

Accountable for what?



"Jesus suggested that at some stage we will all be accountable before God for the way we have responded to human need," (Bishop Cam Venables)

There's a famous song by Slim Dusty called 'Looking Forward Looking Back' and I'd like to do this as we look forward to Christmas and the promise of a New Year and look back at a particularly significant reading. For the last Sunday of November, just before Advent began, gifted us with a compelling Gospel ([Matthew 25.31-46](#)).

In this, Jesus suggested that at some stage we will all be accountable before God for the way we have responded to human need.

Jesus did not say that we will be judged according to what Church we belonged to, what Baptism we received, or what Creed we articulated, and this seems surprising because we spend much energy arguing about what we think God wants. Indeed, Christians have killed other Christians over different understandings of what is perceived to be *orthodox* — which means right thinking.

Jesus did not affirm that we will be judged according to whom we're attracted to or how we loved another person. And, we will not be judged on being single, or celibate, or sexually active. Instead, Jesus affirmed that the criteria for judgement will be based on how we responded to people who had need: those who were hungry, or thirsty; those who were strangers; those who needed clothing; and, those who were sick, or in prison.

I'm not suggesting that we should each be doing all these things — but, I reckon we should each be regularly engaged with at least one!

Jesus suggested that at some stage in the future people would be separated into two groups like a shepherd separating sheep from goats, with the clear inference that we should be like the former, and less like the latter!



"Jesus suggested that at some stage in the future people would be separated into two groups like a shepherd separating sheep from goats, with the clear inference that we should be like the former," says Bishop Cam Venables (Image taken by Bishop Cam Venables in Wales in 2022)

It's hard to read about sheep and goats without considering how they are farmed in south-west Queensland! In times of drought, goats are often the hardiest of these two and have saved many primary producers from financial ruin. So, what's wrong with goats?

As I understand it flocks of sheep and goats were very small in Palestine at the time of Jesus, averaging 20 to 60 in number. A shepherd could call and lead sheep to follow him simply by calling their names — or at least the names of the lead sheep! There were no dogs, , or horses, or motorbikes...a shepherd simply called a few names and his sheep followed!

Apparently, this was not true for goats because goats are more wilful! People who looked after goats would drive them from the back just to keep an eye on them and stop them from wandering.

My hunch is that we are not simple binaries of unselfish or selfish; compassionate or indifferent; sheep or goat...rather, we are a complex mix of these things.

Perhaps part of the challenge in life and faith is to be more like sheep and less like goats; more willing to listen and follow the voice of the Great Shepherd, than simply doing whatever takes our fancy.

For when we hear and respond to that Shepherd's voice I think we have a good sense that we are not alone in our pilgrimage of life and faith, and we'll be more likely to look out for those around us.

What do you think?

Local • Sunday 17 December 2023 • By Michelle McDonald

Archbishop Jeremy Greaves Installed at St John's Cathedral in a service blending ancient traditions and modern sensibilities



Cannon Hill Anglican College student Ethan Malouf, 12, was one of two students who "interrogated" Archbishop-elect Jeremy Greaves upon his entry into St John's Cathedral on 16 December 2023

The tenth Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane was Installed at St John's Cathedral yesterday before a 1,000-strong congregation in a service blending ancient traditions and modern sensibilities, signalling the style of the Diocese's new leader, The Most Rev'd Jeremy Greaves.

The bishop's staff, or crozier, that Archbishop-elect Jeremy used in customary fashion to knock on the closed front doors before entering the Cathedral is a family heirloom, having been used by his British-born grandfather, Bishop Walter Baddeley.

Bishop Baddeley, who served as the Bishop of Melanesia when the Japanese forces occupied the archipelago in 1942, ran an underground jungle hospital that treated Melanesian locals and US troops

during World War II, including during the brutal Battle of Guadalcanal. He later served as the Bishop of Blackburn in the UK and was awarded the US' highest civilian honour, the Medal of Freedom, for his World War II efforts.

The black polished wood and silver crozier has been returned to Bishop Baddeley's Brisbane-based family for Archbishop Jeremy's use by the current Bishop of Blackburn, The Right Rev'd Philip North.



The crozier that Archbishop-elect Jeremy Greaves used in customary fashion to knock on the closed front doors before entering the Cathedral is a family heirloom, having been used by his British-born grandfather, World War II hero Bishop Walter Baddeley (16 December 2023)

The new Archbishop said that the highlight of the day was walking through the eucalyptus smoking ceremony, led by Uncle Gavin Tyson, as he climbed the Cathedral's front stairs holding his grandfather's crozier.

"It was incredibly significant and moving when the Traditional Owners welcomed me as I walked up the front stairs because it connected me to various places I have worked and reminded me of the graciousness of First Nations peoples," Archbishop Jeremy said after the service.



The new Archbishop said that the highlight of the day was walking through the eucalyptus smoking ceremony, led by Uncle Gavin Tyson, as he climbed the Cathedral's front stairs (16 December 2023)

Breaking with tradition, the Archbishop-elect and Anglican Schools Commission chair requested that Anglican school students, instead of the Cathedral Dean, undertake the usual Installation ceremony "interrogation" after he knocked on the Cathedral's front doors with the crozier.

Cannon Hill Anglican College student Ethan Malouf, 12, was one of two students who welcomed the Archbishop-elect.

"It was a privilege to be invited to greet him and say something in the service — he was friendly and we smiled at each other, and I am never going to forget it," Ethan said.

The students' questions ended with: "How do you come among us and with what confidence?"

The Archbishop-elect replied, "I come, despite my fears, trusting in the love of God, knowing that the Christ walks beside me and the Spirit surrounds me with grace to give me courage."

The Archbishop-elect was then greeted by Yagara elder Gaja Kerry Charlton, who had given the welcome to Country at the start of the service before Torres Strait Islander elder Aunty Dr Rose Elu addressed the congregation.

Aunty Dr Rose, who is from the Saibai chieftain clan, said that she was proud to accompany the Archbishop-elect from the entrance to the sanctuary area around the altar, along with Gaja Kerry and senior Anglicans.

"As a chief's daughter, I greeted all those gathered on behalf of Torres Strait Islander peoples in both *Kalaw Kawaw Ya* and English, and then felt spiritually uplifted and honoured to walk with our new shepherd down the Cathedral's aisle," Aunty Dr Rose said.

"The new Archbishop has always loved and cared for my people — he is a friend and we trust him.

"He is coming with me to Saibai, and other Torres Strait Islands, next year so he can speak with my people about the devastating impacts of the damaged climate on our cultures, ceremonies, livelihoods and houses.

"The highlight of the service for me was the new Archbishop's inspirational sermon about hope because it showed his authenticity and why he does what he does."

In his first sermon as Archbishop, The Most Rev'd Jeremy spoke about what it means to work for God and about finding hope "in the darkness".

"I know what darkness looks and feels like; the darkness of making sense of my experience of child sexual abuse, of wrestling with mental health issues, of being publicly vilified, of second-guessing decisions, of worrying about the world my children are inheriting — a world in the midst of a climate emergency that is riven by war and violence," he said.

"I know what darkness looks and feels like — wondering where God might be, praying fervently that prayer of Desmond Tutu, 'God, I know you are in control. I just wish you'd make it a bit more obvious.'

"What might it look like to be part of a Church, a Diocese, that knows what it means to work for the God who invites hope?

"Christian hope invites those under its influence to see possibility in everything — nothing, not even the deepest darkness, is outside the possibility of transformation.

"What does it look like for us to work for that God?

"It seems to me that we have a choice in this season in the life of the Church — we can continue to bow down in fear before the many idols we've created or we can help one another learn to walk in the dark."

Archbishop Jeremy has a strong background in social justice having worked closely with refugees and First Nations community members for decades, particularly during his time serving as a priest in the Northern Territory.

The Governor of Queensland, Her Excellency the Honourable Dr Jeannette Young AC PSM, gathered with other lay dignitaries to celebrate the Installation, along with faith leaders, including the Primate of the Anglican Church of Australia, The Most Rev'd Geoffrey Smith, and the Archbishop of Melanesia, The Most Rev'd Leonard Dawea.

Acknowledging the connection that his Province has with the Baddeley family, Archbishop Leonard “congratulated” Archbishop Jeremy “on behalf of the Anglican Church of Melanesia”.

“Archbishop Jeremy has all the qualities that make a good Archbishop because he is very humble, thoughtful and relational, and I look forward to working with him and strengthening our relationship and that of our Churches,” Archbishop Leonard said.

“We have a wonderful historical link with him because his grandfather was Bishop of Melanesia, and we look forward to seeing him when he visits us.”

The two-and-a-half-hour ceremony commenced at 10.30am after the Cathedral filled with 1,000 faith and community leaders, First Nations elders, school children and broader Anglican community members taking their seats as 12 bells rung across the CBD’s north.

The new Archbishop was Installed by the Cathedral Dean in the *cathedra*, which is derived from the Greek word καθέδρα, meaning “chair”. Because the *cathedra* is the bishop’s chair it is what makes a church a cathedral.

Brisbane Cathedral Dean, The Very Rev’d Dr Peter Catt, said that the new Archbishop demonstrates the qualities of a trustworthy leader.

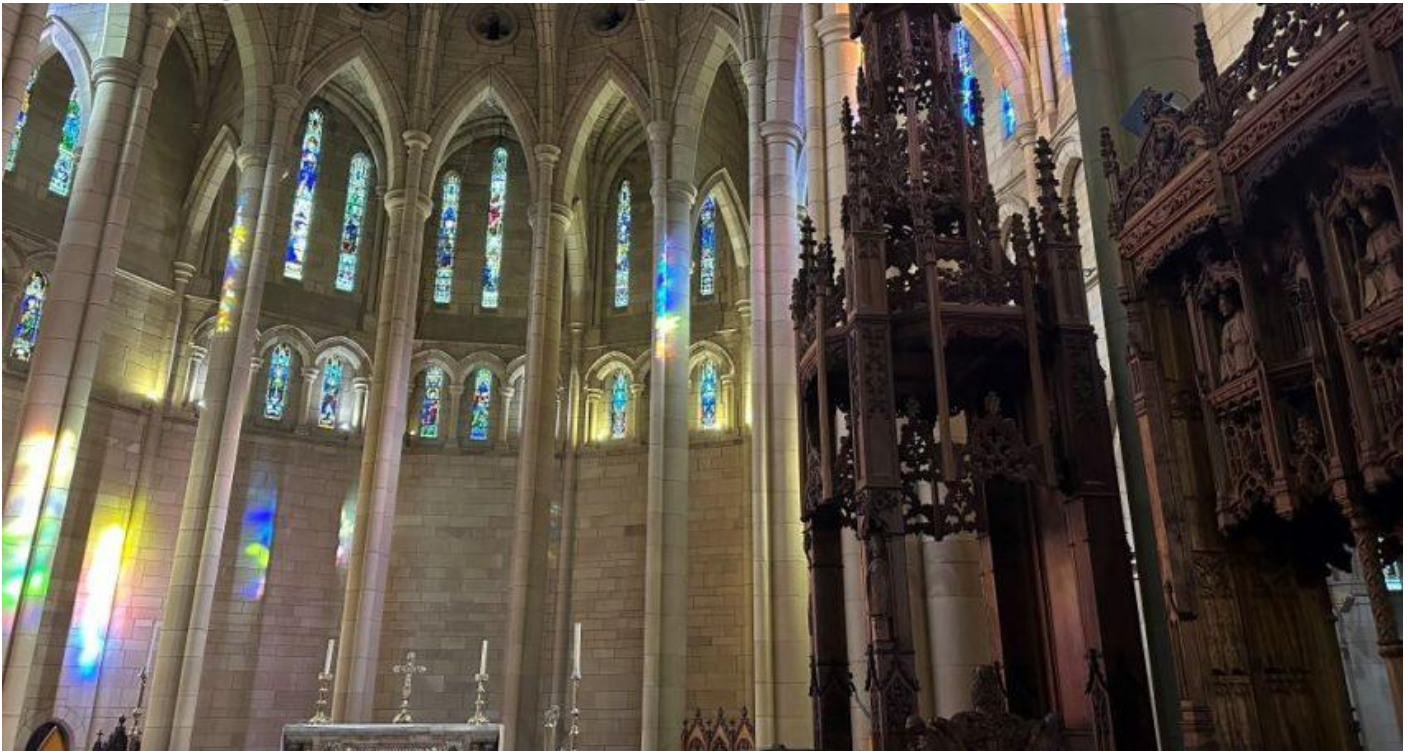
“I have had the privilege of working closely with our new Archbishop since he was made a Regional Bishop in 2017, and have observed that he is wise and reflective, exercises integrity and honesty in ways that cause him to be courageous, and that he cares about the vulnerable and demonstrates his own vulnerability,” Dr Catt said.

Archbishop Jeremy Greaves is the first Archbishop in nearly 22 years, replacing Archbishop Phillip Aspinall who resigned in February. He will additionally serve as Metropolitan of the Province of Queensland, which also encompasses the Northern Territory.

The Diocese of Brisbane, also known as the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, covers an area of more than 500,000 square kilometres from north of Bundaberg to the borders of New South Wales, the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Editor’s note: Yesterday’s Installation service may be viewed on [St John’s Cathedral YouTube](#).

Gathering around the campfire



"The cathedra and the building it contains stand as lasting centring symbols that help to centre the life of the church when the Archbishop is not physically present," (The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt)

Sitting around the campfire

Lo! — the campfire!

Know — the campfire is known

•

The fire!

(the campfire)

By the light of the fire

The

Faces

Are seen

••

••

(some of the faces look so kind)

••

••

By the light of the faces — See!

The gentle visions in each Eye

•

Sitting around the campfire

Lo! — the campfire!

Know — the campfire is known

•

The campfire is known

By those who sit around the flames

Jeffrey Robin, "Mountain Evening Song"

Gathering around a camp fire builds community. No words required. Community can be built through the gift of human presence alone. Aided by a centring object. A campfire.

At morning tea the centring object can be the coffee cup or a shared table. The term "water cooler conversation" suggests that the centring object can be many things.

As Church we use many centring objects to help us gather and build community. A Bible or an altar, a church building or an op shop.

As a Diocese, on Saturday we will be celebrating the gift of one of our key centring objects, The Archbishop, as Bishop Jeremy is installed.

On Saturday at the installation liturgy a number of centring "objects" will be working together:

A person — The Archbishop

A symbol — The *Cathedra*, the Archbishop's seat in the Cathedral. It is the *cathedra*, the seat, that makes the cathedral a cathedral.

A place — The Cathedral.

A people — The gathered community.

As a Diocesan family, widely distributed, we will be centred on Saturday as we gather around our new Archbishop in the Cathedral as he is seated in the *cathedra*, and as he leads us in the breaking of the bread before encouraging us to go and further the mission of Christ.

Archbishop Jeremy will then become a travelling source of centring and will act as a symbol of unity; centring us through his own person, while also linking us back to the particular centring place that is the *cathedra* and the Cathedral; the place we gather for ordinations — priests, deacons and bishops are ordained as gifts to the whole Church — and synods and other significant events in the life of the Diocese.

The *cathedra* and the building it contains stand as lasting centring symbols that help to centre the life of the Church when the Archbishop is not physically present. Sunday-by-Sunday and day-by-day, we welcome people from across the Diocese who come to visit their Cathedral, the place where the Archbishop's seat is kept.

First published in the St John's Cathedral Precinct e-news on 11 December 2023.

Q&A with The Glennie School Year 12 student, Faith and Service Co-Captain, birdwatcher, social justice activist and aspiring vet, Rheanca Lincoln



Rheanca Lincoln at the Steve Irwin Gala Dinner in 2022

Where do you currently live?

I live in Toowoomba, Queensland and have lived there for 15 years.

What do your school roles involve?

I am very honoured to be our school's Faith and Service Co-Captain. I help with leading service initiatives inside of the school and help out with faith-based activities, such as the Christmas carols. I am also part of the Environment Club at school, where we try and promote environmental sustainability. Through school, I am also taking part in [Rosies: Friends on the Streets](#), volunteering with other students and a teacher to provide social connections and warm food for people who are socially disadvantaged, isolated and homeless in Toowoomba.

What projects or activities are you currently working on?

The main project I am currently working on is called "We Are Not Alone", alongside a fantastic youth committee. We were recently successful in the [Foundation for Rural Regional Renewal](#) (FRRR) [ABC Heywire Grants](#) and received \$10,000 to do it.

We Are Not Alone will unite the Toowoomba Region's communities in a fun community event. With performances, workshops, organisation exhibitions and special guest speakers, we want to create support for young people with disabilities in our community.

We want young people with disabilities, chronic illness or who identify as neurodivergent to feel empowered — to know that although we may sometimes feel lonely, we are never alone.

Some other projects I am doing include the annual Youth Peace Conference, filming the *itchY switch* through a different grant with [Eczema Support Australia](#) to provide educational resources for GPs and young people, and the [Australian Youth Climate Coalition's](#) project Climate Canva.

Aside from that, I'm always looking into doing various environmental projects, I really love tree planting days or wildlife citizen science. My most recent project I did was called Paws4ClimateAction with Toowoomba for Climate Action and Toowoomba Carnival of Flowers. I also recently got a new job with the Queensland Family and Child Commission as a youth advocate, so I am looking forward to doing new workshops and projects with them.

What has been one of the key highlights of your time at school so far?

For one of the service projects at school, our committee helped out with conducting a noodle drive to collect noodle cups for Rosies, Toowoomba. Rosies only runs on donated goods, so we thought that we could play a part in this and donate noodle cups. Noodle cups are a favourite on Rosies' outreaches and are often the only warm meal patrons have in a week.

We encouraged everyone in the school to go buy at least one noodle cup and donate it to the collection. On the day of collection, some of the Year 12s helped count all the noodle cups and were astonished that we collected over 700 noodle cups! It was such an exciting moment, and a demonstration of the goals we can achieve when the entire school community comes together for a unified cause.

What are your plans and goals for the next 12 months?

I really hope to get accepted into Veterinary Science / Veterinary Medicine at university. I'm really passionate about wildlife conservation so it would be my dream to become a wildlife vet. If I don't get in, I'm going to study Veterinary Technology and apply again the next year. I am also going to continue doing lots of volunteering and continue working on projects.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

I am really inspired by Haniff Abdul Razak in Toowoomba. Mr Haniff is the Director of the Multi-Faith Multicultural Centre at the Pure Land Learning College Association in Toowoomba, and is always striving for Toowoomba to be a model city for peace and harmony. Mr Haniff sometimes helps guide the Toowoomba Youth Peace Group I am a part of and he is always making a positive difference wherever he is. I am very lucky to have met Mr Haniff.

Why is it important for Christians to work with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples towards Reconciliation?

I believe it is extremely important that everyone, from all different faiths and backgrounds, unites and stands in solidarity with First Nations Peoples. In Australia, we have the privilege of being able to use our voice and we are lucky that the foundations of current Reconciliation movements have already been built from First Nations activists who came before us. That is why we need to use this momentum to step up and help amplify First Nations voices, fight for First Nations justice and continue working towards practical forms of Reconciliation.

We need to be working towards systemic reform that addresses the intersectionality of First Nations justice and allows for First Nations' self-determination. For non-First Nations people such as myself, it is important to remember that even if we aren't directly impacted by an issue, it is still our responsibility as a community citizen to act in allyship.

What is the bravest or kindest gesture you have ever received or witnessed?

The kindest gesture I received was when I was unfortunately too sick to do my school captain candidate speech. Even though I couldn't do my speech, a beautiful friend of mine delivered my speech for me, and other friends offered to do this for me as well. I couldn't thank them enough. On the same day, I received countless kind emails and messages. In particular, my chemistry class took a picture of themselves and sent it to me saying that they were thinking of me. It meant the absolute world to me.

What do you do in your free time to recharge and relax?

I love to go outside and see all the birds because I really like birds. I am working on my identification skills and it's really fun learning more about birds. My favourite backyard bird is the willie wagtail, because they are so silly and cute! I also love playing with my dog Rumi and teaching him fun tricks. I also love cooking and creating new recipes that are more inclusive of those with multiple-food allergies and anaphylaxis.

If you could have a billboard with any text on it, what would it say and why?

It would say, "Different. Not Less". It's what one of my role models, Chloé Hayden, an exceptional actor and disability advocate, always says. I love it because it's a good reminder that we are all so different and absolutely should be valued equally.

Where do you do your best thinking?

Sometimes, I like to go outside and sit in the sun. However, most of my project ideas come randomly, like before I go to sleep or randomly as I get lost in my thoughts.

What's your best childhood memory?

My best childhood memory was playing with all my neighbourhood friends. I loved going to all their houses every afternoon and knocking on their door, seeing if they were ready to play. We would go bike riding, play heaps of games, bake and go swimming.

Our neighbourhood also used to host Christmas parties at different people's houses, or we would all go "trick or treating" collectively, which was so fun. Even though all my neighbourhood friends left Toowoomba, I still stay in touch with them.

If you are having a bad day, what do you do to cheer yourself up?

I play with my dog, Rumi. He brings me so much joy and reminds me to live in the present. I also like to remember that it's totally ok to have some bad days, and it's just a part of life.

What day would you like to re-live and why?

I would love to relive attending the Steve Irwin Gala Dinner. I was so honoured to meet Robert Irwin while receiving my award even though I was very starstruck. I got to have the best food, meet other Visionary Wildlife Warriors, watch the original Wiggles perform and hear all about the legacy of the original wildlife warrior, Steve Irwin. I was so grateful that I was invited.

What is your secret skill?

I used to be an avid chess player when I was younger and used to absolutely love the game. I can still remember a few openings and tactics, and I could play blindfolded (through using the coordinates of the chess board) if I really put my mind to it.

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would that be?

That's a really hard one, because I love food. If I had to choose, it would be hummus, closely followed by olives and hot chips! I love love, love, love hummus so much. I just spoon it out of the tub — it's so delicious.

The life and legacy of trailblazing social reformer and evangelical Anglican Josephine Butler



Social reformer and evangelical Anglican Josephine Butler in 1851 (George Richmond (1809-1896), Public domain, via Wikimedia Commons)

Born on [13 April 1828 in Northumberland](#), and later raised in the region, Josephine Butler was an English feminist and social reformer in the Victorian era. She campaigned for women's suffrage, the right of women to better education, the end of coverture in British law, the abolition of child prostitution, and an end to human trafficking of young women and children into European prostitution.

[A leading evangelical Anglican](#), Butler was motivated by her Christian faith and her compassion for people who are oppressed and marginalised. She demonstrated the Christian belief that all people are created in the image of God with inherent dignity and thus deserving of respect. She also saw her work as a way of fulfilling Jesus' great commission to make disciples of all nations.

[Writing in *The Guardian*](#), journalist and author Julie Bindel notes, "A committed Christian, Butler believed that 'everyone is equal under God', and became appalled at how women in prostitution were treated...Having helped prostitutes on the streets and in workhouses, Butler began to take those most desperate into her home, often to die."

Butler faced many challenges and oppositions in her life, such as the death of her daughter; hostility from the public and the authorities; slander and threats from her enemies; and, the physical and mental exhaustion from her travels and campaigns. She persevered through prayer, trust in God, and the support of her family and friends.

On the topic of prostitution, [Butler once wrote](#), “The degradation of these poor unhappy women is not degradation for them alone; it is a blow to the dignity of every virtuous woman too, it is dishonour done to me, it is the shaming of every woman in every country of the world.”

Amongst her many social reform achievements, Butler influenced the repeal of the Contagious Diseases Acts; the raising of the age of consent; the establishment of women’s education and health care; and, the formation of the International Abolitionist Federation. She also inspired many other women and men to join her cause and follow her example.

Butler — who died in 1906 and is commemorated in our Lectionary on 30 December — was a remarkable woman who dedicated her life to fighting for the rights of women and children.

Her legacy lives on today through the work of those who continue to fight for social justice and equality.

She can inspire other Christians today who are engaged in the mission of the Church, which is the mission of Jesus in various ways. Encouraging people to get involved in the mission of the Church can be a challenging task, but by focusing on the importance of community, education, and leading by example, we can inspire others to make a positive impact in the world around them.

We can take inspiration from Josephine as we live the Mark of Mission: “To seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and to pursue peace and reconciliation.”

She can teach us to be courageous and faithful in standing up for the truth and the rights of those who are oppressed. She can show us how to combine compassion and action, and how to use our gifts and talents for God’s glory. She can also encourage us to rely on God’s grace and power, and to seek God’s guidance and wisdom in all situations.

New era for the Society of the Sacred Advent



The Rev'd Sr Gillian Moses SSA and The Rev'd Sr Jan Crombie SSA made their Profession of Vows for SSA Vowed Membership on Tuesday 5 December 2023 in the Sisters' Chapel in Albion. The service was presided over by the SSA Visitor, The Right Rev'd Dr Murray Harvey. Pictured (L-R) is Sr Sandra SSA, Sr Gillian SSA, The Rev'd Sr Jan SSA, Bishop Murray Harvey, The Rev'd Sr Gillian SSA, The Rev'd Jazz Dow and The Rev'd Paul Bland OAM

A new way of life began for the Society of the Sacred Advent (SSA) recently as we made our Profession of Vows for SSA Vowed Membership.

This profession was the culmination of a journey that began in 2019 when the SSA Sisters initiated dialogue around ways of revisioning the Society. With the blessing of Mother Eunice, Sister Gillian and Sister Sandra, a transitional Chapter considered how we might ensure the continuation of the SSA in the 21st Century.

A significant part of the revisioning was creating new ways of "membership" of the SSA, including Vowed Members (women only) and Companions (men and women). Professed membership is available to women (including those who are married) and who are living and working independently, that is not "in community". Sadly, Mother Eunice died in 2021 without seeing the vision realised. However, the remaining two Sisters joined with the traditional words of reception and support in a beautiful service on 5 December in the Sisters' Chapel in Albion for our profession as the first two Vowed Members. The service was presided over by the SSA Visitor, The Right Rev'd Dr Murray Harvey. We professed our life vows to live to God in "Simplicity of Life", "Fidelity to Vowed Relationships" and "Obedience to Christ's Call to Serve the World".

With a new Constitution and governing Chapter, the SSA will continue to bring spiritual refreshment where needed. Involvement with the two SSA schools, St Margaret's and St Aidan's, is vital. The

support of the leadership of the two schools in this time of revisioning has been wonderful. The courage and leadership of Sister Gillian, in particular, has been our guiding light.

A monthly Sunday 4pm Eucharist is held in the Sisters' Chapel on the first Sunday of the month, resuming in February 2024. All are welcome to this quiet and meaningful time. Quiet Days and a retreat will be offered next year, as well as hospitality events.

Editor's note: For enquiries, please contact the SSA Leadership team, Sister Gillian SSA, The Rev'd Sr Gillian Moses SSA, The Rev'd Sr Jan Crombie SSA via the SSA email SSAChapter@ssa.qld.edu.au. For more information, please visit the [SSA website](#).

Local • Monday 18 December 2023 • By Ben Rogers

Anglicare finds biography writing benefits not just for the prose



Edwin Marsden Tooth Memorial Home resident Mrs Olive Farr (L) and Anglicare Southern Queensland Spiritual and Pastoral Care Manager Colin Lim (R) in June 2023

Pulitzer Prize winning author Frank McCourt once remarked, "Everyone has a story to tell. All you have to do is write it. But it's not that easy."

While the COVID pandemic and challenges in securing volunteer biographers have certainly proven McCourt's maxim that storytelling isn't always the easiest of endeavours, the Pastoral Care team at Anglicare Southern Queensland (ASQ) is excited to start a new chapter with their Biography Programme, which offers residents in aged care facilities the opportunity to work with a biographer to write their life's story.

The initiative was launched right before the COVID pandemic and subsequently halted until earlier this year due to challenges in securing volunteer biographers. With a new year comes new

opportunities and new volunteer biographers to help those in ASQ residential aged care facilities reminisce and turn their memories into written text.

ASQ's Pastoral Care team members were inspired to introduce the programme after attending a workshop that explored the psychological and social benefits of reminiscing and writing one's story.

For ASQ Spiritual and Pastoral Care Manager Colin Lim, the health and wellbeing benefits associated with such a programme meant it was an easy decision to add it to the team's range of pastoral care services.

"Reminiscing and sharing one's story allows our residents to focus on a pleasurable and productive activity, that is also a tool for life review," Mr Lim said.

"One of the highlights of the programme so far has been to hear and see how a resident was able to find new meaning and purpose in life from telling their story, in spite of her declining health conditions."

Beyond the health benefits for residents, the Biography Programme is a vital bridge between past and future generations, according to ASQ Spiritual and Pastoral Care Coordinator Deborah Stengert.

"At Anglicare Southern Queensland, we have access to multiple residential aged care facilities, filled with wonderful, unique, innovative individuals whose stories collectively inspire and uplift future generations," Ms Stengert said

"Implementing this initiative is important because these stories may never be heard if we don't make the space to listen, learn and honour their collective voices."

At Edwin Marsden Tooth Memorial Home in the Brisbane seaside suburb of Manly, resident Olive Farr recently wrapped up work on her biography with volunteer biographer Lexie Keane.

The two-month process provided 99-year-old Mrs Farr with a life review that helped reconnect her with the essence of who she is, despite recent struggles with immobility and hearing and vision loss.

"Memories came forward that I thought I had forgotten," Mrs Farr said.

"I enjoyed it; we laughed a lot and shed a few tears too. I loved every minute of it — I couldn't believe it was happening to me."

With the important task of ensuring Mrs Farr's memories were properly captured on the page, Lexie Keane found the process an equally moving experience.

"Olive didn't think she had a story to tell and wondered who would be interested," Ms Keane said.

"However, through respectful conversation we connected and as we chatted her life story bubbled out.

"It was joyful, we shared laughter, the memories came forth, there was mutual respect for privacy, and the biography sessions were a safe space for Olive to express memories important to her."

Ms Stengert said that a personal highlight of the journey to capture Mrs Farr's story was during the final stages of production.

"When I read the final draft to Olive, I was surprised to see how much joy she experienced hearing the narrative of her life story retold," she said.

"Olive laughed, cried, made amendments and appeared to totally enjoy reliving the memories.

"When we finished, Olive was laughing and said, 'I'm overjoyed, it paints such a good picture,' and I responded, '...of a life well lived!' Olive thought for a moment and responded, 'Yes, I think so.'"

In mid-June, Mrs Farr's family and friends gathered at the home for the official biography presentation with attendees reflecting on the impact Mrs Farr has had on their lives.

At the conclusion of the Biography Programme, participants are presented with a beautiful document that includes their story and any photos the resident would like included — an important keepsake that can be passed on to future generations.

It's experiences like Mrs Farr's that Anglicare Southern Queensland hopes to replicate for other residents and Mr Lim wants to encourage residents to consider the programme.

"We value our residents, the people they've encountered and their experiences, and we would like to hear about it," he said.

In addition to encouraging residents to get involved with the programme, Ms Stengert wants to stress that they're also in search of more volunteer biographers.

"One challenge is finding volunteer biographers who have the skills, experience and sensitivity to work with residents in honouring the resident's story," she said.

"We are overcoming this challenge by continuing to advertise for volunteer biographers and we have been fortunate to have two new biographers join our team in recent weeks."

Mrs Farr has a simple message for other residents considering getting involved: "Do it! It brought me so much happiness!"

Editor's note: If you would like to volunteer for the Anglicare Southern Queensland Biography Programme, please contact Spiritual and Pastoral Care Manager Colin Lim via clim@anglicaresq.org.au.

Culture takes the field at Churchie's rugby Indigenous round



The 2023 rugby Indigenous round was held at Churchie in September 2023

In a display of unity and celebration of heritage, Churchie Senior School Indigenous students Kye Boland and Emil Willie-Jawai joined with Prefect Toby Wilson to create a memorable Indigenous round to conclude the 2023 rugby season, complete with a captivating Indigenous jersey. Artwork by Kye and Emil featured on the jersey created an exceptional piece of clothing, symbolising a bridge between cultures, a profound homage to heritage and a resounding commitment to inclusivity.

The jersey's design draws inspiration from traditional Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island art processes, illustrating the power of art to convey knowledge and stories across generations.

The artists, Kye and Emil, noted, "This jersey is more than just a uniform; it is a narrative woven from threads of connection to the land, history, and community."

At first glance, the jersey's tones reflect the colours of the Churchie community, harmoniously intertwining Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, and Churchie cultures.

"Delicate and intricate patterns pay homage to traditional Indigenous art forms, with each line and curve carrying narratives that reach back through time," Kye and Emil said.

The jersey's ingenious design divides it into two halves, each telling a unique story. The central motif is the symbolic *Dhari*, a headdress worn by Torres Strait Islander men during dancing. Within the *Dhari*, a five-pointed star symbolises the five major island groups and their navigational significance. The design on the right sleeve depicts the Torres Strait, and the triangles at its centre represent one of the totems from the top-western islands, signifying Emil's family heritage.

On the opposite side, Kye's Aboriginal culture takes centre stage, emphasising its profound connection to the land and waterways. This design portrays two people meeting in a new landscape, sharing knowledge and raising awareness in a fresh community. It is adorned with traditional Aboriginal art symbols, including footsteps and corroboree symbols. The central piece of this design is the symbolic sun, intricately connected to the *Dhari*, visible within the centre of the Aboriginal flag.

The 2023 Indigenous round was held on Saturday 9 September, with Churchie taking on Gregory Terrace at home in the final round of the GPS Rugby season. The Churchie First XV proudly donned the 2023 Indigenous jersey, and Churchie's Indigenous students led a ceremony prior to the game.

The match itself was also memorable, with a thrilling win to secure a second-place season finish for Churchie's First XV in the season (tying with Toowoomba Grammar School). The jersey and the Indigenous round not only showcased the players' unique identities, also serving as a powerful testament to the spirit of inclusivity, heritage and unity at Churchie.

Reflections • Monday 18 December 2023 • By Frances Thompson

Hearing in stereo again



If she chooses, Frances Thompson can attach the necessary musician's pencil to her cochlear implant

My hearing gradually decreased in my left ear between 2000-2006, due to Meniere's disease, which is one of those interesting conditions that doctors don't really understand, except that it generally involves symptoms such as vertigo, nausea, dizziness, and sometimes causes increasing deafness.

Happily for me, the dizziness and nausea no longer affect me, but the deafness continued to get worse, so my audiologist suggested I consider a cochlear implant (CI) in 2018.

A cochlear implant can improve hearing by helping to fix the clarity of the words being heard. A hearing aid can only increase the volume, it can't help when the person can't work out if the word is "cat" or "bat" or "hat".

I was reticent about a CI because I knew music could not be heard through a CI as effectively as speech, but as I had, by then, very little hearing in my left ear, a CI was going to be better than the hearing aid I was using in 2018, which was by then pretty useless.

I went ahead with the surgery, and when the external processor was fitted there was a lot of emotion in the room; at my switch-on I couldn't distinguish words, or details, but I could definitely hear things.

My audiologist sounded like a high-pitched distorted robotic cartoon chipmunk with added helium. Walking across King George Square after the processor switch-on, the rain on my umbrella sounded like squealing piglets and the City Hall bells sounded like a wobble board. Back home, the microwave sounded like crashing waves.

After the surgery I undertook six months of intensive homework. Another device was used to send audio directly to the cochlear implant (so my "good" right ear couldn't help), whilst I read the same words. Eventually my brain figured out that what I was hearing and what I was reading were the same.

I went straight back to singing in a choir, and playing violin in an orchestra, which were both exhausting as my brain tried to make sense of the sounds I was hearing. But over those first few months it got better, and after a year my hearing on the left side was fabulous. It wasn't the same as my good hearing on the right, but pretty good.

The external processor on the ear picks up the sound of a dog in the garden and turns it into an electrical signal, which travels through the coil into the implant inside the head, where the auditory nerve is stimulated, sending a message to the brain, where the electrical signal is turned back into sound, and the brain recognises the sound of a dog barking. Essentially the brain is replacing the damaged portions of the ear and doing the listening.

I knew someone in Hong Kong, decades ago, with a cochlear implant. The battery was attached to the behind-the-ear processor with a long wire, and the battery was so large (bigger than a mobile phone), that it was carried in a shoulder bag. Today my lithium ion rechargeable batteries are small and the CI connects to my phone via Bluetooth; I can choose to listen to podcasts with the audio sent directly to the implant, with no need for earbuds. There is a reason that the cochlear implant is also known as the "bionic ear" — the technology is truly marvellous. The implant inside my head will never be updated or changed, whereas the processor on the outside is updated and replaced every few years.

I haven't read Prof Graeme Clark's book, [*I Want to Fix Ears: Inside the Cochlear Implant Story*](#) yet, but what I know of his story is that it is an inspirational one.

I know that there are those in the deaf community who don't want "fixing", and who use sign language, and that works for them. Plenty of deaf people would not be suitable for implantation, as an audiologist needs to assess if an individual has the capability to be able to hear again. A CI won't work for everyone with hearing loss. Plus, you need to be prepared to do the homework — to teach your brain to do the hearing. But there will be plenty of people like me, who have experienced hearing loss in just one ear and who have received a large part of their hearing back again, after implantation. It's not perfect, it's not as good as my regular, original hearing was, but it's pretty good and gives me the ability to hear in stereo again.

Tough Questions: Why are Matthew's and Luke's accounts of Jesus' birth so different?



"As we enter the season of Advent, let us enjoy this story with all its layers and complexities and give thanks for the awesome events that paved the way for us to be reconciled to God through his son Jesus,"
(The Rev'd Charlie Lacey in December 2023)

We are so used to seeing the nativity depicted in the form of cards, paintings, models and plays that we might be forgiven for thinking that every facet of this well-known scene is described by all four gospel writers. In truth, only Matthew and Luke describe the birth of Christ and their accounts are far from identical. For example, Matthew states that an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream, whereas Luke describes the angel Gabriel visiting Mary in person. Both Matthew and Luke recount a group of people visiting the infant Jesus, however, for Matthew it is a group of Magi and for Luke a group of shepherds. Matthew chronicles the family's escape to Egypt, whilst Luke makes no mention of their sojourn in Egypt. What are we to make of these differences?

Firstly, it is important to recognise that "difference" is not the same thing as "contradiction". If you were to read about an event in two different newspapers, you would not expect the accounts to be identical, since each reporter would have his or her own perspective. Moreover, by reading two reports on the same event, you would most likely get a much fuller picture of what occurred. Admittedly, a comparison of the accounts of the birth of Christ in Matthew and Luke does present us with some conundrums, but overall, they complement each other in the same way that two newspaper articles might do.

Most of the differences can be attributed to the details that each writer chose to include or omit. For example, it is perfectly reasonable to surmise that both Joseph and Mary received some kind of angelic visitation.

Perhaps the most difficult details to reconcile are the fact that Matthew tells us that the holy family fled to Egypt, whilst Luke seemingly has them returning to Nazareth immediately after Jesus is presented in the temple (which would have taken place when he was forty days old). There are two possible explanations that negate the need to hypothesise that one or both authors “adapted” the story for rhetorical or theological reasons.

Firstly, it could be that Jesus was presented in the temple after the Magi’s visit in Matthew 2. If the family returned to Nazareth immediately after this event, it would mean that they fled to Egypt from Nazareth and not Bethlehem, which is plausible since Herod’s jurisdiction included Nazareth. If this is the case, Matthew 2.13 would be understood as follows, “When they [the magi] had gone, [insert Luke’s account of the visit to the temple and return to Nazareth], an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.”

The second possibility, and in my view the more likely, is that the family’s flight to Egypt took place after Jesus was presented in the temple and before they returned to Nazareth. In this case, Luke 2.39 would read as follows, “When Joseph and Mary had done everything required of the Law of the Lord [insert the family’s return to Bethlehem, the magi’s visit and the flight to Egypt], they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth.”

An author’s silence about an event need not signify that it did not happen. It is therefore judicious to reconcile the two gospel accounts of Jesus’ birth by recognising that neither author detailed every aspect of the narrative.

The foregoing observations draw our attention to the differences between the two accounts, but of far more interest are the similarities. Matthew and Luke both assert that Mary was a virgin when she conceived and that an angel announced that her son would be the Messiah. Both authors affirm that Mary and Joseph were engaged to be married and that Jesus was born in Bethlehem. And, in both gospels, Jesus’ family end up in Nazareth. Most importantly, the clear message of both evangelists (and indeed all four gospel writers), is that God has entered the world in the person of Jesus Christ to bring salvation to his people.

As we enter the season of Advent, let us enjoy this story with all its layers and complexities and give thanks for the awesome events that paved the way for us to be reconciled to God through his son Jesus.

John 3.16

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

First published on the [St Andrew’s, Springfield website](#) on 3 December 2023.

Light a candle for Sudan this season



"I have been touched by the very elderly World War II veterans who have approached me, saying they understand war's impacts and how sorry they are for my people. Two veterans in wheelchairs spoke with me for half an hour, expressing their sadness — I could tell that they remember what it's like all these years later," (The Rev'd Rebecca King in December 2023)

Please be aware that this content may be distressing for some readers.

I am pleased to update *anglican focus* readers on what is happening in Sudan. It has been very upsetting seeing such little coverage, in both the regular and Christian media, of the current civil war and its devastating impacts.

I have been told that civilians are being buried and burnt alive. This is happening to loved ones of parishioners. Yesterday a parishioner's brother was killed – a bomb was dropped on his head while he was buying Christmas groceries. Since the conflict started in mid-April I have been hearing these stories in phone calls and face-to-face conversations daily and reading messages from people I know in Sudan on WhatsApp.

I am very grateful to Archbishop-elect Jeremy who has compassionately reached out to the Archbishop of Sudan and me this year, and to Bishop John Roundhill, my Southern Region bishop, and The Ven. Bronwyn Pagram, my Archdeacon, for assisting with making things as easy and smooth as possible during this very stressful time.

I am also grateful to all those Anglican community members, including parishioners and other Anglicans, who have contacted me to express support, prayed for peace and contributed financially to my August appeal. Our parish's youth group even organised a day of fellowship and sport to raise money for this appeal, and I appreciate their work.

However, there have been times when I have been shocked and hurt by some people's selfishness and the harsh things they have said to me, all because they don't want me to talk about what is happening in Sudan, whether in conversations or in Sunday services. I can't be happy right now when everything is collapsing at home and people are dying. This is a time of mourning for us. It is not a time of joy.

Although, I have been touched by the very elderly World War II veterans who have approached me, saying they understand war's impacts and how sorry they are for my people. Two veterans in wheelchairs spoke with me for half an hour, expressing their sadness — I could tell that they remember what it's like all these years later.

There have been signs of hope in the last few days — some people have started to return home as the conflict settles in some of the bigger cities, such as Khartoum. As we enter into the special week before Christmas, I am hopeful that the war will stop.

I ask *anglican focus* readers to light a candle for peace in Sudan as we enter into the last week of Advent, remembering the Sudanese people in their prayers during this holy time. If possible, take up a collection or donate personally for the thousands left homeless by contacting the treasurer for The Parish of Yeronga, James Stephen via yeronga.treasurer@anglicanchurchsq.org.au.

News • Wednesday 17 November 2021 • By Michelle McDonald

Nativity story told through stunning dot art on new Cathedral Shop Christmas cards



Cathedral Shop Manager Ann-Marie Reynolds holding the 'Star of Bethlehem on Country' Christmas card design, Kuku Yalanji artist Lalanía Tusa with the 'Journey Line of Lord Jesus' design and The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt holding the 'Star of Bethlehem' artwork outside St John's Cathedral on 12 November 2021

The Cathedral Shop has commissioned Kuku Yalanji artist Lalanía Tusa to design new Christmas cards, depicting the nativity story told through richly symbolic ancient dot art.

Known by many in our Diocesan community through her Anglicare Cultural Support Worker role, Lalanía Tusa said that the highlight of the painting process for her was the opportunity for reflection in the lead up to Christmas.

“The best part of painting the cards was being able to bring my own spirituality and culture into one and reflecting on the nativity of the birth of Jesus and the time of giving that is Christmas,” Ms Tusa said.

“Dot art is a special form of storytelling because it encompasses a range of forms depending on your Nation.

“Each First Nation has different forms, meanings and symbols, and being a rainforest person, my art strongly reflects the rainforest.

“I also seek to respect my ancestors through my art.”

Each year, the Cathedral has a range of Christmas cards available for purchase and online, in packs of 10 or as single cards.

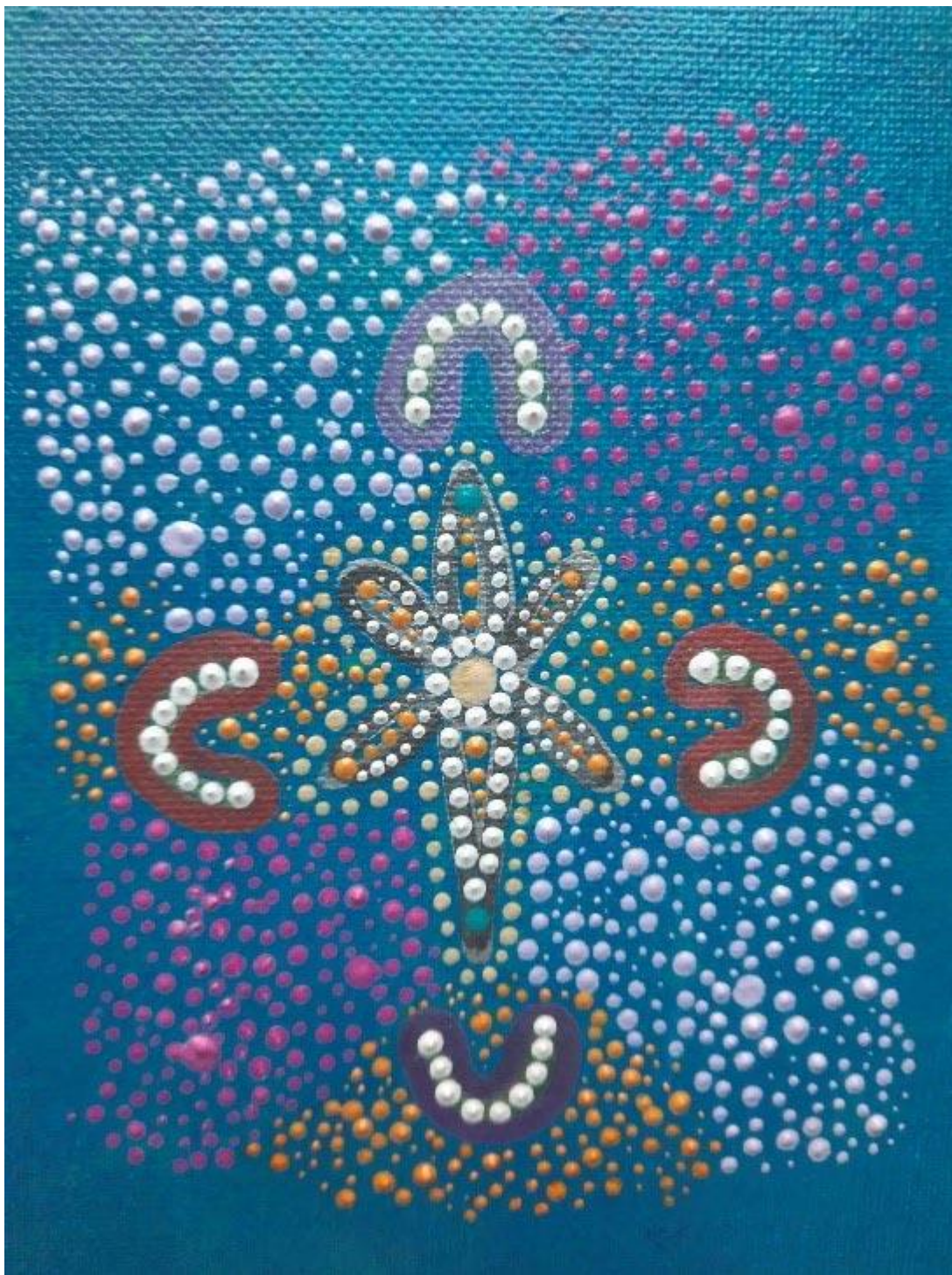
The cards generally feature images taken around the Cathedral, including many of the large well-known cardboard nativity sculptures.

This year, Ms Tusa’s custom-designed cards are a special addition to the Cathedral’s existing gift card collection.

The three card designs are named ‘Star of Bethlehem’, ‘Star of Bethlehem on Country’ and ‘Journey Line of Lord Jesus’, and each card is accompanied by a story explaining the symbolism.



'Star of Bethlehem' story: "On the night that baby Jesus was born, the Star of Bethlehem guided the three wise kings from the East to His birthplace. This represents the star with the middle circle formation representing the meeting place for all who come to seek Jesus. The dots on the outer edges are the individual souls who have come to know and serve the Lord through Christ Jesus" (Kuku Yalanji artist Lalania Tusa)



'Star of Bethlehem on Country' story: "This bright star appeared in the eastern sky when Jesus was born and was followed by the three wise kings to meet the King of the Jews (Matthew 2.1-12). The curved symbols surrounding the star represent the families, communities and Country of each First Nation that are protected and covered by His love. The smaller coloured dots in the background depict the scattered Nations and each generation of surviving First Nations descendants" (Kuku Yalanji artist Lalanía Tusa)



'Journey Line of Lord Jesus' story: "This represents the journey line of Joseph, Mary and baby Jesus during their time on earth. The long journey is symbolised with three different coloured dots. These are then met with the three symbols of man, woman and person (baby Jesus). The two larger blue formations either side of the journey line are the meeting places along the way. The outer dots are the people of all nations coming to hear the good news of Jesus, the King of the Kings" (Kuku Yalanji artist Lalania Tusa)

Cathedral Warden Helen Wootton, who organised the commissioning of the artwork, said that she is thrilled with the designs.

"I am delighted with Lalania's Christmas cards because they give a different perspective to the nativity story, while also helping us to understand how First Nations peoples record stories through their art," Ms Wootton said.

"We are pleased that the Cathedral's engagement of First Nations businesses is aligned with the new ACSQ Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan, which includes even stronger procurement actions.

"We look forward to engaging with other First Nations artists and craftspeople in the procurement of Cathedral Shop products."

Cathedral Shop Manager Ann-Marie Reynolds said that the exclusive and affordable cards have wide appeal.

"Lalania's Christmas cards are beautiful artwork – so unique and colourful," Ms Reynolds said.

"They are the perfect cards for every family member and friend as they are so different, while also being reasonably priced especially for original artwork."

The stunning new cards will be sold both in-store and in the [online shop](#) and will cost \$1.00 each, with packs of 10 sold for \$8.00.

Purchase your Christmas cards in-store at St John's Cathedral on Ann Street or [online](#).

'Hail to the Lord's anointed': a message of praise and hope



James Montgomery (1771-1854) is remembered in a Sheffield Cathedral stained-glass window and in a cathedral forecourt statue

Current tensions and conflicts are signs that we are living through a difficult period. Humanity is facing multiple challenges, including recurring natural disasters and the impacts of a damaged climate, the invasion of Ukraine, a civil war in Sudan, conflict in Palestine and Israel and the ongoing impacts of colonialism on First Peoples in Australia and internationally.

Conversations about such traumatic matters are often played out on social media and in the news in untruthful and oversimplified ways — seeking to divide. So it is that we see a rise in racism and distrust. These are challenging times for humanity and the natural world.

We are therefore thankful once again for messages of forgiveness, compassion, justice, truth and hope that come into focus in the season of Advent. One of the most well-known Advent hymns has a text that is 200 years old, and a tune much older than that. It reminds us of the promise of hope in the coming of the Christ, both as a helpless child and as the One who ushers in and fulfils the promised Kingdom of God.

'Hail to the Lord's anointed' is a five-verse setting of Psalm 72 by Scottish hymn-writer, poet and editor James Montgomery, who grew up in the north of England in a family who worshipped in the [Moravian Brethren](#) tradition.

Finally settling in Sheffield in a time of great social and political conservatism, Montgomery (1771-1854) became owner and editor of a newspaper known for its social conscience, calling for the abolition of slavery and defending other human rights. His commitment to justice resulted in two prison sentences, one for printing a song celebrating the Fall of the Bastille and another for criticising the forceful dispersal of a political demonstration in his city.

Montgomery played an important role with The Rev'd Thomas Cotterill in officially introducing into Anglican worship the singing of texts interpreting the Bible in poetic forms rather than strictly using only words of the Psalms. His more than 300 hymn texts include 'Angels from the realms of glory', 'God is our strong salvation' and 'Stand up and bless the Lord'. They continue to make an important contribution to Christian worship across denominations, demonstrating Montgomery's social conscience and his talent for writing poetry that made for good congregational singing. These qualities are evident in the words of this wonderful Advent song, originally written for Christmas Eve in 1821, and since published in many hymn books around the world.

James Montgomery is remembered in a Sheffield Cathedral stained-glass window and in a cathedral forecourt statue.

Montgomery's hymn (*Together in Song* #275) is useful beyond Advent, serving as a wonderful song at Epiphany and on other occasions. In five carefully crafted verses his text, which is based on Psalm 72, celebrates the Advent promise of the coming of the Lord's anointed One, reminding us of the Christian's task of self-reformation, and of the need to work towards making the Kingdom of God a living experience in our troubled world.

The first verse emphasises the Messiah's role in breaking oppression, freeing captives and administering justice equitably. We pray daily that this will come for our sisters and brothers in war-torn places and for victims and survivors of domestic violence.

The message of the second verse is that the Lord comes with help and mercy for all who are suffering, and for those caught in poverty: central to the Church's mission in the world. His arrival brings light to those in darkness — the great proclamation of Christianity through the ages.

The third verse brings a message of hope for us and our natural environment, and for those who long for love, joy, hope and peace to return to their daily lives. Verse 4 bring us a vision of the fulfilment of God's will in our world, of a glorious future, and the eternal rule of love.

The hymn is both a promise and a challenge. The promise is of a future in which God's Kingdom is realised. It is a promise built on our recognition that a loving God is with us through the darkest times and the most difficult situations. The challenge is for us to remember that our words as Kingdom builders need to be followed through with deeds in our private and professional lives, in the way our parishes, schools and other ministries function, and in the way we interact with others.

This hymn works well on several levels in its clever combination with the tune *Cruger* from Johann Crüger's 1640 collection. Each verse is easy to sing, with the tune of the first line repeated in the second line in each case. The tune for the third and fourth lines balances the first two in a rather more introspective way, and the tune for the final two lines provides a sense of positive fulfilment and promise. Tune and text reinforce each other very successfully.

The wonderful hope of Advent underscores the strength of the Christian message in our local community and in the wider world. When others despair, we can bring the optimism of a hopeful future in God's care. When untruths and division spread, we are commissioned to exercise love and compassion, generosity and kindness. When peace seems so far away, we know that God's will is for us to keep modelling how we can all live together, cooperate for the good of all, and demonstrate that the way forward is love.

Community Refugee Sponsorship



"Joseph was directed by God in a dream to urgently leave Bethlehem and take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Faithfully, he followed that direction...Then Joseph and his family lived as refugees in Egypt until Herod died," (Bishop Cam Venables)

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As we journey through Advent towards Christmas, I hope you continue to be sustained by God's Spirit as you care for and teach the people in your care, and prepare for a marathon of worship on the weekend in which the fourth Sunday of Advent is also Christmas Eve!

At some stage on Christmas Day, I hope there will be time for you to rest and renew with people you love. Boxing Day is traditionally a much-loved slow day at our house!

Two days after Boxing Day the lectionary invites us to remember the children killed by Herod in an effort to eradicate a perceived threat to his rule (28th December – Holy Innocents). The set reading from Matthew's Gospel on that day tells us that Joseph was directed by God in a dream to urgently leave Bethlehem and take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. Faithfully, he followed that direction and avoided the tragedy. Then Joseph and his family lived as refugees in Egypt until Herod died.

Sadly, such tragedies — on a much greater scale — continue to happen in our time. In our current news-cycle we are aware of children being killed and families fleeing their homes in Gaza and the Palestinian Territories; in some parts of Israel; in the Ukraine; in Afghanistan; and, in Sudan.

Aware of this we can rightly pray for the miracle of a lasting peace in each of these countries... 'though we may feel powerless to do much more.

I have worked collaboratively with others to assist refugees settle in Australia since 2003 and have found it to be a significant way to honour the Gospel call to both “love neighbour” and “welcome stranger”...and, I wonder if you have ever considered this?

I am currently on the board of Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia (CRSA), which works to empower groups of like-minded people in Australia settle refugees. They are a skilled and highly motivated team who would love to work with you, your school or parish, and your local community.

To find out more, please go to the [Community Refugee Sponsorship Australia](https://www.crsa.org.au/) website.

Yours in Christ,

The Right Reverend Cam Venables
Bishop Administrator &
Bishop for the Western Region

Local • Monday 18 December 2023 • By Jessica Morthorpe

St Luke's Anglican Church, Ekibin celebrates environmental awards



Louise Scott (L), from Our Lady Queen of Apostles Catholic Church in Stafford, presents the Five Leaf Eco-Awards to St Luke's Anglican Church, Ekibin in December 2023

St Luke's Anglican Church, Ekibin recently received the Five Leaf Eco-Awards Basic Certificate and Eco Worship Awards acknowledging the many environmentally conscious actions the church has taken.

The [Five Leaf Eco-Awards](https://www.fivleaf.org.au/) are an ecumenical environmental change initiative for Australian churches and religious organisations founded in 2008 to assist, inspire and reward churches for environmental action.

For Alison Lampe from St Luke's Sustainability and Environmental Governance (SEG) group, the awards were enthusiastically received by the church as a strong recognition of the environmental work being conducted.

"It has been very fulfilling to play a role in establishing the SEG group in our parish and we are delighted to be awarded the ecumenical Five Leaf Eco-Awards Basic Certificate," Ms Lampe said.

"Seeing initiatives being supported by our congregation is very rewarding; small efforts by many can lead to meaningful change.

"Our group aims to continue our focus on SEG and is enthusiastic about developing further initiatives."

The awards, which operate nationally and across denominations, are non-competitive, with churches completing tasks from a list of flexible criteria to earn each certificate.

There are currently seven awards of varying difficulty.

With a wide range of environmentally conscious initiatives undertaken by St Luke's, such as establishing a sustainability and environmental group, completing an energy audit, facilitating quarterly sustainability and environmental discussion groups and hosting an environmental film night, the Five Leaf Eco-Awards acknowledge and celebrate the parish's hard work in this space.

Other recent environmentally conscious actions the church has undertaken include a [Containers for Change](#) initiative to raise funds for a bike rack on the church grounds, recycling and energy efficiency initiatives, regular inclusion of environmental articles in their church news and participation in [Clean Up Australia Day](#) and the [Season of Creation](#).

St Luke's parish priest The Rev'd Dr Timothy Nicholson said the church was deeply encouraged by the awards, and keen to continue their commitment to care for God's Creation.

The church is currently undertaking a redevelopment, and is looking forward to installing solar panels and a bike rack on their new buildings, and potentially investing in an electric vehicle as the next parish car.

Louise Scott from Our Lady Queen of Apostles Catholic Church in Stafford (who received their Five Leaf Eco-Awards in September 2022) visited St Luke's to present the Ekibin church with their award because prior Five Leaf Eco-Awards recipients, where possible, present awards to the following year's winners.

"It's wonderful to see what another church has done, and to be able to share our story so that both communities can aim higher and work towards the next awards in the program," Ms Scott said.

Editor's note: Find out more or apply for an award on behalf of your church by visiting the [Five Leaf Eco-Awards](#) website.

Caboolture Anglicare on drive for more foster carers



"Our need is for general carers who are able to care for sibling groups, of two or three children under the age of 12, in a long-term capacity and to support reunification, or to provide short-term breaks for our kinship carers," (Dustin Baker, Anglicare Southern Queensland's Children, Youth & Families Service Manager in Caboolture)

Despite the number of foster and kinship carers in Queensland increasing over recent years, the number of children in need of care still outweighs the number of carers.

According to new [child safety data](#), the number of foster and kinship carers has increased to 6,017, up from 5,927 at the same time in 2021 and 5,680 in 2020.

There are currently more than 11,000 children living with foster or kinship carers across the state and more carers are urgently needed in the Moreton Bay region.

Anglicare Southern Queensland's Children, Youth & Families Service Manager in Caboolture, Dustin Baker, said his team are working around the clock to ensure all children are placed into safe and loving homes.

"We have 61 general carer households and 59 kinship carer households in the Moreton Bay region," Mr Baker said.

"Our need is for general carers who are able to care for sibling groups, of two or three children under the age of 12, in a long-term capacity and to support reunification, or to provide short-term breaks for our kinship carers."

Mr Baker believes there are more foster carers out there who just don't know it yet.

"We are always looking for more carers and I would encourage anyone who is considering it to do their research and to speak to one of our staff about taking that initial step. It can be a wonderful and rewarding role," he said.

"People often think they're too old, or their house is too small, or that you have to be married. The truth is that great foster carers come from many different walks of life.

"You can be single, married, a same sex or de facto couple, retired, working full-time or part-time, it doesn't matter. The important thing is that you're genuinely willing and able to offer a positive environment to support and nurture the best interests of every child.

"Carer families play such a crucial role in ensuring some of our most vulnerable children receive the support they need and deserve."

Anglicare Southern Queensland is a not-for-profit charity that provides a range of social services including mental health, counselling, homelessness support and aged care, and has been supporting foster carers for the past 30 years.

"Sometimes taking the first step can be daunting, but we've been supporting foster and kinship carers for more than 30 years, and we understand what information and support is needed during the application process."

Author's note: To learn more about becoming a foster carer, register for an upcoming information session at youbeyou.org.au or call our Caboolture Children, Youth & Families service on (07) 5428 4949.

CHAC student secures international sustainability scholarship



Cannon Hill Anglican College (CHAC) Year 10 student Victoria recently returned from Europe where she completed a month-long study tour as part of the AFS Global STEM Academies Scholarship

Cannon Hill Anglican College (CHAC) Year 10 student Victoria Seng recently returned from Europe where she completed a month-long study tour as part of a highly sought-after international scholarship she was awarded late last year.

Victoria was one of only 180 students from around the world to secure the AFS Global STEM Academies Scholarship from more than 6,000 applications.

AFS Intercultural Programs was created in 1915 as the American Ambulance Field Service, and has since transformed from a wartime humanitarian aid organisation into an international secondary school exchange, volunteer and intercultural learning organisation.

The AFS Global STEM program saw Victoria complete a tertiary qualification in sustainability for social impact through an American Ivy League university and combined 12-week online course, followed by a sustainability tour of Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands.

For Victoria, her journey towards embarking on this prestigious opportunity started with a family friend who introduced her to the AFS Academy.

"I first heard about the scholarship from a family friend who is very big on STEM and women in STEM, and having been to the One Young World Summit, she is very invested in being an active global citizen," Victoria said.

“She brought the AFS Global STEM Academies to my attention and inspired me to apply; without her this incredible opportunity would have never happened.”

Given the many thousands of applicants to the program, Victoria wasn’t expecting to be selected for the competitive program and was thrilled when she heard the news she had been selected.

“Words cannot express my utter disbelief that I actually did get in,” she said.

“Prior to the program, I was invested in social matters, such as female empowerment, food insecurity, and the climate crisis.

“I want to utilise the skills and knowledge I have acquired during this program to become more of an active global citizen within my community.”

The program combines online and hands-on learning for students world-wide to enhance their sustainability knowledge, STEM skills, and global competencies.

Despite the diverse backgrounds of the student participants, everyone Victoria encountered shared a sense of unity around the organisation’s mission and values.

“What I really found interesting was how easily it was for everyone to get along and become friends so quickly; while we all live in different countries and have different life experiences, we really aren’t that different from one another,” Victoria said.

“We all shared a similar goal on this trip, to make new friends, learn more about sustainability and understand how we could become active global citizens.

“I loved how we all got along so well and shared common interests. It was also so interesting discussing political topics with each other and seeing everyone’s personal perspectives.”

Two particular highlights of the experience came when Victoria visited Europe and was able to experience the continent’s natural beauty and conduct sustainability experiments at the prestigious University of Bielefeld.

“One highlight was when we went on a hike in Belgium – there was a natural waterslide, which a couple of us slid down and there were these beautiful water pools,” Victoria recalled.

“We all sang together on the bus ride down and all leaned on each other’s shoulders on the ride back because we were so tired.

“Another highlight was when we went to the University of Bielefeld and got to do all sorts of scientific experiments related to sustainability in their labs.

“It was so interesting to see how STEM and sustainability interact and the possible careers out there.”

While committing to the program in Europe meant additional studies and time away from school back in Australia, CHAC was supportive of Victoria’s journey with AFS and accommodated her additional studies into her pre-existing high school studies.

"I was able to drop a subject during the second term while I was completing the online course," she explained.

"CHAC were really supportive of this external experience and the school worked with me to understand what I can catch up on and how to catch up."

Local • Wednesday 20 December 2023

Gold Coast Anglican communities deliver season's eatings for struggling families



Resident families from The Southport School gathered on Thursday 14 December 2023 at the school to pack hampers for Anglicare Children's Youth and Families Clients along with Felicity Dougherty, Spiritual and Pastoral Care Coordinator for the Gold Coast from Anglicare Southern Queensland

After a chance comment from one of Anglicare Southern Queensland's youth workers about how she wished she could have some hampers to give to families struggling over the Christmas period, Anglican communities on the Gold Coast came together and made her wish a reality.

A combined effort between Anglicare Southern Queensland, The Southport School (TSS), The Parish of Gold Coast North and The Parish of Surfers Paradise led to the collection, collation, and delivery of 15 hampers, full to the brim of pantry staples and some fun items for the festive season, for Anglicare Children's Youth and Families clients.

The resident community at The Southport School spent a morning sorting, packing and delivering the hampers to the Anglicare team who will distribute them this week, just in time for Christmas.

For 10 year-old TSS resident Suzy, the act of preparing the hampers was a fun way of celebrating Christmas.

"It was so much fun decorating the hampers and it was nice to be able to choose some of the things that I love to put in the hampers," Suzy said.

"I know that someone will be enjoying them over Christmas."

The hampers were stored in air-conditioned settings at Abri Residential Aged Care whilst awaiting collection, with the residents mentioning that they are keen to help with next year's hampers.

With the hampers set to be in homes this week thanks to the distribution work of Anglicare, Anglicare's Gold Coast Spiritual and Pastoral Care Coordinator Felicity Dougherty sees the entire initiative as the embodiment of Christian values made real in the community.

"Over the last 12 months I have come to learn about what the Anglicare Children's, Youth and Family Team do here on the Gold Coast and am amazed at the hard work, dedication, and commitment the team has to the people that they serve," Ms Dougherty said.

"The work the Anglicare staff do in this space is the essence of being Christ's hands and feet to our community."