

MODERATOR'S EASTER MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITING CHURCH IN THE NSW/ACT
SYNOD

Friends in Christ,

My regards and blessings to you all at this precious and inspiring time of Easter.

One of the best things about the Moderator's role is the opportunity to travel around New South Wales and the ACT meeting the people who worship and witness in our various congregations and presbyteries.

Over the last month I have had the opportunity on three Sundays to be in congregations in the Sydney basin and then travel to Broken Hill, Menindee, Cobar and Nyngan. I will be in the Riverina with the congregation at Lake Cargelligo on Good Friday and Hillston on Easter Sunday.

This is a time of great struggle and blessing in our churches. Every congregation I visit is working in some way to reach out in mission to their local community, in spite of diminishing resources in some cases. Our rural communities have been particularly hard-hit and need our prayers and other assistance. In some places, like the irrigation communities of the Murray Darling Basin, the future is particularly uncertain, while droughts, floods and fires continue to sorely test resilience.

It is indeed a great comfort and a blessing at this Easter time to reflect on the redemptive suffering of Christ, which enables us to face our struggles with courage and hope. His resurrection also lifts us up and puts us back on our feet that we may continue our journey as people on the Way.

In speaking this Easter to the wider community on behalf of the Synod, I have seen fit to ask that, as caring and compassionate Australians in a country that prides itself in standing by the battler, we might consider how people of goodwill might stand up for the common good.

Some ways we already do this are bi-partisan support for initiatives such as the National Disability Insurance Scheme, an apology for forced adoptions, and commitment to the "Close the Gap" campaign for Indigenous health equality.

In light of Jesus' courageous standing up for the marginalised in his community at his own considerable cost, I am asking our wider community to consider how Easter courage is once again required of us. In particular, this relates to the large and growing gap between rich and poor, the inhuman consequences of the mandatory detention of refugees, our greedy, unsustainable and seemingly unstoppable consumption, and the unchecked burning of fossil fuels — in spite of compelling evidence that to continue in this way is to hasten our demise.

The alternative that we, the Christian community, offer at Easter is the call to worship another God — the God of compassion — who offers us, in Jesus Christ, a way to redeem all creation and seek the common good in the flourishing of all.

May the Spirit of Christ enable us to live up to what we expect of others and demonstrate the inclusive love of Jesus Christ in our life and witness.

The Rev. Dr Brian Brown
Moderator
Synod of New South Wales and the ACT
Uniting Church in Australia