



MEDIA RELEASE

Synod of New South Wales and the ACT Uniting Church in Australia

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Uniting Church leader brings Grace to inner Sydney

The head of the Uniting Church in New South Wales and the ACT, the Rev. Niall Reid, next week will encourage members of the Ultimo faith community and church leaders from the Sydney region to reach out from their comfort zones and build bridges as Jesus did.

Mr Reid, Moderator of the Uniting Church, will conduct a Grace Workshop at Mustard Seed Uniting Church, Ultimo, on Saturday March 20.

Mr Reid has made Grace his theme while Moderator, believing that Grace is central to God's character and that it has the power to transform communities.

“Again and again I am challenged to reflect on this unconditional love of God for us and what that means for us as we live out our Christian lives. Is what we do a reflection of the unconditional love of God? Or do we have another agenda? What is our mission? To fill our churches? To convert people to Christianity?”

“No! Our mission is about giving expression to the unconditional love of God, to live in the way of Jesus and, in so doing, to allow God to raise up new life.”

The name Mustard Seed is derived from an image used by Jesus as a symbol for amazing growth. Ultimo's Mustard Seed is a small group with big hopes for the future; people seeking to help others experience the power of God's love in their lives. Even though the faith community is small it plays a significant role in the local community, organising Anzac Day services and the increasingly popular Christmas Carols in Union Square.

Since Robin Davies began the Mustard Seed Community in 1996 with three members it has been a coffee style, drop-in Sunday service starting with around ten members, gradually growing until last August when it was recognised as a congregation: Mustard Seed Uniting Church Ultimo. In 2002 Ms Davies was commissioned as the community minister of the faith community and became an ordained minister in 2009.

Cynthia Coghill, Executive Secretary of the Uniting Church's Presbytery of Sydney, said Ms Davies had been the driving force in revitalising a run-down church with a casual ministry that engaged people from many different walks of life. “I would suggest she epitomises Grace and that's why the workshop is being held at Ultimo.”

The Grace Workshop with the Rev. Niall Reid will begin at 9.30 am and finish at 1 pm, Mustard Seed Uniting Church, corner of Quarry Street and Bulwara Road, Ultimo. Mr Reid will also lead this year's ANZAC Day service, 8.30 am, April 25, next to the Pyrmont War Memorial in Union Square.

Photographs of Mr Reid can be found at <http://nsw.uca.org.au/church/moderator.htm>. For more information, contact Stephen Webb, 0423 259 945.