

## Postie and priest team wins a rally



**Bishop Sarah and Darius with Car 122 — "The Postie and the Priest" team — outside the Birdsville Hotel, nearing the end of the Great Endeavour Rally in August 2024**

Last year was a big year for Darius and me as a married couple. Three of our girls finished Grade 12, so we were keen to do something adventurous together.

We got a taste of traveling in the West in 2023 while visiting Thargomindah and Cameron Corner, and we loved it. So we looked around for a further adventure and decided upon the [Great Endeavour Rally](#) — a 10-day rally car fundraiser and competition. Our team name was "The Postie and the Priest" (Darius has worked for Australia Post for 25 years and manages posties).

The rally has been going for 73 years. We covered three states and 4,500 kilometres from Roma to the Sturt National Park in NSW, across into South Australia up the Innamincka Track, back into to Birdsville and up to Longreach. The rally goes to different places each time. Last year it went from Cairns to the Cape.

The rally raises money for the Endeavour Foundation's Supported Employment program. The [Supported Employment program](#) helps people with disability to learn new skills, earn money, be confident at work, make new friends, contribute in a safe and accessible space, make a real difference, and feel job satisfaction in a rewarding job.

Every team needs to raise a minimum of \$5,000 for the Endeavour Foundation to participate in the rally. We did a Bunnings barbie and friends generously sponsored us so we could raise these funds.

There were five Endeavour Foundation clients participating in our 22 August to 1 September rally — they were an absolute hoot. They drove cars with support and were an integral part of the event.

One of the participating Supported Employees was the same age as me. Every morning she greeted me with “Good morning, young lady.” I greeted her similarly and looked forward to her greeting every morning. After the rally, I let her know that her morning greeting buoyed me for the day.

Every person in the rally had their unique role to play — it was just gorgeous.

The rally book that guided us through the trip featured a number of people who work for the Endeavour Foundation in a Supported Employment role. One of the profiles was a man named Simon — I recognised his image and read his story. I was delighted to read about how important his Anglican parish is to him — and what’s more, I’m sure I used to go to Anglican Youth Ministry Camps with him. I am hoping to see him soon so I can tell him I recognised him and enjoyed reading his story.

We took the car we regularly drive — a 2010 Mitsubishi Pajero. We call it our “camping car”. Each participating car is fitted with a “RallySafe” unit, which is a global tracking and timing system. This unit ensures rally participants are always in contact with the rally organisers and are able to communicate even when mobile phones are out of range.

The RallySafe unit measures the average vehicle speed and tracks the vehicle — this determines the winning rally team. You lose points if you speed, go too slow or get lost. We were tootling along having a lovely time and somehow ended up with the greatest number of points. We received a massive trophy.

We navigated “old school” with a book. The book had a series of instructions that we followed — things like “RGHR [road goes hard right]” or “Caution: HTS [hard to see] bog hole”. You are constantly on the go.

There were 50 teams and 200 participants, including support vehicles, such as a tow truck (which was well used), Komatsu mechanics, the Australian Army (who helped transport gear and offered their mechanical skills) and medical support.

One night the Army guys worked until 11pm when a car had transmission fluid issues, even seeking a part from a town a long way away. They did this for half a dozen cars during the rally.

One of the things that stood out to me during the rally is how total strangers can work together for a common purpose to make amazing things happen.

Fellow participants always sought to help one another; for example, if there was a flat tyre. At one point, there was a mix-up because word got out that a Pajero had a flat tyre. This meant that people came to our aid before we let them know that another Pajero must be in need of their assistance.

Another rally car — a Suzuki Mighty Boy — kept overheating if it idled. It had no air-conditioning in the 40-degree heat. Because cars had to start in spurts every morning — literally waiting for the dust to settle between starts — the Mighty Boy kept overheating. This meant that it needed to be pushed, with the ignition off, progressively up to the start line. Everyone got out of their vehicles and gave them a hand to push it. The Mighty Boy drivers were two young guys in their early 20s who just

wanted to have an adventure. I honestly don't know how their car got there in the end — it was a two-wheel drive and somehow made it through the mud. It got to the end through sheer persistence and people generously helping. They didn't win, but they were certainly the sentimental favourites of all drivers.



**“The youthful team in the Mighty Boy had difficulty in the heat during the 2024 Great Endeavour Rally, but showed that teamwork and perseverance can achieve great things,” Bishop Sarh Plowman (Photo by Chris Munro)**

I loved the rhythm and routine of each day. We were up at dawn with a cup of tea. As the sun set later in the day, being the West, we turned in after a glass of wine. We felt so connected with the life around us, hearing the birds in the morning and the crickets at night from our tents.

After breakfast we received a briefing about any potential hazards, as well as information about what towns we were going to pass through that day.

The local people loved meeting us — we received beautiful hospitality everywhere we went. They were proud to show off their school or pub or racetrack. There was a great sense of pride in the communities we visited. It was also great to spend money in the towns and contribute to their economy.

On this trip about half of the participants were first-timers, while others were regulars. The regulars often referred to their “rally family” and shared that the rally was the highlight of their year.

One man — a regular rally participant, Sooty — sadly lost his mother on the trip. He said that the rally family helped him cope. This reminded me that belonging to community is a fundamental need of human beings. It has left me asking, “Does the Church meet this need for people?”

Broadly speaking, there were two groups of people on the rally — the pub-going partiers and the solitude-seeking stargazers. The stars in the Outback are phenomenal, by the way — it’s like the sky has been spraypainted.

We met a beautiful couple from Barcaldine. They were folk, like us, seeking some stargazing solitude. We talked about deep things with them — things that were personal. One night while we were camping in Tibooburra in the Sturt National Park, we found an isolated camping site. As we sat and stargazed together, one member of this couple said to me, “I feel completely at ease with you because you are the first Church person I have met who hasn’t judged me.” This was both sad and delightful. It was sad hearing that the person had not had good experiences of Church. It was delightful knowing that I gave her a different experience.

Several other people on the trip said, “My experience of Church hasn’t been positive, so it has been great spending time with you.” It was wonderful being the Church to them — being present in a non-judgemental way.

I had many conversations explaining that women can be priests in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland. People seemed thrilled that women could be priests and even bishops. I had the opportunity to speak after we received the trophy — this made Darius laugh because he knows I love preaching. I shared about how the Endeavour Foundation sees the intrinsic worth of every human being, just as the Church seeks to, and I spoke about how this alignment of values really resonated with me.

The rally reminded me that you can lose touch with people who don’t go to church. I need to know peoples’ hopes, dreams and desires because I can’t proclaim the gospel into a culture that I don’t know. I think Christians need to spend time with others who think differently and with people who disagree. The Church is not meant to be a club of people who all think the same and agree in all things — it’s meant to be a voice that proclaims hope and justice outside its “bricks and mortar walls”, including on desert roads in an adventurous rally.

## Will & Harper



Will Ferrell and Harper Steele in "Will & Harper" (Image courtesy of the Sundance Institute)

Will Ferrell is an American comedian and actor well known to many. His career includes many beloved films, including *Elf*, *Anchorman*, *Talladega Nights* and beyond. His social cachet in the US is significant. Probably less known to Australian audiences is his start in show business on television's *Saturday Night Live* — which is immensely popular in the US and still on-air in its fourth decade. Ferrell debuted there as a fresh-faced funny guy in 1995, quickly establishing himself as a key player in the skits-based show. Of course, central to his success were the writers behind the scenes and key among them was Harper Steele. Except Harper wasn't Harper at that point. Many decades under a former name, in what outwardly appeared to be a successful life, hid turmoil and anguish, a sense experienced from childhood of being born in the wrong body.

Once Harper sent emails to friends describing her transition, Ferrell's supportive response was that the two should road trip across the US, following a path set by Harper taking in many significant places she frequented in her own road trips of bygone years. The question posed by this documentary concerns how she as her true self would be received there — she notes early on, "I love this country so much; I just don't know if it loves me back right now."

If all of this feels a little constructed, it certainly is. It's the nature of documentaries to set the direction of the narrative quickly, especially in character pieces like this one. The film unfolds with a series of stops along the way, from dive bars to steak restaurants, the Grand Canyon to basketball games. Perhaps surprisingly, moments of less than welcome acceptance are few and far between. They do happen — there are misgenderings and hateful online messaging — but the trip unfolds to reveal a different story. The journey provides the structure, but the narrative threads are vignettes of the friendship between these two and the ways warmth and acceptance are expressed through vulnerability and genuine curiousness.

As they settle into the front seats a few minutes into the film, Harper says no questions are off the table and Ferrell steps up for this. That these enquiries seem so staged reveals editing that might have done better to disguise the format. Having said this, the authenticity of Ferrell's wondering and concern for his friend eclipse that issue mostly. Instead, we see a tender gentleness in which the comedian's celebrity often lubricates social situations, perhaps insulating the two from more obvious antagonism.

Maybe because of this, Harper asks Ferrell to wait outside one venue so that she can make her own way with those inside. That leads to a lovely moment with First Nations people serenading her with an Indigenous American tune, touching, as it suggests, that true core identities are being connected all around.

Viewers put off by Ferrell's screen personas may note that this is not a series of awkward jokes or one-liners. The film has moments of humour, but it is significant that more emphasis is given to the deep rapport the two share. Comedians sometimes report fearing pressure to be constantly "on" and that is not apparent here. In fact, the one incident where Ferrell tries an intentional comedy dress-up at a restaurant is the one moment that turns sour, but even this is a chance for the two to console and care for each other.

As the film rolled on, I found myself hoping for some more challenging moments. The realities of living as a trans person in a country where, state by state, laws are increasingly being passed to make such life difficult is barely touched. Not that there aren't deep moments of joy, love and anguish, but the film intentionally chooses not to be polemical. Upon reflection, I think this may be its greatest strength — for audiences who haven't had the privilege to listen to a trans person share about their personal circumstances, this documentary humanises the wonderfully goofy, delightfully prickly, always insightful Harper in ways that direct assertions might not have. Her own hard-won true humanity and the deep care her friend shows for her are the two poles of a film that has the potential to win both hearts and minds. As the credits roll, we see a montage of unshown moments from the trip and I found myself keen to spend more time amongst the authentic, beautiful friendship of *Will & Harper*.

***Will and Harper* is currently streaming on Netflix**

**Editor's note: Interested in learning more about film, the Arts, and the many intersections with life and faith? Jonathan Sargeant is teaching DA2013Z/DA9013Z God and Contemporary Culture: Theology and the Arts in Semester One 2025. Please contact Jonathan Sargeant for more information via [jonathan.sargeant@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:jonathan.sargeant@anglicanchurchsq.org.au).**

## The book I have given away most and why: The Rev'd Tania Eichler



**"This book has led me to rediscover the true meaning of Sabbath in honouring God and how God is calling me, leading me to peace, life, joy and sustenance" (The Rev'd Tania Eichler)**

Last October was a dark time of much change, both externally and internally, when I felt out of alignment with God's desires for me. I was tired. I was anxious. I just wasn't myself. It was a season of wilderness that led me searching for reading material to help restore my soul and bring new life. I had this deep sense of knowing there was more to sabbath than just physical relaxation. I knew that I needed to align my life again with God's rhythm. That is when I came across the audiobook, [\*Soul Rest: Reclaim Your Life. Return to Sabbath\*](#) by Curtis Zackery.

This book really spoke to me because it shares the author's personal story with such real and raw self-examination, and in a way that I could identify with. As I listened, I found myself nodding and saying, "Yes, yes, yes!" This book has led me to rediscover the true meaning of Sabbath in honouring God and how God is calling me, leading me to peace, life, joy and sustenance.

Curtis encourages us to trust God and embrace rest intentionally. It's not just about ticking a box — it's about meeting the Lord of the Sabbath in our moments of stillness. In resting we declare our dependence on God, exercise our faith in God's provision, and receive refreshment. This has led me to examine anything I am tempted to "do" on the Sabbath and asked to "do" on ministry days, helping me to reclaim a healthy rhythm with God.

As Curtis says, "To dig into Sabbath is to shape your life — the people, the calendar, the disciplines — around the idea that obeying God is a marathon, not a sprint, and this marathon has scheduled rest stops that will guarantee you finish in one piece."

Identity is closely connected with rest, as he says: "Our misaligned view of rest has its roots in an identity that is out of rhythm with God. When we understand Sabbath in the way God intends, it can dynamically affect every aspect of our lives."

The book has helped me to understand that I am not working for God, but rather that God is working in and through me, and I really need to honour that. It has also helped me prevent burnout by putting into practice self-examination, setting boundaries, and creating rhythms of rest at the beginning of the day, during the day, during the evening, and during sleep, that honour God. And, I believe I am called to model this to other ministers.

I have recommended this book to people who share with me that they are tired, exhausted, overwhelmed and experiencing compound stressors, and they have found it encouraging.

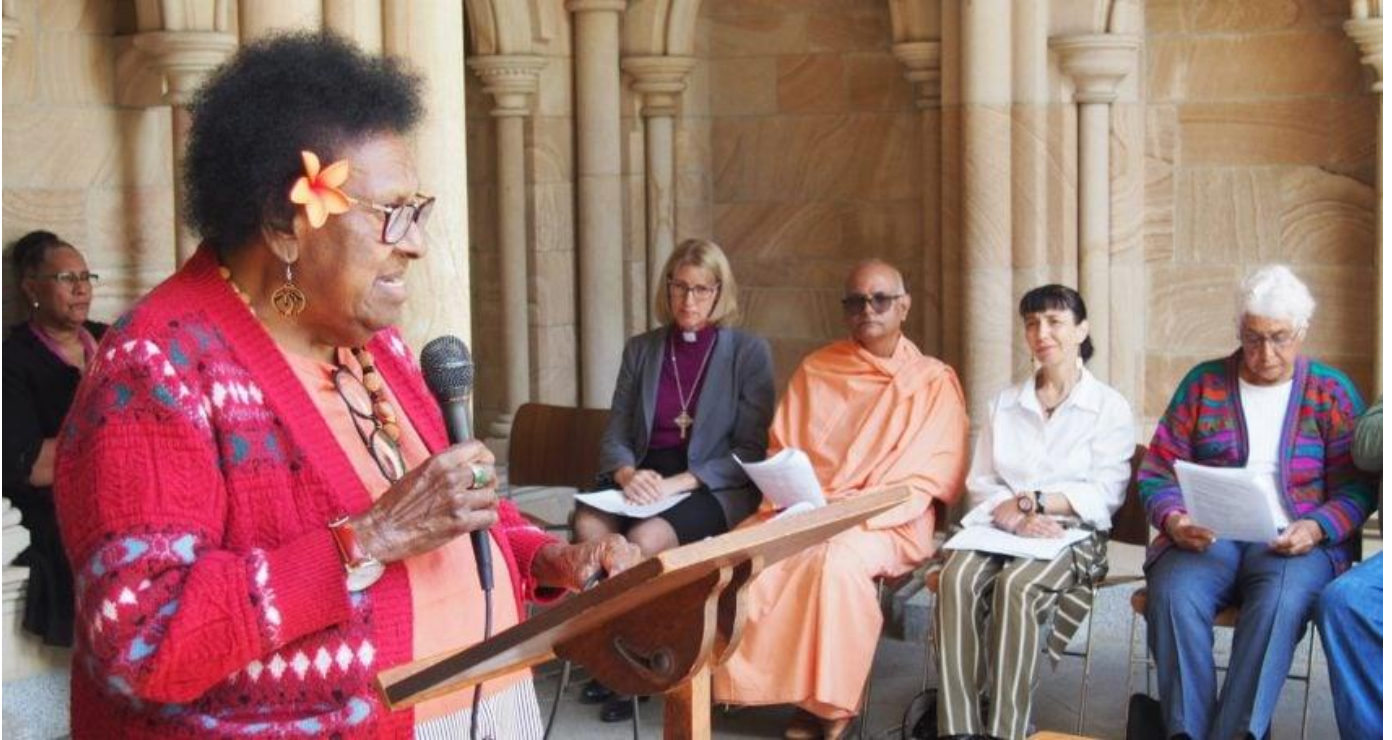
I am inspired by the ultimate invitation of Jesus in [Matthew 11.28-30](#): "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Curtis Zackery, 2018. [Soul Rest: Reclaim Your Life. Return to Sabbath](#). Kirkdale Press, Washington, USA.

**Editor's note: If you would like to share with other readers what faith-related book, including those with theological, spiritual, ministry, Church history or justice themes, you have given away (or referred) the most and why, please [email](#) the *anglican focus* editor, and Michelle will let you know what is needed.**



## Q&A with multi-lingual Saibai elder, customary law expert, social justice icon and NATSIAC executive member, Aunty Dr Rose Elu



Saibai elder Aunty Dr Rose Elu, who spoke in Kalaw Kawaw Ya at the St John's Cathedral Australian Religious Response to Climate Change gathering in Brisbane on Tuesday 17 September 2024, called for the prime minister to demonstrate commitment to the Indigenous communities on low-lying islands that are being inundated with sea water, threatening their homes, livelihoods and cultures

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

I live in Brisbane, and I worship at Holy Trinity, Fortitude Valley. I am there every Sunday unless I am away. On the third Sunday of the month there is a special service with some parts said in Language.



**Torres Strait Islander parishioners based at Holy Trinity, Fortitude Valley welcomed people across our Diocese and the wider community to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the landmark High Court Mabo case on 3 June 2022. The service included a reflection about Mabo and the importance of the constitutionally enshrined Voice by Aunty Dr Rose Elu (back, centre). The singing was led by Uncle Rupert (seated, centre), whose great-great-great grandfather received the Bible in 1871 from London Missionary Society and Melanesian Christians**

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

I have always been an Anglican and have held different positions in the Church since the 1980s. My first roles were Synod Rep and Churchwarden. The Torres Strait Islander ministry started at St Luke's, Herston. We have been based at various parishes over the years, including at Bulimba and Woolloongabba. I moved the motion to create the Torres Strait Islander Non-Geographic Parish at Synod in the late 1980s. We have been based at Holy Trinity, Fortitude Valley for over 20 years.

### **What do your roles involve?**

My current roles are National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC) executive member; Anglican Church of Australia Standing Committee member; Torres Strait Islander Anglican Parish Synod representative; Anglican Church Southern Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group member; and, Anglican Indigenous Network member. The Anglican Indigenous Network is an Anglican Communion network. I advocate for First Nations peoples in these roles, fostering Reconciliation and campaigning and lobbying for stronger action to heal the climate.

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

There have been many highlights, mostly to do with extraordinary people I have met. I spoke about climate change at the World Council of Churches gathering at Porto Alegre in Brazil in 2006. I met the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, in a marquee there.

Another highlight is when Queen Elizabeth visited Brisbane 1988 — she was introduced to elders outside St John's Cathedral.

While I was studying my PhD in customary law at the University of Hawai'i in the early 1990s, I became friends with a woman who volunteered at the St Andrew's Cathedral book shop in downtown Honolulu. She was the beloved grandmother of Barack Obama. When I met Barack Obama in New York in 2014 at a gathering while he was president, I told him that I had been good friends with his late grandmother. He wrapped me in a big bearhug and told me that he was very close to her growing up.

I have been to many installations and consecrations over the years; however, greeting Archbishop-elect Jeremy in Language as he entered the Cathedral last year was the most significant for me. Archbishop Jeremy is very pastoral, devoted to First Nations peoples and energetic, and he is an intellectual thinker.

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

I am part of a seminal class action, led by Uncles Pabai Pabai and Paul Kabai, arguing that the Commonwealth owes a duty of care to Torres Strait Islander peoples to take reasonable steps to protect us from climate harm. I assisted the legal team who argued that the court should order the Commonwealth to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to specific levels by 2030 and 2050. The final hearings and closing arguments for the landmark case were held in Cairns in May. We expect to find out the outcome next year.

I am going to the UN Conference of the Parties [COP29](#) meeting in Baku (Azerbaijan) in November to speak about climate harm again. I will be speaking as a member of the Anglican Indigenous Network through my NATSIAC connection. I [last spoke](#) at COP in Egypt two years ago. COP is the decision-making body that oversees the UN's Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

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

My Christian faith is intertwined with my island spirituality. I relate to God's creation through my Saibai (island) home and through my second home at Seisia on the Cape. I have a Saibai family and a Seisia family. It's important for non-Indigenous people to understand that the spiritualities of First Nations peoples are ancient. Indigenous Christian people like myself [seamlessly blend](#) our ancient spirituality with our Christian faith. We especially know how to care for God's creation because our ancient spiritualities are about balance.

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

I embrace my faith every day in everything I do. I get up at early every morning to meditate. My faith really gives me strength and energises me. It gives me wisdom and comforts me at times of grief.

## **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?**

Singing and praying in Language, in Kalaw Kawaw Ya, are important to me. I like interpreting my prayers into English for people after I have said them in Kalaw Kawaw Ya. It's important for elders like me to welcome non-Indigenous people into the Torres Strait Islander space. So, a strength of the Church is how it builds community through fellowship and relationships.

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

"Do not let your hearts be troubled" ([John 14.1](#)). This is my favourite scripture because in my work as a relationships counsellor and community engagement officer and in my social justice work, I meet many people who are burdened. This scripture reminds me that God is there for all of them.

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

My uncle, who was the first Torres Strait Islander Bishop, (the late) [The Right Rev'd Kiwami Dai](#). He was a very spiritual person. He was well known in the Brisbane Diocese. He told us Torres Strait Islander parishioners to stay at Holy Trinity, Fortitude Valley.

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

A lot of harm has been done by Churches. Many Churches were culpable in the stealing of children and the human rights abuses that happened on "missions". The [Queensland Government](#) is holding a Truth-telling and Hearing Inquiry and the Inquiry's [terms of reference](#) include "faith-based organisations". It's important that the Church participates meaningfully in the Inquiry.

## **Whom did you last light a candle for?**

Today I lit a candle at church for the Palestinians of Gaza, especially the older people and the children. There is no reason for them to die. It's absolute murder for innocent lives to be taken. The Australian Government should do more — by speaking up more strongly and committing to a two-way military trade embargo. All Christians need to speak up and pray hard for a just peace. I think we should have a day of prayer internationally dedicated to praying for a ceasefire — for the bombing to stop.

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

There have many. It meant a lot when Archbishop Jeremy came with me to the Torres Strait in May, along with his wife Josie and Peter from the Justice Unit, to witness the impacts of the damaged climate on low-lying islands. We were all shocked by the level of shoreline erosion that we witnessed. Archbishop Jeremy took the time to speak with local leaders and elders so he could understand the

impacts of climate harm on our livelihoods, cultures, homes, fresh water supply, traditional food gardens and ceremonies.

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

“Always be who you are — don’t be someone you are not.” My father, who was a chief, taught me that.

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

I read books and pray. I pray a lot.

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

A piece of rock to make a fire, along with coconut husk for kindling, and a conch shell to send a message every day.

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

Near the ocean.

**What’s your best childhood memory?**

Waterskiing with my family at the Lakes Entrance in Victoria.

**What is your earliest memory?**

When I was about six or seven, my father and uncles set sail in a small dinghy from Seisia to Waiben (Thursday Island). We were not far from Seisia on the Cape when our boat capsized. Because I couldn’t swim, my father and uncles passed me from one to another to get me safely to shore. They then carried me to the village in Seisia where my adopted Aboriginal grandma and grandpa rubbed me with goanna oil to strengthen my exhausted limbs.

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

Lots of coffee and window shopping.

**What is your secret skill?**

Meditation. I also speak nine languages and dialects.

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

There are so many. One is when I travelled overseas to Europe in 2022 for the Lambeth Conference. I would like to re-live seeing Canterbury Cathedral for the first time.

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

Seafood, especially barramundi, crayfish, prawns and oysters caught off Seisia on the Cape.

**Editor's note: Thank you to Aunty Dr Rose Elu for always giving so generously of her time and knowledge to *anglican focus*.**

**National • Tuesday 17 September 2024 • By Michelle McDonald**

## **Faith leaders call for historic clean energy investment and fossil fuel phase-out**



**Bishop Sarah Plowman (Anglican Church Southern Queensland), Sandra King OAM (Anglican Church Southern Queensland), Emma Beach (Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane), Aunty Dr Rose Elu (Saibai elder and National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council executive member), Swami Atmeshananda (Vedanta Centre Brisbane), Janeth Deen OAM (Queensland Muslim community) and The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt (St John's Anglican Cathedral) outside St John's Anglican Cathedral on Tuesday 17 September 2024 following the unveiling of an Australian Religious Response to Climate Change banner as part of a national week of action**

St John's Anglican Cathedral, along with over 150 diverse places of worship across Australia, unveiled enormous banners today with a united message to the prime minister and the opposition leader, calling for a historic investment in clean energy.

As part of the week of action, led by the Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, a [video message](#) to Prime Minister Anthony Albanese and Opposition Leader Peter Dutton featured nine senior faith leaders outlining a list of policies.

The policies included an end to the coal and gas industry "cash splash", an urgent fossil fuel phase-out and urgent changes to environmental laws.

The Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane, Jeremy Greaves, wants an end to taxpayer hand-outs to fossil fuel companies, along with significant investment in clean energy and more renewable energy jobs.

“We must stop giving public money to the coal and gas industries — they’ve got enough of their own,” Archbishop Greaves said.

“There’s a cost-of-living crisis. Why not give those billions of dollars to your new plan for creating clean energy, creating good jobs, and leaving no one behind?”

The inter-faith leaders are also calling for a phase-out of fossil fuels.

Saibai elder Aunty Dr Rose Elu, who spoke in Kalaw Kawaw Ya at the St John’s Cathedral gathering in Brisbane, called for the prime minister to demonstrate commitment to the Indigenous communities on low-lying islands that are being inundated with sea water, threatening their homes, livelihoods and cultures.

“We are asking you to show care and respect for Torres Strait Islander peoples and all our Pacific neighbours by signing the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty,” Aunty Dr Elu said.

“That will really show the government is serious about phasing out fossil fuels.”

Faith communities are also calling for a safe climate to be a central objective of the country’s revised environmental laws.

Vice-President of the Islamic Council of Victoria Mohamed Mohideen OAM said that elected representatives need to honour Australia’s international commitments.

“Last year, at international climate negotiations, the world agreed to ‘transition away’ from fossil fuels — Australia did the right thing and signed up,” Dr Mohideen said.

The Australian Religious Response to Climate Change, an alliance of national inter-faith groups, calls for [emissions reduction targets](#) of at least 75 per cent below 2005 levels by 2030 and of 100 per cent by 2035.

After two years of speculation, Opposition Leader Peter Dutton, in June, announced that he will go to the next election promising to build seven nuclear power reactors across Australia.

In today’s video message, President of the Uniting Church in Australia and daughter of Tongan parents, Charissa Suli, addressed Mr Dutton stating that nuclear energy is a pipedream.

“Nuclear would cause dangerous delays when we’re in an urgent crisis,” The Rev’d Suli said.

“A serious roll-out would take decades, slowing down renewables and leading us to use a lot more gas in the meantime, and that would mean billions of tonnes of more climate pollution.”

Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT Mata Havea Hiliau addressed the prime minister, asking for clarity on when fossil fuel exports will cease.

“The most important part of the plan is to let the country know when you will get the job done — we need a date,” The Rev’d Hiliau said.

“We need to let the people know when you will stop exporting coal and gas.”

The Rev’d Hiliau also addressed the leader of the opposition, saying that more people are at risk of “suffering in heat waves, floods and drought”.

“People on low-lying islands — like the Pacific, my island home...are at risk of their homes being swallowed up by the rising sea water,” she said.

Assistant Bishop for the Anglican Diocese of Perth, Hans Christiansen, addressed the prime minister, calling for him to heed the warnings of experts.

“Scientists tell us we cannot afford any more coal and gas projects — anywhere,” Bishop Christiansen said.

“So, we’re calling on you to stop allowing new gas fields, especially those looking beyond 2050 — the situation is far too urgent for that.

“Gas is not the answer.”

The St John’s Anglican Cathedral “NO ONE LEFT BEHIND Good jobs in clean energy” Australian Religious Response to Climate Change banner unveiling was supported by Bishop Sarah Plowman (Anglican Church Southern Queensland), Sandra King OAM (Anglican Church Southern Queensland), Emma Beach (Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane), Aunty Dr Rose Elu (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council), Swami Atmeshananda (Vedanta Centre Brisbane), Janeth Deen OAM (Queensland Muslim community) and The Very Rev’d Dr Peter Catt (St John’s Anglican Cathedral).

Huge banners were also ceremonially unveiled at Cathedrals in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide, Perth and Newcastle as part of the week of action.



## Christian, Muslim and Jewish community leaders unite for a just peace, condemning the ongoing atrocities committed by Israel in Palestine



Christian, Muslim and Jewish community leaders united for a just peace at the International Day of Peace commemorations at St John's Anglican Cathedral in Brisbane on 21 September 2024, with (L-R) The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt (Anglican Dean of Brisbane), Clem Campbell (past president, UNAAQ), Louise Adler AM (advisory committee member, Jewish Council of Australia), Virginia Balmain (past president, UNAAQ), Nasser Mashni (president, Australian Palestine Advocacy Network) and Annette Brownlie (peace and security program manager, UNAAQ)

Christian, Muslim and Jewish community leaders united for a just peace, condemning the ongoing atrocities being committed by Israel in Palestine, during the weekend's International Day of Peace commemorations at St John's Anglican Cathedral.

Advisory committee member of the Jewish Council of Australia, Louise Adler AM, and president of the Australian Palestine Advocacy Network, Nasser Mashni, gathered with the Cathedral Dean, Peter Catt, and south-east Queensland community members on Saturday night for the Cathedral's 13th annual Brisbane Peace Lecture.

The lecture, with the theme "Uniting for a just peace", was hosted three days after the UN General Assembly voted to adopt a [resolution](#) that demands that Israel ends its "unlawful presence" in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

Jewish woman and former publisher Louise Alder said that while her family's history has shaped her beliefs, she is "an ally...of Palestinian people...because as human beings, injustice and inequality demand that we all care".

“Yes, my own family history has shaped my political views,” Ms Adler said.

“My father’s father was deported to Beaune-la-Rolande in the first round up of immigrant Jews in Paris in 1941 and then sent to Birkenau where he was murdered.

“I have discovered that it is impossible to ask, however hesitantly, whether anyone feels that the images from Gaza on our TV screens are reminiscent of the brutal and now iconic images from last century, of the photos of the Jews rounded up in the Warsaw ghetto — that is to break a taboo.

“In this small corner of the world, there are 120,000 Jews.

“I have learned that it is not acceptable to ask, ‘What is our relationship to the modern state of Israel? What is our response to the occupation of Palestine and the plight of the Palestinians?’

“My response is to ask whether empathy, an acknowledgement of our shared humanity, is such a risk.”

Ms Adler said that it was during a 1972 visit to Israel, where she volunteered on a kibbutz upon completing school, that she was first educated about the plight of Palestinians.

“I imagined that I was landing in a socialist utopia, instead the reality of the Zionist project made itself explicit at the airport.

“European Jews stamped my passport, Middle Eastern Jews manned the luggage carousels, while Palestinians swept the floors and cleaned the toilets.

“It was the beginning of my own education regarding the entrenched racism underpinning the establishment of the state of Israel.

“I have been repeatedly berated for failing to refer to October 7th and mentioning the Holocaust.”

The killing of over [40,000](#) Muslim and Christian Palestinians, largely women and children, in Gaza over the last year is being condemned worldwide.

In March, following nearly six months of research and 12,000 reported deaths in Gaza, [UN human rights expert](#) Francesca Albanese found that there are “reasonable grounds” that genocide is being committed in Gaza.

While presenting her “[Anatomy of a Genocide](#)” report to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, Ms Albanese called member states to heed their obligations “to prevent and to punish the crime of genocide” by imposing an arms embargo and sanctions on Israel.

“The genocide in Gaza is the most extreme stage of a long-standing settler colonial process of erasure of the native Palestinians,” Ms Albanese said.

Ms Albanese criticised governments, including Australia’s, for having “amnesia”, “myopia” and “living in an alternative reality” when asked about its response to the war on Gaza.

Israeli military assaults are a near daily occurrence in the occupied West Bank, with the UN reporting that the number of [Palestinian children killed](#) by Israel Defense Forces' live ammunition has almost tripled over the last year.

Hundreds of children in the West Bank have also been [detained without charges](#), and children from Gaza are among the thousands of Palestinians who have been similarly [detained](#), with torture reported.

Muslim Palestinian Nasser Mashni said that the nature and history of Zionism and settler-colonialism must be recognised in authentic discussions about peace.

"Palestine is more than just the land, it is also a people," Mr Mashni said.

"In Palestine the British gave away land that was not theirs to others based on the racist, supremacist ideology that the natives mattered not!

"The father of Zionism, Theodore Herzl, wrote to Cecil Rhodes in 1902, one of the most famous colonialists of his period, yes that Rhodes — Rhodes Scholarship fame: 'You are being invited to help make history. It doesn't involve Africa, but a piece of Asia Minor; not Englishmen but Jews...How, then, do I happen to turn to you since this is an out-of-the-way matter for you? How indeed? Because it is something colonial.'

"Zionists never denied they were colonialists; they did though claim that Palestine was 'a land without people for a people without a land' — their own version of *terra nullius*.

"Palestinians don't deny Jewish connection or historical links to the land — we just don't accept that it is superior to ours.

"Jewish connection and the Zionist enterprise of the state of Israel today are two very separate connections.

"The Zionists' conundrum is that they want all of the land of historic Palestine and want it to be a Jewish state and they want it to be democratic.

"But it can only have two of the three!

"Jewish, democratic, but not all the land.

"Democratic, all the land, but not Jewish.

"Or the reality of today, all the land, Jewish, but not democratic — and there is a word for it, 'apartheid'.

"The problem with Zionism is that its basis in supremacism means Zionists only feel secure when Palestinians are totally insecure.

"This is aided and abetted by a compliant and sycophantic West.

“Peace is closer when everyone and every country is treated equally and fairly — when double standards and hypocrisies are no longer entertained or allowed, be it in Palestine or Ukraine.

“I dream of the Jerusalem my father was born in — where Ibrahim, Avraham and Abraham...all played marbles together in the Old City, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, but on Friday Ibrahim went to Al Aqsa Mosque, on Saturday Avraham went to temple and the Wailing Wall, and on Sunday Abraham to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre.

“On Monday morning they were playing marbles together again.”

This was the first time that the Brisbane Peace Lecture was co-delivered.

In his introductory remarks, the Anglican Dean of Brisbane, Peter Catt, said that it was important for Muslim, Jewish and Christian community leaders to speak unequivocally together about a just peace.

“In terms of dealing with the complexities that drive many of the world’s conflicts, instead of bombing we need dialogue, we need truth-telling and truth-listening,” The Very Rev’d Dr Catt said.

“In the current circumstances to have a Jewish person and a Palestinian, standing side by side, looking for a way to bring peace, is a practical way of dismantling the destructive binary — the either-or places — before us.

“We are, if you like, seeking to find the third way and looking for what might emerge.”

The St John’s Cathedral International Day of Peace event was co-hosted by the United Nations Association of Australia — Queensland Division and Just Peace.

The United Nations marks the International Day of Peace annually on 21 September, after being first declared 43 years ago as [a shared date for the world to build a culture of peace](#).

UN Secretary-General António Guterres’ [International Day of Peace message](#) was read by United Nations Association of Australia — Queensland Division intern Elisabeth Haugland Austrheim.

“Everywhere we look, peace is under attack,” Mr Guterres’ said in his message.

“From Gaza, to Sudan, to Ukraine and beyond we see civilians in the firing line; homes blown apart; traumatised, terrified populations who have lost everything — and sometimes everyone.

“This catalogue of human misery must stop.

“Our world needs peace.”

St John’s Cathedral is the Cathedral for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, which stretches from Coolangatta to Bundaberg and out to the borders of the Northern Territory and South Australia.

Since March, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland has been co-hosting “Gathering to Pray for Gaza” inter-faith ceasefire prayer vigils in Brisbane, with 80 recognised Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Bahá’í and Buddhist community leaders reciting from their holy texts and leading intercessory prayers across the vigils.

The 2024 Brisbane Peace Lecture may be viewed on the [St John's Cathedral, Brisbane YouTube channel](#).

**International • Tuesday 10 September 2024 • By World Council of Churches**

## **Sudanese archbishop pleads for peace, as humanitarian agencies warn of catastrophic hunger crisis**



**Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo, Primate of the Episcopal Church of Sudan, with Archbishop Justin Welby (Photo: Neil Turner/The Lambeth Conference)**

Archbishop Ezekiel Kondo of the Episcopal (Anglican) Church of Sudan called for end to the ongoing war in the country, as humanitarian agencies flagged a hunger crisis of epic proportions.

The war between two rival factions of government, the Sudan Armed Forces and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces started as a power struggle, but erupted into a full-scale fighting on 15 April 2023. Since then, it has killed thousands of people and displaced millions of others, as it created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises.

Kondo said peace was the most urgent need of the people, since the situation was very critical. He also urged church-based relief organizations worldwide to join relief food efforts to aid the suffering populations.

"War must stop. The people need peace now and not tomorrow," said the Archbishop of Khartoum. "What is most needed is peace [but] the war can only stop if supporters stop supplying weapons to the warring parties."

According to the primate, most of the weapons being used in war were sent to the country by foreign nations to both sides, which must stop if the people and country are to have peace.

“Unless this stops the war will continue. I would like to urge countries which are contributing to suffering of the Sudanese people to stop sending weapons,” said Kondo.

Amidst the war, Jan Egeland, general secretary of the Norwegian Refugee Council; Charlotte Slente, secretary general of the Danish Refugee Council; and Tjada D’Oyen McKenna, chief executive, Mercy Corps, in a joint statement on 3 September, called on the international community to address the immense hunger crisis in Sudan.

“We cannot be clearer: Sudan is experiencing a starvation crisis of historic proportions. And yet, the silence is deafening. People are dying of hunger, every day, and yet the focus remains on semantic debates and legal definitions,” said the heads of the humanitarian organizations.

The statement accompanied a report titled, “If Bullets miss, Hunger won’t—Beyond the numbers: Hunger and Conflict in Sudan.” Dated 2 September, the report is based on testimonies of people in regions, including Darfur, Kordofan and, Khartoum. It reveals ways in which the conflict and wide violations of international law have led to starvation and suffering countrywide.

Kondo said it is true, “if civilians are not killed by bullets, hunger will,” but he added that civilians were also being killed by diseases due to lack of medicines and natural calamities, including floods, cold weather, or heat.

Civilians in the larger Khartoum area, Darfur, North and South Kordofan, and West Kordofan regions, including the Nuba Mountains region, a part of South Kordofan which has been declared a hunger zone, are most affected, according to the archbishop.

“If food is not given, many people are going to die and this is because Kadugli [the capital of South Kordofan State] has been besieged and nobody can go out or go in,” he said.

More than 25 million people – more than half the population – are suffering acute food insecurity, according to the humanitarian organizations, with many families eating one meal a day for months or being forced to eat leaves or insects.

The agencies call for pressure to ensure the flow of humanitarian aid, while highlighting that about 1.78 million people have had no access to critical humanitarian assistance in June alone—due to logistics constraints, arbitrary denials, and bureaucratic obstruction.

[WCC member churches in Sudan](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches](#) website on 6 September 2024.

## Archbishop Jeremy announces new Vocations Coordinator



**The Rev'd Chris Bate has been appointed as Vocations Coordinator (on secondment)**

Dear sisters and brothers,

It is with pleasure that I announce the appointment of the Reverend Christopher Bate — on secondment — as the new Vocations Coordinator (on a part-time, 0.1 FTE basis).

During his secondment, Chris will retain his position as Rector, Church of The Holy Spirit, Algester and this will be fulfilled on a part-time (0.9 FTE) basis.

The Vocations Coordinator is responsible for facilitating the Seekers process and promoting vocations to ordained ministry. This role involves encouraging and promoting vocations, facilitating initiatives from the Vocations Task Group, and supporting enquirers through the Seekers Program. Additionally, the Vocations Coordinator is responsible for:

- Working with the Vocations Task Group to initiate projects, events, and processes to stimulate vocations;
- Coordinating vocations-related events and to ensure their successful execution;
- Developing and distributing resources to promote vocations across various platforms;
- Maintaining active communication with parishes, schools, and other ministry units to promote vocations; and
- Creating and maintaining an active web and social media presence to engage potential seekers.

I welcome Chris' willingness to take on this role, and I also thank the people of The Parish of Algester for their willingness to support Chris in this new position of responsibility in the Diocese, while he continues to be their Rector.

Please pray for Chris as he prepares to take up this new role as well as for all members of the Vocations Task Group, and for all enquirers and those involved in the Seekers Program.

Yours in Christ,

The Most Reverend Jeremy Greaves KCSJ  
Archbishop of Brisbane

**Reflections • Tuesday 1 October 2024 • By The Rev'd Dr Gemma Dashwood OAM**

## **My liturgical organist journey**



**"...my journey to being a liturgical organist probably began when I started playing the pipe organ in our little school chapel," The Rev'd Dr Gemma Dashwood (pictured in September 2024)**

I sometimes get asked what the difference is between a concert organist and a liturgical organist. My suggested response is something like:

**"A concert organist worships playing while a liturgical organist plays to worship"**

There are, of course, those clever people who can be both, but for me, my journey to being a liturgical organist probably began when I started playing the pipe organ in our little school chapel. It is a passion that has continued to develop through my time as assistant organist and eventual music director at All Saints', Ainslie in Canberra, and still grows in my current life as a priest. Probably the greatest joy I find in being a liturgical organist comes from being able to interact with the



congregation by attempting to reflect the emotions of the liturgical year and (hopefully) enhancing their worship.

My liturgical appreciation has certainly developed over the decades — and my approach to playing in church has without doubt altered considerably. While I was always aware of the liturgical requirements of a church organist, it probably wasn't until I started my theology degree and formation training that I found my focus shifting somewhat.

The most obvious change I noticed in my playing was that I approached it less as a “performance” and more as part of my personal worship. Particularly striking was how I started to understand how relatively unimportant the postlude was. I remember as a younger student spending hours a week on finding and perfecting something to play for the end of the service, sincerely believing that the most complicated, difficult and fancy thing I could find would be the best thing to play. In fact, some of the most powerful musical moments have been when I have played the simplest things (such as when I played a very quiet “Abide with me” at the end of the service as we closed the church for COVID lockdown) or indeed the occasions when the organ has remained silent.

Rather than spending my time learning postludes, I started to look deeper at the various parts of the service instead. Playing hymns, for example, is not just about getting the notes right (although that helps, of course!) but also using the different sounds of the organ to reflect the words of each verse — helping the congregation to undertake the journey on which the hymns is leading them. Organs have a wonderful flexibility about them — so there is every opportunity to reflect “earthquake, wind and fire” one moment and “a still small voice of calm” the next.

I also really started considering how I could play the Mass setting in a way that reflected the theology behind what was being sung. For example, I started having discussions with other organists about whether they made “Amen” loud or soft (hint: there's no “right” answer!). Once I started taking more notice, I realised that the penitence reflected in the “Kyrie” could be powerfully contrasted by the joy of the “Gloria” and the subtlety of the “Angus Dei” had the potential to prepare the congregation to approach the altar.

I also discovered that for me personal worship is very different (but no less powerful) when taking part in the liturgy from the position on the organ stool. As a liturgical organist it is necessary to concentrate hard to ensure that the correct music is ready to be played at the correct time, that the organ is set up for the next item to be played and if necessary decide how long an improvisation needs to be extended for various processions. This all takes a lot of effort, and it is not realistic to enter into such a deep reflective space as it is when sitting in the congregation. Nevertheless, I still find that I can feel the sense of worship and fulfillment even if it isn't in the same way.

Finally, it would be remiss of me not to mention how the organist actually has a certain amount of opportunity to express a sense of humour. Examples of this include the time when I heard an improvisation unmistakably including the theme tune to *Wallace and Gromit* or when the postlude for the Feast of the Assumption was “Hooray and up she rises”. In my role as clergy, I know only too well that it is not worth upsetting the organist — for no other reason, the trumpet stop on the organ is louder than any noise I can make!

All jokes aside, being a liturgical organist is a tremendous privilege, and I hope that it is a skill that I can continue to develop throughout my life. Moreover, I hope that the interest, excitement and

passion in liturgical organ playing is something that can continue through many more generations to come.

First published in *The Eagle*, the magazine of St John's Cathedral. [Download](#) your copy today.

Justice & Advocacy • Tuesday 1 October 2024 • By Lela, Bry, Leia, Muhammad, Priya

## Young inter-faith leaders reflect on their "Gathering in Prayer for Gaza" ceasefire vigil



**Young people signing a prayer space banner at a youth-led "Gathering in Prayer for Gaza" inter-faith ceasefire vigil at St Andrew's, Indooroopilly on 31 August 2024**

A youth-led "Gathering in Prayer for Gaza" inter-faith vigil was held at St Andrew's, Indooroopilly recently to pray for a permanent ceasefire; lament the lives lost to violence; pray for the release of the thousands of child and adult Palestinians arbitrarily arrested in Gaza, the release of remaining Israeli hostages, and the release of Palestinian political prisoners; and, pray for a just peace. The peace vigil included prayers, readings from holy texts and prayer spaces, with fellowship over traditional Palestinian food after the vigil.

**Lela — Parish of Indooroopilly community member and vigil organiser and co-MC**

It was an honour to lead the organising of this vigil and to co-MC the vigil with Leia, who is a young Palestinian Muslim.

During the night I thought it was really powerful to see everyone gathered together around the prayer station that showed the names of the children killed in Gaza and Israel. Although an extremely sad moment for all, it was moving for me to see many people gathered to lament the children's lives lost and to light remembrance candles.

The prayer space that resonated the most with me was the olive tree prayer space. Leia's grandfather's olive trees have been uprooted by Israeli soldiers nearly every year since 2002. Her grandfather's stoic replanting of the trees, even though they keep getting uprooted, is a representation of the persistence of the Palestinian people. The vigil's hand-painted olive tree was a place for everyone to come together to write a message or prayer of hope for the Palestinian people on a leaf that was adhered to the tree. The tree also symbolised Leia's grandfather's hope that his trees will one day reach maturity and for the prayers and hopes of Palestinians to one day reach maturity, too.

I think it is important for young people from different faith backgrounds to gather in unity so that we have a place to reflect on the traumatising human rights violations that we are seeing happening to Palestinians on our phone and computer screens.

### **Bry — Jewish community member**

It was fantastic for people of all ages to come together to a youth-led vigil in solidarity and to express connection and unity. In particular, hearing so many young people of different faiths reading from their holy texts and prayers was incredibly special. [Muhammad's Quran recitation](#) was absolutely gorgeous. Another deeply moving moment was hearing the Tamil holy text (written by Thiruvalluvar) read by Priya, especially the lines:

"Who grieves confront with meek, ungrieving heart,  
From them grieves, put to grief, depart." (Kural 623)

There was such beauty — both in the differences in expression and the common message about peace and justice. Expressing grief, anger, and hope for the future together was powerful.

The olive tree prayer space resonated with me the most. I loved that we were able to reflect on something so real and immediate and close to some of the people present. The farmer featured in the story is the grandfather of one of the MCs, Leia. Leia's grandfather has replanted his 500 olive trees nearly every year for over 15 years. His maturing trees are bulldozed or his young trees are uprooted by hand, by the so-called Israeli Defense Forces, after he replants them. Leia's grandfather's response here symbolises Palestinian resilience against occupation and oppression.

It's so important for young people of faith to understand that what is happening in Palestine and Israel is not a "Jew versus Muslim" issue — it's not a matter of religion. This is a human rights matter — Palestinians have a right to self-determination and to be free of [occupation](#), [apartheid](#) and [genocide](#). It's especially important for young people to understand this because they shape the future — as activists, as advocates and as policy makers.

### **Leia — Palestinian and Muslim and co-MC**

A specific part of the vigil that really spoke to me was that everybody appreciated each other and respected each other and were able to come together and pray for Palestine and the injustices happening, regardless of their faith or background.

I actually found that two prayer spaces resonated with me most. The first one was the one that had the story of my grandfather, which was obviously very close to my heart. The other prayer space that really resonated with me was the one with the names of the child victims rolling on the screen because, although it was a quiet, the silence spoke volumes.

Gathering young people from diverse faith backgrounds to lead prayers for Palestinians is crucial for fostering solidarity and support amid ongoing hardships. Such events promote interfaith understanding, break down stereotypes and build meaningful relationships. They empower youth to advocate for peace and justice while raising awareness about the challenges faced by Palestinians. By coming together in prayer, participants emphasise a shared hope, highlighting that compassion transcends religious and cultural divides. Ultimately, these gatherings inspire collective action and a commitment to humanitarian values, reinforcing the importance of unity in addressing complex global issues.

### **Muhammad — Shia Muslim community member**

My highlight of the youth-led “Gathering in Prayer for Gaza” vigil was when everyone was praying or reflecting at the different prayer stations. Everyone called upon their God to alleviate the Palestinians in Gaza who have endured so much over the last year. They stood in solidarity as they prayed.

The prayer space featuring the names of children, who have died since October, on the screen was very moving. The speed at which the thousands of names rolled on the screen in the 20-minute prayer station period was very sad, to say the least. It was difficult to focus on a single child’s name. I prayed for mercy and that no more names would be added to the list of children who have died. I also prayed for the children’s surviving family members.

Gathering is important because it shows that we value life and are willing to stand up against oppression together, even though our faiths are different. Our shared morals, values and integrity brought us together.

We stood in solidarity knowing that what is happening to Palestinians isn’t about religion — it’s about land and the Indigenous Palestinians are being dispossessed through an ongoing process of [illegal occupation and settler-colonialism](#).

People of faith especially need to show that what is happening in Gaza is now beyond catastrophic. Basic human rights are being denied by the state of Israel. Palestinian children, like all children, have a right to live in peace and safety.

In the Muslim faith, two core values and duties revealed in the Quran and the Hadith are enjoining good, including standing with those who do good, and forbidding wrong, including standing with those who resist evil. I think the youth who led the vigil, along with those who gathered, fulfilled both these.

## **Priya — Tamil Hindu community member**

For me, the vigil was particularly moving because it honoured the lives of people who have died in Gaza and the voices of those who have so far survived. Coming together with young people from different cultures and faiths showed our shared commitment to pray for peace and to recognise the profound sacrifices made, including of the journalists who have been killed.

The prayer space that resonated with me the most was reading some of the names of the children who are victims of the war. These children should have had the chance to experience childhood and a future full of possibilities. As I lit a candle, I felt a deep sense of sorrow for their unjust suffering and death. I prayed for their souls to rest in peace and for an end to the ongoing suffering in Palestine, hoping for peace and justice for all.

It is important for young people from different faith backgrounds to gather and lead prayers for Palestinians because it shows unity, compassion and solidarity across our community. By praying for those suffering, we make their voices heard and their pain recognised. Collectively, these prayers transcend religious and cultural differences, sending a powerful message of shared humanity. By uniting in this way, we raise awareness about the plight of Palestinians, recognise their struggles, and hope for peace and justice.

**Reflections • Tuesday 1 October 2024 • By The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt**

## **The mystery of being incarnated**



**The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt enjoying the Italian countryside in September 2024**

"...For every atom belonging to me as good belongs to you.  
I loafe and invite my soul,  
I lean and loafe at my ease observing a spear of summer grass.  
My tongue, every atom of my blood, form'd from this soil, this air,  
Born here of parents born here from parents born the same, and their parents  
the same..."

Walt Whitman, *Song of Myself*

It is an experience of being connected to country that I cannot explain. And I am increasingly glad that it is not subject to explanation. I can just enjoy it. And be transformed by it.

On several occasions as I was walking through the Italian countryside over the past week I had to stop as a deep sense of joy overwhelmed me. On one occasion I said aloud, "I am so happy I could cry". I have similar experiences every time I visit Italy.

I am writing this as I sit in a hotel lobby preparing to return home. Having written the word "home" in the last sentence, I find myself pausing to reflect on what that word means for me.

I do feel at home, very much at home when I am in Brisbane. It is my place. My family. My community of faith. My story. And yet this morning while on the train traveling from the countryside of Lazio to Rome, I found myself already feeling 'homesick' as I prepare to leave this place where my heart sings. Feeling homesick for a place that is not my home, and yet in some ways is more home than home.

My family story has no connection at all with Italy. One of my children took a DNA test a few years ago and discovered that our ancestry is entirely anglo-celt.

The feeling of being at home in Italy is sufficiently strong that I could be tempted to put it down to reincarnation, but I don't give the idea of reincarnation much credence except in the sense that my body is made up of atoms from the great carbon soup of the earth system and those atoms will return to that soup once my earthly pilgrimage is over. No doubt some of my atoms have lived in Italy before.

So, as I wrote earlier, there is no explanation for my sense of attachment to Italy. And as I also noted, I do not need have it explained.

In an earlier piece I reflected on how I experience a feeling of connection, of home coming, when I drive the Pacific Highway and cross into the Manning Valley where I grew up. I have spent almost no time in the Manning Valley over the past 45 years, and the highway has been rerouted since I left "home", and yet I still feel a deep sense of belonging as I catch the first glimpse of the mountains on the far side of the valley.

My sense of being at home in particular places gives me a deep sense of appreciation for the way the First Nations people of Australia speak of Country and their relationship with it. It also reminds me to appreciate the mystery of being incarnated:

I am a person who encounters the world in an embodied and relational way; that my spirituality is shaped by my relationship to place; and that we are more than rational creatures.

Above all my sense of being “at home” in particular places reminds me of the importance of honouring the world in which we live and of the importance of caring for country. Our connection to country means that an injury we cause to country will see us injuring ourselves.

**First published in the Precinct eNews on 16 September 2024.**

**Reflections • Monday 30 September 2024 • By The Rev'd Charlie Lacey**

## **Tough Questions: Is Christianity always counter cultural?**



**"Therefore, our point of reference for moral discernment ought not be the mores of the prevailing culture, but rather God's word," The Rev'd Charlie Lacey**

The Church has been persecuted since its conception. In the book of Acts, following the stoning of the first Christian martyr, Stephen, we read how “a great persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem” (Acts 8. 1-2). Today, Christians remain the world’s most persecuted group. According to a 2019 report ordered by former British Foreign Secretary, Jeremy Hunt, the persecution of Christians has reached near genocidal levels in some parts of the world.

Jesus warned his disciples that they would face persecution:

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” (John 15. 18-20)

So, what has persecution got to do with the question at hand? Quite simply, Christians have always been persecuted precisely because Christianity is countercultural. The Gospel has been proclaimed in every cultural context imaginable, and it would take volumes to catalogue the various ways that Christianity has collided with such a vast array of cultures. However, from Jesus’ perspective, there are, broadly speaking, only two cultures: the worldly culture that hates God, and the culture of God’s

kingdom. Either we belong to the world, or we belong to Jesus. For those who belong to the world, the Gospel will be confronting.

Indeed, the Gospel is an offence because following Jesus necessitates change and transformation at the deepest level. From the haughty Pharisees of Jesus' day to the 20th century communist ideologists who attempted to eradicate the very concept of God, the world has always resisted the Gospel.

In a world that is in rebellion against God, Christianity properly understood is always countercultural; however, the Church has sometimes failed to be. One of the most notable examples is that of the German Church in the 1940s. In the face of racialised Nazi ideology, particularly anti-semitism, church leadership remained conspicuously silent. Not to mention the widespread complicity of many "ordinary" Christians. Of course there were many exceptions, but overall, the German church capitulated to a wholly evil cultural innovation.

Christians must remember that the world hates God, and any society bereft of Christian influence will tend to move further away from the values of God's kingdom. Therefore, our point of reference for moral discernment ought not be the mores of the prevailing culture, but rather God's word.

The moral zeitgeist of Western civilisation is now changing so rapidly that to align ourselves with it would mean adjusting our perspective every five years or so. In an increasingly polarised world, Christians should not be swayed by loud voices from either side of the political divide, as they never seem to reflect a truly Christian perspective.

As Christians we are called to be "salt and light", which invariably means being countercultural. We must reject ungodly cultural trends, ideologies and policies, no matter what their origin. Our loyalty is to Jesus and his kingdom. However, we must understand that our allegiance comes at a cost. Adopting a countercultural stance can, depending on the context, lead to Christians being derided, ostracised, "cancelled", victimised, imprisoned, tortured or killed. We are fortunate to live in a country where the cost of following Jesus is relatively low.

Christianity is always countercultural. If we find ourselves getting comfortable with the surrounding culture, then we have probably compromised with the world that hates God. We are the Church. Let us aim to be as radically countercultural as Jesus and the faith he taught us.

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



## From accidental ARPA member to Gutenberg winner



**St Andrew's, South Brisbane parish councillor Allan Sauer OAM was presented the prestigious Gutenberg Award by Australasian Religious Press Association president Sophia Sinclair at the 23 September 2024 awards dinner to the delight of Archbishop Jeremy Greaves and Annette Sauer**

A beloved South Brisbane parishioner and former *FOCUS* editor was recently awarded the Australasian Religious Press Association's highest accolade at the association's golden jubilee conference on the Gold Coast.

St Andrew's, South Brisbane parish councillor Allan Sauer OAM was presented the Gutenberg Award by Australasian Religious Press Association (ARPA) president Sophia Sinclair at the 23 September awards dinner.

Ms Sinclair said that the Gutenberg Award, which recognises excellence in religious communication, was presented to Mr Sauer for his long-term dedication to journalism and the Anglican Church.

"The variety of roles and responsibilities Allan has held within the Church and the diocese, coupled with his natural skills and eye for detail, made him an ideal candidate for serving as the Chairman of the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane Diocesan Media Committee," Ms Sinclair said.

"At the dawn of the millennium this commitment led to his involvement with *FOCUS*... where he would soon serve as editor.

"During this time Allan became involved with ARPA as a member — finding fellowship, professional development and recognition among his peers.

Ms Sinclair said that Mr Sauer found out about the association via a bill for payment more than 20 years ago.

“Allan first became aware of ARPA when a membership invoice crossed his desk at *FOCUS*.

“Little did he know at the time that this would develop into a significant long-term investment.

“Allan took on the role of Executive Officer of ARPA in 2006, serving until 2012.

“Since 2012, Allan has given generously of his time, knowledge, and skills as ARPA’s Treasurer.

“Allan is known for his exacting standards and his excellent taste.

“From arranging events and finding speakers to meticulously organising records and accounts.

“From editing, advocating and speaking for the rights of the religious press, to caring about the tiny details which make an ARPA conference happen.

“From being so willing to offer up institutional knowledge and insight to applying his expertise to the arranging and upholding of the prestigious ARPA awards.

“Allan is an exceptional and faithful colleague and peer who has dedicated his service to ensuring ARPA is an association that serves and blesses its members.

“To put it simply, Allan Sauer embodies the spirit of ARPA.”

Ms Sinclair also honoured Allan’s wife Annette for her support of ARPA.

“Allan’s service and commitment are born from a deep and abiding faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” she said.

“Allan has been ably and wonderfully supported in his commitment to ARPA by his wife of nearly 53 years, Annette Sauer.”

The first Gutenberg was awarded in 1983.

The award is named after the 15th century inventor of the movable-type printing press, Johannes Gutenberg, who also produced the first printed Bible.

The award was originally given to the publication that won the most awards in a given year.

ARPA’s executive then rethought the Gutenberg’s purpose — from 1985 it was a discretionary award given by the association’s president in recognition of excellence in Christian journalism and communication.

Mr Sauer said that he is surprised and grateful to be announced the Gutenberg winner.

“Religious media is an important arm of the mission of the Church — we should give every encouragement as they fulfil their calling,” he said.

"I was stunned when my name was announced because the award is the president's gift, and not sought.

"One is extremely grateful for the privilege that one's ministry has been recognised as important in the service of God.

"Ecumenism is important because we are trying to follow the commands of Christ to love one another, especially in the wider sphere — this is done in a practical manner."

Mr Sauer received the award to a standing ovation, with past and present ARPA members and office bearers in attendance, along with senior religious leaders.

The Most Rev'd Jeremy Greaves, who was the keynote conference speaker, said that he was thrilled to see Allan receive the prestigious award.

"Congratulations to Allan for receiving the Gutenberg Award from his ecumenical press peers," Archbishop Greaves said.

"Allan is very well respected in our Diocese for his decency, work ethic, dedication, broad skills and faithfulness.

"I felt privileged to be present and to join in the applause, as well as the joyful laughter when dinner guests saw the look of surprise on Allan's face when his name was announced.

"I cannot think of anyone more deserving of receiving the Gutenberg Award in the association's golden jubilee year."

Mr Sauer, a past General Synod and Diocesan Council member, currently serves as a parish councillor, treasurer and liturgical assistant at St Andrew's Anglican Church in South Brisbane.

ARPA members voted to wind up the association at the Gold Coast conference, which was held on 23-24 September, due to the declining number of Church and non-denominational newspapers and magazines.

The association has its roots in a lobby group against significant postage increases in the 1960s and 1970s.

While the lobby group did not get the outcome they campaigned for, members valued the collegiality and fellowship, and thus a more formal association, ARPA, was born.

As well as pursuing mutual issues of concern, ARPA encouraged excellence in Christian communication through an annual conference and awards.

In 1991 ARPA adopted a statement, leading with the importance of communication:

"Communication is at the heart of the Church's life and mission. It is not an optional extra. Christ's 'great commission' ([Matthew 28: 19,20](#)) is a mandate to communicate.

The mission of *anglican focus* is “[t]o deliver a free community-owned news site for diverse ACSQ members to proclaim the Gospel, reflect, inform, advocate and resource in order to nourish spirituality and connect community.”

**Reflections • Friday 27 September 2024 • By Cheryl Courtice**

## **How did I end up ministering one day a week at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, speaking with the men in green?**



**Parish of Kenmore-Brookfield community member and prison chaplain, Cheryl Courtice**

A tall intimidating-looking man was walking towards me. His head was shaved and tattooed. I remained motionless, rooted to the spot. As he passed me, he whispered, “God bless.”

How did I end up ministering one day a week at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre, speaking with the men in green? Most of the men look like teenagers — so very young.

The answer is worth reflecting on, so here goes...

In 2021 I felt drawn to pursuing some clinical pastoral education (CPE). I had friends coping with ageing, illness, dementia, death and other big life stuff. I felt I might be more helpful to them if I went beyond giving them something delicious to eat and making them laugh.

I did a foundational CPE course through the Queensland Institute of Clinical Pastoral Education with Cathy Brown, and it was life changing. The course was quite intense, and I learnt a lot about myself and how to properly listen to others.

As part of this CPE training, I was involved in pastoral care at a local hospital and in my local parish. I also practised my new skills while conversing with my friends, usually over the phone, during a time when COVID-19 was keeping us physically distant.

My husband, Tim, had been involved in prison chaplaincy for many years, visiting the Brisbane Correctional Centre weekly and leading the four Sunday services every six weeks. He finds it very rewarding and often wondered, out loud, if I might too?

At the start of 2023, Tim decided to change chaplaincy service providers and move to Anglicare Southern Queensland. This also involved a change from the Brisbane Correctional Centre to the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

I remember the exact moment one night when I suggested that this change might make it a good time for me to “give it a go”. The words just came out of my mouth. I think I was as surprised as Tim. Anyway, the words were out there, and we subsequently began the process. God works in mysterious ways.

The chaplaincy onboarding process was longer than I expected; however, at 8.30 one July morning last year, after flying in the previous night from a nine-week overseas trip, we were in our induction course at the Arthur Gorrie Correctional Centre.

The induction was confronting at times. Behind the razor wire and chain-link fences we learnt about the potential for being manipulated by inmates. Our fingerprints were taken and we heard about the guard dogs. By the time we were taken on a tour of the prison, I was wide eyed and nestled into the middle of the group. When we passed some of the men in green my heart rate increased.

I wanted to train alongside Tim, so two days later we made our first visit. We met another chaplain, a Catholic priest, to learn the ropes.

Prison chaplaincy is about listening. The inmates often have no one safe to talk to. Other inmates could use what is said against them and if they talk to the guards they may be seen as “dogs” (informers). As with hospital and parish chaplaincy, I must put my story and curiosity aside and meet them where they are at, and listen to what they want to talk about. I need to be accepting, open hearted and available to hear whatever they want to tell or ask me.

Often when people are really given the chance to open up, they unravel their own problems, with the solutions becoming clearer to them in the process. Theologian and anti-Nazi dissident Dietrich Bonhoeffer writes in his letters and papers from prison, “But I can’t help sharing my thoughts with you, for the simple reason that that’s the only way I can clarify my own mind.” This is the real benefit to the inmates — having someone listening to them.

One young fellow was distressed because bad things kept happening to him. We talked about breathing, pressing the pause button between the stimulus and the response (instead of immediately reacting) and using agency to choose a response — breathing God in. He was happy to report back during following visits that he was feeling much calmer, making better decisions and reconnecting with his family the best that he could from prison. He was also making constructive and supported plans for his release. This was certainly a highlight for me — hopefully a young life back on track.

I have been impressed at how well-mannered the inmates generally are. They are courteous and polite, frequently thanking us for our visits. I am also often impressed by the strong faith I see. Admittedly, the ones who want to talk, usually want to talk about God — this has, in turn, done great things for my faith. I am usually a follower of the idea to “preach the Bible constantly, occasionally use words”. So this prison community has me sharing my faith one full day per week — more than the rest of the week put together. It’s wonderful and challenging!

I have also enjoyed sharing this ministry with Tim — which is probably what drew me to it. I have always found him great company, but watching how he operates and his interactions with the men have been inspirational. It has been a bonding experience that has left me with renewed admiration for his quiet, calm ways.

I believe that jails are not full of evil, but full of suffering. A young fellow came up to me shortly before I wrote this reflection to see if I could say a prayer for his mother who had just died. Imagine it! I asked his name and her name before we said a prayer together. He was so grateful, but not nearly as grateful as I was to be able to shine a little of God’s light on him in that moment.

One year on, and it is still early days. Six months after the induction, I completed the required number of visits and Sunday services to be allocated an official yellow pass. I am thoroughly enjoying the chaplaincy ministry and sincerely recommend it. This kind of volunteer work takes as much time as you allow — I prioritise it around other activities in my retirement.

All the prisons, particularly the women’s prisons, are crying out for chaplains — for someone the inmates can talk with. Please consider it.

**Editor’s note: If you would like to volunteer in the special ministry area of prison chaplaincy, please [email](#) Dr Stephen Harrison.**

## Project Hope25: origins and hopes



The Rev'd Catherine Govan, The Rev'd Michael Calder and The Rev'd Dr Ann Edwards from Hope25 at the Provincial Clergy Conference on the Gold Coast in August 2024

We live in a complex and messy world. There is racism, wars and invasions, a changing climate, a cost-of-living crisis, and violence within homes. More than ever, people are looking for hope. As followers of Jesus, we believe that Jesus is the hope in this complex and messy world.

That's why the Anglican Church of Australia is embarking on a daring "[Hope25](#)" project to intentionally reach out to the world with the hope of Jesus from Easter Day to Pentecost in 2025.

Imagine every Anglican parish and community around Australia doing at least one thing to share the hope that we have in Jesus and being fervent in prayer during next year's Easter Day to Pentecost period. To me, that sounds phenomenally exciting!

Of course, parishes can do different things, but we from the Hope25 team would love every parish and community doing something. This could mean running an introduction to Christianity course, having a community lunch, hosting an art evening on the theme of hope, or anything else that enables you to reach out to the world with the hope of Jesus.

At our recent Synod, Archbishop Jeremy urged us all to join in. We also passed the following "Project Hope25" motion (which was moved by me and second by The Rev'd Catherine Govan from St Stephen's, Coorparoo), with acclamation:

"That this Synod wholeheartedly supports the Anglican Church of Australia's project Hope25 — 'Hope in an Uncertain World' — sharing the hope we have in Jesus Christ, and encourages every Parish and Community to participate."

This project has sprung up from the Mission and Ministry Commission of the General Synod of Australia who are urging us to have a greater focus on evangelism and proclamation.

In February, The Rev'd Catherine Govan and I were invited to participate in a national workshop in Melbourne to provide input on what this season could look like for our Church. At this workshop, every Australian diocese was represented apart from one (and this exception was due to no representative being available on the date).

This was an amazing time of unity across the national Church and across the spectrum of Anglicanism. It was a great joy to see us all focussed on proclaiming the hope of Jesus outwards after many years as a national Church often focusing more inwardly on internal matters, including disputes.

Coming out of this workshop were a number of initiatives.

Firstly, a website has been set up at [hope25.com.au](http://hope25.com.au) to [resource](#) parishes and communities and to provide [ideas](#) for reaching out to our wider communities with the hope of Jesus.

Secondly, a national time of prayer has begun on the first Thursday of every month at 7.30pm (Brisbane time) on Zoom in order to commit all our plans to our Lord in prayer.

Thirdly, a [podcast](#) has been created that includes interviews with various experts about the hope of Jesus and practical advice about proclaiming this hope to every generation.

Lastly, more locally a working group has been formed for our diocese, which includes The Rev'd Catherine Govan, The Rev'd Claye Middleton, The Rev'd Dr Ann Edwards, The Rev'd Tania Eichler and The Rev'd Melissa Conway.

**Here are a few ways that you can get your parish, ministry or other faith community involved and preparing right now:**

1. Pray for Hope25 and that we as a national Church will be fruitful and faithful in our preparation and in our execution of the season of evangelism next year.
2. [Sign up](#) to the Hope25 e-newsletter.
3. Create a working group in your own community to start gathering ideas.
4. [Subscribe](#) to the Hope25 podcast on your preferred podcasting platform.



## Making the most of time, talents and tithes in Holy Hermits Online



**"There is so much we have learned in the online space. I look forward to presenting our learnings to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas in 2025-2026 through the HHO programme we are building this year," says The Rev'd Jamee-Lee Callard, pictured in September 2024**

God has a great sense of humour! I am one of the least likely candidates for using technology as a vehicle for ministry. And yet, I find myself in my fourth year of online ministry, thriving alongside the faithful community members of [Holy Hermits Online](#) (HHO) and St John's Cathedral in Brisbane.

God's persistent call to be in the digital space with our diverse group of HHO community members is what keeps me showing up to my computer. It seems I'm in good company because many of our folk are not with HHO because they are tech-enthusiasts, but because God is inviting them to be a part of our flourishing online community.

Some community members remain from the small group who helped pioneer our online space during the pandemic when HHO was connected to St John's, Bulimba. Many more have found a home with us online as it suits their location, accessibility or lifestyle needs. Our travellers, seekers and "dual citizens" are treasured parts of HHO, coming and going digitally, while retaining connection with congregations in "bricks and mortar" parishes when they can.

We are geographically dispersed, with members gathering online from all over Australia, as well as overseas. Many HHO members also enjoy being connected with us via our email distribution list — supporting us through prayer and giving — even if they can't come to online services and other online gatherings regularly.

Recently, we have reflected on how God calls us to form community online as an intentional practice. A value we have in common with our home base at the Cathedral is a shared vocations-centred approach to ministry.

We seek to enable, equip and empower lay leadership. The offerings our members make of their time, talents and tithes online are cherished. Some of our lay servers express their online roles in ways that will be familiar to in-person churchgoers. One is our Welcomer role, where a volunteer server greets each participant that joins our digital space 15 minutes before Sunday worship begins. Chris shares how she prepares for her welcoming role on her blog post "[Welcoming tips and tricks from Chris](#)".

Two other easily translated roles are our Readers, who offer the lessons at the Ministry of the Word, and our Liturgical Assistants, who lead our prayer and praise/ante-communion liturgies. Some roles have been formed that are unique to the online ministry format, such as our Cantor, who is the voice of the congregation and "unmutes" to offer the shared responses (bold text) that we all say together. Jeremy shares about his call to these HHO roles in his blog post "[Preparing to be Cantor, Reader or Liturgical Assistant](#)".

We deliberately focus on making space for the emerging ministries that bubble up in our midst, based on where we experience community energy. One such ministry is our [Digital Faith Artists](#) that rose up during Eastertide. Using an AI art generator platform, our volunteer artists are creating one-of-a-kind artworks. These are stunning visual devotions, formed prayerfully and with love. Here are two Pentecost-inspired pieces from Liz and Leonie:



**"Using an AI art generator platform, our volunteer artists are creating one-of-a-kind artworks. These are stunning visual devotions, formed prayerfully and with love. Here are two Pentecost-inspired pieces from Liz and Leonie,"** says Holy Hermits Online priest, The Rev'd Jamee Lee-Callard

Another emerging ministry is our [Reader Project](#), which popped up in our enthusiastic lay-led fellowship space. Our volunteers read their favourite Psalm, with the words and artworks on the screen, to create videos for our [YouTube](#) channel. We have often gone in search of a video psalm for

our contemplative services, so we hope this project will resource other churches who want to use video readings, too, and help new members find us via YouTube.

Julie, one of our faithful Liturgical Assistants, read Psalm 121 as our first Reader Project volunteer. Julie loves this psalm and uses it to share sympathy or comfort with loved ones and friends. Check out the video on our [YouTube Channel](#), and give it a “Like”. If you aren’t already subscribed, you might like to join us as our video library grows.

There is so much we have learned in the online space. I look forward to presenting our learnings to the Episcopal Diocese of Texas in 2025-2026 through the HHO programme we are building this year. Offering encouragement and support for one another in the post-pandemic Church is the biggest focus, while facilitating an experience that will hopefully see others join us in online outreach.

Having the vibrant Cathedral team and community behind us gives us the confidence we need to keep going, while remaining open to the Holy Spirit’s leading. Knowing that there are other communities in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland praying for us and joining us in partnership is a great source of encouragement and strength.

### **Here are five top tips for online ministry:**

1. Take online community building seriously — it will increasingly become part of the future Church.
2. Do online ministry intentionally, while making room for emergence.
3. Prioritise and support vocations and lay-ministries, both online and offline.
4. Partner up and collaborate — online and offline ministries need one another.
5. Pray! Pray for those who have need of the Gospel to find belonging online, as well as offline, and pray for online communities to keep going and growing.

If you, or your community, would like to join or support our online mission, please visit the Holy Hermits Online website’s [partners page](#) and/or [sign up](#) to receive our digital resources.

## Anglicare appoints specialist to oversee \$12m dementia care program



**Victoria Cain has been appointed as the Clinical Lead of Anglicare Southern Queensland's Specialist Dementia Care Programs**

It is estimated there are more than [421,000 Australians](#) living with dementia and without a medical breakthrough, the number of people with dementia is expected to double by 2054.

Anglicare Southern Queensland (Anglicare) currently delivers a Specialist Dementia Care Program (SDCP) at its St Martin's Residential Aged Care Home in Taigum — a transitional program that provides a dedicated, dementia-friendly environment catering to individuals with very severe symptoms of dementia who need specialist emotional and mental health support.

Following the success of this program, Anglicare Southern Queensland was recently awarded \$12 million in funding by the [Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care](#) to implement new Specialist Dementia Care Programs at its Abri Residential Aged Care Home on the Gold Coast and EM Tooth Residential Aged Care Home in Brisbane's South.

Victoria Cain has been appointed as the Clinical Lead of Anglicare's SDCP units to oversee the development of the new and existing programs, as well as provide clinical oversight to ensure best practice dementia care principles and the highest quality of care is delivered to all residents.

Ms Cain holds a Bachelor of Nursing and a postgraduate degree in Gerontology from Griffith University and brings a wealth of aged care experience, with previous roles including dementia consultant; residence manager; national consumer dignity and risk advocate; and, registered nurse.

In addition to her many achievements, she is also a Community of Practice Group member and a panel member with Dementia Australia and was on the panel of the Australian Dementia Research Forum.

Ms Cain is passionate about finding new and innovative solutions to support people living with dementia and is an advocate for the SDCP units as a unique way of delivering quality care to loved ones.

"I've really enjoyed my time at Anglicare so far and my goal once all SDCP units are up and running, will be to coordinate our homes to support evidence-based practice," Ms Cain said.

"Regardless of whether a person is living with dementia, quality care is a right for all residents. It's important to see each person as an individual and tailor our approach to their unique needs.

"I like to focus on the person being at the heart of care as this is the key to ensuring quality outcomes for residents. Evidence based practice may not always work for the individual person and we need to be open to changing how we do things."

Anglicare Southern Queensland's Group Manager for Residential Aged Care and Retirement Living, Kate Hawkins, expressed her delight at Victoria's appointment.

"In the last five months since Victoria commenced at Anglicare, she has made progress with overseeing the design and construction of the SDCP units in both our Abri and EM Tooth residential aged care homes," Ms Hawkins said.

"It's great to have her skillset, knowledge and expertise in dementia care as part of the Anglicare Southern Queensland team and I look forward to seeing her achieving great outcomes in the future."

The Specialist Dementia Care Program unit at Anglicare's St Martin's Residential Aged Care home in Taigum was awarded an additional \$4.4m to extend operational costs until June 2028 by the Commonwealth Department of Health and Aged Care.

Abri and EM Tooth SDCPs are expected to be operational by the end of the year.

The [SDCP](#) aims to implement 35 SDCP units nationally, of which Anglicare has been awarded funding to operate three in Queensland.

To find out more about Anglicare Southern Queensland's Specialist Dementia Care Programs, please visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#).

**Editor's note: Find out more about Dementia Action Week, which is running from 16-24 September in 2024, by visiting the [Australian Government's Department of Health and Aged Care website](#).**

## Anglicare welcomes new Aged Care Act to support older Australians



**"We're looking forward to the new Aged Care Act progressing through Parliament, which will provide certainty, supporting the sector to grow and meet the needs of a booming ageing population," said acting CEO of Anglicare Southern Queensland, Anna Zilli**

[Anglicare Southern Queensland](#) has congratulated the Government and Opposition for agreeing on historic aged care reforms, including the introduction of a new rights-based [Aged Care Act](#), to support all Australians now and into the future.

The \$5.6 billion dollar initiative is set to support a growing number of older Australians who choose to maintain their independence and remain in their homes as they age.

Included in the package is the \$4.3 billion dollar [Support at Home](#) program, which is scheduled to commence on 1 July 2025.

Anglicare Southern Queensland's acting Chief Executive Officer, Anna Zilli, thanked both sides of Government for working together to ensure older Australians rights were put first.

"I would like to thank and congratulate both sides of Government on reaching bipartisan support on these historic aged care reforms and for putting older Australians and the future of aged care above party politics," Ms Zilli said.

"Anglicare Southern Queensland have been providing quality care to thousands of vulnerable Queenslanders for more than 154 years and as one of the largest and most trusted aged care providers, these reforms will mean providers like ours can continue to deliver essential and quality support to those most vulnerable in our community.

“There have been more than 20 reviews of aged care in the last 20 years and none of them have led to real change. Now, that has finally changed with a new *Aged Care Act* that delivers on dozens of recommendations from the Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety.

“With the new Support at Home program to commence on 1 July 2025, this will help thousands of older Australians get the quality care they need, when they need it and where they need it.”

Australia’s population is [ageing fast](#) and it is estimated that by 2026, more than 22 per cent of Australians will be over the age of 65 – up from 16 per cent in 2020, which means the demand for aged care is set to spiral in the coming decades.

“These new reforms are all about improving the lives of older Australians and to ensure greater funding is given to providers to remain viable so they can continue supporting those most vulnerable now and into the future,” Ms Zilli said.

“We’re looking forward to the new *Aged Care Act* progressing through Parliament, which will provide certainty, supporting the sector to grow and meet the needs of a booming ageing population.”

## World Council of Churches opens applications for 2025 Stewards Programme



**WCC central committee moderator Bishop Dr Heinrich Bedford Strohm pictured in conversation with Emma Rahman and a group of other stewards in the Ecumenical Centre chapel as the World Council of Churches central committee gathers in Geneva on 21-27 June 2023, for its first full meeting following the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022. Photo: Albin Hillert/WCC**

The World Council of Churches (WCC) invites young people from across the globe to apply for the 2025 Stewards Programme, scheduled to take place from 14-26 June 2025. This exciting programme offers a unique opportunity for youth ages 18-30 to engage with the global ecumenical movement and actively contribute to the work of the WCC. The deadline for applications is 30 November 2024.

Participants in the Stewards Programme will be part of a diverse and dynamic community of young Christians from different backgrounds, churches, and regions. Together, they will bring their faith, experiences, and vision to create an enriching ecumenical experience of fellowship and collaboration. The programme will be conducted in English, the working language for the event.

### **Rich ecumenical experience**

The 2025 Stewards Programme includes a comprehensive onsite formation in Johannesburg, South Africa. Stewards will arrive four days prior to the WCC central committee meeting and engage in workshops, discussions, and activities that explore the history, values, and mission of the ecumenical movement. This learning period prepares participants to fully understand their role and make meaningful contributions during the meeting.

The programme is designed to equip young people with the tools to carry forward their ecumenical insights into their local churches and communities, fostering unity and action worldwide.



## **Empowering the next generation**

Abigayle Bolado, programme executive for the WCC's Young People in the Ecumenical Movement programme, highlighted the longstanding impact of the Stewards Programme on the ecumenical movement. "The Stewards Programme has played a crucial role in shaping the active participation and involvement of young people in the ecumenical movement over the years. I've had the privilege of hearing from numerous individuals who were once part of the Stewards Programme and are now assuming leadership roles in different local and global ecumenical platforms. Each of them has emphasized how the Stewards Programme significantly influenced their interest in active participation in the movement," Bolado reflected.

She continued, "It's not just about engaging in the technical and logistical aspects; it is about embracing broader opportunities to partake in discussions and important conversations within the ecumenical movement. I am eagerly anticipating the involvement of young stewards in the central committee of 2025 and the continued expansion of the ecumenical platform for, and with, the youth!"

## **Call to service in Christ's love**

The Stewards' Programme is more than a time of service—it is a response to Christ's call to be co-workers in the ministry of reconciliation and peace-making. Young people are encouraged to bring their unique gifts, perspectives, and faith stories to this gathering, with the hope of returning to their home communities as ambassadors of the ecumenical vision: a world moved by Christ's love, on a Pilgrimage of Justice, Reconciliation, and Unity.

The WCC seeks young people who are eager to bring their ecumenical experiences back to their local contexts, motivated to spread Christ's love, by "doing ecumenism" in their communities.

Interested youth are encouraged to submit applications by **30 November 2024**.

[Click here to download the Application form](#)

[Young People in the Ecumenical Movement](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches Website](#) on 30 September 2024.