

## To Fargo and back



**Bishop Daniel Abot and the President of the Nyarweng Association, Mr Chol Deng Jok (seated on Bishop Daniel's left), with the event leadership team at the Nyarweng Annual Convention and Fundraiser in Missouri in May 2024**

I recently returned from a trip to the United States where I spoke at a convention of US South Sudanese citizens and attended an important gathering of fellow former "Lost Boys".

The convention was also a fundraiser for food, fuel, medicines and other living expenses for people living in South Sudan and in neighbouring countries whose economies have been impacted by the war in Sudan since April last year.

South Sudan's economy relies on oil. Because South Sudan's oil is refined in Sudan, the South Sudanese economy is collapsing due to the war there.

The annual convention this year was about updating delegates about what is happening in the whole community of Duk in South Sudan, particularly about the hardship people are experiencing there.

People came from all over the United States and Canada for the convention and fundraiser in the city of St Joseph, Missouri.

A short explanation is needed here. All across the world where South Sudanese refugees have been welcomed and rebuilt their lives, we answer the call to assist those in refugee camps in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia, as well as internally displaced people in South Sudan.

Sometimes this assistance is as simple as sending money to buy the necessities of life and sometimes it is as complex as sending items like medicines. But in every case we, who are so blessed, answer the call with every dollar we can.

At the convention I also assisted with mediation. Like any community there are sometimes disagreements in the South Sudanese diaspora. I was so pleased to see people willing to come together at the convention to fundraise, despite some grievances, because they know that the plight of their people in South Sudan is a much bigger matter than their comparably smaller localised concerns. They raised US\$32,000, which is such a generous offering.

I was especially taken by a young boy, Kuol, who took up a collection in his kindy class. His little friends raised \$200 in coins from their own savings to renovate Nyarweng School in Duk County, reminding me of the [widow's mite](#) parable. Kuol's parents explained the flooding of Duk County to him, and he speaks with his cousins, aunts and uncles back home. When he went to fundraise with his classmates, he explained that his cousin's school in an African village had been destroyed by flooding, and so they have not been to school for a couple of years. He explained to his classmates that he wanted to visit someday and wanted to be able to communicate to his cousins in English, and without school, they wouldn't be able to learn English. That was precisely his "pitch".

At the convention I shared about the eight years I served as the honorary Bishop of the Diocese of Duk and my subsequent return to my Toowoomba-based wife, Rachel, and family. The delegates expressed such gratitude to the leaders in our Diocese for prioritising the funding of my Anglican Church Southern Queensland role, especially to Bishop Cam. They understand how important it is to have a leader able to focus on serving a diaspora community.

However, the primary reason for my trip was to visit Fargo in Dakota to attend a gathering of fellow "Lost Boys of South Sudan" — a group of over 20,000 boys, mainly from the Dinka and Nuer language groups, who fled because of military conscription and for being targeted for their gender by the then Government of Sudan during the Second Sudanese Civil War between 1983 and 2005. The boys who survived the month-long desert journeys — with all the dangers of disease, wild animals, dehydration, starvation and airplane bombing — then grew up in refugee camps. I was 10 when I fled my family's village, first to a refugee camp in Ethiopia and then again on foot to a refugee camp in Kenya.

It was a joy to meet up with many of the boys whom I walked in the desert with and grew up with in the refugee camps. They asked me to come and speak to them about the current situation in South Sudan, having just visited, and also as the former Bishop of the Diocese of Duk.

They came from places spread across the USA and Canada. They have built successful lives for themselves and their families in the countries that have given them safety. This group, whom I have known since I was a child, continue to assist with projects — they are the main supporters of an orphanage in Juba.

Because of their ongoing generous giving, many people in South Sudan and in refugee camps in neighbouring countries have a future to look forward to. These former Lost Boys in Canada and the US know that many would not make ends meet without their support.

I had many moving conversations in Fargo. I was very humbled by a woman, whom I first met in the Kenyan camp when I was 19 years old. She now lives in Canada and, upon hearing that I would be visiting Fargo, she told her husband that they needed to come and see me.

Another person, whom I met in the Kenyan camp when I was 19 years old, drove eight hours from Nebraska in his semi-trailer truck because he heard I was coming to Fargo.

Hugging people with tears of joy was the highlight of my recent trip to the US for me. We former Lost Boys had lots to reminisce about because we are such good friends — we kept each other alive on the long desert journeys and during our 15 years in the refugee camps.

I would like to thank the South Sudanese diaspora in the United States for inviting me to come and to join and speak at their events.

I especially thank the president of the Duk Community Association of the USA, Chol, and his wife, Nyanacha, for their hospitality in Fargo. They made me feel right at home and were so generous and welcoming.

**Reflections • Friday 23 August 2024 • By The Rev'd Lyn Kareta**

## **My childhood call to the priesthood**



**Lyn Kareta being ordained a deacon by Bishop Cam Venables in St John's Cathedral, Brisbane in December 2023**

I grew up with the Anglican Church as part of life — going to Sunday School and Girls Friendly Society gatherings in my young years. I recently reflected upon an experience I had in these years while attending a Sunday service with my family.

I recalled one Sunday watching the priest celebrate the Eucharist, and almost seeing myself in that celebration also — not as a vision of any sort, more like feeling a strong sense of who I was meant to be. In going home and trying to express this, I was met with “Girls can't be priests”, which was very true at the time. And so, while faith and church continued to be part of my life, I focused on family, study and career, which led me to study psychology and to a corporate career of about 20 years in

human resources. I worked mostly in organisational development where I led programmes focused upon leadership development and organisational culture change.

Amidst the busy-ness of life juggling work, kids in school and sport, and further post-graduate studies, it was through the people I met over time that I found myself becoming intently curious when talking with them about their experiences of faith and of following different senses of calling. These weren't conversations at church, rather they were people I came across in my work. I found the conversations fascinating — both the stories about people following their call to ordained ministry and the stories about how people initially followed a call before choosing a different direction. One work colleague in particular would tell me of her daughter's journey towards ordination. It was during these discussions with her, and her noting my curious interest in her daughter's journey, that she wondered whether it was perhaps something I needed to look into for myself. It was almost in seeing the possibility realised in someone else that I came to eventually see the possibility that may be there for me also.

My "go to" for seeking understanding on most topics usually involves turning to study, so that's where I started. After some research, I found a course in theology at Charles Sturt University. I became more deeply immersed in it all and after a while I started to speak with my parish priest at the time, The Rev'd Dr Marian Free, who provided guidance and helped me become a liturgical assistant, a parish council member, and more immersed in my parish community in general, something I was a bit shy about in the past. A Seekers Day came up and I remember Marian saying to me, "I don't know where your journey of exploring your vocation is right now, but this [Seekers Day] may be something to consider." She gave me the brochure, and pushing myself outside my comfort zone, I went along thinking I had nothing to lose. I thought, "I'll go along and see what it's all about and I can always walk away and not go any further." From there, the compelling thought soon became, "I can't not do this".

It was a no small transitional journey, though, to move from a career of about 20 years that I was well entrenched with. Yet something was constantly building within me — I knew I had to become closer to God, but I wasn't exactly sure how or what that meant. In acknowledging that, and in making the decision to turn fully to live my life for God, it's amazing how space was created in different ways, such as through seeking out flexible working arrangements to study and having an open dialogue with my parish priest and other mentors around me.

I initially undertook my study online while I was still working and trying to work out what I was being called towards. It was Marian who encouraged me to start studying in-person at St Francis College. As I did, I came to realise the importance of community while studying theology — to have people alongside me to discuss my learnings; to ask questions; to reflect more intently upon how God was speaking into my life; to lean on others when needed; and, of course, having teachers available who inspire you and help to shape your understanding of everything theological. The experience of being on campus certainly helped direct my calling and pathway into ministry, and became essential when I finally made it into formation.

Non-church friends often ask me, "So what does a standard week look like?" One of the many things I love about my life in ministry is how diverse every day is, with no two days being the same. There might be days where, in the morning I'm singing and dancing alongside children and their adults at "mainly music", to then leading aged care services in the afternoon, with pastoral encounters in between or pantry deliveries to the local community centre. Of course, there is also preparing for services, being part of the ministry team in regular worship, and being part of the broader Diocesan team. Then there is the privilege of being alongside people for their pastoral needs, including leading

funerals for peoples' loved ones, and simply being in relationship within community in such lifegiving ways — it's very different to tending to the employment lifecycle of people in my previous HR career.

My suggestion for anyone who thinks they may have a call to ordained ministry is to be brave. Be brave to open up a dialogue with others to discuss the feelings of your call, particularly with your parish priest.

Be brave to get outside your comfort zone, to take the first step towards Seekers Day.

And notice your inner dialogue — if it changes over time from “Can I do this?” to “I can't not do this”, you may be on the right path towards your calling, right where God wants you to be.

Be brave because you have nothing to lose from exploring your call, and everything to gain in living life fully for God.

**Editor's note: Explore your vocation at Seekers Day 2024, which will be held between 1pm and 3pm on Saturday 31 August as part of the St Francis College Open Day. Visit the [St Francis College website](#) for more information.**

**Spotlight Q&A • Monday 26 August 2024**

## **Q&A with St Francis College formation student, intrepid traveller, former expat accountant, and St Paul's School graduate, Richard Butler**



**Current formation student Richard Butler at “Middle Earth”, right on the equator in Ecuador, in 2009**

## **Where do you currently live and where do you worship?**

I live in Toowoomba, and for my second year in Formation I am placed in The Parish of Warwick.

## **How long have you been involved in the Anglican Church and in what roles?**

I was confirmed in Grade 9 at St Paul's School, Bald Hills, and was co-sacristan in Grade 12. After moving to Toowoomba several years later, I became involved in one of the parishes there and became a server, a liturgical assistant, treasurer, a warden, and a Synod representative over a period of five years. I then spent the next 24 years abroad as an expat accountant, and upon returning, commenced my theological studies at St Francis College.

## **What does your role involve?**

As a formation student in Warwick this year, one of my learning goals is to develop my capacity to provide spiritual and emotional support to those in need. Providing pastoral care as part of aged care ministry this year has been one of immense value for me as I get to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to residents in aged care in a way that they understand and appreciate.

## **What has been one of the highlights or best memories of your time?**

I conduct a regular service of worship in the advanced dementia wing of an aged care home, and through the use of carefully selected hymns, residents who can be non-responsive much of the time, start singing with gusto when they hear a familiar tune. Recently, when I played "How Great Thou Art", several residents started singing passionately and holding their arms out. I felt privileged to see the impact such ministry can have on the lives of these residents — that through music a door opens up to allow us to see part of their real personality.

## **What projects or activities are you currently working on?**

I am currently working on an aged care concert that will see residents of various aged care homes in the region come to St Mark's Anglican Church in Warwick to enjoy a morning of listening and singing to favourite songs and hymns on the large pipe organ, followed by morning tea. It is an opportunity to provide community fellowship to aged care residents as they enjoy time outside of the care home facilities.

## **Why and when did you become drawn to ordained ministry?**

I have always possessed a strong desire to serve God; however, the specific feeling of calling towards ordained ministry strengthened around five years ago to the extent that I need to specifically follow this path to see where it leads me. To be able to convey the word of God to others in a way that the message can be received and understood by them is key for me.

## **What advice do you have for people considering ordained ministry?**

It is okay to feel unsure — I initially wrestled with what I felt was a "pull towards the Church". Remember to talk to those people in your life whose opinions you value, including your parish priest. Most importantly, share your intimate concerns with God through prayer.

## **What do you enjoy most about studying at St Francis College?**

Having lived as an expat for over 20 years, life could become a lonely experience at times, so I have appreciated the opportunity St Francis College has provided to make such good friends with those who are travelling a similar path to my own. And I know some of these people will be friends for life.

## **Can you tell us a little about your Christian faith journey?**

Ever since Confirmation, I have possessed a strong Christian faith, and whilst some more remote expat locations have meant regular church worship was not possible, being exposed to different cultures and social systems, has enabled me to gain a broader understanding of where we can find God in these cultures.

## **How does your Christian faith inspire you and shape your outlook, life choices and character?**

I genuinely care about others, and I always strive to see the good in others. I believe both of these qualities stem from my Christian faith. When faced with a dilemma, I often find I am asking myself "What would Jesus do?" and this generally guides my decision making.

## **What are the primary strengths of the Church and what is the best way to make the most of these for the benefit of our communities?**

The Church is a source of Love and a source of Hope. Today, we live in a world where we are used to an economy of exchange — you do something for me, and I will do something for you. Yet, in these troubled times, there is such a huge opportunity for the Church to be a beacon of that love and hope, by reaching out to the local community with welcoming arms of faith and grace, conveying the message to simply trust in God's love. To do this in a way that the wider community can understand is paramount.

## **What is your favourite Bible scripture and why?**

[Luke 24.13-35](#) — "The Road to Emmaus" story always makes me smile. It is a journey from sadness to joy, darkness to light, as the two disciples finally see their companion as Jesus. In this story, Word and sacrament – scripture and meal – feed off each other. Put them together, and you have the centre of Christian living — you have the structure of our Eucharist service.

## **What person of faith inspires you the most and why?**

On Christmas Day each year, the Queen would give a Christmas message, including a summary of major events that took place in that year. The telecast would often include positive reflections on differing faiths without criticism, and she would always draw on her own Christian faith with a reflection of the Christmas story and the works of Jesus. The strength of her Christian faith was evident — it was something I always drew inspiration from as she would, in her unique way, spread the good news of the Gospel, which is what I am currently being formed to do.

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

I believe the importance comes back to the two great Commandments. To love your neighbour as yourself, there needs to be Reconciliation, as well as recognition of past wrongs, with a genuine desire to care for all. To love the Lord your God, there is so much Christians can learn from the spirituality of First Nations people. The nature of God is such that it surpasses all understanding; however, by listening to each other, we can gain more knowledge and awareness, and that can only be a good thing.

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

I attended a Christian worship service in another language and another culture. At the end of the service, I was handed a plant and an envelope. When I arrived home, I discovered that the envelope contained a cash gift. I was overwhelmed with emotion because I felt unworthy of this gift from those who seemed less well-off than I was. However, I accepted the gift because to refuse would be disrespectful to this congregation's culture.

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

I go to gym, though I don't particularly enjoy it. However, I am a firm believer in "healthy body, healthy mind", and I feel this pays dividends for me in this regard. I also enjoy playing tennis and listening to classical music.

## **What would you describe as your greatest achievement?**

Completing the four-day Inca Trail to Machu Picchu in Peru before my 40th birthday.

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

"Be still and know that I am God" ([Psalm 46.10](#)).

## **Where do you do your best thinking?**

Laying down in bed.

## **What's your best childhood memory?**

School holidays at my grandparents' cattle farm in Central Queensland.

## **What is your karaoke go-to song?**

"Groovy Kind of Love", by Phil Collins.

## **What is your earliest memory?**

I was being carried by my mother down a hospital corridor to visit my grandfather who had broken his leg. We did the Maths, and I would have only been six months old. But I have that memory.



## Of all the countries you have lived in, which one was your favourite?

Fiji tops the list. There is something about its simplicity that I find so peaceful and relaxing — great weather, great people, great lifestyle.

**Editor's note:** Explore your vocation at Seekers Day 2024, which will be held between 1pm and 3pm on Saturday 31 August as part of the St Francis College Open Day. Visit the [St Francis College website](#) for more information.

Reflections • Tuesday 13 August 2024 • By The Rev'd Charlie Lacey

## Tough Questions: Can we reverse Church decline in the West?



**"The phrase, 'Church decline', is itself a misnomer. The true Church of Jesus Christ includes every follower of Jesus alive today, as well as everyone who has ever belonged to Jesus, including those saved by grace prior to his coming into the world," (The Rev'd Charlie Lacey)**

It is well documented that Christianity in the Western world is in decline. Is this an unavoidable and irreversible trend to which we must resign ourselves, or might we hope for, and work towards, a very different picture? To help us answer this, let us begin by asking a different question, namely, 'Could a tiny group of Jesus' followers in the first century have organised a mission that would eventually lead to the Christianisation of the Roman World?' History replies with a resounding 'yes'. And perhaps Jesus would respond to both situations by reminding us, *"With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible."* (Matthew 19.26).

The phrase, 'Church decline', is itself a misnomer. The true Church of Jesus Christ includes every follower of Jesus alive today, as well as everyone who has ever belonged to Jesus, including those saved by grace prior to his coming into the world. When a Christian dies, they do not cease to be part of the Church, rather they await Jesus' return when they will be raised to new and everlasting life. The

decline of the church is therefore an impossibility. If only one person in the world were to give their life to Jesus over the course of the next year, the Church will have grown by a factor of one.

However, we should not use this knowledge as a cop out. Jesus has not given up on building his Church and neither should we. So, what lessons can we learn from the rapid expansion of the early Church in the first century? Firstly, the primary concern of the Apostles was proclaiming the gospel, which is neatly summarised in John 3.16 and the creeds. Jesus died for our sins and without him we are lost and eternally separated from God. The core message of salvation through repentance and faith in Jesus must remain front and centre. In recent decades, many churches have been distracted by other agendas, sometimes at the expense of the gospel itself.

Of course, the outworkings of the gospel in a believer's life are manifold. Should we feed the hungry? Yes! Should we welcome strangers? Yes! Should we care for the sick and the dying? Yes! Should we visit prisoners? Again, an emphatic yes! Jesus commanded us to do these things and true discipleship necessitates them. However, the core business of the Church is to bring people to repentance and faith in Jesus, that they would be filled with the Holy Spirit and led to a life of true discipleship.

When it comes to sharing the gospel, we live at a time of unprecedented opportunity. There is an emerging generation that, by and large, has almost no understanding of the Christian message; we are bombarded with a confusing array of new ideas and philosophies; and, in a world that seems more chaotic by the day, many are beginning to doubt humanity's ability to fix things. In short, there is a dearth of hope and a hunger for truth. A relatively recent survey conducted by NCLS suggests that 37% of Australians would likely accept an invitation to a church service, if asked by a close friend or family member.

Can Church decline be reversed in the West? That depends on whether we can recover our confidence in the message that has been entrusted to us.

**First published on the [St Andrew's, Springfield website](#) in August 2024.**

## Why I am organising an inter-faith prayer vigil for Gaza with other young people



**"One example of the persecution towards young people in both the West Bank and Gaza, which are both occupied, is the indefinite detention without charges...Layan Nasir, a young Anglican Palestinian aged 24, has had her safety and freedom stripped away since her abduction and detention without formal charges by Israeli soldiers in April this year," (LM, a young St Andrew's, Indooroopilly parishioner)**

Growing up, I never understood what Dad being Irish from "Northern Ireland" truly meant. As I grew older, people responded to me saying, "Oh, so you're not actually Irish" because Northern Ireland is technically part of the UK. This started to undermine my feelings towards my Irish Identity.

During my childhood, I learnt of the oppression that still exists beneath the surface towards Irish people. I learnt of our history as Catholics in Northern Ireland being treated like second-class citizens, including not having the same voting rights due to the [plural voting system](#) and how people were stopped at multiple checkpoints in a 20-minute car ride. I once wondered about our Irish language, only to realise that had been taken, too.

"No Irish. No Blacks. No Dogs" was on a poster I saw in a photo that was plastered outside a bed and breakfast in England. Although that poster would not be allowed now, those ideologies still sometimes stand. The atrocities towards the Irish people were justified because of our ethnicity and came from colonial lust for power and greed.

Violence in Ireland officially ended in 1998 under the Good Friday Agreement. When I think about "The Troubles" in Ireland, I also think about all the young people who died in the conflict who deserved to have a future. I would never have thought that I would see the oppression they faced being played out even more violently towards young Palestinians right now.

Despite their own oppression, the Irish have never forgotten about the Palestinian people. I have always been told to never forget about Palestinians. As the violence has gotten worse recently, I have watched it unfold on my phone and felt like I can't do anything. I think about the young Palestinians who don't have a bright future or who will never have a future after their lives have been cut so short.

For me, I want to be someone who speaks up for people who can't speak for themselves. I have always felt this way. When I was eight years old, I spoke at a rally in support of refugees that was televised on *ABC News* and I wrote a letter to the Australian prime minister at the time about his refugee policies. I was awarded the Rotary Young Citizen Peacemaker Award when I graduated primary school, and I am part of Amnesty International at school.

I think that it is important for young people to show solidarity and pray for Palestinians who are suffering from violence in Gaza, and to grieve and lament the lives lost from the oppression that began well before October 7.

In 1948 more than 700,000 Palestinians were permanently displaced and uprooted from their homes when the State of Israel was created in the "Nakba" (which means "catastrophe" in Arabic). Thousands of Palestinians were also killed. "Nakba Day" is officially commemorated on 15 May by Palestinians to this day.

The events of the Nakba can be traced back to the 1917 "[Balfour Declaration](#)", through which Britain pledged to Zionist leaders that it would help establish "in Palestine [of] a national home for the Jewish people". Like Palestine, there has been a history of Britain dividing other countries, including splitting Ireland, with Northern Ireland remaining under British rule.

With the relentless bombing in Gaza, I think about the future of the young Palestinians there if they do live. More than 16,000 of the 40,000 people killed in Gaza are children. However, even surviving this statistic as a young person in Gaza means living in constant fear of being killed, grief from loss of family and friends and displacement from your home with no protection or safe place to go. For these young people as their schools continue to be bombed, their education is halted, which will continue to impact their quality of life socially and economically. There are also many other pressing issues for youth in Gaza, including health and sanitation issues from limited access to healthcare. They may not be killed from Israel's bombardment, but from preventable diseases spreading around Gaza like wildfire. The youth of Gaza won't remember what it is like to live in peace if this war continues.

One example of the persecution towards young people in both the West Bank and Gaza, which are both occupied, is the indefinite detention without charges. A similar practice young people faced during The Troubles in Northern Ireland — this was referred to as "internment without trial". [Layan Nasir](#), a young Anglican Palestinian aged 24, has had her safety and freedom stripped away since her abduction and detention without formal charges by Israeli soldiers in April this year. Layan's parents have only been allowed to see her twice since her detainment and now her mother has growing fears for her health and wellbeing. Layan continues to face the uncertainty of when she will see her family again and be released — a similar storyline for the many other [3,615 Palestinians](#) who are being detained, including 40 children.

**Author's note: I am helping to organise and lead an inter-faith "Gathering in Prayer for Gaza" prayer vigil at 7pm on Saturday 31 August 2024 at St Andrew's Anglican Church in Indooroopilly. Christian, Muslim, Jewish and other young people of faith will be leading prayers and reading from their holy texts. There will also be prayer spaces. People of all ages and faith**

backgrounds are welcome to come along. All attendees under 18 years must be accompanied by a supervising adult. There will be a supper after the vigil from 8pm. Please see [Facebook](#) for more information.

Editor's note: Find out how to support Layan Nassir through the "[Free Layan Nassir](#)" Sabeel-Kairos initiative.

Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 29 August 2024 • By Jenny Clark

## The Ten Commitments — the journey to date



Anglican Church Southern Queensland's Archdeacon Lucy Morris, Bishop Cam Venables, Jennifer Clark and Archbishop Jeremy Greaves with the "Not Now, Not Ever. Together" pledge, which they signed along with other Synod members, at the Anglican Church Southern Queensland's annual Synod meeting on the weekend of 22-23 June 2024 at Churchie

It has been more than 20 months since I started as the Anglican Church Southern Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Project Officer, so this seems like a good time to reflect on progress and achievements to date.

A Domestic and Family Violence Working Group of dedicated clergy and lay people formed and nurtured this work well before my arrival. The Rev'd Gillian Moses was the initial Chair of the working group, helping to guide this work across our Diocese and the Church nationally.

Implementing the "[10 Commitments](#) for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia" sits at the core of my role. It is a unique document — part strategy and part plan — that addresses the challenging space where theology, culture, tradition and power intersect.

Many organisations have a "Domestic and Family Violence Plan". Most seek to support victim survivors, particularly their "own" people, and commit to supporting overall initiatives and DFV

services. More organisations need to ask the questions that the 10 Commitments do to challenge the drivers to violence, including questions about ways of thinking, culture, inequity and power.

The 10 Commitments have 41 “Strategies that will enable this commitment”, with 38 ideas for action or “Ideas for how we can work together to achieve this” listed under the strategies.

While implementing the 10 Commitments, I have been grateful for the wisdom initially provided by Gillian and then by The Ven. Dr Lucy Morris, who took over chairing the working group in late 2023. Their dedication has helped to support and prioritise this work.

So, what has the ASCQ project achieved in the last 20 months? Here, in no particular order, are some of the outcomes to date:

- Review and updating of material on the [ACSQ's website](#) (**Commitment 2**)
- Distribution of services of lament, which were created by Archdeacon Lucy Morris and me (**Commitment 1**).
- Taking the Not Now, Not Ever Together pledge at Synod (**Commitment 6**).
- St John's Cathedral *On the Way* podcast on DFV prevention (**Commitment 3**).
- Participation in national Anglican DFV prevention work (such as the forum of practice established by the National DFV Program Manager, The Rev'd Tracy Lauersen, through the Families and Culture Commission) and Queensland ecumenical work through Queensland Churches Together (QTC) (such as the development of an Advent resource) (**Commitment 2**).
- Members of the Joint Churches Domestic Violence Prevention Project (JCDVPP), including me, delivered training (**Commitment 8**).
- I ran sessions with St Francis Theological College formation students (**Commitment 8**).
- The working group endorsed three free [Ridley College training courses](#) for clergy, church workers and other Anglican community members (**Commitment 8**).
- Diocesan Leadership Team reflections in 2023 and 2024 (**Commitment 8**).
- Jointly, with Anglicare, developing a whole-of-Church [submission](#) to the development of “Queensland's strategy to strengthen responses to people using DFV” (**Commitment 6**).
- I attended the third National Anglican Gathering on Domestic Violence and the Church in 2023 (**Commitment 8**).
- Along with other ACSQ clergy and staff, I attended an ecumenical youth gathering at St John's Cathedral, which was organised by the Queensland Faith Communities Council and focussed on respect and consent (**Commitment 3**).
- At least six Red Rose Foundation “Red Benches” have been installed in the Diocese (**Commitment 2**).

It has been a privilege supporting and being supported by the ACSQ's Domestic and Family Violence Working Group — each member provides a unique and valued contribution to this work. Extra thanks go to two remarkable women — Lesley Briggs (GFS — An Anglican Ministry) and Vanessa Fowler (Queensland Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Council).

Two annual periods provide a particular focus for this work — [Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month](#) in May and the [16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence](#) in November/December. In May this year a candlelight vigil was held in remembrance of those who have lost their lives as a result of domestic abuse. This vigil was held at St Francis College in conjunction with Queensland Churches Together. It was a special event, as was the Evensong on 26 May 2024 in St John's Cathedral for Domestic and Family Violence Prevention where the St Peter's Lutheran College

choir sung and the sermon was given by The Rev'd Gillian Moses (the Evensong can be viewed on [St John's Cathedral's YouTube channel](#)).

The absolute highlight for me of the work to date is the signing of the Not Now, Not Ever Together pledge at Synod this year where Archbishop Jeremy so eloquently connected this initiative to other forms of peacemaking. The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is the [first faith-based organisation](#) to “take the pledge” (Commitment 6). I was overwhelmed by the enthusiasm of Synod delegates to sign the pledge and be active participants in this work. The depth of understanding of the impact of domestic and family violence was clear — many stories were shared, and many Anglican domestic and family violence prevention champions emerged.

My current focus is on finalising a revised domestic and family violence policy. Revised procedures and guidelines will follow (Commitment 6). For the remainder of the year, the workplan includes a number of workshops, revision of ARC material, a review of marriage preparation material, trialling of bystander training through Queensland Churches Together, and supporting 16 Days of Activism activities.

**Author's note: The Anglican Church Southern Queensland is committed to the implementation of the [“Ten Commitments for Prevention and Response to Domestic and Family Violence in the Anglican Church of Australia”](#) as our Church's response to domestic and family violence.**

**The following 24/7 telephone services have a long track record responding to people experiencing domestic and family violence:**

**DV Connect 1800 811 811 helps Queenslanders wanting to leave an abusive relationship.**

**1800RESPECT is a national service providing information, referrals, and counselling.**

**If you, or the person you are assisting, are in immediate danger, call the Police on 000.**

## Anglican Church Southern Queensland synod carries three related motions: anti-semitic attacks, Islamophobic attacks and a new social cohesion working group



**"During the early onset of COVID-19, most people of Asian descent whom I know were looking over their shoulders because of vitriolic social media commentary and news stories about verbal and physical attacks," says Peter Branjerdporn from the ACSQ's Justice Unit**

"Social cohesion" was raised during the recent Synod, and in the context of three Synod resolutions, including one that:

- encourages all Christians to oppose anti-semitic attacks wherever they occur.
- encourages all Christians to oppose Islamophobic attacks wherever they occur.
- assemble[s] a working group to explore ways of supporting social cohesion.

The following Synod motion, which was carried about "anti-semitic attacks", was moved by David Walter Drake from The Parish of Hamilton and seconded by Michael Willis from The Parish of East Brisbane:

"That this 2024 Synod of the Anglican Church in Southern Queensland seeks social cohesion in Australia, condemns recent acts of aggression and intimidation against Jewish fellow citizens and encourages all Christians to oppose anti-semitic attacks wherever they occur."

While this motion was being debated, The Rev'd Canon Paul Mitchell from The Parish of Bulimba sought to succinctly combine both anti-semitism and Islamophobia in the one motion. However, because a given Synod motion needs to be considered on the basis of the motion's intention this was deemed "out of order".



The following Synod motion was subsequently carried about “Islamophobic attacks”, and was moved by The Rev’d Patrick King from The Parish of Hamilton and seconded by The Rev’d Jilleen Chambers from The Parish of Kilcoy:

“That this 2024 Synod of the Anglican Church in Southern Queensland seeks social cohesion in Australia, condemns recent acts of aggression and intimidation against Islamic fellow citizens and encourages all Christians to oppose Islamophobic attacks wherever they occur.”

The following third Synod motion, which was carried about assembling a social cohesion working group, was moved by The Ven. Robert Sutherland CSC from The Parish of Moggill-Mt Crosby and seconded by The Rev’d Kate Ross from The Parish of Bundaberg:

“That this Synod notes with sadness the religiously motivated attacks within our community, which diminish our social cohesion, and calls on the Synod to assemble a working group to explore ways of supporting social cohesion.”

The Ven Rob Sutherland, who is also an Army chaplain, spoke eloquently when he moved this motion, saying that:

“Your Grace, members of Synod, we are surrounded as the Church has been since the time of St Paul by those who wish to divide our community. There are many who use religion — their religion — as an excuse to divide, to disparage and at times to physically attack others in our community on the basis of their religion. Australia has worked hard at many levels to promote religious tolerance and inclusion. As an Australian Defence Force chaplain, I work in support of those of any, or no, declared faith. Social cohesion is vital to any effective Defence Force or any organisation. I have seen and used things which, from a faith perspective, can work positively to the benefit of all. In my experience Christians benefit greatly from understanding the religious beliefs of others — those of no claimed faith can both understand what they do believe in, and often find their own need for faith through this process. In my experience everyone believes in something even if they don’t know it. We as a Church, as a diocese, have opportunities to provide leadership.”

I have given much thought to social cohesion and racism and what these mean in the inter-faith and wider Australian community contexts since Synod, and to how our Diocese can be a leader in this space.

Dr Max Kaiser, an Australian Jewish historian who is an expert on Jewish responses to fascism, including on Nazi Germany, since the 1940s explains that:

“...the only way to effectively fight antisemitism is by committing to work in partnership with other groups facing bigotry and discrimination, and to fight all forms of racism.”

Similarly, Australia’s Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman said “a united approach to anti-racism is essential if our society is to better address and ultimately dismantle systemic racial discrimination in all its forms.”

And, Dr Nora Amath, who is the Executive Director of the Islamophobia Register Australia, is always quick to condemn both Islamophobia and anti-semitism, along with racism as a whole, in her organisation’s statements and in her speeches, recently stating that:

“By fostering an environment of respect, understanding and empathy, we can together combat Islamophobia, antisemitism and all forms of racism...”

So, it makes sense for us to work towards stopping both anti-semitism and Islamophobia, and other religious-based or racialised prejudice, by working in a collaborative way to create a kinder and more compassionate community.

I have experienced racism, both directly and indirectly — and it is demoralising and dehumanising. In a former workplace, a colleague started ranting to me about “Asian students coming here to study and never returning home” and “taking our jobs” all morning. I was so upset I left work early.

During the early onset of COVID-19, most people of Asian descent whom I know were looking over their shoulders because of vitriolic social media commentary and news stories of verbal and physical attacks. Because I am ethnically Chinese, I was anxious myself during this period.

As someone who has experienced racism, I understand why a whole-of-community approach to all religious-based prejudice and racism is essential.

And, I look forward to working collaboratively and constructively with the Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s social cohesion working group and with inter-faith and multicultural leaders so all people in our community can live in peace and safety.

**News • Wednesday 7 August 2024 • By The Most Rev’d and Right Hon. Justin Welby**

## **Archbishop of Canterbury statement on the ICJ’s Advisory Opinion on Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories**



**"The Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (19 July 2024) makes definitively clear that Israel’s presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is unlawful and needs to end as rapidly as possible." (The Archbishop of Canterbury — image courtesy of the World Council of Churches)**

In a statement today welcoming the International Court of Justice's Advisory Opinion on Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Archbishop of Canterbury has urged governments around the world to reverse the "deeply damaging trend" of upholding international law "in a selective manner".

Archbishop Justin Welby says the State of Israel has been "denying the Palestinian people dignity, freedom and hope" — and that ending its occupation of Palestinian territory is "a legal and moral necessity".

**Read the full statement by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev'd Justin Welby:**

The Advisory Opinion by the International Court of Justice (19 July 2024) makes definitively clear that Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is unlawful and needs to end as rapidly as possible.

At a time when the world is marked by increasing violations of international law – and commitment to a rules-based system is in question – it is imperative that governments around the world reaffirm their unwavering commitment to all decisions by the International Court of Justice, irrespective of the situation. International law protects our shared humanity, and safeguards human dignity and flourishing. To resist a world where actions such as torture, hostage-taking and indiscriminate violence become the norm, we must apply the law without fear or favour in all circumstances. But for too long it has been applied and upheld in a selective manner that threatens our common peace and security. Now is the time to reverse that deeply damaging trend.

Having visited our Palestinian Christian brothers and sisters many times over recent decades, it is clear to me that the regime imposed by successive Israeli governments in the Occupied Palestinian Territories is one of systemic discrimination. Through annexing Palestinian land for illegal settlements, depriving Palestinians access to their own natural resources, and imposing a system of military rule that denies them safety and justice, the State of Israel has been denying the Palestinian people dignity, freedom and hope. I am particularly aware of how this is impacting Palestinian Christians, threatening their future and viability. It is clear that ending the occupation is a legal and moral necessity.

I pray that all UN member states respond positively to this Advisory Opinion by ensuring their individual and common actions are consistent with it – and pave the way for the realisation of the Palestinian people's fundamental right to self-determination.

**First published on the [Archbishop of Canterbury website](#) on 2 August 2024.**

## "Simply because they were human, I admire"



**"Given that homeless women fare more poorly than men, it is timely that this month's Outreach through Offerings project is The Forgotten Women," (The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt)**

*At this particular time I have no one  
Particular person to grieve for, though there must  
Be many, many unknown ones going to dust  
Slowly, not remembered for what they have done  
Or left undone. For these, then, I will grieve  
Being impartial, unable to deceive.*

*How they lived, or died, is quite unknown,  
And, by that fact gives my grief purity—  
An important person quite apart from me  
Or one obscure who drifted down alone.  
Both or all I remember, have a place.  
For these I never encountered face to face.*

*Sentiment will creep in. I cast it out  
Wishing to give these classical repose,  
No epitaph, no poppy and no rose  
From me, and certainly no wish to learn about  
The way they lived or died. In earth or fire  
They are gone. Simply because they were human, I admire.*

By Elizabeth Jennings, "In Memory Of Anyone Unknown To Me"

Two of our rough sleepers have died in the past two weeks. They did not die at the Cathedral site, but within a few days of being here.

Just over a week ago a young lady called into the Cathedral and asked me to bless her new rosary beads. When we had finished, she asked me if I could say a prayer for a friend of hers who had died. She talked of this friend's kindness and of the deep friendship that they had shared. She also talked of how she was with him when he dropped dead as they walked along the street. She then told me his name. He was one of the rough sleepers who had died. We lit a candle and gave thanks for his life, for his kindness and the hole left in the lives of his friends.

The second of our rough sleepers died in his sleep, probably of hypothermia, in a suburban Brisbane garden.

More than likely neither will be remembered at a funeral. The State pays a contractor to undertake the respectful, but no frills (a funeral being a frill), disposal of the bodies of those who die without means.

In early 2024 [The Guardian](#) published a story following a year-long investigation into the deaths of 627 homelessness people. It revealed that Australians experiencing homelessness have an average life expectancy of just 44 years (45.2 for men and 40.1 for women), which is more than 30 years lower than the median age at death for the general population. Note the substantially lower life-expectancy for women compared to men, the reverse of the situation found in the wider community.

Other than when an investigative journalist looks at it, the issue of reduced life expectancy for those who sleep rough does not get much attention. It is something of an invisible pandemic.

The homeless, the fact they exist at all and their plight, serve as reminders that our society does not regard everyone of being of equal value. Their unreported deaths and the reduced life expectancy do not cause ripples in society. Without knowing the complexity of their stories, we still hear people speak of the homeless in dismissive terms, such as hopeless, and blaming them for their plight.

Yet, whilst the young woman's friend will not be remembered at a funeral, other than through the short funeral-like service we created during our simple ceremony of lighting a candle and saying a prayer, the fact that she was able to share his story with me, and the value she placed on his friendship and love, serves as a reminder that those who the mainstream might label as hopeless are valuable contributors to the lives of those who truly know them.

Given that homeless women fare more poorly than men, it is timely that this month's Outreach through Offerings project is [The Forgotten Women](#). The Forgotten Women is a unique, grassroots housing initiative for homeless women over 55. This not-for-profit project mission is to put a roof over the heads of as many of these vulnerable women as possible. Through the acquisition of suitable properties, The Forgotten Women project will ensure these women have access to secure, safe and affordable housing options that enable them to age in place with dignity and security. For more details check out the information in Monthly Notices and on the [Home Page of the Cathedral's website](#).

Simply because they were human, I admire.

**Editor's note: First published in the St John's Cathedral Weekly News on 12 August 2024.**

## Q&A with amateur entomologist, cello player, karate black belt and professional missiologist, Dr Stephen Harrison



Stephen Harrison with his grandmother, Grace Colk, simultaneously blowing out birthday cake candles and eating the entire cake in a single bite in the early 1970s

### Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I have lived on the Gold Coast for 27 years, but I grew up in Brisbane. I go to Robina Anglican Church.

### How long have you been involved in the Anglican Church and in what roles?

I grew up in the Anglican Church and was involved in Anglican youth ministries when I was a teenager. I trained to become a youth worker at St Francis College and my first placement was with the St Peter's, Southport community. I have worked as a parish youth minister and school and university chaplain, as well as Diocesan Youth Children's and Families Officer, Director of Mission for the Anglican Schools Commission and as Executive Director of the Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission. I currently serve as Director of Mission, Research and Advocacy for Anglicare Southern Queensland.

### What does your current role involve?

Within Anglicare I provide leadership to the Mission, Research and Advocacy team members in their diverse work. A large part of my day-to-day work is building relationships with parishes, schools and the wider Church and helping Anglicare connect with its Anglican identity. I also represent Anglicare on the Diocese's Social Responsibilities Committee.

## **What do you enjoy most about being able to serve the Church in your Anglicare role?**

I love working for Anglicare because I am inspired daily by the passion and energy of our staff as they engage in vital work in our community, such as advocacy and support for people experiencing homelessness, caring for victim-survivors of domestic and family violence, supporting foster and kinship carers, providing nursing care and assistance in homes and caring for people in residential aged care. These are just some of the core missional activities of Anglicare.

## **What has been one of the highlights or best memories of your time in your current role?**

One of the highlights of my current role was organising and participating in visits to different Anglicare services with Archbishop Jeremy earlier this year. Interacting with clients and hearing about the positive impact Anglicare is having was incredibly energising. I especially enjoyed participating in some of the social activities at one of our respite centres.

## **What projects or activities are you currently working on?**

One of the small projects I am working on at the moment is an Anglicare Prayer Diary to help the wider Church become more aware of Anglicare's work and to better enable our broader Church community to pray for us as we together seek to create a more loving, just and inclusive society, reflecting the life and teachings of Jesus.

## **Can you tell us a little about Anglicare Sunday, which will be celebrated this year on 8 September?**

Anglicare Sunday is a day for the whole Church to celebrate the work of Anglicare. It is a day for our whole Diocesan community to give thanks for all that Anglicare does as part of our Church.

## **How can parishes and ministries celebrate Anglicare Sunday?**

We ask everyone to learn a bit more about what we do and to pray for us. [Resources](#), including a liturgy, brief videos, flyers and PowerPoint slides, have been created for parishes and ministries to assist their clergy and lay leaders with doing this.

## **Can you tell us a little about your Christian faith journey?**

I grew up in a Christian family who were committed to their local Anglican church. My faith was formed and nurtured by many things through my life, including highly engaged parents, youth ministry activities, the Catholic school I went to and the input and support of many Christian people.

## **How does your Christian faith inspire you and shape your outlook, life choices and character?**

My faith is firmly centred on the person of Jesus that I find in the Gospels. His life compels me to a live a life of service to God as part of the Church.

## **What are the primary strengths of the Church and what is the best way to make the most of these for the benefit of our communities?**

One of the great strengths of the Church is that it is embedded in local communities. Being local is important because Church folk know their wider local community and can help the Church connect and serve in ways that best minister to and support their respective community.

### **What is your favourite Bible scripture why?**

[Matthew 6.25-34](#). I love the idea that we are not to worry about ourselves while we participate in God's mission in the world. God cares for us and we are not to worry about what tomorrow brings.

### **What person of faith inspires you the most and why?**

I am inspired by Aunty Dr Rose Elu and her commitment to her faith and the Torres Strait Island community. I am particularly inspired by her customary law advocacy over more than three decades that led to the Queensland Government legally recognising traditional adoption practices of Torres Strait Islander families.

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples are our family, both as Christians and as human beings. Great injustice continues to be done to them, and as [Anglicans](#) we are called "to seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation". In order to do this, we must walk in the light, accepting the true shared history of this country. This means listening and walking a path to peace and healing together.

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

The parents of my wife, Cathy, helped us when we wanted to buy a house. This was no small gesture and something I will always remember.

### **What is the best piece of advice you have ever received and who gave you this advice?**

I read "What I'm not up on, I may be down on" in Marlene Wilson's *The Effective Management of Volunteer Programs* and it has shaped how I work with people since.

### **If you found yourself on a deserted island, what three things would you choose to have with you?**

My cello, my favourite book and an etch a sketch.

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

"Don't think about this billboard" because I have a weird sense of humour and like the idea of people thinking about why someone would put that message on a billboard.

### **What book have you given away most as a gift and why?**

*Getting Things Done: the art of stress-free productivity* by David Allen because it provides one of the best frameworks for being effective in whatever you are doing.



### **What's your best childhood memory?**

Camping at Adder Rock on *Minjerribah* (Stradbroke Island) with my family.

### **What is your karaoke go-to song?**

I have never participated in karaoke, but if I was forced to, I would sing "Never Gonna Give You Up" by Rick Astley.

### **What makes you nostalgic and why?**

When I hear certain TV show theme songs, they take me back to special times in my life and help me to remember all that was going on. One of my favourites is "Reflections" by Diana Ross and the Supremes, which was the music for the TV show, *China Beach*.

### **What is your earliest memory?**

My earliest memory is from when I was four or five playing in the big sandpit at kindergarten.

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

Usually going for a long walk helps me feel better. The time to think helps me to get into a better frame of mind.

### **What is the most surprising thing that happened to you recently?**

At our last Synod I met a Parish of Logan Synod Rep, Fabian, from Myanmar who knows members of the Myanmar delegation who attended the International Conference of Young Anglicans in 1997. I spent a lot of time with them at the conference and we became friends, but lost contact over the years. He reconnected me with them.

### **What is your secret skill?**

Finding camouflaged insects on foliage.

### **What item should you throw out, but can't bear to part with?**

I am not a person that keeps things when they should be thrown out or passed on to others.

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

I think I would like to re-live one of the first days I spent with my wife, Cathy, when we starting dating. I think it would be interesting to remember my thoughts and feelings on those days.

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

I love fried chicken and would happily eat it forever.

## Where do you do your best thinking?

Walking or driving in the car.

## What's your unanswerable question — the question you are always asking yourself?

This question has become my unanswerable question.

**Editor's note: Sunday 8 September 2024 is Anglicare Sunday in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland. Anglicare is an important part of our Church and Anglicare Sunday provides a terrific opportunity for parishes and other faith communities to celebrate and pray for its clients, staff and work in the community. Anglicare offers residential aged care, in-home care, mental health support, youth programmes, care for those escaping domestic and family violence, support for people experiencing homelessness, foster care, and family services. Some prayers and other resources can be downloaded in this [Google Drive folder](#).**

**Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 29 August 2024 • By Marion Rutter, Hannah Jesser, Jacqueline Fagg, Elodie O'Brien, Susan Bamford**

## Cannon Hill Anglican College students assemble 400 birthing kits



**CHAC students Elodie O'Brien, Maya Jones, Max Alpa and Jacqueline Fagg (Social Justice Committee President) assembling birthing kits, with Susan Bamford (Zonta Club of East Brisbane President) in August 2024**

### Marion Rutter — Social Justice Coordinator, Cannon Hill Anglican College

Earlier this month, students from the Social Justice Committee at Cannon Hill Anglican College (CHAC) joined forces with volunteers from the [Zonta Club of Brisbane East](#) to assemble 400 birthing kits.

These kits, essential for safe childbirth, are destined for various locations across Africa, facilitated by Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia).

The students at CHAC fundraised to purchase 200 of these kits, while the Zonta Club provided the remaining 200. Once assembled, these kits will be shipped to regions in Africa, by [Birthing Kit Foundation \(Australia\)](#), where they are desperately needed, offering support to women so they can give birth in unsanitary conditions.

### **Hannah Jesser and Jacqueline Fagg — Presidents of the Social Justice Committee, Cannon Hill Anglican College**

Many women throughout the world are giving birth in unsafe and unsanitary conditions, leading to increased mortality rates for both mothers and babies. Health, safety and support should be freely accessible to all, yet sadly many go without these essentials daily. However, organisations such as the Birthing Kit Foundation (Australia), alongside our Social Justice Committee, are making a difference by providing access to better healthcare during childbirth.

By assembling and sending these kits to Africa, women who once faced higher risks of infection can now deliver in a more sanitary space and enjoy the arrival of their little ones. We are deeply grateful to the Social Justice Committee members, Mrs Rutter and Zonta volunteers for their dedication to this worthy cause.

### **Elodie Obrien — Year 12 student, Cannon Hill Anglican College**

With the assistance of the Zonta volunteers who took time out of their days to help us, we assembled 400 birthing kits containing gloves, gauges, a scalpel, soap and string that were placed within a bag alongside a large green tarp. These kits are crucial in ensuring safer births and reducing maternal and infant deaths by providing a sterile environment. It was inspiring to witness the committee's dedication to this vital cause.

A heartfelt thank you to Mrs Rutter for organising this initiative and to the Zonta volunteers for their generous support.

### **Susan Bamford — President, Zonta Club of Brisbane East**

It is a basic human right that every birthing mother has a clean, safe childbirth. Thanks to the amazing students, Social Justice Coordinator Marion Rutter, and other staff at Cannon Hill Anglican College, 400 women in remote areas of the world will now have access to a birthing kit that will allow them to give birth cleanly and safely.

CHAC students are always a pleasure to work with, and their organisational skills and willingness to get the job done make this task so much easier.

## Anglicans Ablaze Australia Conference: insights and highlights



**"The Anglicans Ablaze Australia Conference is also just a great time to be fed, nurtured, refreshed and renewed individually in the Holy Spirit. I went away glad that with our Archbishop's emphasis on comprehensive Anglican identity and purpose, that there is a place for us people who love Holy Spirit renewal in our Diocese, and though the Conference was small, it is just the beginning," (The Reverend Steve Wockner)**

The Anglicans Ablaze Australia Conference was held at The Parish of Bardon between 19 and 21 July. It was hosted by ARNA (Anglican Renewal Network of Australia) and the Anglican Communion's SOMA (Sharing of Ministries Abroad).

Leaders of both ARNA, Bishop Ian Lambert, and SOMA, The Rev'd Melinda McMahon were [conference program](#) key speakers, as well as Bishop Tim Harris, Rose Males and The Rev'd Mark McDonald.

The "elective" sessions were run by Bishop Tim and his wife, Fiona Harris; Lisa McDonald; Rose Males; and, Bishop Ian Lambert. The Rev'd Peter Jeffery from The Parish of Bardon kept the conference moving along well with his jovial compering. Bishop Tim preached at the Sunday service, which concluded the conference.

According to its website, "ARNA desires to see renewal in people from diverse backgrounds and ministry experiences through growth in intimacy with God by the Holy Spirit. We seek to champion renewal in the local Church through life-giving relationships." According to the [SOMA Australia website](#), SOMA "is a short-term mission agency that sends teams of missions with a prophetic mandate of caring for the nervous system of the body of Christ, particularly within the Anglican Church...Our desire is to build up the body of Christ to be the instrument of renewing and refreshing God's kingdom for a time such as this."

Both groups have a desire to see Holy Spirit renewal in the Anglican Church, hence the conference theme “Anglicans Ablaze”.

Bishop Ian opened the conference with a talk titled, “We Worship a Supernatural God.” One of his opening sentences was, “It is time to be taking back ground that has been lost to disbelief; a time to be impacting our Churches, communities and families with the love and power of our supernatural God.”

His opening sentence really struck me. When I was ministering in the Church in the last decade of last century, Holy Spirit renewal was ablaze across the Anglican, Lutheran, Roman Catholic and other Churches. However, when the new millennium came, it seemed to snuff out in some denominations. Many in these denominations have missed the focus on the Holy Spirit’s activity.

Rut and routine can easily infiltrate one’s ministry, and Bishop Ian Lambert’s message was a timely reminder that God is indeed supernatural, and we can put our faith in Him to save, heal and restore. Bishop Ian encouraged us to hand over the control of our churches to God. I was greatly blessed by this reminder that God is a supernatural God and that we can put our trust in Him with confidence.

The Rev’d Melinda McMahon gave a very different type of presentation in the third talk of the conference. It was called, “Being Led by the Spirit in the Local Church”, and she sought to engage the imaginations of her hearers. It is not an easy calling to lead an Anglican church into Holy Spirit renewal if that is what you feel God is calling you to do as a priest. After returning from Africa and feeling full of the Holy Spirit and faith, she reflected on what it means to lead an Anglican Church into renewal. She emerged with an image of the priest as tour guide, the church members as passengers and Jesus as the bus driver. As she spoke, I could recognise myself as the tour guide with ultimately the bus driver, Jesus, being in control and when we got to a stop, there were those who were excited to get out of the bus and explore and others, who just wanted to stay on board and look at new sights from behind the glass windows of the bus. We were all given a printed copy of the sermon, and I had mine photocopied and shared it with my parish. Hopefully, some parishioners will take something meaningful from it.

The highlight of the conference was the talk after lunch on Saturday by The Rev’d Mark McDonald from St Columb’s, Hawthorn. It was called, “Lingering in the Presence of God”. I was amazed how the spirit of this talk followed on from Bishop Ian’s talk. Bishop Ian had begun his talk with, “Seek the heart of God, not just the hand”, with The Rev’d Mark saying, “The revival that God wants to bring is not about the past — power, signs and wonders — but about His presence.”

Mark spoke a lot about the Asbury Revival among the young people today in Asbury, New Jersey. He said that the young people today don’t need a gospel of shame and guilt for they already feel it, but one of God’s presence and his love, grace and mercy. This is why the Asbury Revival is so popular among the younger generation.

Mark made the statement that God is doing away with celebrity pastors, celebrity bands and celebrity churches. He said that God doesn’t want “the guru” with all the gifts on stage being the centre of attention, and that God is going to take his Church back.

We often focus on things other than God in the Church, and so “experiencing” God can get lost in theology, music, liturgy and success. I think it’s time to focus again on God. For example, I was encouraged by this talk to allow times of silence in our worship services to focus on God’s presence

and to even let people share what they thought God might have been saying to them. It has brought a wonderful sense of joy and freedom to my parish.

I would encourage Anglican clergy and laity to attend an [Anglicans Ablaze Australia Conference](#). One of the great things about it is that it is Anglican. I have been to a number of Holy Spirit conferences in my time. But the problem is that many weren't of my Church denomination and culture. Another good thing is that the emphasis on renewal is not about "the guru" out the front, as happens at some non-Anglican revival conferences, but about congregational renewal — which is our focus as Anglicans.

The [Anglicans Ablaze Australia Conference](#) is also just a great time to be fed, nurtured, refreshed and renewed individually in the Holy Spirit. I went away glad that with our Archbishop's emphasis on comprehensive Anglican identity and purpose, that there is a place for us people who love Holy Spirit renewal in our Diocese, and though the Conference was small, it is just the beginning.

**Local • Thursday 29 August 2024 •By Archbishop Jeremy Greaves KCSJ**

## **Archbishop Jeremy announces new Director of Discernment**



**The Rev'd Michael Stalley has been announced the new Director of Discernment (on secondment)**

Dear sisters and brothers

It is with pleasure that I announce the appointment of the Reverend Michael Stalley — on secondment — as the new Diocesan Director of Discernment (on a part-time 0.4 FTE basis).

The Director of Discernment is a key leadership role within the ACSQ and is pivotal in fostering and encouraging vocations to the ordained ministry. The role includes managing and facilitating the Vocation Discernment process from enquiry to ordination to the priesthood, including:

- Managing entry into the Vocational Discernment process;
- Overseeing candidate invitations to the Vocational Discernment Conference;
- Organising the Vocational Discernment Reflection process and Vocation Discernment Conference;
- Facilitating candidate entry into Formation;
- Monitoring and supporting candidates' progress through Formation;
- Guiding candidates towards ordination to the Diaconate and Priesthood; and
- Making recommendations to the Archbishop regarding the suitability and readiness of a candidate to progress through to the next stages of the discernment and formation process.

Emerging from my discussions with Michael has been a mutual recognition of the changing nature of discernment and formation and the significant challenges we face in this season of our life together as a Church. I have therefore asked him to use this time in secondment to help develop a model that will be used to guide the future evolution of discernment and formation in the ACSQ.

During Michael's secondment, he will retain the position as Rector, St Bartholomew's Anglican Church, Mt Gravatt, but on a part-time (0.6 FTE) basis.

I welcome Michael's willingness to take on this role, following Bishop Sarah Plowman's relinquishing her position as Diocesan Director of Discernment and Formation when appointed Bishop for the Northern Region. I also thank the people of the Parish of Mt Gravatt for their willingness to support Michael in this new position of responsibility in the Diocese, while he continues to be their Rector.

Please pray for Michael as he prepares to take up this new role and for all involved in the discernment process, including all candidates, supervising priests, examining chaplains, staff of St Francis College, and assistant bishops. May God bless us and equip us for our various ministries in the service of Christ.

Yours in Christ

The Most Reverend Jeremy Greaves KCSJ  
Archbishop of Brisbane

## "For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God"



**"The hatchlings some time later will make that same journey. It is a dangerous journey because of birds, but they must do it. They are quicker. They rush to the water where new predators await. But they must do it," (The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase)**

The Queensland Churches Environmental Network (QCEN), a commission of Queensland Churches Together, has produced a devotional for the Season of Creation, which is celebrated from 1 September to 4 October annually. Thank you to The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase for his stunning contribution for Day 7 of the devotional.

### **Reading**

#### **Romans 8.18-23 (NRSVA):**

"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory about to be revealed to us. For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies."





### **Focus verse**

#### **Romans 8.18-23 (NRSVA):**

“For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.”

### **Reflect**

I and some of my family have been blessed to be able to watch the turtles return to their special beach, Mon Repos near Bundaberg. This is the destination every year for the females who come to lay their eggs. These are the huge Loggerhead turtles. Their species is endangered. The mother makes her way, seemingly painfully, up the beach to a spot where she digs her nest. This is where she lays her eggs. The process takes some time. The look in the turtle’s eye seems to be sadness and tiredness. It seems as if her whole being is groaning in this process of ensuring creation and the continuance of her kind. Once finished, the mother flaps sand onto the eggs and makes her way back to the water. When she reaches the water, her movements are no longer labored; they are graceful as she swims back out to sea. The hatchlings some time later will make that same journey. It is a dangerous journey because of birds, but they must do it. They are quicker. They rush to the water where new predators await. But they must do it.

We too must wait, like the mother. Be patient. Do what we must do. Know that our freedom will come with Christ. Our natural place will be with Him. We will face the dangers and toils of a hostile world, but we will come through. We are blessed by the grace of God who has given us the gift of Christ. There is our deeper water. There is our place.



**"We too must wait, like the mother. Be patient...There is our deeper water. There is our place," (The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase)**

## **Saying**

### **"Stream Of Life" by Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941)**

The same stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

## **Pray**

God of all our dreaming, come take us in Your arms.  
Lead us onward to the deeper parts of ourselves.  
Bring us closer to the deeper heart of Your love,  
Safe and calm through Jesus the Christ.

Amen

**Editor's note: Thank you to The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase and all the writers who contributed content to a stunning Season of Creation devotional. The Queensland Churches Environmental Network (a commission of Queensland Churches Together) produced the resource with the assistance of a National Council of Churches in Australia grant and with graphic design and app development support from the ACSQ Justice Unit's, Peter Branjerdporn. The devotional is available as a free app, a free PDF and a printed book for individuals and parishes/ministries. The Season of Creation runs from 1 September (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation) to 4 October (St Francis of Assisi's Feast Day) annually. It is celebrated by Christians internationally, so we can renew our relationship with our Creator and all Creation.**

**You can access the devotional:**

- **As a free app via Apple Store or Google Store by searching for "Season of Creation".**
- **As a [PDF](#) through the QCT website.**
- **In printed form — a limited number of books has been printed. These are available for \$10 each, plus postage. Please contact [admin@qct.org.au](mailto:admin@qct.org.au) to order your copy.**

## WCC publishes resources for World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel: "Whatever you did...you did for me"



**Palestinian refugee men, women and children outside makeshift shelters (Photo: MECC Department of Services to Palestinian Refugees)**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) has newly published resources for the 2024 World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, to be observed 16-22 September. This week includes the UN International Day of Peace on 21 September, now in its 25th year.

The theme is: "Whatever you did...you did for me" (Matthew 25:40), based on the larger context of Matthew 25:35-40.

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.*

This year's main message conveys the dismay at the suffering and devastation caused by Israel's war on Gaza, reflected The Rev'd Dr Kenneth Mtata, WCC programme director for Public Witness and Diakonia.

"It highlights the tragic impact of this war, particularly on vulnerable groups like women, children, the disabled, and prisoners," he said. "It expresses deep sorrow over the loss of lives and livelihoods, displacement, and human rights violations. It raises the questions why, despite numerous efforts and resolutions, peace remains elusive."

Mtata added that he hopes that the whole fellowship will collectively advocate for peace, justice, and the protection of human rights in the context of the Gaza and the whole of Palestine. "If member churches raise awareness about the suffering of civilians, support humanitarian efforts, and use their

influence to call for an end to violence and the implementation of fair and lasting solutions, hope will be restored,” he said. “The fellowship must call for immediate ceasefire, remain a moral and spiritual voice, urging all parties to seek reconciliation, uphold dignity, and pursue actions that reflect the teachings of compassion, mercy, and love.”

During the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel, church organizations, congregations, and people of faith are encouraged to bear a common witness by participating in worship services, educational events, and acts of support in favor of peace and justice for Palestinians and Israelis.

The World Council of Churches invites member churches, faith-based communities, and civil society organizations around the world to join for a week of prayer for just peace for all in Palestine and Israel.

**Resource material:** [Seven days, seven themes – for the World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel 2024](#)

[World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches Website](#) on 20 August 2024.

International • Friday 9 August 2024 • By World Council of Churches

## WCC leadership meets parents of detained Palestinian Anglican student



Layan Nasir is a member of St Peter’s Anglican Church in the occupied West Bank city of Birzeit: she has been held under administrative detention by Israeli authorities without formal charges since April 2024.

World Council of Churches moderator Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm and general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay met on 7 August with the parents of Layan Nasir, a 24-year-old Palestinian Anglican student held in administrative detention by Israeli authorities — without formal charges — since April 2024.

The conversation, held as part of a WCC pastoral solidarity visit to the Holy Land, took place online and placed on the table not only the personal trauma of one family, but also a case emblematic of a broader issue, where individuals are held in detention without formal charges, often for extended periods, without due process — amounting to a direct violation of their human rights.

The WCC moderator and the general secretary both expressed commitment to advocate in calling for the immediate release of Layan Nasir, as well as all other unjustly detained Palestinians.

WCC moderator Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm said, “it was very touching to hear the story of Layan’s arrest and to feel the despair of her parents not even being told what the charges are. The situation of war can never be an excuse for arbitrarily detaining people without even revealing the charges. Layan Nasir needs to be released immediately.”

WCC general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay added, “It is very alarming and concerning that the Israeli government could impose administrative detention on people and keep them in prison for extended periods without any charges or information to the families about the arrests of their loved ones. We spoke to the parents of Layan Nassir, and we heard their stories and saw their pain and suffering as they worry about their daughter who was detained since April 2024.”

“The WCC will intervene in this situation on behalf of Layan and all other detainees under similar circumstances and rules. Human rights and human dignity must be preserved and taken seriously, and International human rights law must be respected, even by governments in whatever country. We continue to hope, pray and work for justice and peace,” Pillay said.

An in-depth interview with the family of Layan Nasir is planned for release in WCC News shortly.

*The pastoral solidarity visit to the Holy Land takes place online on 7-8 August 2024. The delegation includes Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, moderator of the World Council of Churches; Rev. Prof. Dr Jerry Pillay, general secretary of the WCC; Dr Audeh Quawas, member of the WCC central committee and executive committee; Dr Michel Abs, general secretary of the Middle East Council of Churches; Erik Lysén, moderator of ACT Alliance; Rudelmar Bueno de Faria, general secretary of ACT Alliance.*

**First published on the [World Council of Churches Website](#) on 7 August 2024.**

## Raising funds for kids in care through the Bridge to Brisbane



Anglicare Southern Queensland team members at the 2023 Bridge to Brisbane event, with (L-R) Amy, Michelle, Jade, Tahnee and Deborah

Anglicare Southern Queensland is shining a light on the importance of foster and kinship carers for a second year at the [Bridge to Brisbane](#), which will be held on 8 September.

There are currently more than 11,400 young people living in out-of-home care in Queensland and more than 6,000 registered carers across a variety of care types including short- and long-term foster care, respite care, and [kinship care](#).

Anglicare Southern Queensland Group Manager of Out of Home Care North, Tammy Lloyd said the work to care for children and young people is vital, as is the need to provide support for the carers who dedicate their lives to deliver a stable, caring home and family environment.

“Being a foster carer is such a rewarding job! It does come with some challenges, as these children have come from a variety of backgrounds, and does require a lot of patience, understanding and willingness to go the extra mile for these children,” Ms Lloyd said.

“We are constantly looking for ways to do more to support our amazing carers and equip them with the tools they need to confidently care for a child and provide a safe, nurturing and happy home – all while ensuring they feel appreciated and valued for all the hard work they do.”

“It is so important we ensure carers have positive experiences from the beginning and that we continue to support and encourage them to continue the great work they are doing,” Ms Lloyd said.

Whilst not everyone is in a position to become a foster carer, Anglicare is calling on the community to help support foster carers, children and their families by donating to our [Bridge to Brisbane campaign](#).

“All funds raised will help us to provide meaningful assistance to foster carers and children outside of Government funding,” Ms Lloyd said.

“This can include short holiday breaks for carers and children to experience a ‘family holiday’, camps for children and young people as well as conferences, counselling services, additional training or extra support to manage the cost-of-living pressures.”

Remington and his partner Alain began their fostering journey with Anglicare Southern Queensland after moving to Queensland during the pandemic. Since then, they’ve become full-time carers to three young siblings, under the age of 10.

“Alain and I always wanted to have kids. We love babies, but what we love about having older kids in our lives is that they can talk to and communicate with you. If they have a headache, they will let you know.” Remington shared.

“There are a lot of kids in the system, and we thought that fostering would be a nice way to have kids in our lives while helping people at the same time.

“With the three kids that we’re fostering, it was only meant to be a short-term placement, but now it’s turned into a long-term placement. It’s been a year now, and we can really see their development and we’re watching them start to blossom with us. We know we’ve done well.

“Everyone always says the kids are so lucky to have us, but I think the opposite. We’re lucky to have the kids in our lives.”

Anglicare Southern Queensland currently supports close to [1,000 foster and kinship carers and more than 2,000 children in care](#).

The organisation partners carers with practitioners and cultural support workers to assist them on their care journey as well as connecting them with the wider foster care community, and providing training programs, resources, and 24/7 support lines.

Click [here](#) to donate to Anglicare Southern Queensland foster carers.

To learn more about foster care or becoming a carer visit [youbeyou.org.au](http://youbeyou.org.au).