

Maitland Uniting Churches

August - December News 2024

Introducing the work of the Maitland Uniting Church Regional Mission Council (MCRMC) by Louise Trist

Maitland Uniting Churches had an extended period of consultation in 2022/23 between the Presbytery, and congregations to work on a mission plan to develop a viable future that engages younger people.

MCRMC was officially formed as a Church Council for the five Uniting Churches in Maitland on 14/06/23. Two representatives from each church leadership group were nominated by their congregations to become members, together with Hunter Presbytery representatives, Rev Graham Perry (Chair) and Rick Brownell (Property and Finance), Rev Neil Smith (Ministry) and Rev Rod Pattenden (Mission) were also invited as members of the MCRMC. Recently Ian Robinson was elected as Treasurer.

The role of the council is to provide leadership to all five churches in Pastoral, Mission, Property and Finance and to replace the five separate church councils. However, each church still has a local Leadership Group, whose responsibility it is to look after local matters. The Treasurers of each church joined together to form a Finance and Resources Committee. This group has been led by Rick Brownell, Hunter Presbytery. The Resources Committee have agreed to have all bank accounts overseen by a single accountant (Balance 1,2,3), and will combine these under a single ABN held by MCRMC. Local leadership groups will still oversee local church maintenance, fundraising and grants.

We have employed an administrative assistant, Mrs Christine Russell to help with the many regulatory functions that were duplicated across the five churches. She now has an office at Bolwarra Church.

Christine has been following up on maintenance and governance issues. She has helped us through the process of fire safety accreditation. She has started producing regular newsletters. She has been the contact point for baptisms, tradespeople, Community and Church contacts. She has also been updating our website: <https://maitland.uca.org.au/>

A budget has been prepared that shows we will be financially able to employ a full-time minister for at least the next three years. A mission plan is being prepared and the manse situated on Belmore Road, Lorn is going to be renovated to encourage ministerial candidates to consider relocation. The time it will take to call a minister is uncertain. We are grateful that Neil and Rod have continued their roles to guide and help us during this transitional period.

A workshop was held in June with representatives from all five churches in attendance to discuss the future. It was agreed that a combination of the five congregations into a single congregation will allow a more cohesive, vibrant and active congregation at a single worship centre. This prospect would also be a more attractive option for a ministerial applicant than five small and disparate congregations at five separate worship centres. Our aim is to move towards that goal over the next few years through consultation with each congregation.

The MCRMC would like each person and each congregation to pray for guidance and wisdom for us all as we consider the next steps. A gathering to **Listen, Pray, Hope** is being held on **Sunday afternoon 2 - 4pm 22nd September** at Morpeth Uniting Church Hall and we invite your participation. This will be an opportunity to listen, share responses, pray and seek a vision for the future.

News from Rutherford - from Col Avery In June of this year we commenced a reduced period of worship, meeting on the first, third and fifth Sundays of the month, due mainly to vital members unavailability to conduct Worship Services. At a Congregational meeting held on the 16th August 2024, and in response to a letter received, regarding forming one congregation we have decided to discontinue Worship Services at Rutherford Uniting Church in December 2024. Our last Service will be on the 15th of December 2024.

A Closure of Ministry Service is to be held at Rutherford on the 24th November 2024 at 10.00am. The Regional Mission Council are inviting all congregations to join with Rutherford for this special occasion, and to surround the congregation with their love and prayers.

Combined Fifth Sunday Service on the 29th September 10am at East Maitland will feature the Rev John Dacey who ministers on the central coast. Everyone is invited.

Combined Worship Celebration



Maitland Uniting Churches



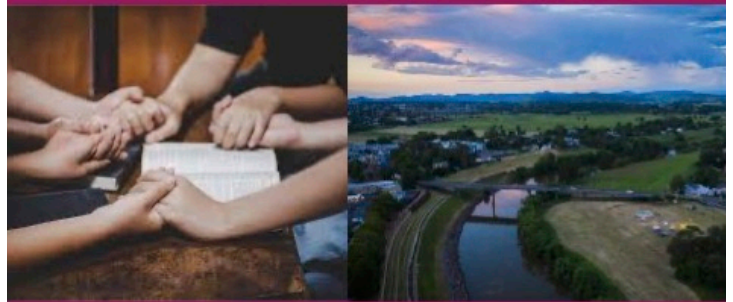
A combined service, celebrating of our faith across the Maitland region, with Rev John Dacey. John Dacey is a Deacon who has worked ecumenically in social justice, community development, nonviolence and social change. He was a UCA community development minister in Bidwill (Mt Druitt, NSW), a disadvantaged area of Western Sydney, and then, Chaplain at Macquarie University. John is currently Mission Growth Minister, Northern Central Coast, for the Sydney Central Coast Presbytery.

Sunday 29th September 10am

**East Maitland Uniting Church
35 William St East Maitland**

<https://maitland.uca.org.au/>

Listen Pray Hope



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An invitation to join together with people from our five churches to listen, pray and imagine our future together. We will listen to members of the Regional Council sharing their work over the last 12 months to bring together our churches, and consider what we imagine for the future. Our time together will include listening, conversation, prayer, and create a space for all voices to be heard. The Council invites your involvement.

We ask that you prepare for this gathering through own prayers over the next few weeks, and include prayers for this gathering in Sunday services.

**Sunday 2 - 4pm
22nd September 2024**

**Morpeth Uniting Church Hall
96 High St Morpeth
<https://maitland.uca.org.au/>**

Gwenda Brownell presents
INTERWOVEN: FAITH & ACTIVISM
ONE WOMAN'S EXPERIENCE

Sunday 22
September
5:30pm
Branxton Uniting
Church

Light meal in the
hall following

Interwoven: Faith and Activism. An invitation from the Branxton church community to join them on Sunday afternoon 22nd September at 5.30pm with speaker Gwenda Brownell, at Branxton Uniting Church.