

Vast skies, red earth, night walks amongst echidnas, and a deep, unsettling silence



Rungtjirpa (Simpson's Gap) was the first stop for the Coomera Anglican College April 2026 Year 11 Desert Retreat participants, including Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, Peter Materne (spouse of staff member, Natasha), Emilio, Harry, Natasha Materne (staff member), Naomi, Alicia, Isaac, Eden, Connor, Amy, Jadon, Loch, Logan, Dom Fay (staff member), Imogen Whitaker (staff member), Haylee Reid (staff member), Cordelia, Olivia, Erin, Gemma, Imogen and Helena

It had been nearly 20 years since I last visited central Australia, and as I arrived in Alice Springs with a group of Year 11 Coomera Anglican College students for their "Desert Retreat", I found myself wondering..."Would the desert feel the same?" and "Would it still speak in the way I remembered?"

In some ways it did, of course — the vast skies, the red earth, the deep, unsettling silence. But in other ways it was entirely different because I am not the same person I was 20 years ago. And perhaps that is one of the great truths the desert reveals — it does not change nearly as much as we do.

The early Christian desert fathers and mothers understood something profound about places like this. They did not go into the desert to escape the world, but to encounter it more truthfully — to encounter themselves and God without distraction or illusion. The desert strips things back. It has a way of exposing what is essential and letting the rest fall away. It can feel confronting at first, even uncomfortable, but it is also deeply clarifying.

Over the week we were together we sought to make that ancient wisdom a lived experience. Our time in Alice Springs and at Uluru was shaped by a simple invitation to the students and to the rest of us along for the journey — to practise paying attention.



Year 11 Coomera Anglican College Desert Retreat participants with an echidna in April 2026

It sounds straightforward, but it is anything but easy. We are so accustomed to noise, to movement, to constant stimulation that stillness can feel like a challenge. Yet it is precisely in that stillness that something begins to shift.

We paid attention to the land itself — its beauty, its resilience, its ancient story. We sat in silence at [Angkerle Atwatye](#) — meaning “Gap of Water” — which is sacred to the Arrernte people, and also known as Standley Chasm. We sat at sunset on a hilltop and at sunrise near Uluru. We listened to artists reflect on how they see and paint the land. We walked at night amongst bilbies and echidnas.



Eastern Arrernte artist Marie Ryder with Harry, Jadon, Naomi, Eden, Peter Materne (spouse of staff member, Natasha), Amy, Haylee Reid (staff member) and other Coomera Anglican College students at Campfire in the Heart retreat centre in Mparntwe (Alice Springs) in April 2026

There is something about that landscape that resists being rushed or reduced. It asks something of you. It invites you to slow down, to look more closely, to listen more deeply. In doing so, it gently reminds you that you are part of something much larger than yourself.

We paid attention to one another as well. Removed from the usual rhythms and distractions of school life, there was space for different kinds of conversations: more reflective, more honest. There was also space for silence, which can be its own kind of communion. It was a privilege to witness the openness and thoughtfulness of these young people as they engaged with the experience.

And we paid attention inwardly — to the movements of our own hearts and minds. What surfaces when the noise recedes? What do we notice about ourselves when we are not constantly occupied? These are not always easy questions, but they are important ones. The desert, in its quiet way, holds them before us without judgement.

Above all, we sought to pay attention to God not as something distant or abstract, but as a presence that is already there, waiting to be noticed. The desert fathers often spoke about this kind of attentiveness as the beginning of prayer: not so much speaking, but listening. Not striving, but becoming aware.



Uluru at sunrise on the second last day of the April 2026 Coomera Anglican College Desert Retreat, with Natasha Materne (staff member), Peter Materne (spouse of staff member, Natasha), Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, Connor, Amy, Eden, Haylee Reid (staff member), Isaac, Jadon, Emilio, Loch, Logan, Dom Fay (staff member), Alicia, Naomi, Harry, Cordelia, Erin, Olivia, Helena, Imogen, Gemma and Imogen Whitaker (staff member)

Standing before Uluru, that sense of attentiveness felt especially tangible. There is a reason people speak of “thin places” — locations where the boundary between heaven and earth seems somehow more permeable. Uluru, for me, is such a place. Its stillness carries a kind of weight, a dignity that commands both respect and humility. It is difficult to stand there and not feel that you are on holy ground.

As I reflect on the retreat now, I find myself deeply grateful, not only for the opportunity to return to central Australia after so long, but for the chance to share that experience with such a remarkable group of students. The desert does not offer quick answers or easy conclusions. Instead, it offers space to listen, to notice, to become more attentive to what is real and what matters.

And perhaps that is its greatest gift. In a world that so often pulls us in a thousand directions, the desert gently calls us back to simplicity, to presence, to God. It invites us, patiently, but persistently, to pay attention.

Celebrating Jonathan Sargeant's 30 years serving the Church



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves presented Jonathan Sargeant (pictured with Lisa Sargeant) a special award to commemorate Jonathan's 30th anniversary serving the Church on Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at St Francis College (Image by anglican focus)

The Most Rev'd Jeremy Greaves — Archbishop, Anglican Church Southern Queensland

When I first came to our Diocese in 2013, my first encounter with Jonathan was at a Chrism Eucharist. I didn't actually meet him, but I noticed his brightly coloured shoes in the Cathedral and was in awe of this person who seemed to have found a way to be part of the Church while pushing the boundaries just enough. And of course when I eventually met him, all my suspicions were confirmed...and I'm still in awe.

Like any workplace, the Church has its challenges — some teams could benefit from more resourcing, there is a need for more encouragement and positive feedback and it is sometimes hard to see what difference you are making in the world. Yet Jonathan remains committed, positive and passionate and lifts the spirits of any group with his wry sense of humour, pointing them back to the faith that sits at the heart of all he does.



Jonathan Sargeant (holding FormEdFaith's ASKaround cards, a resource from the innerVIVID conversation project) and Archbishop Jeremy Greaves at Anglican Church Southern Queensland Synod at Churchie in June 2025 (Image supplied)

I have spent plenty of time with Jonathan in the little film studio at St Francis College recording short pieces for various video resources — he and Fiona do amazing work with limited resources. Jonathan has a wonderfully encouraging manner that brings out the best in people, including archbishops who have rushed in from a difficult meeting — he quickly puts people at ease in the most disarming way.

Perhaps his greatest gift to the Church is his capacity to teach, and to inspire people about the importance of faith in the context of life.

Congratulations to Jonathan — it is an honour to present him with a special award in recognition of his 30 years serving our Church.



Jonathan Sargeant and Lisa Sargeant (née Barke) on their wedding day at St Andrew's, South Brisbane in 1990 (Image supplied)

Lisa Sargeant — Assistant Registrar, Anglican Church Southern Queensland & Spouse of Jonathan Sargeant

Jonathan and I met in 1988 when I was a new graduate from Trinity Theological College and he was a student. I was on a panel and someone was singing very loudly outside the door. I was sent to ask them to pipe down (there are times I still have to do this). Love and Expo 88 were in the air. Jonathan was the lead singer with a popular Brisbane band called Modern Poets. We spent our courting years at various pubs and venues around Brisbane and Sydney and married in 1990 at St Andrew's, South Brisbane — the same church my parents married in many years before.

In our early married years as youth workers in our Diocese, we spent a lot of our time in Anglican Youth Ministry, especially youth rallies, Gatherings and Youth Synods. We met life-long friends, many of whom continued on like us, ministering in our Diocese.

This year we celebrate our 60th birthdays and a 36-year wedding anniversary. Life is never dull. We always give it our all and put fun and adventure at the top of our life list. We are incredibly proud of our daughters, Amy and Lily, who light up our world and challenge us to be better people.

I am so thankful for Jonathan each and every day and so very proud of his ministry journey.



Jonathan Sargeant and Stephen Harrison deep in conversation at the Provincial Clergy Conference at Burleigh Heads in July 2018 (Image supplied)

Dr Stephen Harrison — Director of Mission Research & Advocacy, Anglicare Southern Queensland

I have no clear memory of first meeting Jonathan — it was probably around 35 years ago, possibly in the Diocesan Youth Office at Webber House on the Cathedral Precinct. I have a vague recollection of his fascination with a collection of Kinder Surprise toys there. That love of pop culture and kitsch has never really left him. I also remember him writing a regular column in Ministry News under the pseudonym “Agent Brainfade” and being drawn to his quirky sense of humour.

Both Jonathan and Lisa were mentors of mine when I was discerning the direction of my life as a young person. I have always valued Jonathan’s authenticity and empathy — he fanned and fed my nascent passion for social justice.

I have a million fond memories with Jonathan, many from the three years we worked side by side — most of them involving ongoing pranks between us. One prank that played out over many months involved repeatedly hiding a particular book in each other’s offices. With Lisa’s help Jonathan found the book under his pillow one night.

At the 1994 Gathering (a weeklong Anglican youth camp), Jonathan and I somehow formed a hip-hop duo, performing each day during the main sessions. He wrote brilliant lyrics, while I did my best to look cool. I still remember us crammed into a tiny spare room for hours, going slightly mad rehearsing and memorising lines — some of which have never left me: “Love is the message, and the message is love.”

Jonathan's greatest gift to the Church is his ability to communicate the truths of faith in language that genuinely engages with the wider culture.

For reasons that remain a mystery to both of us, people have regularly confused the two of us — despite us looking nothing alike, unless you're squinting...from a distance...in poor lighting.



Jonathan Sargeant, Fiona Hammond and Bishop John Roundhill in the film studio at St Francis College, wrapping up a session for the online faith formation course "Anglican Identity" in 2022 (Image supplied)

Fiona Hammond — Lay Education Project Office, St Francis College

It's the end of 1989, I'm at a workshop for prospective Youth Ministry students with the ecumenical Brisbane College of Theology. Suddenly we hear the theme song from *The Love Boat* sung at VOLUME by a tenor enjoying the stone stairwell's acoustics. Lisa Barke (now Sargeant) opened the door to tell the singer to pipe down. So, I was there when Jonathan and Lisa met, and knowing these two wonderous humans has been a total joy since.

Other songs I've heard Jonathan spontaneously sing very loudly for no apparent reason include (but are not limited to) "Funkytown" by Lipps Inc., "Dancing Queen" by ABBA and "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor.

Sometimes it's hard to know when Jonathan isn't joking because he does joke a lot. However, there is within Jonathan a deep, genuine, abiding passion for justice, for the Gospel and for the Jesus who

notices and cares for people who have been pushed to the margins, disenfranchised and misunderstood. He is moved by many human things, and I love this about him.



Ministry Education Commission (MEC) clergy, staff and volunteers gathered on 14 October 2021 in the Administration Building to celebrate the birthdays. The group of MEC gatherers included folk from St Francis College, FormEdFaith, AYCF, Community of The Way and the Roscoe Library, as well as GFS - An Anglican Ministry and parish friends (Jonathan Sargeant is standing at the back, centre) (Image by *anglican focus*)

I have so many great memories of Jonathan — emceeding the staff annual trivia evening; teaching with humour and passion in parishes; and, at a gig when Jonathan is lead singer and instrumentalist. Perhaps my all-time fav happens each day at 10.30am when St Francis College staff, volunteers and visitors gather to share coffee and conversation in the Admin building tearoom. It's noisy and fun. The calm in this social storm is Jonathan with the crossword book. Erasable pen in hand, he simultaneously draws in the new people; manages the crossword fanatics; reads the clues out loud; negotiates the onslaught of answers; and, responds to "what did you say?" and "how many letters?" This is his way of making people feel relaxed and included and it works! A tea break becomes a ministry in itself, and many have felt the warmth and joy of a coffee with the crossword at the College thanks to Jonathan.

Jonathan has astounding skills in faith formation — from faith development theory to educational practice and engaging, effective communication. Jonathan is also incredibly creative — everything he does is new and interesting! Jonathan has chosen to offer this unique combination of gifts to the

Church to help people grow their faith in wonderful ways. His options are many, and he continues to share his time and talents with us. Amazing.



Jonathan Sargeant (back, fourth from left) being his usual funny self while the St Francis College team and formation students line up for the 2025 Ordination Day procession outside St John's Cathedral (Image by *anglican focus*)

The Rev'd Mamuor Kumpeter — Priest-in-Charge, The Parish of Caboolture

I first met Jonathan at a St Francis College Open Day around five years ago. He became one of my lecturers.

His humility is obvious. He is easy to get along with and so friendly. He articulates theology well and he is passionate about building up lay ministry. I always drop in and say hello to Jonathan when I visit St Francis College — we always have a joke with each other.

A particularly inspiring memory I have of Jonathan is when he filmed me in the St Francis College green room for a training module. He was very helpful and patient and made me feel comfortable — it was the first time I had ever been filmed.

Jonathan's contribution to lay ministry is outstanding. He puts a lot of effort, energy and time to developing lay ministers. His Theology and The Arts subject was one of my favourites. He is a gifted teacher and uses images and other visuals to communicate. I am a visual learner, so I appreciated this.



The Rev'd Dr Ruth Mathieson (St Francis College principal), Jonathan Sargeant (Director, Lay Education), Fiona Hammond (Project Officer, Lay Education), Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, The Rev'd Dr Greg Jenks and Bishop Tiffany Sparks enjoying the formalities of Jonathan's 30th anniversary event on Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at St Francis College (Image by *anglican focus*)

The Rev'd Dr Greg Jenks — Sessional lecturer, St Francis College

I first met Jonathan in the early 1990s, so even more than 30 years ago. At that time, his connection with the college was more to do with Religious Education in State Schools, as I recall. We worked very closely on the development and launch of the Bible360 project, and in more recent years have collaborated with some of the video-based projects that Jonathan and Fiona Hammond (also from St Francis College) have been running.

Character, values and faith are closely interwoven in the package we call "Jonathan Sargeant". I know him as a committed faith educator, and also as a supportive friend and colleague. Jonathan connects faith, contemporary life and the people in his life in ways that are inspiring.



Jonathan Sargeant studying at St Francis Theological College in the 1990s (Image supplied)

We all know and love the extroverted Jonathan who lights up a room full of people and makes us laugh. I know him also as a compassionate person who quietly offered me friendship and solidarity when it really mattered — and I am ever grateful.

From [anglican focus film reviews](#) to [St Francis College](#) classes on theology and media, Jonathan is a catalyst for the Church's engagement with the wider cultural context. His appreciation for humour and his own practice of comedic theology are profound blessings.



Carole Danby and Jonathan Sargeant at Jonathan's 30th anniversary (serving the Church) event on Wednesday, 29 April 2026 at St Francis College (Image by *anglican focus*)

Carole Danby — Volunteer, Queensland Churches Together

I first met Jon in 1997 after I joined a new team formed by the Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane. He contacted our team because he was newly appointed to the Anglican Diocese of Brisbane in a similar role — supporting volunteers who taught Religious Education (RE) in government schools. That meeting was the beginning of a long and wonderful collaboration and we were soon joined by other denominations. We became the Religious Education Network of Ecumenical Writers (RENEW); wrote a training program (RETOP), which remains the basis of training today; held 10 conferences; and, advocated for RE with the Department of Education and Queensland Churches Together.

A campaign aimed at ousting RE from government schools nearly succeeded —but thanks to Jon, who contacted local politicians, spoke on news programs and rallied all Churches, we were able to “save” RE.

So, our friendship was forged by a shared passion for God, children, sound teaching, quality resources and a sense of humour and fun.

I would like to thank Jon for his honesty, integrity, compassion, humour, creativity and intelligence — qualities he brought to all we achieved over the last 30 years.



Margaret Humphries (GFS - An Anglican Ministry), Jonathan Sargeant (FormedFaith), Fiona Hammond (FormedFaith), The Rev'd Tim Booth (Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission), Stacey McCowan (Community of The Way) and Peter Branjerdporn (Justice Unit) providing Dr Stephen Harrison (Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission) with feedback during a session test run of the new 'Being Together: An inclusion and respect dialogue resource for parishes and ministries' in 2022 (Image by *anglican focus*)

Peter Branjerdporn — Justice Enabler, Anglican Church Southern Queensland

I first met Jonathan at St Francis College when I was filming and needed to borrow a wireless microphone set. He was so pleasant, helpful and funny.

Jonathan cares deeply for all people because of his faith in an all-inclusive, loving God. He lives out the Marks of Mission by helping people grow their faith and ministry, and by supporting the efforts to tear down unjust structures in our society.



Jonathan Sargeant building a stage with Kelly Houston as they volunteered to help set up for the On Earth festival of art/music, spirituality and justice at St Francis College in October 2023: "I like this photo of Jonathan because it shows that he is always willing to help out with anything" (Image by Peter Branjerdporn, On Earth festival organiser)

Studying Jonathan's [Growing Faith: Forming Christians in Multiple Contexts](#) unit at St Francis College, as part of my Graduate Certificate in Theology, was one of the most valuable things I have done in my faith journey. Leading by example, Jonathan showed me that God wants us to be our authentic selves in our respective ministries, and that when we create a safe space for learning others may discover who they are meant to be in Christ, too.

While his talent as a teacher and creativity as a video producer contribute massively to the Church, I think his infectious (often mischievous) sense of humour is his greatest gift!



Jonathan Sargeant and Kate Venables (née Doulin) at the Gathering, a Diocesan camp run in January for youth at Mt Tamborine in 1996 (Image supplied)

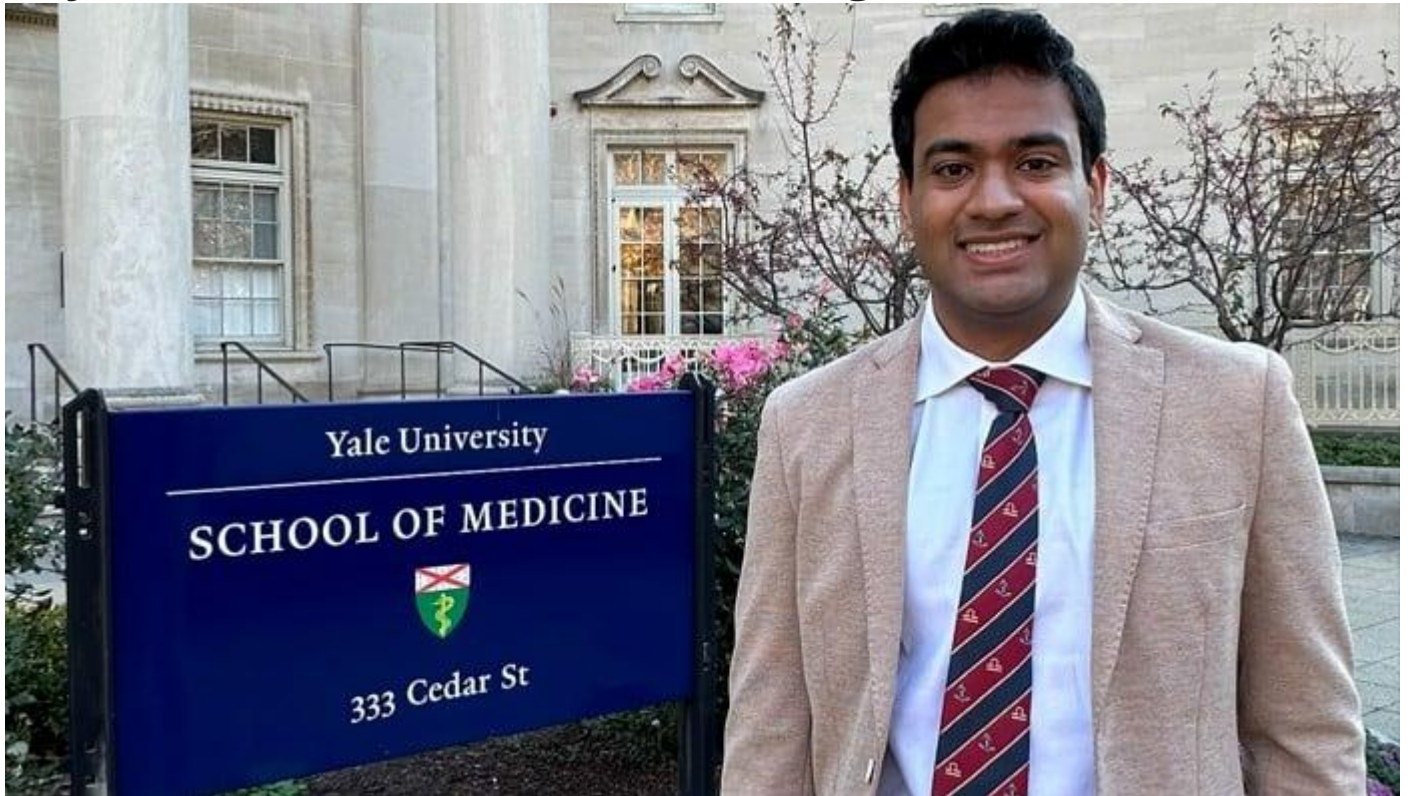
Jonathan Sargeant's Church roles:

Chaplain, The Gap State High School, 1991 to 1997 (Ecumenical appointment)

Lay Minister (Diocesan Religious Education Officer), 1996 to 2014

Director, Lay Education, 2014 to present

Q&A with future doctor, 2020 TSS dux and active TSS Old Boys Council member, Vishaak Gangasandra



Vishaak Gangasandra at the Yale School of Medicine in 2024

Where do you currently live?

I live in Brisbane and am studying the Doctor of Medicine at the University of Queensland.

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

I graduated from The Southport School (TSS) in 2020 and remain very involved in the TSS Old Boys Council.

What is a highlight or memory of your time at TSS?

One that springs straight to mind is the euphoric feeling at my final rowing regatta when around 300 fellow TSS students clapped and cheered our crew into shore — it was a great sense of community.

What projects or activities are you currently working on in your TSS Old Boys Council role?

I am working with current Year 12 students in fostering post-graduation opportunities. For example, I am involved in encouraging future doctors, nurses, physios and other allied health care professionals. One of the activities I am currently involved in is a career mentoring session, so Old Boys established in the healthcare professions can pass on their insights to current students.



Vishaak Gangasandra at the Royal Flying Doctor Service QLD Headquarters, which he runs a charitable program for, with (L to R) Amelia Smith, Vishaak Gangasandra, Paulina Knight and Jack Feng in 2025

Can you tell *anglican focus* readers about your Yale University initiative?

I am part of neuroscience research aiming to discover the ageing pathways of the brain and am working to optimise MRI technologies to best detect neurological changes early in the life course.

Why is it important to commemorate Anzac Day?

Anzac Day celebrates values like mateship and servant leadership and commemorates those who have fought for these values.

How do you commemorate Anzac Day?

This Anzac Day I am organising the University of Queensland Medicine Anzac Day service to commemorate the efforts and sacrifices of all healthcare personnel, both men and women, who have served in the past.



Vishaak Gangasandra visiting his *tha-tha* (grandfather) GS Basavaraj in Tumkur, Karnataka in 2019

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

My *tha-tha* (my grandfather), who said that work is worship — inspiring me to do good quality work with good intentions to improve the world.

What are the primary strengths of the Anglican Church?

I can answer this in the context of TSS. We had two Life and Faith Sessions and one chapel service each week where we were encouraged to have open minds, accept peoples' differences and genuinely seek to understand others' worldviews and perspectives.



The Southport School's Yarning Circle was launched on 2 June 2022 during National Reconciliation Week

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have been here for a very long time, and they hold sacred knowledge about finding harmony with the land, that is integral to Australia. By seeking Reconciliation we take a step towards finding this harmony in our current society.

Why is it important to commemorate National Reconciliation Week?

Reconciliation is only achieved when everyone shares the same goal, so it's important to celebrate National Reconciliation Week to publicly show that we are united in this important pursuit.



Vishaak Gangasandra and Mr John Wallace at the TSS Class of 2020 Five-Year Reunion in 2025

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

The most discerning advice I've received was from my TSS ancient history teacher, Mr John Wallace. He said, "Don't say 'no' to an opportunity – be grateful for everything presented to you." Mr Wallace runs monthly public speaking workshops, and he shared this advice at one of these workshops — he has run 500 workshops in his 35 years teaching at TSS.

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

"Smile and the world will smile back at you" because I think people need to be more optimistic about the world.

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

My close group of TSS friends to have fun with, a rugby ball and a nice suit.



Vishaak Gangasandra after completing the Sydney Marathon in 2025

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

I recently got into running. I like the meditative nature of going for a run.

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

Every Patient Tells a Story: Medical Mysteries and the Art of Diagnosis by Lisa Sanders. This book is paradigm changing because it encourages doctors and other healthcare workers to genuinely listen to patients to help find the root cause of problems instead of jumping to band-aid solutions.

Where do you do your best thinking?

When I stretch first thing in the morning — this is when my mind is least distracted.

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

It's always nice to talk with friends and family.

What is your secret skill?

Playing table tennis.



The TSS Senior A Debating Team 2020 (From L to R): Martin Dwyer, Noah Purza-Page and Vishaak Gangasandra in 2020

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

Any day of the summer before my Grade 12 year — I felt the most free then and was surrounded by my close group of friends every day.

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

Strawberry ice-cream.

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

I hate throwing things out. I really should throw out the name tags that I've amassed from events over the last few years.

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

What am I going to do with my life and where am I going to go?

Editor's note: Vishaak Gangasandra recently featured in the Anglican Schools Commission's [Footprints](#) magazine, which may be viewed online.

Lockyer Valley young people celebrate Youth Week



Anglicare Family Support Workers Dommoni Brennan and Jasmine Reardon pictured at Anglicare's Youth Week stall on Wednesday, 15 April 2026

Youth Week was recently celebrated in Laidley as Anglicare Southern Queensland joined local community services Kambu Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation for Health, Ipswich Community Youth Service, Our Valley Communities and the Lockyer Valley Regional Council to host a fun-filled event.

Held at the Laidley recreational grounds on Wednesday, the gathering featured a range of sports activities, technology activities, arts and crafts, board games and more, providing young people aged 10 to 17 years with the opportunity to make new friends, try new things and enjoy an enjoyable day of creativity and teamwork in a safe and welcoming environment.

Anglicare Family and Wellbeing Services Manager Casey Thorpe said the event was a fantastic way to recognise and celebrate the region's young people.

"It's wonderful to have the opportunity to come together with other community services and put on an event for young people in the Lockyer Valley to enjoy," Ms Thorpe said.

"In regional communities like the Lockyer Valley, creating accessible and affordable opportunities for young people to come together is incredibly important.

"This event provides a fun, light-hearted school holiday activity that helps young people build new friendships and connect with others in their local area.



Local young people enjoy a game of basketball at the Laidley Youth Week event co-hosted by Anglicare and other community service providers on Wednesday, 15 April 2026

Of the young people in attendance, Charlotte said she was most excited to get involved in a round of Edor — a traditional Aboriginal game.

“Edor is kind of like a game of tag. You wear these two strips and have to run around trying to pull them off other people, without losing your own. It’s really fun!” Charlotte said.

“I like getting involved in these kinds of events — I’m pretty happy to meet new people and make new friends.”

Charlotte’s mother, Sarima, said the event provided valuable opportunities for young people to connect and thrive.

“It’s really important for kids to have something like this during the school holidays, where they can get involved in activities and spend time with others,” Sarima said.

“It helps them feel connected to their community, and I’d love to see more events like this happening more often — they’re so important for their wellbeing and development.”

From young people making new friends to parents seeing the benefits firsthand, the day underscored the importance of creating opportunities for connection, wellbeing and community engagement.

Reflections and resources for Anzac Day



“Whether you choose to go to a dawn service or a march or open your church for prayer, I encourage you to take some time on Anzac Day to reflect on the gift we have been given and the gift we can be to others,” says Army chaplain The Rev'd James Hall

I can still remember going to an Anzac Day dawn service in 2012 with my father-in-law Greg Doneley, who served 20 years in the Army and finished up as a Warrant Officer Class One (WO1). He never talked much about his Army service, but I always remember how much Anzac Day meant to him and how he acted very differently at the dawn service — very quiet and reflective like it was the most important day of the year. In later years my mother gave me a replica copy of my grandfather’s medals and I always wear them on Anzac Day with pride.

The first Anzac Day is a significant milestone in Australia’s history and remains an important day in our annual calendar. It is important for us as a nation to keep stopping and reflecting and honouring those who gave so much for our freedom. We continue to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before us, including the original Anzacs who forged the reputation of courageous and compassionate service personnel, and who cared about mateship. When we commemorate Anzac Day we are not glorifying war — we are honouring those who fought for justice and freedom; something worth fighting for.

On Anzac Day, as a current serving Army chaplain, my day usually consists of leading an Anzac Day dawn service, going into the Brisbane city for the march and then catching up with Australian Defence Force (ADF) friends, both current and ex-serving.

Since the very first dawn service held in Australia by a priest more than a century ago, ADF chaplains have continued to lead ADF members and the wider community in prayer and reflection on Anzac Day. At these services, we give thanks to God for those who have given their life, as well as for God’s

protection and peace. As chaplains we are bringers of hope, and this is always an important part of our Anzac Day reflections.

From a very young age I have always had a love for the Army. However, because my grandfather suffered from PTSD from his service in the Royal Air Force in World War II, my mother was understandably unsure about her children serving in the ADF. So it was after I had my call to the priesthood — and following in my father's footsteps as a sixth-generation priest — that I had the opportunity to become a reserve Army chaplain when I was the rector at St John's Anglican Church in Nambour.

After several years as a reserve chaplain I knew God was calling me to full-time ADF chaplaincy — caring for those are serving their nation. There is something really special in caring for others and seeing the impact I can make as someone safe to talk to and able to help bring hope when things are not looking great. It is such a privilege to be invited into someone's world and to be able to share in their pain and celebrate their wins.

When we commemorate Anzac Day I find it helpful to frame it with the theme of "Making a difference". What difference did the Anzacs make to our nations and the world? How can we serving in the ADF or as members of the wider community make a difference that honours their sacrifice?

Whether you choose to go to a dawn service or a march or open your church for prayer, I encourage you to take some time on Anzac Day to reflect on the gift we have been given and the gift we can be to others.

Author's note: I encourage clergy and other church leaders to consider the following Anzac Day resources:

- Prayers for people serving in the Australian Defence Forces in *The Prayer Book*.
- The [Anzac Day Commemorative Package](#) on the Department of Veterans' Affairs *Anzac Portal*, including [posters](#), [classroom resources](#) and [colouring-in sheets](#) and an [Order of Service](#), as well as [resources](#) for music, flag protocols and wreath laying.
- Resources on the [Defence Anglicans](#) website, including an Order of Service, prayers, Bible readings and multimedia.

DV Aware Sunday: When the Church weeps with those who weep



The Right Rev'd Genieve Blackwell (Chair of the Families and Culture Commission) and The Rev'd Tracy Lauersen (National Program Manager for the Families and Culture Commission) at a conference in 2025 (Image supplied by The Rev'd Tracy Lauersen)

Some people in our congregations are rejoicing. Others are quietly carrying deep pain. The Church is called to make room for both.

Most churches want to be places of hope and encouragement. But the gospel also calls us to something more demanding: to stand alongside those who are suffering.

The apostle Paul describes the shape of Christian and church life in a simple but challenging sentence:

“Rejoice with those who rejoice; weep with those who weep.” (Romans 12.15)

That is why DV Aware Sunday on 3 May matters.

The New Testament scholar Leon Morris observed that Paul often begins his letters with rich theological teaching about faith and then moves to how that faith should be lived out. Faith is not simply belief; it is life transformed. For Paul, faith is clearly not about doing good things to earn life, but also, clearly, good works will flow from a life already made new in Christ. True life in Christ expresses itself through love.

In Romans 12, Paul describes what that love looks like in practice: in our relationship with God, in our care for fellow believers, and in our posture toward the world. Within the Christian community, love

means sharing both joy and sorrow: rejoicing with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep.

In some ways this runs against the grain of our culture. In Australia, we sometimes like to cut down tall poppies who have reason to rejoice, and many of us feel uncomfortable engaging with people who are suffering.

I remember helping alongside a group of church volunteers at a donation-sorting shed after the devastating Victorian bushfires. The volunteer managing the donations, a man who had been working tirelessly for days, suddenly broke down in tears of relief when he realised we were helpers rather than victims needing assistance. After a week of quietly supporting others, the emotional toll had finally caught up with him.

Carrying other people's burdens is not always easy. Hearing about suffering can make us uncomfortable, and it can feel self-protective to turn away from painful stories.

But the Christian community is meant to model a countercultural way of life, one where people are not left alone in their suffering. As Mother Teresa reminded Christians, "If we have no peace, it is because we have forgotten that we belong to each other." To rejoice with those who rejoice and to weep with those who weep is part of remembering that truth. It is part of living the new life in Christ together.

Domestic and family violence affects many people connected with our churches: Research within the Anglican Church found that one in three women and one in seven men had been in a violent relationship. When we remain silent about this reality, that silence can isolate those who are suffering and embolden those who cause harm. It can also lead victims to conclude that the Church is the last place they could safely turn for support.

Is your church going to mark DV Aware Sunday on 3 May?

Marking DV Aware Sunday is one small, but important, way of living out Paul's call to weep with those who weep. It is a moment for churches to acknowledge the reality of domestic and family violence in our communities and in our congregations, to pray for those affected, and to signal clearly that the Church is a place where suffering can be named and where people will be supported.

Resources for your church

We have prepared [simple resources](#) to make participation easy:

- prayers for use in services
- sermon and reflection ideas
- an all-age talk
- bulletin notices and slides
- guidance for responding well to disclosures
- ways to easily support the Church's work.

Even a brief acknowledgement during a service can make a difference.

Join DV Aware Sunday on 3 May, 2026

Following Jesus shapes the way we live together. It teaches us to notice what others overlook, to name what others ignore, and to stand with those who are hurting. DV Aware Sunday is one practical way our churches can embody that calling.

This year we invite your church to take part.

Together, we can help our churches become places where suffering is not hidden, compassion is visible, and hope can begin.

Support this work

On DV Aware Sunday, we also have one more request for Anglicans: that you invite people in the pew to make a small one-off donation to support the Church's work to prevent domestic and family violence. It's a practical request as this ministry now relies significantly on voluntary financial support. Without this support, we will not be able to continue providing the kind of resources and coordination that help our churches become safer places for all.

For more information, visit tencommitments.org.au.

Editor's notes: Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month is commemorated in Queensland annually. This year's theme is "Together Queenslanders can prevent domestic and family violence". Visit the [Queensland Government website](#) for more information, resources, to register and event and to find out about events near you.

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

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

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

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

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

Inter-faith community Q&A panel on the Palestinian people: Max Gan, social worker and former Israel Defense Forces soldier



Image by Michelle McDonald

Editor's note: This address by Max Gan was given at an inter-faith community Q&A panel event titled "Who are the Palestinian people and where do they live?" at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Indooroopilly on Saturday, 11 April 2026.

“We want to do everything possible so that the world will not forget Ukraine”



St. Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery in Kyiv, Ukraine (Photo: Ivars Kupcis/WCC)

On 20 April, World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary The Rev'd Prof Dr Jerry Pillay, together with Peter Prove, director of the WCC Commission of the Churches on International Affairs, and The Rev'd Prof Dr Vasile-Octavian Mihoc, WCC programme executive for Ecumenical Relations and Faith and Order, met online with representatives of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations.

The purpose of the meeting was to receive updates on the current situation in Ukraine, particularly concerning ecclesial life, and to explore avenues for continued cooperation in promoting peace and solidarity.

From the outset, Pillay expressed strong solidarity with the churches and people of Ukraine. He recalled the WCC's sustained efforts for justice and peace, including previous visits and ongoing initiatives, reaffirming the WCC's commitment to accompanying Ukrainian churches in their witness and service during this time of war.

Current situation in Ukraine

Members of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations addressed the ongoing situation in Ukraine, with particular attention to its impact on churches and religious communities. The chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations, Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church, highlighted ongoing inter-confessional efforts to remain united and resilient. He expressed gratitude for the continued prayers and support provided by churches, international institutions, and partners.

Special attention was given to the challenges faced by faith communities, especially in the occupied territories.

Solidarity visit

The WCC expressed its intention to undertake a solidarity visit to Ukraine in the near future. This proposal was warmly received, and Ukrainian church leaders committed to assisting in any way possible to facilitate such a visit. They emphasized the importance of this gesture as a visible sign of international support and accompaniment for Ukrainian churches and society. July, coinciding with the 30th anniversary of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations, or August were mentioned as possible timeframes.

Global Prayer for Peace

The WCC presented a proposal to organize a Global Prayer for Peace in Ukraine. The initiative was received positively, with participants expressing openness to collaboration and coordination with Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations member churches.

Bishop Vitalii Kryvytskyi of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine, Ordinary of Kyiv-Zhytomyr, stressed: "We want to do everything possible so that the world will not forget Ukraine. Prayer is the most powerful way to sustain awareness."

Strengthened collaboration

The meeting took place in a constructive and cooperative spirit, marked by a shared commitment to deepening collaboration between the WCC and the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations. Both WCC representatives and Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations members agreed to intensify their channels of communication and to ensure regular updates on the challenges faced by Ukrainian churches.

Particular and immediate focus will be placed on the preparation of the Global Prayer for Peace in Ukraine and the organization of a solidarity visit. In this context, WCC and Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations will engage in further consultations to assess the practical arrangements for such a visit, while continuing close coordination on the Global Prayer for Peace initiative. Ongoing communication between WCC and Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organisations will be maintained to support these efforts and ensure sustained cooperation.

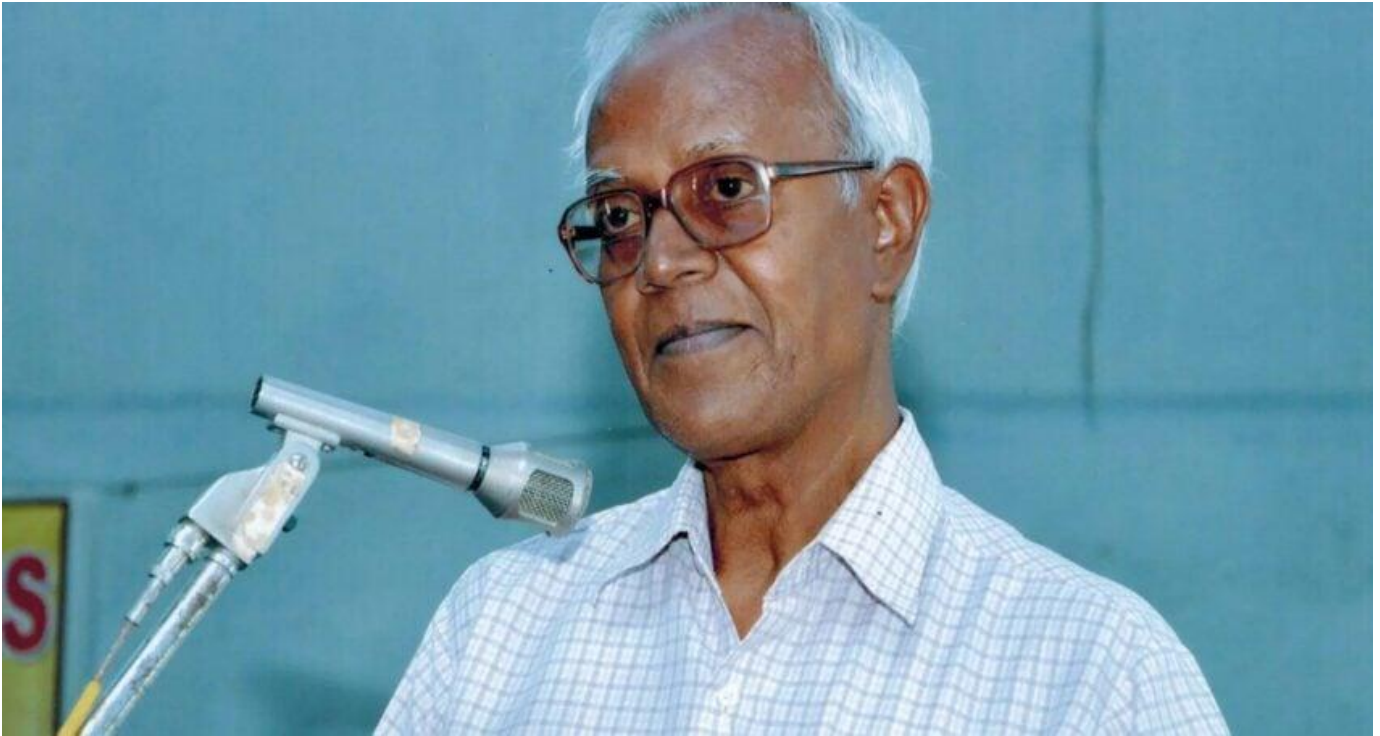
[WCC gravely concerned over report regarding crimes against Ukrainian children \(WCC news release, 20 March 2026\)](#)

[Ukrainian churches hold National Day of Prayer for just peace \(WCC news release, 24 February 2026\)](#)

[Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations \(UCCRO\)](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 21 April 2026.

“Fr Stan Swamy’s example teaches me that flourishing together through justice means choosing solidarity over comfort and accompaniment over convenience”



Fr Stan Swamy SJ in 2010 (Khetfield59 via Wikimedia: CC BY-SA 4.0)

I first encountered Fr Stanislaus Lourduwamy — affectionately known as Fr Stan Swamy — in 2020 through distressing news headlines reporting his arrest. As I read further, I learned that this 83-year-old Jesuit priest, detained under India’s *Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act* by the National Investigation Agency, had devoted more than four decades to advocating for Indigenous Adivasi rights. He died in pre-trial custody after nine months in jail at the age of 84.

He is known as a martyr of justice. In a [statement](#) following his death, United Nations human rights expert Mary Lawlor said that: “There is no excuse, ever, for a human rights defender to be smeared as a terrorist, and no reason they should ever die the way Father Swamy died, accused and detained, and denied his rights.”

What strikes me most about Fr Stan was his deep compassion and unwavering courage in standing with the Indigenous Adivasi communities. He did not merely advocate for them from a distance — he identified with them, lived among them and accompanied them in their long struggle for constitutional justice. His life reflected a profound commitment to building a just, humane and egalitarian society — one where Adivasi land, dignity and livelihoods were not sacrificed to exploitation or greed.

Fr Stan Swamy’s example teaches me that flourishing together through justice means choosing solidarity over comfort and accompaniment over convenience. By standing with the Adivasi people, sharing their lives, and defending their dignity, he showed that true human flourishing is communal,

not individual. His life affirms that justice is upheld when we listen to people who are marginalised, protect their rights and recognise their inherent dignity as non-negotiable.

My experience with Adivasi communities during fieldwork in Odisha in 2013 exposed me to the same struggles Fr Stan confronted — displacement, exploitation of land for mining and the denial of constitutional rights. Fr Stan's lifelong commitment, culminating in his arrest and death at 84, challenges me to root my advocacy firmly in faith. His life mirrors Christ's mission for justice and calls the Church to be an active agent of justice wherever dignity is threatened.

*To protect the author's safety, this reflection has been written anonymously.

Homilies & Addresses • Tuesday 14 April 2026 • By John Na'em Snobar

"Fear is not the opposite of faith. Paralysis is"



"My theological worldview is shaped by the lessons I learned from my grandfather, the first Palestinian Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Bishop Faik Ibrahim Haddad," says John Na'em Snobar, Director of Advocacy for Palestinian Christians in Australia

[John 20.19-31](#)

Thank you to The Reverend Suzanne Grimmett for this opportunity to preach to you today.

It has been a great pleasure connecting with Sue over the last few months, including through St John's Cathedral's *On The Way* Podcast, where I spoke about antisemitism, its impact on Palestinian Christians living in the Holy Land, and some of the challenges of peacemaking.

It was a pleasure to deliver the keynote address at the community Q&A hosted here earlier.

My name is John Na'em Snobar and I am the Director of Advocacy at Palestinian Christians in Australia. I am also a former Australian diplomat.

My theological worldview is shaped by the lessons I learned from my grandfather, the first Palestinian Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, Bishop Faik Ibrahim Haddad.

Through legacy, tradition, and the grace of our Lord, I have come to learn a lot about fear and faith, which is the topic of today's reading in John 20.19–31.

The Levantine Arab poet Khalil Gibran writes about fear:

"Before entering the sea, a river trembles with fear. It looks back at the mountains, and forward at the long road that it has travelled. It sees an ocean so vast that to enter it seems like disappearing forever. But there is no other way. Only by entering the ocean does the river discover that it is not disappearing, but becoming part of something greater."

[John 20.19](#): "The evening of the first day of the week"

"The doors were locked for fear."

And then, " 'Peace be with you.' "

These are the two anchors of today's sermon. Hold them. We will return to them.

"The doors were locked for fear." And then, " 'Peace be with you.' "

Before we go further, I want to tell you who was in that room.

The disciples were not Europeans. They were not from Rome. They were not from Athens or Alexandria.

They were known as Nazarenes — Aramaic-speaking, olive-skinned, working-class people from the Galilee. Fishermen. Tax collectors. People who knew what it meant to live under military occupation. People who knew what it meant to be surveilled, to be taxed into poverty, to watch their land administered by a foreign empire backed by overwhelming military force.

Palestinian Christians — my community, my grandfather's community, the community that for 2,000 years that has preserved the faith in continuity — are the living descendants of those people. We are the continuation of that story.

And when I read "the doors were locked for fear," I do not read it as ancient history.

I read it as a WhatsApp message from Gaza.

Let me tell you what fear looks like in a warzone.

It looks like a mother in Rafah (Gaza) who has memorised the sound difference between an F-16 and an Apache helicopter because each one means something different about how much time she has to grab her children.

It looks like a father in Jenin (West Bank) who will not let his son go to school because the road is unpredictable.

It looks like a priest in Bethlehem (West Bank) who gives the Eucharist knowing that some of the people in front of him have not eaten that day, and that the bread of the sacrament might be the only bread they receive.

Fear is not abstract in a warzone. It is physiological. It lives in the body. It makes your hands shake. It makes you unable to sleep. It makes decisions for you before your mind has caught up.

For those of us lucky enough not to experience war, we know fear as the fear we feel when a loved one is sick — when the phone rings at 2am, when the doctor's face changes before the words come, when we sit in a waiting room and discover that time can move both very fast and very slow at once. That fear is real, too. That fear is valid.

And here — here in John 20 — we find the disciples in exactly this state.

Their leader has been executed by the state. Publicly. Brutally. As a warning to others.

And they are behind locked doors.

“The doors were locked for fear.”

But there is another kind of fear I want to name today.

It is the fear that people like me feel when we speak about Palestine.

It is not the fear of bombs. It is a different fear — quieter, and in some ways more effective at silencing people.

It is the fear of being called mislabeled.

I want to address something directly, because I believe the gospel demands directness. The phrase that John uses — “for fear of the Jews” — has a long and painful history of being weaponised.

For centuries, Christian preachers took this phrase and used it as fuel for persecution. They used it to paint Jewish people as inherently threatening, as the eternal enemy. That reading gave cover to pogroms. It gave cover to discrimination. It gave cover to the Holocaust.

That reading is wrong. It is wrong and it is morally catastrophic.

John's gospel was written in a specific context — a community of Palestinian Jewish — Nazarene — followers of Jesus who had experienced conflict with particular synagogue authorities in the late first century.

The phrase “fear of the Jews” referred to a specific political and religious establishment — not to Jewish people as a people. The disciples themselves were Palestinian Jews. Jesus was a Palestinian Jew. To read this text as anti-Jewish is to commit an act of violence against the very people in that room.

But — and I need you to hear this — the weaponisation of antisemitism has not stopped. It has simply found a new application.

And then Jesus appears.

Doors locked. Fear coursing through every body in that room.

And he does not knock. He does not wait to be let in. He simply appears in the middle of it — in the middle of the fear, in the middle of the grief, in the middle of the locked doors — and he says:

“Shalom aleichem. Peace be with you.’ ”

Not — “you should have trusted more.” Not — “you should not have been afraid.” Not — “pull yourselves together.”

Just: “Peace be with you.”

And then he shows them his wounds.

He does not hide them. He does not pretend the crucifixion did not happen. He does not offer a resurrection that erases the suffering that preceded it.

He shows them his hands. He shows them his side.

The resurrection of Jesus is not the cancellation of trauma. It is the transformation of it.

And this is the word for Palestine today.

The wounds are real. The deaths are real. The destroyed homes are real. The hospitals — bombed. The churches — damaged. The olive trees — uprooted. These are real.

But the God who appears in locked rooms, the God who walks through walls of fear, this God does not ask us to pretend the wounds are not there.

He asks us to touch them.

Thomas was not present that first evening. And when he hears what the others say, he refuses to believe without evidence.

I love Thomas for this.

Thomas is every person who has looked at the images coming out of Gaza and said: “I cannot look away. I need to see. I need to bear witness.”

Thomas is every person who has read the reports from Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders), from the UN, from Human Rights Watch, and said: “I need to know the truth, even when the truth is unbearable.”

Thomas is every person who has sat in a congregation, in a country of comfort and abundance, and thought: “I cannot simply sing songs and feel good about myself while children are dying in my name.”

And Jesus does not condemn Thomas for this. He honours it.

“Put your finger here. See my hands. Reach out your hand and put it in my side.’ ”

He says: touch the wound. Do not be a faith that averts its eyes from suffering. Be a faith that goes toward it.

Here is what I need you to hear before I close.

After Jesus says “peace be with you”, he says:

“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.’ ”

You are not called to be observers of the resurrection. You are called to be participants in it.

The disciples were afraid. The doors were locked. And Jesus did not say: when the fear is gone, then you can begin.

He said: “peace — and now go.”

This is the word for every person in this room who feels the weight of what is happening in Palestine, in Ukraine, in Lebanon, in Iran, or other parts of the world experiencing war, genocide and violence. Who feels the grief. Who feels the anger. Who feels the helplessness.

The doors of your fear are not the end of your story.

Go back to Gibran: the river trembles before the ocean. It looks at how far it has come and how vast the sea is, and it feels like disappearing forever.

But the river making its way to the sea does not disappear. It becomes part of something greater.

Fear is not the opposite of faith. Paralysis is.

You can be afraid and still speak. You can be grieving and still act. You can feel small and still stand tall.

“The doors were locked for fear.”

And then, “Peace be with you.’ ”

That is the whole of the gospel, compressed into two sentences.

The locked doors of your fear do not keep Jesus out. He walks straight through them. And when he appears in the middle of your fear, he does not come empty-handed. He comes with his wounds, and with his peace, and with a commission.

My grandfather, Bishop Faik, led a Church in Jerusalem in some of the most turbulent decades of the 20th century. He did not have the luxury of a comfortable theology. He had a theology forged in displacement, in violence, in the long patience of a people who have clung to the land of Jesus by their fingernails for 2,000 years.

Palestinian Christians are still there. Still praying. Still celebrating Easter. Still saying “Alleluia”, now in Arabic— in the same land where these words were first spoken.

We are the river that trembles before the ocean.

But we are entering it.

Peace be with you.

Amen.

This sermon was given by John Na’em Snobar, the Director of Advocacy for Palestinian Christians in Australia, at St Andrew’s Anglican Church in Indooroopilly on Saturday, 11 April 2026.

Homilies & Addresses • Tuesday 28 April 2026 • By Asha Stewart

Handcarving our chapel’s Paschal candle: Asha Stewart



Asha Stewart with her stunning Paschal candle in the foyer of St John’s College within the University of Queensland in April 2026 (image by anglican focus)

Hi everyone, I hope you’ve had a good night so far and are enjoying your wine. I would like to share with you my Paschal candle, which I worked on over the Easter holidays.

I am not religious, but my grandfather held strong religious beliefs, and his faith was an important part of his life and identity. He passed away when my mum was in her twenties, but his presence has still been carried through family stories and memories, which continue to shape how we understand connection and tradition.

Over the holidays, we travelled to the Bunya Mountains, a place of significance to my mother’s family and to Indigenous Australian peoples, too. This landscape is shaped by the bunya pines, which for

thousands of years supported large seasonal gatherings involving ceremony, trade, law and kinship between First Nations groups. Being in this place gave a strong sense of how deeply Country holds memory, culture and identity.

In creating my Paschal candle, I carved it by hand using my pocketknife, and hand painted it with brown pigments mixed with melted wax and varnish. This process took around 45 hours.

I incorporated several symbols into the candle, each representing different aspects of this experience. The light of the candle represents hope and continuity, and the idea of guidance through darkness. The cross symbolises faith and sacrifice, reflecting the religious tradition my grandfather followed and the meaning it held in his life. The colours and layered design represent the connection between past and present, and the way personal memory is shaped by both family and place. Finally, the natural elements and grounding tones are influenced by the Bunya Mountains themselves, acknowledging the deep cultural significance of Country and the enduring presence of Indigenous Australian knowledge and history within that landscape.

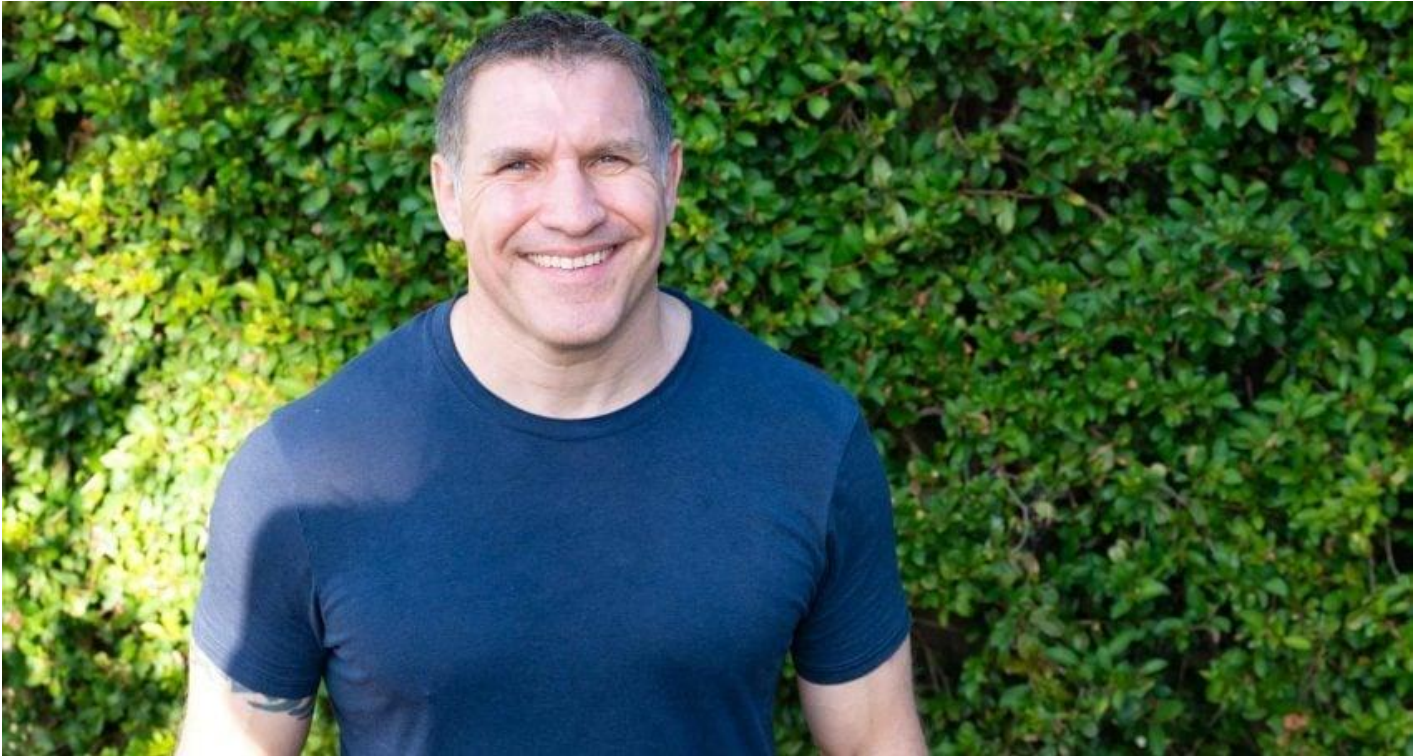
With that being said, I enjoyed creating this piece and hope it looks good in the chapel.

Have a nice evening.

Thank you

This reflection was based on an address given at St Johns' College within the University of Queensland on Thursday, 16 April 2026.

Tough Questions: Why are there discrepancies in the Gospel accounts of the resurrection?



"It's easy to get caught up in the finer details, but the heart of Easter is wonderfully simple: Jesus rose from the dead and now reigns forever," says The Rev'd Charlie Lacey from St Andrew's, Springfield (Photo: supplied)

Easter is almost upon us, and Christian congregations around the world will soon be hearing one of the four Gospel accounts of Jesus' resurrection. Focusing on a single Gospel at a time can sometimes obscure the fact that the accounts differ in certain details. For example, how many women went to the tomb? Were there angels present, and if so, one or two? At what point did the women encounter Jesus? How many disciples ran to the tomb? These variations have led some to question the reliability of the narratives. Yet, as we will see, such minor inconsistencies are exactly what we would expect from genuine eyewitness testimony recorded some years after the event.

Most scholars agree that the entire New Testament was written within the first century, with the Gospels composed between roughly AD 60 and 100. Mark's Gospel is widely considered the earliest, and some even suggest it may have been written as early as AD 40. Since Jesus was almost certainly in his thirties when he died and rose again, this timeline places the writing of the Gospels well within the living memory of many eyewitnesses.

It's also important to remember that the ancient world relied far more on oral tradition than on written texts. Oral transmission aimed to preserve the core message faithfully, without necessarily emphasising every subsidiary detail. Naturally, the specific details remembered and recorded would vary depending on the eyewitness. For instance, John's Gospel notes that "the other disciple" (likely John) outran Peter and reached the tomb first; a detail that could only have come from Peter or John themselves. Their recollections would inevitably differ from those of Mary Magdalene, whose

experience was entirely different. Perspective and memory easily account for the perceived inconsistencies.

My teenage son and I recently witnessed a multi-car road traffic accident from the vantage point of an elevated footpath. It unfolded in a matter of seconds, involving at least six vehicles travelling in both directions. Thankfully, no one was seriously injured. Five minutes later, I asked my son to describe what he had seen, and we quickly realised that neither of us could confidently recall the exact sequence of events. Now, several weeks on, I'm not even certain how many cars were involved.

What we can both remember, however, are the core details: there was a multi-vehicle accident near Suncorp Stadium, no one was badly hurt, and it was caused by a woman driving recklessly with a child in the car. I have no intention of turning this incident into an oral tradition however, if I were to do so, I'm confident that we could preserve the key facts for decades, if not for generations.

All four Gospels agree on the core details. It was the first day of the week when a group of women who followed Jesus went to the tomb early in the morning. When they arrived, they found it empty. Most importantly, every Gospel affirms that Jesus rose bodily from the dead. The variations in the surrounding details simply reflect the differing perspectives and memories of the eyewitnesses who reported these events.

It's easy to get caught up in the finer details, but the heart of Easter is wonderfully simple: Jesus rose from the dead and now reigns forever. He is risen! Jesus is alive and you can know him today.

First published on the [St Andrew's, Springfield website](#) in April 2026.

WCC remembers 111th anniversary of Armenian Genocide, lifts prayers for healing



Tsitsernakaberd Armenian Genocide Memorial Complex (Photo: David Ghahramanyan)

World Council of Churches (WCC) general secretary The Rev'd Prof Dr Jerry Pillay, on the occasion of the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, joined Armenians around the world, and especially the Armenian Apostolic Church, in solemn remembrance and prayer.

"We mourn the lives lost, the communities destroyed, and the enduring pain carried across generations," said Pillay.

"This commemoration is not only an act of memory, but also a call to conscience, reminding the global community of the urgent responsibility to uphold human dignity, truth, and justice."

Pillay also recalled with deep concern the forced displacement and suffering of Armenians from Artsakh/Nagorno-Karabakh in 2023, which resulted in the mass exodus of an entire population from their ancestral homeland.

"The World Council of Churches stands in solidarity with all those affected, lifting prayers for healing, protection, and the restoration of rights and dignity," said Pillay.

"At the same time, we welcome ongoing efforts toward dialogue and peace between Armenia and Azerbaijan."

Pillay emphasized that a just and lasting peace must be grounded in full respect for international law, including the right of displaced people to return safely and with dignity, the protection of religious and cultural heritage, and the safeguarding of fundamental human rights.

"We also call for the release of all remaining prisoners held in Azerbaijan," he said.

“Peace must be built on justice, truth, and accountability to be sustainable.”

Pillay reaffirmed the WCC’s commitment to walk alongside the Armenian people and its member church, bearing witness to their suffering and hope. “We pray for reconciliation, for truth to prevail, and for a future where such tragedies are never repeated,” he concluded.

[In remembrance and hope: WCC statement on the 111th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 23 April 2026.

Local • Tuesday 14 April 2026

Youth Homelessness Matters Day in focus as Anglicare’s Beenleigh Accommodation Service surges towards opening



Artistic Impression of one of the unit's at Anglicare's Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service in Beenleigh, on track to officially welcome residents from late-July 2026

As Australia marks Youth Homelessness Matters Day on Wednesday 15 April, Anglicare Southern Queensland is highlighting the scale of the crisis while reaching a major milestone, with the roof now installed at its Beenleigh Youth Homelessness Accommodation Project.

With external works finalised, the accommodation service is set to open its doors in late July 2026 and will support young people aged 16-25, who are either experiencing homelessness or at significant risk of experiencing homelessness.

Anglicare CEO Sue Cooke said the milestone comes at a critical time, as demand for youth housing continues to rise.

“On Youth Homelessness Matters Day, we are reminded that far too many young people do not have a safe place to call home,” Ms Cooke said.

"In [2024-2025](#), we saw more than 42,000 children and young people seeking the support of specialist homelessness service nationwide. Of that number, [more than half](#) were turned away due to lack of supply.

"When a young person doesn't have a stable place to call home, the impacts are immediate and far-reaching, from constantly moving between homes, couch surfing or relying on crisis accommodation, to missing school and falling behind on key milestones.

"It can lead to increased stress and anxiety, withdrawal from friends and support networks, and a growing sense of instability at a time when connection is so important.

"Over time, this instability snowballs. We see young people disengage from education, struggle to find employment, and in some cases become exposed to unsafe environments or negative influences.

"With stable housing and the right support, young people can completely change their life trajectory. They are more likely to stay engaged in education, secure employment, achieve long-term housing, and experience better health, wellbeing and financial security.

"This is why we are so excited to be nearing the opening of our Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service in July this year."

The service, based in Beenleigh, will offer 24 studio apartments and six one-bedroom apartments for couples or small families, while being staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

"In the South Brisbane-Logan corridor we are seeing a significant shortage of immediate need accommodation for young people facing homelessness," Ms Cooke said.

"Seeing the roof go on brings us one step closer to opening our doors and providing that safety, stability and support where it's needed most."

In addition to accommodation, young people will have access to wraparound supports including mental health services, cultural connection, life skills development, financial literacy, and pathways into education and employment.

"The reality is that the need for services like this continues to grow," Ms Cooke said.

"In Logan alone, we've seen median rents surge by 71 per cent since 2020, from \$350 to \$600 highlighting the pressure on the housing affordability in the area (AIHW, 2025).

"We're calling for support from the government, community and industry to back solutions like this, because every young person deserves a safe place to call home, and right now, far too many are missing out."

To find out more on the Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service, visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#).