

Uniting Church in Australia – Queensland Synod

GREEN CHURCH NEWS



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Issue No 2

September 2010.

*May the Spirit surprise you
like a dove from above,
or a swallow from below,
but now and then like a blue wren!*

(Norman Habel)

WELCOME to our second issue of Green Church News!

Here is some information and updates on resources and activities that can help us to become a Green Church.

1. A Season of Creation September
2. Multi-faith/ Community Activities
 - a. Earth Charter + 10 Festival 16-18 September Brisbane
 - b. Multi-faith Dialogue on the Earth Charter
 - c. Walk against Warming
3. Green Church Website www.greenchurch.ucaqld.com.au
4. Green Church Stories: Blue Care
 - Sustainability
 - Fluorescent lighting trial
 - Petrol-electric hybrid cars trial
5. DVD Mission Stories
6. Book Review: Bill McKibben – *Eaarth*
7. Green Church Presentations

1. A Season of Creation

September is the special time to focus worship and reflection on God's creation. The Season of Creation runs from 1 September, which has long been marked as Creation Day in the Orthodox Church, to St Francis' Day, 4 October.

Norman Habel (Professorial Fellow in Biblical Studies, Flinders University, South Australia) brings his extensive biblical knowledge to the Season of

Creation project which has become well accepted into the ecumenical liturgical calendar, in Australia and around the world.

A Season of Creation CHARTER

In a Season of Creation we will:

1. **Celebrate** Earth as a sacred planet filled with God's vibrant presence.
2. **Unite** with all creation in praising the God of creation.
3. **Confess** our sins against creation and empathise with a groaning creation.
4. **Embrace** our kin in creation as our extended family.
5. **Proclaim** the good news that the risen Jesus is the cosmic Christ who fills and renews all creation.
6. **Go forth** on a mission to be partners with Christ in the healing of creation.

Resources for specific Sundays, as well as general resources to help address ecological issues from a biblical base throughout the year, are available at <http://www.seasonofcreation.com>.

In particular there is a large pdf file of songs "to stir our faith in God as the cosmic power creating our planet, the cosmic impulse groaning with our planet and the cosmic presence healing our planet", with new words to old tunes at <http://seasonofcreation.com/resources/creation-songs/>.

2. Multifaith Community Activity

a. Australia Pacific "Earth Charter +10" Festival Brisbane - September 16-18, 2010

This Festival is a celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Earth Charter, and will focus on living and building sustainable communities in the face of global challenges. Leaders from different faiths, including Fr Denis Edwards and Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, will share in a Day of Inspiration at St John's Cathedral, 373 Ann Street, Brisbane on Thursday 16 September.

Information and registration: <http://www.earthcharter.org.au/>

b. Multifaith Dialogue on the Earth Charter

There has been a series of meetings at Griffith University Multifaith Centre in a Dialogue on the Earth Charter, and there is clearly a lot of common ground – the Earth.

<http://www.earthcharterinaction.org/content/pages/Read-the-Charter.html>

c. Walk against Warming Brisbane - 15 August

The Walk against Warming round the city centre the Sunday before the election was organised by Queensland Conservation, calling all parties to Unite for a Healthy Climate. Different Faith groups were represented. It was well supported, and it was fun walking and talking with people from many different backgrounds, including some Pacific Islanders singing in harmony. As well as walkers, there were bikes, scooters, prams and even Green Cabs offering lifts at the back of the bunch! A great experience for children – and grandchildren.

3. Green Church Website

www.greenchurch.ucaqld.com.au

The Green Church Website is now up and running and there will still be some modifications and further additions. Please let us know of anything you would like included, and send in your stories, events and activities, book reviews, reflections.

This website is to facilitate sharing ideas and resources throughout the Queensland Synod. So it depends on your contributions!
Check it out!

4. Green Church Stories Blue Care

Congratulations are due as Blue Care are going green!
They were recognised as Finalists in the Minister's Award for Climate Smart Leadership (May 2010).

[http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/premiersawards/finalists/winners.html#ministers award for climatesmart leadership](http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/premiersawards/finalists/winners.html#ministers_award_for_climatesmart_leadership)



Blue Care's Sustainability Principles

Responsibility: we will take responsibility for the environment and our resources while we provide quality services to the community.

Integration: we will integrate sustainability into our actions, values and culture.

Innovation: we will adapt to challenges by seeking innovative ways to preserve the environment and sustain our organisation.

Collaboration: we will work together, and in partnership with others, to influence change through education, research and commitment to sustainable practices.

Blue Care Fluorescent lighting trial

The type of lights we install not only affects the electricity bill, but also impacts our work performance, mood and even the quality of our sleep.

Blue Care's Business Improvement Officer (Best Practice) Dr Helen Higgins together with Contracts Manager Michael O'Sullivan have undertaken a three month lighting trial at Blue Care's head office to compare the effectiveness and efficiency of two alternative lighting systems.

"The (new) T5 lights used 50% less energy than the (existing) T8 lights. Just in the small area of Head Office that was trialled, we found an estimated potential saving of \$900 on electricity costs and a reduction of nine tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions annually," Dr Helen Higgins said.

"We also surveyed the 21 people working in the trial area, when the lights were installed and then again on completion of the trial.

"They indicated they had experienced a decrease in headaches and fatigue at work, as well as a perceived increase in work performance."

Blue Care Petrol-electric hybrid cars trial

Eight new hybrid Prius cars are being piloted as part of Blue Care's continuing commitment to sustainability.



The cars are in use at Blue Care's Brisbane Northside and Southside, Redcliffe, Sandgate and Nambour services.

Already fuel consumption figures are showing amazing results; around 5 litres

per 100 kilometres, which in comparison to a Corolla in similar working conditions, is about a saving of 4 litres per 100 kilometres, or at present around a \$4.40 saving for every 100 kilometres.

Staff using the Prius have also said they only have to fill up with petrol once a month.

Blue Care has purchased two hybrid Camrys for use in Mackay and Pittsworth, and another 20 hybrids are on order for Mareeba, Beenleigh, Toowoomba, Bundaberg, Allora, Caboolture, Kingaroy, Stanthorpe and Warwick. Over the next 12 months Blue Care is endeavouring to purchase hybrids for all regional community services as replacements of existing larger cars.

For further information see Stories at the Green Church website www.greenchurch.ucaqld.com.au, or contact Director of Mission, Colleen Geyer at c.geyer@bluecare.org.au.

5. DVD Mission Stories

The new Mission Stories DVD from the Queensland Synod shows different ways in which churches are in touch with their communities. The final session includes Clive Ayre at Caloundra looking at the 5 Marks of Mission (from the Anglican Church)

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers
3. To respond to human need by loving service
4. To seek to transform unjust structures of society
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth

How “green” is your church mission?

(continued on next page)

6. Book Review

Bill McKibben, 2010. *Eaarth: Making a Life on a Tough New Planet.* Black Inc, Melbourne.

Reviewed by Rev Dr Clive Ayre

At first glance you may think that the title is a misprint, but the spelling is intentional. McKibben, who some years ago wrote “the End of Nature”, saw the global problem very early on, and is now, according to Tim Flannery, “the most effective environmental activist of our age”. But back to the title; why the strange spelling? Very simply, McKibben argues that because the early warnings have largely gone unheeded, we now have to admit that we have waited too long, and that “massive change is not only unavoidable but is already underway.” We have changed the planet so much that it is no longer the familiar place we have known; it is a less hospitable place – “a new planet, still recognizable but fundamentally different”.

This book is disturbingly easy to read. He outlines the deep hole we have dug for ourselves, and acknowledges the cost and other difficulties involved in taking action. My advice would be, don’t read the first half of this book before going to bed! The second half of the book begins to deal with some of the steps we need to take if humanity is to have any future. “Our survival depends, McKibben argues, on scaling back, concentrating on essentials and creating the kinds of communities that will allow us to weather trouble on an unprecedented scale. Change – fundamental change – will be our best hope on a planet suddenly and violently out of balance.”

This book deserves to be read and its message taken to heart; as Barbara Kingsolver said in urging us to read it through to the end, “Whatever else you were planning to do next, nothing could be more important.”

7. Green Church Presentations & Preparations

There are approximately 30 “Green Church seedlings” (that we know about!) emerging and growing in different communities in Queensland...in Uniting Church agencies and congregations, and these are all thanks to particular individuals on the ground who have been encouraging others to become a Green Church. There are issues of why and how do we become GREEN, why

and how this is related to being CHURCH, and how we deal with change, transformation, and BECOMING a Green Church.

Clive and Judith have been looking at various ways of effectively supporting Green Church development: through addressing Presbyteries, Congregations and Church Councils; through the development of the Green Church website with links to many other resources; and also through this newsletter.

In particular, Clive has recently addressed a meeting of Central Queensland Presbytery, "Creation and Ecotheology" at the Mary Burnett Presbytery Lay Preachers course, and will also address a Cross Cultural Ministry session at the UCA Centre in Brisbane, a Regional Seminar at Palmwoods, and Elective sessions at NCYC.

Please do contact us to arrange a presentation. Send us your suggestions and questions. Tell us your greening stories. Pass this newsletter on to others who might be interested, (and ask them to email us to be added to our Green Church mailing list), then we can...

journey
together on the way
to become a Green Church
enriching community

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