

The story of Alan Stafford and the Uniting Church Emergency Fencing Team came to my attention via a copy of an article in the Benalla Ensign last month. It included news that Alan, a long-time member of Benalla Uniting Church, had just received an Order of Australia Medal in the recent Australia Day Honours list “for service to the community of Benalla, and to bushfire recovery projects”.

I had so many questions for Alan. I sensed in the story so many of the hopes of the Vision and Mission Principles of the Synod, so I headed up the Hume Highway to Benalla to meet him on his farm about 10 kilometres out of town. I asked him how, following the 2009 Black Saturday bushfires, the fencing idea started.

“After church, a few of us were having a chat in the carpark,” Alan said. “In this simple way, some ex-farmers began a passionate idea to help. They knew a few things, and one of those things was how to build fences.” Slowly but surely, the idea became reality. Over the ensuing years Alan led an increasingly well-equipped team of volunteers throughout central Victoria from Wandong to Buxton, from Boho to Corryong.

Alan would be the first to say the fencing team started with just normal folk responding to a need. In this humble beginning was a true sense of being driven by compassion. These farmers knew what it meant to suffer loss from bushfires. Together, they simply responded to the need in their context. The plan was simply farmers reaching out to farmers. From the beginning, Alan constantly formed partnerships with others – both within the church and the wider community.

The initial small group solicited help from the presbytery that, as it turned out, had a Share grant to help in bushfire recovery. Further relationships formed with Uniting Church Chaplaincy responses through Rev David Howie and others. Word got around to other neighbouring congregations. Relationships were formed beyond the church with groups such as Blaze Aid operating out of the Kilmore region, where lessons were learnt in organisation and resourcing. Links developed with disaster response agencies, Landcare groups and community groups like Rotary.

As things progressed and the work developed, somewhat unexpected surprises and challenges emerged that were profound. Read the rest of the story on the Uniting Church web site by clicking on the link below
<http://crosslight.org.au/2017/02/19/a-helping-hand/>

Items for this news letter to peter.heath@me.com or phone 5263 2297
 Bible Readings Genesis 28:10-19a - Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24 - 112
 Romans 8:12-25 - Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43



Aireys Inlet

Anglesea

Bellbrae

Torquay

Notices from Linked Council

Linked Council is happy to report that a letter was received this week from Presbytery (Pastoral Relations Committee) to confirm supply ministers, Rev Margaret Russell and Rev David Walker, will be sharing supply for our Linked Congregations from Oct 1 to Dec 31, 2017. We look forward to welcoming them as our Surf Coast Linked Congregation’s supply ministers. They will each be working across the four congregations. A preaching plan for this time period will be available in early September.

Mission Study Sessions

Linked Council would like to thank all our congregational members who attended one or both of the recent Mission Study sessions. It was great to see such an excellent attendance and to see everyone participate in this important part of the process towards calling a new minister. Adam McIntosh, from the Presbytery, is now preparing a report with a summary of the congregational input at the Mission Study sessions and from this information, his recommendations for the best way forward in our present search for a suitable minister. Linked Council will be meeting with Adam in the next few weeks to receive his report and to progress the placement process. We will be keeping everyone up to date with the outcomes of forthcoming meetings. **Noni Johnson Secretary of Linked Council**

Today
 Anglesea 9.00
 Aireys Inlet 10.30
Brian Shaw
 Torquay 9.30
 Bellbrae 11.00
Rev David Walker

Bellbrae Bric-A-Brac and Book Stall
 Sorting each Tuesday 1pm – 4.30pm
helpers are very welcome.
 Opening times Thur. & Friday 10am - 4pm
 Saturday 10am–1pm

Next Week
 Anglesea - Sat
 6pm at St
Christopher’s
Catholic Church
 Aireys Inlet 10.30
 Torquay 9.30
 Bellbrae 11.00
Worship Teams



SHARE WINTER APPEAL

Winter is certainly here now. Winter is also a time of real need for many families and individuals who are forced to seek assistance for food, warm clothing and meeting power bills. The Share Winter Appeal enables the Uniting Church through its agencies to help meet this need.

Envelopes for the Winter Appeal are available at each of our churches. Please take one, read more about the needs of people and consider making a contribution. Envelopes can be placed in the offering plate or mailed directly to SHARE.

The Torquay Uniting Church has a piano that is no longer needed.

The piano is in good working order, but needs a little work on some keys and is available free of charge. The piano needs to be removed in the next month. Contact Rosemary Thompson on 0408 319 385 to inspect.

The Anglesea Ecumenical Service will be at St Christopher's Catholic Church on Saturday 29th. July at 6pm.
(No Sunday Service on the 30th.)

Anglesea Afternoon Fellowship Meeting is this Wednesday July 26th at 1.30 pm . Goods for Concern this Month are Cans of Soup or Baked beans.

Some Torquay News

Our Beaut Beanies group recently donated \$600 to Save the Children from the proceeds of a market stall. Save the Children's CEO, Paul Ronalds, has sent the following acknowledgement.

“Dear Beaut Beanies, It's so heartening to know we have your support — I know what it means to the children and families who need it most.

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Thank you for your donation of \$600. Without your generosity, life for children experiencing unimaginable adversity might be far more difficult than it already is.

We are living in a time where agencies like ours are stretched more than ever before. Humanity is facing a number of significant challenges simultaneously and, as always, it's the children who suffer most. Because of your support, we can continue to provide ongoing protection, healthcare and education so that children experiencing hardship can begin living like children again.”

Beaut Beanies, you're playing a crucial part in giving children renewed hope. Once again, please accept my heartfelt thanks.”



WINTER has arrived and our clients are feeling the cold.

Food stocks are low and funding cuts are going to make it hard for us to top them up.

Can you help **Uniting Barwon** (formerly UnitingCare Geelong) with items such as soup, pasta sauces, long life milk, noodles, cooking oil, tinned vegetables & Harvest meats?

Warm blankets and doonas are also in short supply.



ALL DONATIONS ARE MOST WELCOME

Call in to 272 Torquay Rd Grovedale OR 10 Wendover Ave Norlane.

The four Uniting church congregations along the Surfcoast are set in a most beautiful place, where the bush meets the sea.

Whether you choose to worship at Torquay, Bellbrae, Anglesea or Aireys Inlet you will find a really warm welcome.

In our worship we seek to invite people into the love and mystery of God, who has given his Son so that we can enter freely into relationship with our God. We celebrate the love God has for us, and for all creation, and think about what it means to be disciples of Jesus.