Uniting for the Common Good”, seeking to bring the liberating, worth affirming Good News of Christ that gives voice to the marginalized and the oppressed.

In our current climate of mistrust and scepticism, let us treasure the form of government we have, as flawed as it can be, let us uphold the value of each person who makes up our democracy and let us always fight to maintain it as a way of government in which people can have the freedom to locate their purpose and meaning, finding a way in which to flourish and be made whole, as our creator God desires them to be.

Pastor Geoff Battle

Forster/Tuncurry Uniting Church



Celebrating the people, congregations and communities doing amazing things across The Northern Presbytery.

Terrigal Uniting Church



Repair, Restore, Renew

People Care. Earth Care. Fair Share.

Three simple principles are helping Terrigal Uniting Church turn care for creation and community into practical action.

On the last Saturday of each month, the church becomes home to the **Terrigal Repair Café**, where people bring along broken or damaged belongings and work with skilled volunteers to give them another life.

Jewellery, clothing, furniture, bicycles, tools and small mechanical items are among the many things that find their way through the doors. But the idea isn't simply to fix people's belongings. Volunteers share their knowledge and skills, helping others learn how to repair and maintain things themselves.

The Repair Café began in 2019 after Barry and Lesley Earp saw a story about a similar initiative elsewhere and wondered whether it could work at Terrigal.

It did — and something more than repairing things began to happen.

Coffee, cakes and wood-fired pizza encourage people to stay, chat and get to know one another. What started with a desire to reduce waste has also become a place of welcome, conversation and connection.

See the Repair Café in action

Want to see what happens at the Terrigal Repair Café? Watch the video and meet some of the people behind this wonderful community initiative.

[Watch the Terrigal Uniting Church Repair Café video](#)

Growing Community

That same spirit has spread into the church grounds through the **Terrigal Uniting Permaculture Patch — TUPP**.

Established in 2023, the garden brings church members and the wider community together to grow food using sustainable practices — and this spring, there's plenty happening.



With the last of the winter crops cleared, gardeners have been busy preparing the beds for spring and summer planting, enriching the soil with compost made on site, manure and worm castings. Seedlings are already thriving, ready for a summer crop that will include tomatoes, climbing cucumbers, zucchini, corn, lettuce and herbs.

The garden itself continues to grow too. The team has renovated and built up its hügel mound and, true to its commitment to sustainability, has constructed **two additional garden beds and a new shade house using donated materials that might otherwise have gone to landfill.**

And there's a lovely connection between the garden and the Repair Café: **produce grown at TUPP is shared with the wider community through the monthly café.**

Making, Mending and Mateship

There's another workshop of activity at Terrigal too.

Terrigal Community Men's Shed operates from the church grounds and provides a place for men to work, learn, contribute and, just as importantly, enjoy one another's company.

Members put their woodworking and metalworking skills to use on everything from furniture repairs and engraving to their own projects and work for the wider community. Recent projects have included making items to be donated to church schools.

You don't need to arrive knowing how to use the tools either. Experienced members share their skills with those wanting to learn — and for anyone less interested in making something, there's always the option of simply dropping in for a cup of tea and a chat.



The relationship between the Shed and the church goes back many years. Members of the Men's Shed and congregation even worked together to create Terrigal Uniting's **Bush Chapel**, an outdoor worship space dedicated in 2009.

It's another example of something that seems to happen repeatedly at Terrigal: **practical activity creates an opportunity for connection.**

People Care. Earth Care. Fair Share.

Together, the Repair Café, Men's Shed and Permaculture Patch reflect three permaculture principles Terrigal has embraced:

People Care. Earth Care. Fair Share.

They're simple words, but they beautifully capture what's happening.

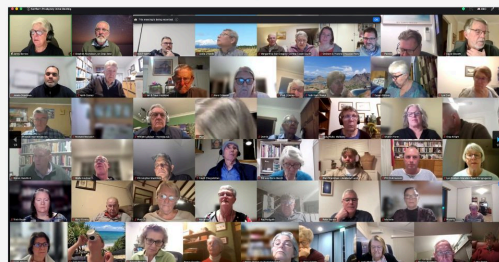
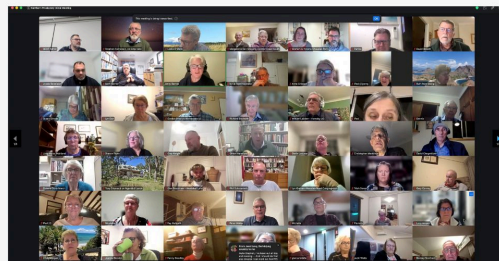
Repair something rather than throw it away. Reuse materials that might have gone to landfill. Make something for someone else. Pass on a skill. Grow food together. Share the harvest. Or simply sit down over coffee or pizza and make time for a conversation. None of these things is particularly complicated. Yet together they are creating opportunities for people to connect with one another, care for the environment and experience community.

At Terrigal Uniting Church, **repairing, making, reusing and growing are all helping to build something even more important — community.**

Northern Presbytery Update

[Northern Presbytery Website Link](#)

Northern Presbytery
Inaugurated in Historic
Zoom Gathering



The Northern Presbytery officially came into being on 9 September 2026, marking a significant milestone in the life of the Uniting Church in New South Wales and the ACT. More than 150 Presbytery members and guests from across the former Far North Coast, Mid North Coast, New England North West, Sydney Central Coast and The Hunter Presbyteries gathered online for the inaugural meeting, celebrating the conclusion of one chapter and the beginning a new chapter of shared ministry, mission and discipleship across the region.

Gathering as One

Dr Jennifer Barnes, Interim Standing Committee Chairperson, warmly welcomed members and guests, including Rev. Dr Peter Walker, General Secretary, and Rev. Punam Bent, Associate Secretary. She acknowledged the significance of the occasion and thanked everyone who had contributed their time, energy and commitment throughout the transition process.

The meeting commenced with an Acknowledgement of Country delivered by Nathan Tyson, Head of First Peoples Strategy and Engagement, recognising the many Aboriginal nations across the region and affirming the Church's commitment to walking alongside First Peoples in the spirit of the Covenant. Participants were invited to reflect on the sacredness of place, community, and God's ongoing presence among God's people. While reflecting on the enduring connection of First Peoples to Country, members were encouraged to continue walking together in the spirit of reconciliation, respect and partnership.

Worship and Formal Inauguration

During a special worship service, participants celebrated the formal inauguration of the Northern Presbytery. Greetings were shared on behalf of the Moderator and the Synod Standing Committee, recognising both the significance of the transition and the opportunities it creates for renewal in the life of the Church.

Opening worship, led by Rev. Graham Ghavalas Perry and Rev. Dr Peter Walker, centred on themes of pilgrimage, renewal, and God's call into the future. Through readings from Exodus and Romans, prayers, and reflection, members were reminded that they stood on "holy ground" as they stepped into a new season of ministry together.

A highlight of the evening was the formal inauguration of the Northern Presbytery. On behalf of the NSW/ACT Synod, General Secretary Rev. Dr Peter Walker declared the dissolution of the Far North Coast, Mid North Coast, New England North West, The Hunter and Sydney Central Coast Presbyteries and officially proclaimed the formation of the Northern Presbytery.

Reflecting on the significance of the moment, Peter encouraged members to see the changes not simply as structural reform but as an opportunity for renewal and mission. Members responded together with thanksgiving, affirming their commitment to journey together in ministry and mission.

Honouring the Past, Looking to the Future

Reports were received from each of the former Presbyteries. Rev. Phil Dokmanovic, Stephen Nicholson, Rev. Simon Hansford, Dr Jennifer Barnes and Rev. Keith Garner expressed gratitude for past ministries while looking forward with hope to the future. Speakers acknowledged the rich heritage and faithful service of their communities while also recognising that change brings both challenges and opportunities. Across all reports there was a common commitment to strengthening relationships, encouraging discipleship, supporting congregations and exploring new possibilities for mission together.

Transition Commission Leader - North, Rev. Graham Ghavalas Perry, providing an update from the Transition Commission, reflected on the significant work undertaken over the past ten months to prepare for the new Presbytery and thanked the many

people who contributed to the transition process. Noting that the technical change was largely complete, Graham encouraged members to remain open to God's leading as the Northern Presbytery continues to take shape and embrace the adaptive changes and opportunities as the Presbytery discerns where God is leading the church in the years ahead.

Business Manager, Matthew Jones, provided an update on the practical work of the transition, including finances, staffing and governance arrangements. Members heard that contributions from the former Presbyteries have established a Presbytery Resource Fund, providing a strong foundation for the future work and ministry of the Presbytery.



Election of Chairperson

Another significant highlight of the evening was the election of Sharon Flynn as Chairperson of the Northern Presbytery. In responding to her election, Sharon expressed her gratitude for the confidence shown in her and acknowledged the many people who have contributed to the formation of the new Presbytery. She spoke about the importance of establishing strong governance, encouraging clear communication, fostering inclusion, and ensuring that the work of the Presbytery remains focused on ministry, mission and making disciples.

Members offered their congratulations, joining in prayer as Rev. Keith Garner offered a prayer for Sharon as she commences this important leadership role.

Presbytery Standing Committee Elected

The meeting also affirmed the election of the inaugural Presbytery Standing Committee (PSC). Those elected to serve were Stephen Nicholson, Carolyn Sharp, Ian Lawrence, Serena Paea, Rev. Dr Rosalie MacLarty, Eldrene March, Glen Bradshaw, Rev. Glenys Biddle, Rev. Michele Shumack and Joanna Drayton.

Members expressed appreciation for those who have accepted the call to serve during this important formation period. The Standing Committee will provide leadership and governance between meetings of the Presbytery and help guide the next stages of the transition.

Rev Richard Harris Elected PRC Chairperson

Members also affirmed the appointment of Rev. Richard Harris as Chairperson of the Northern Presbytery's Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC).

The meeting recognised the valuable leadership Richard has already provided through the transition process and expressed confidence in his continued support of ministers,

congregations and mission across the Presbytery.

Continuing the Journey

The Presbytery also confirmed interim arrangements for business, property and finance matters, recognised Matthew Jones as Business Manager, and received updates regarding ministry placements and leadership recruitment.

An extraordinary meeting will be convened in coming months to consider recommendations relating to the appointment of a Presbytery Minister, additional Standing Committee appointments and the role of Treasurer.

Looking Ahead with Hope

The inaugural meeting concluded with heartfelt thanks to the many staff, volunteers, leaders and members whose dedication made the formation of the Northern Presbytery possible.

The inaugural gathering was marked by gratitude, hope and a strong sense of shared purpose. While much work remains ahead, members expressed confidence that, together, the Northern Presbytery can build on the rich heritage of the former Presbyteries and embrace God's call for mission, ministry and discipleship into the future.

Leslie D'Mello

Transition Commission Administration Support Officer | Secretariat | Synod Mission Services



WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE THIS MONTH: OCTOBER

- Quarterly Business Activity Statement (BAS) due 28 October
- All General insurance policies renew for 12 months
- Plan for final people related changes (new starters or variations) before cut-off in December

[Click here for the full email for this month](#)



FAITHFUL PAST
COURAGEOUS FUTURE
Heritage & Horizons

13 MAY 2027
PARKLANDS RESORT AND
CONFERENCE CENTRE, MUDGEE NSW



Nominations for the Synod Meeting 2027 now close on **Sunday 25th October 2026**

Complete the online Synod nomination form [Nomination Form - Contact Details](#)

For any further information, please contact Leslie D'Mello LeslieD@nswact.uca.org.au



*Big or small, every prayer matters — share what's on your heart and let our Presbytery pray with you.
Click here to request a prayer*

We give thanks for the many people whose faithful service often happens behind the scenes — preparing worship, caring for others, maintaining our church spaces, serving meals and offering a helping hand. May they know that their contribution is deeply valued.

We pray for children and young people across our communities, and for all who walk alongside them. May our churches be places where every generation feels welcomed, valued and encouraged to explore faith.

We pray for the towns, suburbs and neighbourhoods in which our churches are planted. Help us to listen carefully to the needs around us and to find meaningful ways to build relationships, offer hospitality and share Christ's love.

We remember those who are tired, discouraged or carrying burdens others may not see. May they experience moments of rest, unexpected kindness and the reassurance that they do not journey alone.

As we offer these prayers may God open our eyes this week to the people, places and possibilities where love is needed most.



Interested in what's happening at your local congregation?

Many of our congregations have **regular activities, groups and events** throughout the week. For the latest details, times, changes and **special events**, check your congregation's **Facebook page or website**.

It's a great way to stay connected and discover what's happening in your local church community.

1.30pm - 5pm Saturday 24 October
The Neighbourhood Space
in Manly Uniting Church
4 West Promenade, Manly
To register:
www.trybooking.com/DPXNQ



Listening to the Wisdom Within

Self-discovery through story and metaphor, imagination and reflection

Guided by spiritual director Carolyn Handley

English Reading & Conversation Group

Read. Think. Talk. Explore.

Good books.
Thoughtful
conversations.
New perspectives.



We're reading the Book of Acts together.

We'll read aloud, take time to think, and talk about what we've read.

You don't need to be a Christian or have any previous knowledge of the Bible.

Everyone is welcome.



Read

A whole book together.



Talk

About what we've read.



Meet

New people and build friendships.



Practise

English through reading and conversation.



Starting

Thursday 15 October

Every fortnight - 2:00pm - 3:30pm



Epping Uniting Church
(NSW)
Corner of Oxford St & Chester St



FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT

Chao Zhou | Family Ministry Worker

0413 788 783

✉ familiesconnect@eppingunitingchurch.org.au

HORNSBY UNITING CHURCH

Kids' Christmas Club

Join us for Christmas craft, art, singing, parachute games, cookie decorating, stories, songs, friendship and fun. All children will play a special part in our 4 - 4.30pm Christmas Eve service on Thursday 24th Dec!

MONDAY DECEMBER 21, TUESDAY 22, & WEDNESDAY 23 FROM 9.30 - 3.00PM

THURSDAY 24 NO MORNING SESSION
ARRIVE 3.30PM

SPACES LIMITED! BOOK EARLY!!

For ages 7-13 years

\$20 per child total

\$5 discount for each sibling

Morning & afternoon tea provided

Register **HERE** or contact Rev. Minh Towner

minister.hornsbyuc@gmail.com

(M) 0410 885 632



SYDNEY EISTEDDFOD / POLLARD INSTRUMENTAL AWARDS

FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE.

TUESDAY 13th OCTOBER 2026

at 7.30 p.m.

Venue: LONGUEVILLE UNITING CHURCH HALL

47A Kenneth Street, Longueville 2066

Ten of the most outstanding solo instrumentalists between the ages of 13 and 15 years will be

selected from the | 2026 Sydney Eisteddfod for these awards.

Their performances will be followed by an audience vote and the awarding of prizes.

Come along and be inspired by the musical talent of these young people!

Ticket Bookings open on 22 September 2026 via our website www.lanecovemusic.org.au

Enquiries welcome at 9428 4287.

Diary date for our final 2026 concert: Tuesday 24 November at 7.30pm.

with Le Basque Trio of Tenor, Piano and Horn.



The Northern Presbytery

Ethical Ministry Refresher Course Dates

Anyone from anywhere can do any of these courses, they are not area-restricted

In Person Workshop at Warners Bay Uniting Church
- **Thursday 22nd October** 9.30am - 12.30pm . Arrive
from 9.15am for tea or coffee before you start

Zoom Workshop - **Tuesday 10th November** at
9.30am . Zoom links will be sent closer to the day.
Please book with Jenny Mathieson :
jennyandray@bigpond.com
The pre reading material will then be sent to you

Wed 21 Oct 9:15am for 9:30am start
2026B | Terrigal Uniting Church with facilitators
Rev. Patty Lawrence & Lorna Martin

Wed 28 Oct 9:30am- 11:30am
2026B | Zoom with facilitator Trish Rooney
To register: please e-mail Michelle:
michelle.lombard@sccpresbytery.org.au

10-Oct-2026 9:00 AM -12:00 PM

~In person, only.~

Bellingen Uniting Church - Rev Tony Shumack

10-Oct-2026 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM

~In person, only.~

Manning Uniting Church - Ps Geoff Battle

Please contact the MNC PRC Secretary to register:
mncprc16@gmail.com

23-Oct-2026 -2:00 PM - 5:00 PM

~For Ministry Agents~

Tamworth City Uniting Church - Ps Geoff Battle

24-Oct-2026 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

~For Lay People~

Tamworth City Uniting Church -Ps Geoff Battle

Please contact the NENW Presbytery

Administrator to register:

nenwpresbytery@gmail.com

Other Publications



Uniting Climate
Action Network



Acknowledgement of Country

From before recorded time, the First Peoples of this Nation have cared for this Land.

We praise God, the Creator, for the beauty of this Land and honour those who have cared for it.

We acknowledge the Elders and community members who have told the sacred stories and nurtured faithfulness to the Creator.

We ask God's blessing on those who continue to work for the healing and restoration of this Land and its many communities.

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