

Connexion Newsletter

Uniting Church Adult Fellowship

NSW/ACT Synod

April 2018



OBITUARY - RHODA GATES

Rhoda was an exceptional woman. Other people will write about her other abilities and achievements, but my brief is to write about Rhoda and her involvement in UCAF.

As the representative from the Hunter Presbytery, Rhoda served on the NSW/ ACT Synod Committee of Adult Fellowship from its inception in 1977/8. When Co-ordinator Heather Stevens retired, Rhoda took on the position with Les Woodhouse. When Les retired, the position became Chairperson and in this role Rhoda's leadership abilities led her to become the National Chairperson.



Always believing that 'Adult Fellowship is the coming together of men and women in Fellowship', Rhoda chose three men as part of her team. Those men were Rev Ron Sparks, Rev Barry Ridge and Rhoda's own husband, Neal. They were the first men to have positions on a National Committee. This National Committee was in NSW and served from 1991 to 1994. During this time, the Celebration was held in Ulverstone, Tasmania and the Consultation at Westmead in Sydney. They were great times and Rhoda had a good team. Rhoda was an outstanding organiser. She was the enthusiastic co-ordinator of the President's Table for a number of years.

As National Chairperson she visited other States and fellowships in NSW. She and Neal attended a number of seminars of the South Pacific Region of the Federation of the Methodist and Uniting Church Women. She also represented UCAF at Australian Church Women, NSW Council for some years.

At home in the Hunter, Rhoda was an outstanding leader. The Rallies in those years were so big it was a problem finding a venue large enough to hold all the people.

Under her leadership the Synod Committee held day seminars and live- in seminars.

Getting people together and going to other places in a bus was one of Rhoda's strengths. People from the Hunter enjoyed this as did Synod Committee Members when we visited country fellowships. One bus-load went from NSW to the Celebration in Ulverstone and then on a tour of Tasmania.

Rhoda and Neal were great hosts. Their home was always open to their friends, there was always a meal or a bed available. Rhoda loved people and being with them. So she made many friends and served her Lord at the same time.

UCAF has a lot to thank Rhoda and Neal Gates for. For they were a good team and served well. Those of us who knew and loved them are richer for the experience.

I hope this tribute to Rhoda Gates is enough to inspire its readers with a sense of here was a good disciple of Jesus. She has earned her reward. Rhoda died on 16th March 2018 aged 90 years.

Edith Ridge (Former Chairperson UCAF NSW/ACT Synod)

MOLONG UNITING CHURCH ADULT FELLOWSHIP

The members of the Molong Uniting Church Adult Fellowship held a most successful Luncheon in the Church Hall on 28th March 2018. Attendance included members of the local Churches of Molong, also from further afield such as Bathurst and Orange, in total approximately 50 persons.

We served a salad and sweet meal, which all enjoyed immensely, and this was followed by our Guest Speaker, Mr Kevin Beatty, who enlightened us with an insight into his life and time as an Officer of the Police Force, and also now his position as Mayor of Cabonne Shire.

The weather was perfect, and the fellowship enjoyed by all. Brian and Betty Cowan, members of the UCAF NSW/ACT Synod Committee were also present.

Mrs Helen Houghton



MACQUARIE DARLING PRESBYTERY ADULT FELLOWSHIP REPORT

On Wednesday the 14th March we attended a Presbytery Rally at Nyngan commencing with morning tea at 9.30am. Nyngan was once a proud railway town, two hours west of Dubbo. It is at the junction of the railway lines to Cobar and Bourke, with a branch line to Brewarrina. It is sad to see the shut-down of so much of the passenger rail network and so many of the branch lines that serviced the freight needs of smaller country towns.

The Guest Speaker was Rev Phil Matthews, Rural Chaplain for Riverina, Macquarie Darling and New England North West Presbyteries, who spoke of his work with rural communities. He told us of a visit by the Moderator, who asked him where his home church was. Looking at his 4-wheel drive he answered, "There is my church, I do everything from there, it is my office." Being a photographer, he photographed trees still burning during a bush fire, together with a long line of hail following a storm!

Whenever he stopped travelling for a period of rest, he would have a prayer time, and if he was close by a rubbish bin, he would then empty all his worries into the bin!

Rev Noreen Towers, the new Chairperson of the Uniting Church Adult Fellowship NSW/ACT Synod Committee brought greetings and shared regarding her project "Sharing Stories Sowing Seeds."

Following a lovely lunch, some went on a bus tour of the massive solar farm which is producing reliable energy for, among others, the Cobar mines. Others of us visited the Nyngan Museum, which lives in the restored and re-purposed Nyngan Railway Station. This was led by the founder of this Museum, who has so much knowledge, and a passion for Nyngan. The it was back to the Church Hall for afternoon tea, after which we all departed for our various destinations.

Approximately 30 attended the Rally, with the centres represented being Nyngan, Bathurst, Narromine, Blayney, Wellington, Gilgandra and Perthville, as well as the Rural Chaplain, the Presbytery Secretary, the Chairperson of the NSW/ACT State Committee, and the Presbytery Minister. The offering amounted to \$280.40, and was donated to Life Charity Focus, supporting a village in Uganda.

Many thanks to the Nyngan Congregation for organizing such an enjoyable day for us. *Brian Cowan Co-ordinator*

NSW/ACT SYNOD COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

Attendance has been to the following Rallies and Gatherings:



Macquarie-Darling Presbytery Autumn Gathering at Nyngan, 14th March.

Canberra Region Rally (41st) at Braidwood, 7th April, as Guest Speaker

The Hunter Presbytery Rally (82nd) at Tarro, 10th April

A meeting of the Executive of the Synod Committee was held to discuss and prepare submissions to be presented at the UCAF 13th National Consultation to be held in Hobart, 3-6 May

Sharing Stories – Sewing Seeds brochures were explained and distributed at Rallies and Gatherings.

A brochure setting out the Purpose and Aims of UCAF NSW/ACT Synod Committee, explaining its mission and purpose, has been prepared. It could accompany requests for Presbytery Affiliation levies and would also be available to Fellowship Groups.

Rev Noreen Towers

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Rev. Alistair Christie reported that sales by the Stamp Committee amounted to \$5,723.
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CANBERRA REGION RALLY

The 41st Rally, held at Braidwood on 7th April was attended by over 40 people, with Rev. Noreen Towers as Guest Speaker. The offering of \$340 was donated towards the production of an edition of Powerful Moments of UCAF stories.



Rev. Christie reported that Braidwood hosted the first UCAF Rally in 1977, although the Rally was held in the Anglican Church, with lunch at the Catholic Church as the Uniting Church was unable to accommodate the numbers in attendance. Mrs Lillian Wells, the first Moderator of NSW/ACT was the Guest Speaker at that Rally.

THE HUNTER PRESBYTERY RALLY



Approximately 60 people attended the 82nd Rally of The Hunter Presbytery at Tarro on 10th April, Rev Christine Sheppard OAM was the Morning Speaker. Christine's ministry was predominantly in mental health, but in her retirement, she had extended her interest in inter-faith relations and ecumenism and she shared these experiences.

The afternoon Speaker, Mr Paul Procter, Operations Manager, Newcastle Wesley Mission spoke of the outreach of the mission to homeless people in the City area.

