

Maitland Uniting Churches December 2024 Newsletter

Maitland Uniting Churches Regional Mission Council

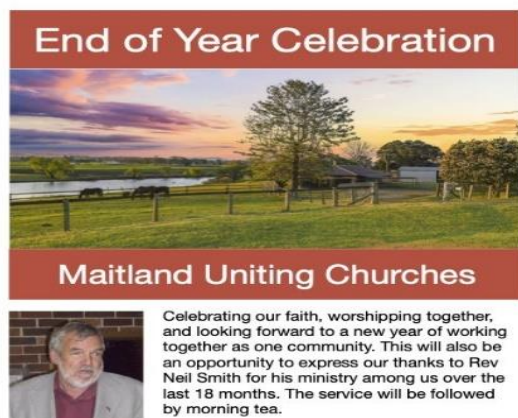
Regional Mission Council (RMC) members met together for a day at Louise Trists home in November, to explore the role of church councils, the dynamics of group decision making and to build relationships within the council. Rev Maz Smith guided us through discussion of governance and management, and we looked at the UCA document outlining Church Council Ministry role and regulations and the consensus model. Jan Craft lead a session about decision making and conflict models.

Work on the extensive refurbishment of the manse at 61 Belmore Road continues and should still be completed by Christmas. Work to ensure that all centres are compliant with recently updated fire safety regulations is underway at considerable expense. Thanks to our Administrative Support Officer, Christine Russell, for organising the assessment, quotation and construction processes.

Lease negotiations with Maitland Evangelical Church for non-exclusive use of the Maitland City Uniting Church property have taken place and details of the licence agreement have been agreed to by MEC and MCUC. Other property matters include that a building advisory committee has been formed with representatives from all centres. This committee will work with our admin assistant, Christine, to develop maintenance procedures for all the buildings and deal with any larger building issues. Access to EMUC has been identified as an issue, because some people with mobility issues are unable to safely enter or exit the church building. A builder has provided plans and a quote for an access ramp and drop-off parking bay. At MCUC, MEC has organised and paid for the installation of air conditioners in the hall. Current storage issues at MCUC are being addressed.

Despite diligent work by Rick Brownell THP treasurer, the Task Group on Resources (TGR) is still waiting for an ABN, which will enable final consolidation of the accounts of all the centres on 1 January 2025. The ABN has to be applied for by Synod on our behalf to the tax department. The preaching plan for the first four months of 2025 is now finalised. Thank you to all those who have agreed to lead worship at our churches.

A combined service of thanksgiving and celebration for the life and work of Rutherford Uniting Church was held on 24 November, marking the closure of worship services at Rutherford. The last service will be on 15 December. In his message, Rev Graham Perry spoke about the sadness that can accompany change but assured everyone of hope and to trust that God has a plan for us all. Beatie Esterbrooks presentation outlined the history of RUC, but more importantly she captured the spirit of RUC- its people, connections, outreach and dedicated service to the community for over 60 years. Beatie handed on the RUC baton- a beautiful banner- to Rev Graham Perry. Those present shared their memories and connections over morning tea. A combined service will be held on 29 December at Bolwarra UC at 10am with a focus on singing together/music. It will also be an opportunity to thank and farewell Rev Neil Smith. Work on developing a mission plan for Maitland Uniting Churches is being undertaken. A pastoral care group has been formed. The need to focus on seeing ourselves as one entity was identified as the key to establishing a sense of MUC which will lead to cohesion and growth. A proposed theme for our churches is Working Together as One." There will be 4 combined services next year. We look forward to welcoming back Reverend Garry Derkenne to Maitland. He will be starting on 1 February 2025 as Maitland Uniting Churches Supply Minister (working half time). Sally Carratt Hon Secretary MUC RMC



End of Year Celebration

Maitland Uniting Churches

Celebrating our faith, worshipping together, and looking forward to a new year of working together as one community. This will also be an opportunity to express our thanks to Rev Neil Smith for his ministry among us over the last 18 months. The service will be followed by morning tea.

Sunday 29th December 2024
10am Bolwarra Uniting Church
4 Canna St Bolwarra

Maitland Uniting Churches
<https://maitland.uca.org.au/>

Christmas Service Times

Bolwarra

22nd December -9am special morning tea after the service (TBC)

24th December – 7pm Christmas Eve Carol service Rev Neil Smith

25th December – 7am Christmas Day service Rev Neil Smith

East Maitland

24th December – 6pm Christmas Eve family service and 11pm Candles and Carols

Maitland 25th December – 9am combined service with Maitland Evangelical Church

Morpeth

25th December – 8:30am Christmas Day service Rev Neil Smith

O HOLY NIGHT
CHRIST IS BORN, GLORIFY HIM!

MERRY CHRISTMAS

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Rutherford service of closure



On Sunday 24th November, the members of Rutherford Uniting Church met together with past members, members of the other Centres of the Maitland Uniting Churches comprising people from Morpeth, East Maitland, Maitland City and Bolwarra for their service of closure. Reverend Graham Perry was the liturgist and local people participated in the service. Music consisted of hymns written by Stephen Mills, Andrew Williams and Beattie Esterbrook. People were reminded of the journey of the faithful people of faith before and during the witness of Rutherford Uniting Church.



Pictures helped the remembering. The sermon helped us to imagine a different kind of king and a different kind of kingdom, seen sometimes in our life together. People were invited to share times of importance for them. A banner was presented to the Presbytery Minister to be used in the worship places around Maitland and visitors stood to reach out to and bless the people of Rutherford Uniting Church. Colin Avery thanked some people and led the prayers of the people. The church was full, and the mood, though sad at times, was hopeful and future focussed. A hearty morning tea was shared and there were times of remembering and catching up

Bolwarra Spring Fair 2024

Bolwarra Uniting Church Spring Fair was held on Saturday 9 November and it was another successful day. The weather was perfect, and the free jumping castle proved very popular with the children. As usual we had a wide range of plants, cakes, crafts and second hand books for sale. Many people admired the Teddy Bears on display and prizes were handed out to the owners who entered the competition. Bolwarra has a great reputation for our delicious Devonshire Teas which were served in the church hall. We really appreciated Rev Dr Rod coming out to help us and for purchasing lots of goodies. A huge thank you to Rev Neil who put his face on the line and allowed us to throw wet sponges at him, all to raise a few extra \$! We also extend our thanks to the community and those from the other Maitland congregations who came along to support us.



Report from Maitland City Uniting Church

We recently celebrated a baptism – it was lovely to welcome a very large family group to the service. We have appreciated the ministry of Rev Neil Smith, who has been so supportive of members as he has ministered to us. We give thanks for Rev Neil and for our MCUC members who faithfully serve each Sunday: for Robyn who sets up and packs up the church and who welcomes us all, making sure that were all comfy and supplied with water; for Jan, who is such a great listener and who communicates and explains relevant issues to everyone, for David who shares his wonderful strong singing voice by leading us in the hymns; and for Stephen and Lyn who play our magnificent organ so well each week. We also give thanks for all those who lead or participate in our worship each week.

Sally Carratt MCUC Honorary Secretary

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