

April 2024



On Palm Sunday approximately 60 people set out a journey around the five Uniting Churches in the Maitland Region. Starting at Rutherford at 9 am for Praise and Sending Off, then some got onto a coach and others went by car, to Bolwarra for a short play (Carrots the Donkey) and service, then to Morpeth for another play where we were confronted with Jesus grief as he entered Jerusalem. At East Maitland we shared the comfort of human touch and remembered the moments of kindness amidst the suffering of Jesus, finally to Maitland for remembering the Last Supper by sharing in Holy Communion and then for lunch in the Hall. About 1.30 people were on their way home. No accidents, no one got lost and no fights. A successful day.



Minister's message from Neil Smith

Minister's message,

Greetings in the name of the Risen Lord,

We have come through the long period of reflection on the journey of Jesus to Jerusalem and all that awaited him there. Thanks to Beattie for her daily devotionals, to the people who contributed to the Bible Study discussions looking at the four gospel accounts, to those who prepared worship and who participated in the Palm Sunday Pilgrimage and to those who led Good Friday and Easter Sunday worship services.

Now we are in that Post Easter period where we begin to consider: 'what does it mean to follow a risen Lord into the future?'

Congratulations to the people who took the risk of attending the Hunter Community Alliance Founding Assembly. I was sad to have to stay home due to a positive Covid test.

It is time to do some reality checks on where to from here. May we have the courage to face the future with faith in what may be possible rather than fear of what is no longer possible.

God's blessings,

Neil



Christine has joined our team as administration support.

Christine is married to Peter they have 4 adult children, 13 grandchildren, and 2 great children. Peter and Christine live in Raymond Terrace and attend a local church.

Christine has worked previously in Aged Care in various roles as Office Manager, Property & Services Manager and Aged Care Community Manager. Christine's interests are spending time with her family and friends, entertaining, volunteering, church activities, caravanning and travel.

Christine will be working Wednesdays & Thursdays from 8:30—5pm.



Christine's email address: maitland.uniting@outlook.com

Christine's mobile : 0493 828 071

East Maitland's News

East Maitland Fellowship have continued their catering for Community groups. Each month they prepare about 70 meals for Carrie's Place (for people experiencing family and domestic violence and homelessness)/ The meals are packaged into containers that can be frozen for emergency use. Fellowship members have also catered for East Maitland Rotary for their annual Anzac Night, when returned and currently service personnel from the Armed Services are invited to a dinner meeting, held in Wesley Hall. A current or former member of the Armed Services is the Guest Speaker. RSL members conduct a short Remembrance Service during the evening. Fellowship members are also preparing for a Pie Drive, featuring home-made gramma pies. Orders will be available soon. Following a Successful Grant Application for new seating in Wesley Church, the seats have now arrived and are being placed into the worship area.

Congregation members congratulate Patricia (Trish) Bevan on her successful completion of studies and practical assessments to gain accreditation as a Local Preacher.

Morpeth's News

The highlight of the Easter season was the Palm Sunday worship. Morpeth was pleased to be able to provide morning tea and our section of the ' Church crawl' and we were thankful to be sharers in the sections presented by our sister churches. This was a delightful, heart warming and lovely experience as we all came together to celebrate and worship. Our many thanks to Rev. Neil for his special guidance.

Our exercise group on a Wednesday continues to provide benefits health-wise, both physical and mental and is always a place for a good laugh.

Playmates for littlies and their Mums will be in recess now for three weeks for the School holidays.

FOCASS continues their outreach to the community and will welcome Charles Pope to their next meeting on Tuesday 16th. Charles will be sharing his experiences of India and a warm invitation is given to everyone to come along and have a lovely afternoon with us.

On the 3rd April Rev Neil Smith led a service of celebration for Steve Bentham who has been the Chair of the Leaders Group at Bolwarra, with a large crowd of family, friends and work colleagues. Steve had a significant career in the UK and Australia in the mining industry. He was great family man and much loved by his children, step children and many grandkids. A highlight of the service was the video tribute they put together. Steve has been a gentle force for hopeful change at Bolwarra with the church being renovated enabling expanded community engagement and generosity. Steve has been a wise leader who has led the congregation through change and renewal and we are very grateful for receiving his many gifts and strong legacy. We continue to hold Leanne and their wide family in our prayers



Being A Welcoming Church



Is your church ready to welcome newcomers? Here is a workshop opportunity to develop principles and strategies that give welcome and hospitality to visitors to your church who may, in the future, become members. Led by experienced pastor Rev Neil Smith, this workshop will give you clear strategies that can be developed in your congregation that give real impact as a welcoming community of faith. Participants will be asked to attend a church of another tradition as part of their preparation and research, and to have the experience of being a newcomer themselves. This workshop will provide an excellent resource for church leaders and elders and help you turn your Sunday worship into a form of community engagement.

**Live by Faith, be known by Love
and be a voice of Hope**

**Saturday 27th April 2024 9.30am - 1pm \$20/15
conc. East Maitland Uniting Church**

35 William St Bookings and Further details here: [Welcoming Seminar Tickets, Sat 27/04/2024 at 9:30 am | Eventbrite](#) The Hunter Presbytery Uniting Church in Australia