

Centenary of the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves (centre) celebrating the centenary of the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill with The Rev'd Quinn Humphreys and the "YAFFERS" (Young Anglican Fellowship members) Peter Ellis, Don Henderson, Richard Swan, Kevin Bell, Dianne Bell (née Burnett) and Wendy Sponberg (née Bryce) in the church hall following the centenary service on Sunday, 3 May 2026 (Image by anglican focus)

In the Gospel we have just heard, the angel Gabriel comes to Mary with words that must have seemed at once bewildering and overwhelming:

"Greetings, favoured one...Do not be afraid...you will conceive and bear a son..."

And Mary, after all the questions, after all the uncertainty, responds with that extraordinary sentence: "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

It is hard to imagine a more fitting Gospel for a day like today.

Because the Feast of the Annunciation is not simply about a moment long ago. It is about what happens when an ordinary human life is opened — however tentatively — to the possibility that God might be doing something new.

And that, it seems to me, is exactly what we are celebrating in this place today.

One hundred years ago, in this part of Brisbane, a group of people heard, in their own way, something like that same invitation.

Not an angel, perhaps...not quite so dramatic...

But a sense, a conviction, that God might be at work here, and that something new might be possible.

And like Mary, they said, in their own way: "Let it be..."

Let there be a church in this place.

Let there be a community of prayer and worship.

Let there be a place where the Gospel is proclaimed and lives are shaped by the love of God.

And so this parish was born.

But it's important to remember the context in which that "yes" was spoken.

Because if we imagine that 1926 was some golden, settled, confident moment for the Church, we would be mistaken.

In fact, the Diocese of Brisbane in the 1920s was facing significant challenges. There were financial difficulties — serious ones. By the mid-1920s the Diocese was struggling, with declining parish incomes and substantial shortfalls in funding for mission and ministry.

There was a shortage of clergy, described at the time as "calamitous", with very few candidates coming forward for ordination.

There were internal divisions — disagreements about theology and practice, even to the point of organised resistance to certain expressions of Anglican worship.

And looming over everything was the uncertainty of the years leading into the Great Depression.

It was not, by any measure, an easy time.

And yet...between 1920 and 1930, more than 50 churches were built and opened across this Diocese.

Fifty.

At a time when there wasn't enough money...when there weren't enough clergy...when the future was anything but clear...people still stepped out in faith.

They bought land. They built buildings. They gathered communities. They said "yes".

That is the spirit of the Annunciation.

Not certainty. Not control. But courage.

A willingness to trust that God might be at work, even in the midst of uncertainty, and to respond with a simple, costly, hopeful "yes".

And for 100 years, that "yes" has echoed in this place.

For a century, people have come here hoping to catch a glimpse of God...to pray, to worship, to belong...to mark the great moments of life: birth and death, joy and sorrow.

This church has borne witness to the changing seasons of the world: war and peace, prosperity and hardship, growth and decline. It has been a place of refuge and of sending, of gathering and of going.

And through it all, the quiet faithfulness of generations has sustained the life of this parish.

Like those early builders, they might well have said with St Paul: "I planted...but God gave the growth."

But the Annunciation is not only about the past. It is always about the present...and the future.

Because the question that sits at the heart of this Gospel is not simply what Mary said...but what we will say.

The temptation on a day like today is to look back with gratitude: and we should.

We remember...and we give thanks.

But if that is all we do, we risk turning this moment into nostalgia. And nostalgia, however comforting, can quietly draw a line under the story. It can suggest that the real work has already been done...that the best days are behind us...that our task now is simply to preserve what remains.

But the Annunciation will not allow that. Because the God who speaks to Mary is not finished.

The God who called those first builders in this place is not finished.

The God who has sustained this parish for 100 years is not finished.

So the question for us today is this: What is God announcing here, now? What new thing might God be bringing to birth in this community?

What would it mean for us, not in some grand or abstract way, but here, in this place, in this time, to say again: "Here am I...let it be with me according to your word."

Because the truth is, we stand in a moment not entirely unlike that of a century ago.

We, too, live in uncertain times.

We face questions about the future of the Church.

We wrestle with resources, with changing patterns of belief and belonging, with a world that often seems indifferent or even hostile to faith.

And it would be easy, very easy, to retreat.

To go back to what feels familiar. To lower our expectations.
To imagine less.

But those who built this church did not do that.

In a time of uncertainty, they chose faith. In a time of scarcity, they chose generosity. In a time of doubt, they chose hope.

They said “yes”...and now it is our turn.

So as we celebrate this centenary, we do so with gratitude for all that has been.

But, also, with openness to all that might yet be.

We remember...and we give thanks...but we also listen.

And we dare to imagine.

Because the story of this place is not finished.

The Gospel is still being written in this parish, in this community, in each of our lives.

And who knows what might yet be said, what might yet be done, what might yet be born...if we, like Mary, and like those who came before us, are willing to say:

“Here am I...let it be...”

This sermon was given by Archbishop Jeremy Greaves on Sunday, 3 May 2026 during the centenary service at the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill.



Val Burton playing the organ in the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill during the church's centenary service on Sunday, 3 May 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves sprinkling the congregation with holy water during the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill's centenary service on Sunday, 3 May 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, The Rev'd Quinn Humphreys (parish priest) and The Honourable Justice Debra Mullins AO (Chancellor of the Diocese of Brisbane) following the centenary service in the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill on Sunday, 3 May 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, The Rev'd Quinn Humphreys (parish priest) and Melanie Humphreys following the centenary service in the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill on Sunday, 3 May 2026 (Image by *anglican focus*)



The Rev'd Quinn Humphreys celebrating the centenary of the Church of the Annunciation, Camp Hill in the church hall on Sunday, 3 May 2026, along with long-term parishioners Bernie and Robyn Casey and their daughter Kathryn and grandchildren (Image by *anglican focus*)

Give thanks with a grateful heart



Mothers Union members gathered for a special luncheon event at St Francis College on 18 May 2024, including Pamela Albana Zone C Trustee, Mothers Union Australia President Dr Robin Ray, Mothers Union member and NATSIAC Executive Member Aunty Dr Rose Elu, Worldwide President of Mothers Union Sheran Harper and Regional Development Coordinator Zone C Jeanette Lawrence (Image by anglican focus)

How great is it to belong to a movement that has been actively engaged in God's kingdom for 150 years. We are so privileged to be living into the heritage of Mary Sumner, as well as the millions of faithful women who answered God's call to share the faith through care for families down through the years.

This anniversary year is a time for reflecting on, and giving thanks for, those who have formed us in the faith and mentored our Christian and Mothers' Union journey. For me, it would begin with my mother. Who are these people for you? Before reading on, you might like to pause for a few minutes, identify and give thanks for these people in your life.

In the New Testament's occasional letters, Paul often begins by giving thanks for the faith of the people in that community (e.g. [Romans 1.8](#); [1 Corinthians 1.4](#)). During worship a clergyman once introduced the Peace by asking people to look at those in front, behind and beside them. He then said, "These people are God's gifts to you, and you are God's gift to them". What a wonderful reminder of those for whom we should be thankful. We also need to give thanks for our local members of MU

[Mothers Union] and the people in our community, as we grow together and support one another in Christ.

When visiting your dioceses and listening to people's experiences of MU, I often hear stories that reflect thankfulness for the ministry of MU members. I am fortunate to be one of these people, thankful for the Christ-centred love of women in Toowoomba. As a young mother with a baby / young child who did not sleep well at night, these MU members scooped me up and supported me. They understood what it was to be a young mother living away from the usual family supports and made me welcome in the parish and in their groups. They also encouraged others in the faith as they led or assisted with GFS or taught Sunday School.

This 150th anniversary year also brings MU worldwide into clearer focus. Our Worldwide Gathering in Durban, South Africa, will be an excellent opportunity to listen to a range of MU stories from different contexts. It will be a unique occasion to explore God's call for MU through different lenses and new perspectives, giving thanks for the breadth of ministries in action. The theme for the gathering "Lighting the way for generations to come" reminds us of the hope we have in Christ and the message of God through Jeremiah "...welfare not harm, to give a future with hope" ([29.11](#)).

As you enjoy celebrating 150 years of MU, I encourage you to take time to be thankful for your life each day. In Australia, to be glad that we live in a free country, that we can make choices about how we live our lives and that we have many opportunities to freely share Christ's love. May we welcome the challenges that come our way, seeing them as occasions for learning more about ourselves and others as we renew our commitment to Christ and the work of MU in Australia and worldwide.

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“Peter Branjerdporn’s witness as a faithful and fearlessly challenges me to be consistent and courageous”



ACSQ Justice Enabler Peter Branjerdporn and anglican focus Editor Michelle McDonald at a "Yes 23" referendum event in Queens Gardens in the Brisbane CBD

I first met Peter Branjerdporn in mid-2015 in a West End café, where local Love Makes A Way committee members were meeting to discuss next steps in our advocacy for refugees warehoused on Nauru and Manus. Love Makes A Way is an ecumenical group that advocates for the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum. I had just joined the committee, while Peter had joined sometime before.

Peter immediately struck me as very intelligent, measured, morally courageous and articulate. I wasn't expecting when we first met that we'd both end up working for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland — Peter as the Justice Enabler in the Justice Unit and as Digital Content Creator in the *anglican focus* team. Peter also moonlights as a pharmacist and is a talented singer-songwriter and devoted family man.

I have many heartwarming and funny stories to share about Peter — stories that demonstrate his steadfastness and dry wit. In mid-2018, Peter and I organised an impromptu Love Makes A Way donation drive outside the Department of Home Affairs for people seeking asylum whose [Status Resolution Support Services](#) (SRSS) payment was suddenly cut off leaving them at risk of homelessness and being unable to afford basics like food and medicine. We didn't have time to complete the usual "intention to hold a public assembly" form because the situation was dire, especially for torture survivors, pregnant women and young families. Our trestle tables quickly overflowed, with rice, pasta, canned fish, nappies, toddler milk and other non-perishables stacking on the ground as city workers dropped off items, along with cash donations and supermarket gift cards. When the Home Affairs authorities emerged, scolded us for not completing the form and asked when

we were leaving, Peter replied with a gentle smile and slightly cheeky voice, “At the end of the day...or sooner if you reinstate SRSS.” He won them over and they let us stay.

Over the years, I have witnessed Peter advocating, both behind the scenes and publicly, for people often pushed to the margins, including by the Church. He does a lot more than most people realise, sincerely supporting the rights of all people to flourish. He has shown me that when you uphold the dignity of one person or group, you uphold the dignity of all — because we are one body.

Peter Branjerdporn's witness as a faithful and fearless ally challenges me to be consistent and courageous.

Spotlight Q&A • Tuesday 19 May 2026 • By The Rev'd Christopher Bate

Q&A with priest, Diocesan Vocations Coordinator, dad, coach, cook and painter, The Rev'd Chris Bate



The Rev'd Chris Bate with his daughter, Victoria, at his ordination to the priesthood in St John's Cathedral Brisbane in December 2017

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live in Brisbane's south and I worship at The Parish of Algester, where I am the rector.

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

I started as a parishioner at St George's, Birkdale in 2012. I went on to study theology at St Francis College in 2013 and was ordained a priest in 2017. I now serve as the Rector of The Parish of Algester, as part-time Diocesan Vocations Coordinator and Area Dean of Logan.



The Rev'd Chris Bate wearing the green stone cross that his wife The Rev'd Juliana gifted him for his ordination at St John's Cathedral Brisbane in 2016

What do your roles involve?

As Rector I support people as they live out their vocations, including presiding over Sunday services, pastorally caring for parishioners and wider community members, and supporting their faith formation. As part-time Diocesan Vocations Coordinator, which is a role based at St Francis College, I organise the Seekers Days for people discerning vocations and help lead the Vocations Task Group alongside Bishop Sarah Plowman. As Area Dean for Logan I assist the Bishop John Roundhill and Archdeacon Geoff Hoyte with pastorally caring for clergy and laity in the Deanery.

What do you most love about being a priest?

Presiding over baptisms, weddings and funerals (and supporting people in other major life events) is an honour because it involves walking alongside people in their most joyful and sorrowful moments. I also enjoy bringing a community together in the celebration of the Eucharist.



The Rev'd Chris Bate "catching" the Paschal candle during a baptism service at The Parish of Algester in April 2026

What is a highlight of your priestly ministry?

A recent cute and amusing moment was the baptism of a five-year-old child during a Sunday service. Each time I said the persons of the Trinity when saying "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" upon pouring water on the child's head she exclaimed, "Ow", which made the congregation laugh. At the same Baptism, the Paschal candle was nearly knocked over, which led to the whole congregation gasping and then laughing in unison. I cherish moments like these.

What projects or activities are you currently working on in your roles?

I am currently working with Bishop Sarah and the Vocations Task Group in preparing for the next Ember Week, which will be observed the week following Pentecost Sunday. During each Ember Week our Diocesan community is encouraged to pray for vocations to both ordained and lay ministry and for people already serving in these ministries. Please visit the vocations webpage on the [Anglican Church Southern Queensland website](#) for resources and more information.

What are you most looking forward to in the next Ember Week?

I will be using the reflection guide from the vocations webpage on the [Anglican Church Southern Queensland website](#) each day of Ember Week. The guide includes a Bible passage and a short reflection. During Ember Week I will also be reaching out to ordained and lay people serving in ministries in our Diocese letting them know that I am holding them in prayer.



Basketball coach Chris Bate with his U19 Div 2 team at Hibiscus Stadium (Brisbane) after winning gold in December 2025

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

I grew up in the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand. Even though my faith was always there, I drifted from the Church a bit in my late teens and early adulthood before joining a Pentecostal church in Brisbane, which led me back “home” to the Anglican Church after I met The Rev’d Nicholas Whereat while coaching his son’s basketball team.

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

My faith keeps me grounded and constantly reminds me that I can’t do life on my own — I need Christ.

What is the primary strength of the Church and what is the best way to make the most of this for the benefit of our communities?

One of the primary strengths of the Church is its unifying function — we are all part of God's family.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

The one that always jumps to mind is Jeremiah's call and commission ([Jeremiah 1. 4-8](#)):

"Then I said, 'Ah, Lord God! Truly I do not know how to speak, for I am only a boy.' But the Lord said to me,

'Do not say, "I am only a boy";
for you shall go to all to whom I send you,
and you shall speak whatever I command you."

These verses really speak to me because I have dyslexia.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

My grandfather, who passed away in 2017 — even though he wasn't perfect, he was always true to his faith and who he was in Christ and was humble, gentle and kind.

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

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples were on this land originally and are part of God's family. Growing up in Aotearoa New Zealand I learnt to respect the Māori people and their culture — this was embedded in our school curriculum. When I was ordained my wife, The Rev'd Juliana, gifted me a cross carved out of greenstone, which I wear daily. Out of respect she sought permission from the Māori carver to give me the cross.



The Rev'd Chris Bate with The Rev'd Juliana Bate, Connar and Victoria in May 2026

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

St George's, Birkdale funded my first year of theology study. Money was tight because I was studying full-time, which meant that Juliana needed to return to retail accounts management work while our young children were in kindy. The parish was committed to me and investing in my vocation.

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

When I was at St Francis College studying theology someone — I can't remember who — said "Keep your head down. Keep doing what God is calling you to do. But every now and then poke your head up so you are aware of what's happening around you."



The Rev'd Chris Bate in his element in the kitchen, cooking up a storm, in May 2026

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

As a former restaurant cook, I love cooking, especially smoking meat on the BBQ and making panna cotta for dessert.

What book have you recommended most and why?

Practicing the Way: Be with Jesus. Become like him. Do as he did by John Makr Comer — the book's subtitle says it all.

Where do you do your best thinking?

When I am looking at God's creation with either a coffee or good wine in hand.

What's your best childhood memory?

The Aotearoa New Zealand family's Christmas water fights, which went for hours.



The Rev'd Chris Bate with his grandad when Chris was two years old at Raumati Beach (New Zealand) in 1987

What is your earliest memory?

Blowing out the candles on my playdough cake at kindy while living at Raumati Beach.

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

Eat good food and drink good wine with family.

What makes you nostalgic and why?

Hearing 80 or 90s music takes me back to childhood memories of holiday road trips to Taupo in Aotearoa New Zealand.

What is your secret skill?

I paint Impressionist-style landscapes and I coach basketball.



The Rev'd Chris and The Rev'd Juliana Bate on their wedding day in Hamilton, New Zealand on 14 February 2008

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

My wedding day and the birth of my children to re-live the joy of becoming a husband and dad.

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

A good chicken or beef roast with Yorkshire pudding and lots of gravy and a pint of beer.

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

An Orlando Magic basketball singlet I was given when I was 11 years old.

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“Sitting in the dark listening to the choir sing their hearts out, I knew immediately that I wanted to join them”



"We look forward to welcoming many children aged between eight and 11 years to the new Queensland Academy of Young Singers choir," says Rosemary Kirkman from All Saints', Wickham Terrace (Image by anglican focus)

When I was 10 years old I went with my dad to watch the 20th anniversary concert of the Queensland Show Choir. Sitting in the dark listening to the choir sing their hearts out, I knew immediately that I wanted to join them. Walking into the foyer after the performance, I picked up an application form and the rest is history.

I spent a lot of time in the Queensland Show Choir as a young child and teenager. Not only did I enjoy singing at rehearsals each week, I also got to experience many exciting performance opportunities. I sang at venues like the Queensland Performing Arts Centre, the Ekka and in the Wivenhoe Dam for a water conservation campaign. I even got to be on TV. I also travelled with the choir, including to Charleville for the Save The Bilby Fund.

Singing in the Queensland Show Choir showed me what I wanted to do with my life. It encouraged me to pursue a music degree and ultimately to work with choirs as an adult. I also made lifelong friends during my time in the choir.

Since finishing my tertiary studies I have worked as a singing teacher, early childhood music teacher and choral conductor. At the start of 2026 I came on board as the Director of Choral Outreach for the Queensland Academy of Young Singers, which is a new initiative of All Saints', Wickham Terrace.

On a [scientific level](#) we know that singing is good for us. It's been shown to benefit both our respiratory and circulatory systems.

It's also great for our [mental health](#). When you sing you regulate your breathing. There's evidence to suggest it can help calm the nervous system and ease anxiety.

Group singing, like church choir, is also particularly good for us. Humans have been singing together for millennia — to celebrate, to mourn, to tell stories. Singing together helps us make [social and emotional connections](#), as well as [build teamwork](#) skills.

[Studies](#) show that singing uses multiple regions of the brain — engaging our language receptors, as well as the regions of the brain that deal with emotion and movement.

I know from my experience that singing helps children grow in confidence as they express themselves, learn a new skill and experience new opportunities, such as performing publicly.

As Director of Choral Outreach for the Queensland Academy of Young Singers I'm most excited to be forming a choir of children aged between eight and 11 years.

The choir will sing many different genres of music, from musical theatre to traditional folk songs.

There won't be an audition process and we are keen for children of all backgrounds to join the choir.

Choir members will not need to pay a membership fee.

The choir will practise on Saturdays during term time between 11.30am and 12.30pm at All Saints', Wickham Terrace in the Brisbane CBD, commencing on 18 July this year at the beginning of the new school term.

We look forward to welcoming many children aged between eight and 11 years to the new Queensland Academy of Young Singers choir.

Editor's note: If your child is interested in joining the Queensland Academy of Young Singers or if you would like to find out more, please [email](#) the Director of Choral Outreach, Rosemary Kirkman, by Monday, 13 July 2026.

My ministry as youth leader at Christ Church, Yeronga



“Lay-led ministry is important because lay people form the basis of the Church, which can only exist with lay people,” says Christ Church, Yeronga youth group leader Ritti Kagi (Image by anglican focus)

Earlier this month, we launched a young adult’s outreach called “Bible Study & Gym”. Its purpose is to create a welcoming space where young people can explore their faith, grow in their knowledge of God, and engage with Scripture, followed by a fitness session.

The idea for Bible Study & Gym began a few years ago after a youth gathering that concluded with a gym session. Since then, I have felt drawn to use fitness as a pathway to encourage young people in their faith. As Christians, we are called to steward our bodies, minds and faith, as reflected in [1 Corinthians 6.19-20](#):

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body.”

From the conception of this idea to its launch, there were many doubts and fears that delayed it from happening sooner, such as qualifications. However, I am grateful I listened to the persistent prompting to move forward, which I believe was the Holy Spirit guiding me, alongside the encouragement of my parish priest, as well as youth at the time who are now young adults. Every fear or doubt I faced was met not with opposition, but with open doors that God had already prepared. I simply needed to step into them. I believe this is true for all of us in the Church: God places things on our hearts, and as His hands and feet, we are called to seek Him and act on what the Holy Spirit stirs within us. As [John 15.5](#) reminds us, God is the vine and we are the branches, called to bear fruit through Him.

After the first outreach, I have been greatly encouraged by several affirmations:

1. Young people are looking for spaces where they can explore their faith.
2. There is excitement and anticipation for the next outreach.
3. There is a hunger for more opportunities for Bible study and fitness, as we currently meet face to face once monthly, with weekly personal reflection between sessions.
4. People are reengaging with their Bibles after a long time and recognising the connection between faith and fitness — that both require training, discipline and consistency.

My ministry as youth leader at Christ Church, Yeronga also involves equipping the young people on their faith and life journey by preparing for youth group gatherings in the church hall every second and fourth Friday of the month. These gatherings usually begin with socialising over pizza and catching up with each other, which is then followed by an interactive Bible study and then praise and worship. Around 10 or so youth turn up.

Because the young adults have their own Bible study during the week, when the younger youth are doing the Bible study on Friday nights, the young adults spend time in prayer before selecting songs for the youth service.

On the Sundays after our youth groups gatherings, the youth either lead the service as a whole or — if the Sunday is a key liturgical day — we lead the service's praise and worship.

In my youth leader role, I also organise social events throughout the year, such as Sunday Funday (a sports day), a movie night and an end-of-year trip to the beach, bowling or where the group decides. On top of that I do weekly check-ins and visitations with families of young people in our parish, alternating between those who attend regularly and those who have not been in a while. These visitations take place every two months on the last Sunday following a youth service — all the youth go on the visit to encourage and share the message from the service with the family we visit.



"On the Sundays after our youth groups gatherings, the youth either lead the service as a whole or — if the Sunday is a key liturgical day — we lead the service's praise and worship," says Christ Church, Yeronga youth group leader Ritti Kagi (Image by *anglican focus*)

Lay-led ministry is important because lay people form the basis of the Church, which can only exist with lay people.

Being a lay person leading a ministry sets an example, showing that we play an important role in the life of the Church.

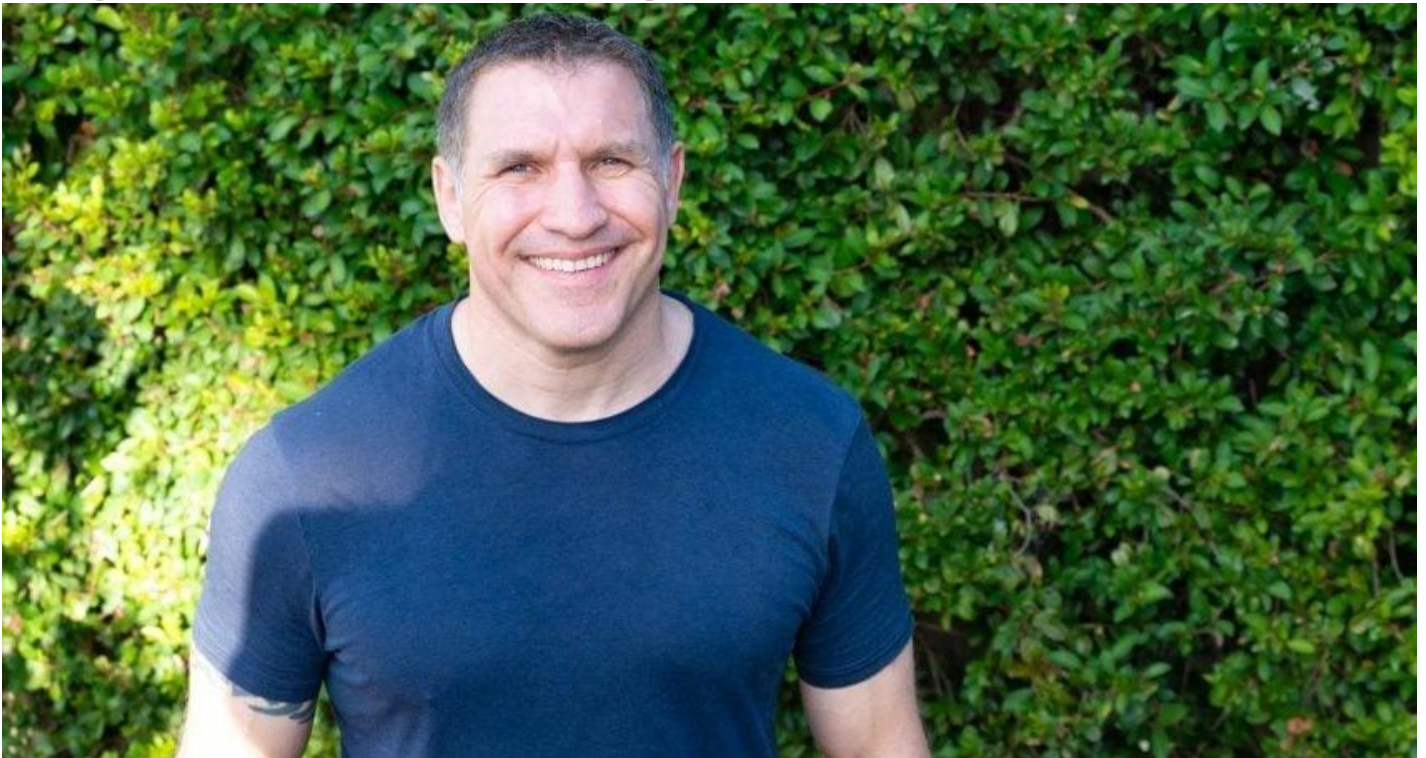
Both of my parents were ordained to the priesthood. My mum's father was a priest; her mother was the head of Mother's Union and a lay minister; and, her grandfather was the first Anglican Archbishop of Sudan.

While I am discerning a call to ordained ministry, I understand that people can have multiple calls in their life. I may just be called to different forms of lay ministry or my current parish lay ministry may be a pathway to ordained ministry.

As I trust and believe in God's promises to me, at the moment I am focussed on my current call to lay ministry. I will keep trusting and believing that God will show me the way so His plans for me will be fulfilled.

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Tough Questions: What is spiritual warfare?



"The Bible cites three sources of evil, namely the world, the flesh and the devil," says The Rev'd Charlie Lacey from St Andrew's, Springfield (Image supplied)

Objective evil exists, and it is not hard to identify. We turn on the news, and we see all kinds of atrocities being committed at home and abroad, and even in our own neighbourhoods. But it is even closer than that. The well-known Russian dissident, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, famously said, "The line separating good and evil passes not through states, nor between classes, nor between political parties either — but right through every human heart — and through all human hearts." But why is evil so prolific and where does it come from?

The Bible cites three sources of evil, namely the world, the flesh and the devil. In the New Testament, "the world" is used as shorthand for the world that is in rebellion against God, and it encompasses the corrupt moral zeitgeist of our age. The flesh refers to our own evil inclinations and desires. This is the evil that Solzhenitsyn referred to, and according to the Bible, it has been present in every human being, like a ubiquitous hereditary disease, ever since our first parents rebelled against God in the garden. Finally, we have the devil, who is a spiritual entity who seeks to oppose God.

At this point some may guffaw and conclude that I am away with the fairies, in part I think because in the popular imagination talk of the devil conjures up the image of a little red man with horns and a pitchfork. It should be noted, however, that this depiction is not only inaccurate, but also unbiblical. Notwithstanding, the Bible, and especially the New Testament, repeatedly makes reference to the devil and demons. Across the four Gospels, the devil is mentioned by name approximately thirty-five times, and Jesus is recorded directly speaking to demons on at least seven occasions.

The devil and demons are created beings that have rebelled against God. Whilst this might sound shocking and implausible, it must be remembered that humans are also created beings that have rebelled against God, the only difference being that humans are physical and spiritual, whilst demons

are solely spiritual. God is omnipotent (all-powerful), omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipresent (everywhere at once), the devil and demons are not. Though limited in power, they hate God and are active in the world, seeking to destroy all that He has created. This is the underlying cause of a spiritual war that all human beings are embroiled in whether they realise it or not. The Bible is very clear about this, for example:

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6. 12)

Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. (1 Peter 5. 8)

The Bible draws our attention to this spiritual conflict because we cannot be effective in a war about which we are ignorant. Moreover, as Christians, we can expect to come under targeted spiritual attack, particularly if we are actively seeking to build God's kingdom. However, this need not be a source of fear, because, as 1 John 4. 4 reminds us, "[...] the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Jesus' own brother, James, was therefore able to say with confidence, "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4. 7) For more details about how to engage in spiritual warfare, I recommend Ephesians 6. 10-20.

We must be aware of the devil and his schemes, but our focus should always be on Jesus, and not the devil. As C.S. Lewis wrote in his clever exposé of the devil's tactics, *The Screwtape Letters*, "There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them."

Christians can be prone to giving the devil too much credit, as if every instance of evil and personal misfortune were a direct result of his actions. However, if God were to destroy the devil and all his demons tomorrow, evil would not cease to exist and the war would continue against the world and the flesh. When Jesus returns, evil will be completely abolished. Until that time, we must recognise that we are engaged in a spiritual war. A war that is best fought on our knees in prayer. What is more, it is a war with a foregone conclusion, the devil is a defeated enemy. Jesus has already won the victory through his death and resurrection.

"And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he [Jesus] made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." (Colossians 2. 15)

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

Inter-faith community Q&A panel on the Palestinian people: John Na'em Snobar, Director of Advocacy for Palestinian Christians in Australia



"More than 750,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed from their ancestral homelands in the Nakba. My family's buses carried many of these refugees. The vehicles that were my family's source of pride became the transportation of a brutal exile," said John Na'em Snobar, Director of Advocacy for Palestinian Christians in Australia and the grandson of the first Palestinian Bishop of Jerusalem (Image by anglican focus)

In 1993, as a young and recently arrived settler-migrant family to Australia, we had little but the belief in God's ability to provide. "Indeed, He always provides," said my mother, Randa, the day that my father, John Sr, came home with a trailer full of lemons, which he'd bought from a market garden, near Fremantle, Western Australia.

"We are going to make Jerusalem lemonade!" Mama announced to me, and my younger siblings, Faik and Haya.

Like a procession of priests and parishioners carrying palm fronds on the first day of Holy Week through Jerusalem's streets, we carried the lemons in brimming buckets, emptying them onto the table.

We spent the morning sterilising glass bottles and printing sticker labels that said, "Holy Land Lemonade". Faik, my brother, was tasked with cutting the lemons. I squeezed them. And, Haya, our sister, poured and mixed the lemon juice into the sugar. It was Mum's job to add the right amount of Palestinian rosewater, which was how we ensured the lemonade really was from Jerusalem.

Rosewater, or *masaher* in Arabic, is a Palestinian favourite. Mum adds *masaher* to her *kaak ma'moul*, to her Easter biscuits. Rosewater is Palestine to me.

"It's called Holy Land Lemonade," Mum announced at the church fair that Sunday. "Oh, my, that sounds delicious," a woman elder said in an English accent. "Did you make it yourself?"

"Randa is from the Holy Land, you know," Dad said, proudly interjecting. The woman's eyes lit up. Mum explained her story — how her father was the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem, and how she had grown up under Israel's occupation, before moving to Australia.

"Why, I knew a man there when I did a pilgrimage, some years ago," another parishioner said.

There was always someone who knew someone in Jerusalem, someone who was connected to my grandfather, The Right Reverend Faik Ibrahim Haddad, the first Palestinian Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem.

Who are the Palestinian people and where do they live?

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

I acknowledge the Turrbal and Jagera peoples on whose lands we gather today, and I pay my respects to their elders past and present. I would also like to thank the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, especially St Andrew's Anglican Church in Indooroopilly, Common Grace, Jewish Voices of Hope, Queensland Muslims Inc, the United Nations Association of Australia Queensland Division, QPASTT and the many other co-hosts of this community Q&A event.

The Palestinian people are a religiously diverse group, largely Christian and Muslim, whose lineages date back to when Jesus of Nazareth — saviour to Christians, and prophet to Muslims — walked the land of Palestine.

Palestinian Christians are the first Christians, direct descendants of the community that walked with Jesus — a Palestinian Rabbi, born in occupied Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and died and resurrected in Jerusalem, who, as Palestinians continue to do today, preached peace and justice.

So how is it that descendants of the first Palestinian Christians ended up squeezing Jerusalem lemonade in Western Australia in the 1990s? How is it that Palestinian Christians are now making *kaak ma'moul* — the Palestinian Easter biscuit — in places as far away as Australia, Chile, Germany and the United States?

Nakba

The ethnic cleansing of Indigenous Palestinians in 1948 — which we Palestinians call the *Nakba*, meaning "catastrophe" — is part of my family's story. We suffered the Nakba when the Jewish state of Israel was created in historic Palestine, the population of which was 89 per cent non-Jewish. This is despite the claim that the State of Israel was created as "A land without a people for a people without a land", which was first said by Chaim Weizman, who later became Israel's first president. The phrase echoes the term *terra nullius* — meaning "land belonging to no one" — which was the legal principle upon which British colonisation rested until 1992, when the High Court of Australia ruled that native title had always existed.

A modern Jewish state required a Jewish majority — a significant demographic shift — and the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians, which began in the 1948 Nakba.

The creation of the modern nation-state of Israel was predicated on the creation of a second state for the non-Jewish inhabitants, for the Palestinians. However, this state did not come into being when the State of Israel was created 78 years ago.

Prior to the Nakba, the family of my paternal grandmother, Violette Srouji, owned and operated the Palestine Bus Company — a factory in Jaffa that built buses using imported German engines.

In 1948, these buses were loaded with Palestinian Christian and Muslim families fleeing the terror of the Zionist Haganah who were attacking villages and massacring civilians — a militia that later formed the Israel Defense Forces.

More than 750,000 Palestinians were ethnically cleansed from their ancestral homelands in the Nakba. My family's buses carried many of these refugees. The vehicles that were my family's source of pride became the transportation of a brutal exile.

Palestinians fled to the West Bank of the Jordan River — the same river where Jesus of Nazareth was baptised — and to Gaza. Or to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and other parts of the world. Each carried with them the hope and belief that they would return to their ancestral homes. And, it's important to note here that the [United Nations](#) still recognises our right of return.

Naksa

Some 20 years after the Nakba, in 1967, Palestinians suffered what they call the Naksa — meaning “setback” — when the State of Israel occupied the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza in the so-called Six Day War.

Following the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, in 2024 the [United Nations General Assembly](#) voted that these territories have been under unlawful military occupation since, and “calls for Israel to comply with international law and withdraw its military forces”.

My mother grew up in Jerusalem occupied under this occupation — and she experienced firsthand what it means to live under Israel's [apartheid regime](#), without equal rights in her own city, on her own land.

In September a [United Nations Independent International Commission of Inquiry](#) found that Israel has committed genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Over [70,000 Palestinians](#) have been killed in Gaza since October 2023, with this tragic figure excluding the countless bodies still buried under the rubble. More than 30 per cent of Palestinians killed in Gaza are children.

Chosen people

I am often asked about the claim that the lands of historic Palestine belong exclusively to the Jewish people out of divine right.

Any framework — religious or otherwise — that claims to justify the expulsion, dispossession, and destruction of one people in favour of another deserves serious scrutiny. What kind of moral order does that produce? And, is it consistent with the values that tradition actually teaches?

The figure of Jesus himself is instructive here — not as a theological claim, but as a historical one. Jesus was a Palestinian Jew, living under Roman military occupation, who spoke about justice, mercy and the rights of the persecuted. This context is rarely acknowledged, including by Christian Zionists, in the political misuse of religion to justify Israel's ongoing regime of occupation, apartheid, ethnic cleansing and genocide.

The Zionist demographic reversal of Palestine is a settler-colonial project — not borne from ancient scripture, but from 19th-century European nationalism and decisions made by British and American powers that did not consult the Indigenous inhabitants. As explained by the [Neturei Karta International](#), the world-wide voice of Orthodox Jews who oppose Zionism on religious grounds, and I quote:

“To accomplish their goal of statehood, the Zionists chose Palestine, a land with its own people, and initiated a brutal process of taking over the land while forcibly displacing its inhabitants, the Palestinians. Ever since the establishment of the Zionist entity in Palestine, the indigenous people of Palestine have suffered all forms of brutal oppression, including occupation, killings, and theft — all of which are clear violations of the laws of the Torah.”

I want to acknowledge here the vile, ancient hatred of Jews by Europeans — this hatred of Jewish people for being Jewish is antisemitism, and was a sin committed by European Christians that contributed to the Palestinian people being ethnically cleansed from their homelands.

I also condemn Islamophobia, which is especially connected to anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian racism in this discourse, and emphasise that all forms of racism are equally egregious.

Where to from here?

I started this keynote address by sharing a story about Palestinian lemonade. This was a tale about my family — which echoes the experience of millions of Palestinian refugees, who do their best to survive outside their ancestral homeland.

What lemonade are we to make of the human rights violations that Palestinians suffer today? How can we possibly add sugar to this bitter reality or rosewater to cover up the stench that characterises the misinformation, bias, racism, silencing and attempted erasure of the Palestinian people?

Or are we to do as my grandfather and many others of his generation did — to speak the truth about both the evil of antisemitism and the ongoing ethnic cleansing of Palestinian people?

For those of you who are new to understanding Palestine, welcome.

Your presence here today speaks to the enduring hope that Palestinians carry.

The hope to be listened to.

The hope to be asked questions and have the opportunity to answer them.

And finally the very realistic, and genuine hope of the Palestinian people to live equally in historic Palestine.

In his famous “Sermon on the Mount” Jesus said “Blessed are the peacemakers” and “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness”.

The Palestinian people — including Palestinian Christians through whom Jesus’ message comes — hunger and thirst for righteousness and a just peace.

How we respond to Jesus’ call is a question both God and history will ask of us.

I pray we have the faithfulness and courage to answer well.

Thank you.

Editor’s note: This address by John Na’em Snobar 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.

Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 14 May 2026

“All in”: A call for Australians from all backgrounds to commit wholeheartedly to Reconciliation

By Walters Nkemfack

“Aunty Dr Rose and I have become good friends and I admire her dedication to her people, including her constant striving for justice. She is best known for her advocacy for the climate — especially for low-lying islands like Saibai in the Torres Strait — and traditional adoption practices,” says Reconciliation Queensland co-Chair Walters Nkemfack



“We recently spent time together on Waiben (Thursday Island) to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Torres Strait Islander Maritime Strike,” says Reconciliation Queensland co-Chair Walters Nkemfack, pictured here with Aunty Dr Rose Elu in January 2026 (Image supplied)

One of the first Elders I've sat down and yarned with is Aunty Dr Rose Elu. She is a Crocodile Chieftain clan Elder from Saibai in the Torres Strait Islands and a beloved member of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland community. I remember first chatting with her at the 2023 National Reconciliation Week dinner in Brisbane. I was immediately struck by her truthful directness.

Aunty Dr Rose and I have become good friends and I admire her dedication to her people, including her constant striving for justice. She is best known for her advocacy for the climate — especially for low-lying islands like Saibai in the Torres Strait — and traditional adoption practices. She was recognised for her advocacy in 2021 when she was awarded Queensland Senior Australian of the Year.

We recently spent time together on Waiben (Thursday Island) to commemorate the 90th anniversary of the Torres Strait Islander Maritime Strike, when Torres Strait Islander workers (many of whom worked in the pearl industry) withdrew their labour to demand fair pay (instead of payment through food rations, for example); greater autonomy; and, the right to manage their own affairs. This strike was the catalyst for reforms that reshaped the human rights of Torres Strait Islander peoples.

As an Indigenous man from the former British Southern Cameroons, I understand firsthand colonialism's impacts, including displacement and dispossession for the exploitation of resources. My country of origin was initially colonised by Germany and was then recolonised by Britain and (more recently) by France. There is ongoing pressure for my people to assimilate into the French culture.

When I came to Australia over 15 years ago I immediately empathised with the stories that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples shared with me. Their resilience reminds me of my own people's resilience from the other side of the globe.

Elders like Aunty Rose inspired me to join the board of [Reconciliation Queensland](#) in November 2024. I was elected co-Chair in February 2025.

Reconciliation Queensland is the peak body for Reconciliation in our state and is connected to the Anglican Church Southern Queensland through our membership of the [Queensland Community Alliance](#).

Our vision is for "An equitable and informed Queensland, which recognises a shared past and respects Aboriginal peoples and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the first Australians."

This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is "All in". It is a call for Australians from all backgrounds to commit wholeheartedly to reconciliation.

As the [Reconciliation Australia website](#) explains: "All In makes clear that reconciliation is not a spectator sport and that all of us must step away from the sidelines and take action to make change."

Reconciliation is built in relationships over time — in churches, mosques, synagogues and temples; classrooms and kindies; community halls; parks; cafes; homes; and, workplaces. It's built wherever there is goodwill and a willingness to listen.

Over the past year, we've been listening deeply — to communities, to Elders, to young people — and one thing is clear: truth-telling must stay at the centre of everything we do.

When the truth about our shared history and about what is still happening today is listened to, understanding grows and respect and rapport build. Real change subsequently becomes possible.

Listening to this truth includes a willingness to hear that racism is not behind us. In many ways, we've seen racism become more visible, more emboldened — in places where people should feel safe.

I met an Elder in the Torres Strait Islands in January who's been doing this truth-telling work for over three decades, year after year.

His health isn't good. Some days, it takes everything he has just to get there. But he still shows up. I asked him, "Why do you keep going?" He didn't answer right away. Then he said, "Because if I stop, who's going to be there when the next person is ready to listen?"

That conversation has stayed with me.

His response and dedication show that reconciliation belongs to all of us.

Editor's note: There are lots of ways to get involved in this year's National Reconciliation Week activities. Please [register your events](#) on the National Reconciliation Week website and check out their website for [posters and resources](#) and [translated resources](#) (in 13 languages).

To support the "All In" theme, this year [Reconciliation Australia](#) is asking singers and choirs around the country to sing Midnight Oil's song "Beds are Burning" as part of its "Voice for Reconciliation" project. You can [register online](#) to participate and share your performance during National Reconciliation Week using the tags #NRW2026 #VoicesforReconciliation #BedsAreBurning.

Locked out: Southern Queensland rental crisis shuts out families with children



“While many Australians are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis, Queenslanders already under growing financial pressures are experiencing the greatest impact, particularly when it comes to safe and secure housing,” says Sue Cooke, CEO of Anglicare Southern Queensland (Image by anglican focus)

Queenslanders are being effectively locked out of the rental market from the cost-of-living crisis with almost no affordable and appropriate options, Anglicare Southern Queensland report reveals.

Anglicare Southern Queensland’s 2026 Rental Affordability Snapshot, released last week, reveals the cascading impacts of the rental crisis in Southern Queensland, with the rental market now effectively out of reach for many of the region’s lowest income households, particularly young families with children.

Of the 8,163 rental listings surveyed across Southern Queensland, just 26 properties or 0.3 per cent were affordable and appropriate for households on income support. For those on minimum wage, only 444 properties or 5.4 per cent were affordable and appropriate.

The situation has continued to worsen with 483 [fewer rentals available across Southern Queensland than in 2025](#). Of the rentals currently available, none were affordable and appropriate for every household category on income support, and almost every household on minimum wage, with the sole exception of couple households where both adults are working.

Anglicare Southern Queensland CEO Sue Cooke said each year the organisation is hopeful that the data will stabilise, though unfortunately communities across the regions continue to experience a concerning and sustained decline.

“While many Australians are experiencing a cost-of-living crisis, Queenslanders already under growing financial pressures are experiencing the greatest impact, particularly when it comes to safe and secure housing,” Ms Cooke said.

“The ripple effect of unaffordable and unavailable housing extends beyond the need for a roof over your head, particularly for young families and children who are most at risk.”

Young families and children most at risk

Ms Cooke said the report highlights the disproportionate impact of the rental crisis on children and families, with 0 per cent affordable and appropriate rental properties for households on income support with children.

“This is not just a story about unaffordable and unavailable housing — it is about the wellbeing of those who are doing it tough right now,” Ms Cooke said.

“When families cannot secure stable, affordable and appropriate housing, children are more likely to experience overcrowding, repeated moves, disruption at school, and poorer physical and mental health.

“In overcrowded households, children can end up sleeping in living rooms, on floors, or other spaces not designed to be bedrooms simply because families have run out of options. It also increases their likelihood of experiencing homelessness and family violence.

“In the past year, we have supported women, children and young people experiencing or at the risk of experiencing homelessness, seeing firsthand the anxiety, hunger, lack of sleep, disrupted education and the worries they live with each day.

“We see families skipping meals, working multiple jobs and cutting essentials and health appointments just to keep a roof over their head. This is the heartbreaking reality behind this report’s figures.”

In Brisbane, 417 fewer properties were listed than this time last year, with affordable and appropriate options falling from 20 to 9 for households on income support and from 75 to 26 for those on minimum wage.

On the Gold Coast, there were no affordable and appropriate properties for households on income support and just one for those on minimum wage. The Sunshine Coast was no better, with no affordable and appropriate properties for any of the 14 household types assessed.

“What we’re seeing in Moreton Bay is the reality for a lot of regions across Southern Queensland. Sadly, 0 per cent of the properties for almost all household types with children were both affordable and appropriate,” Ms Cooke said.

“Stable housing for children is a right, not a privilege, and should be treated as such — it underpins their ability to grow, meet developmental milestones and thrive.”

Supporting Queenslanders doing it toughest

Ms Cooke said investment into more appropriate and importantly, affordable, housing from all levels of Government is critical in protecting Queenslanders unable to find a place to call home.

“Rental affordability is worsening, and there is little in this data to suggest meaningful relief is on the horizon,” she said.

“With the National Rental Affordability Scheme finishing at the end of this financial year, we are calling on the Australian government to invest more social and affordable housing at the scale this crisis demands, and support income support settings that do not leave people locked out of affordable and available housing from the outset.

“For households relying on Jobseeker and other income support payments, this is not a question of budgeting better. The numbers simply do not stack up.”

Visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) to view the full 2026 Anglicare Southern Queensland Rental Affordability Snapshot.

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

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.

[Anglicare Southern Queensland](#) offers support between 9am and 5pm weekdays via 1300 114 397.

A counterpoint to the modern idea that simply quoting a scripture verse out of context is the purist expression of the faith



Photo by Lawrence OP on Flickr

*They fashioned a tomb for you [Zeus]...
but you are not dead:
you live and abide forever,
for in you we live and move and have our being.
Attributed to Epimenides, Poem to Zeus*

*From Zeus let us begin;
him do we mortals never leave unnamed;
full of Zeus are all the streets and all the market-places of men;
full is the sea and the havens thereof;
always we all have need of Zeus.
For we are also his offspring...
Aratus of Soli, Phaenomena*

*... though indeed God is not far from each one of us.
For "In him we live and move and have our being";
as even some of your own poets have said,
"For we too are his offspring."
Since we are God's offspring...
Acts 17.27b -29a*

Epimenides was a Greek philosopher who lived in the 6th or 7th Century BCE. Aratus was a Greek Stoic Philosopher and poet who lived in the 3rd and 4th Centuries BCE. By the time Aratus was writing, The Stoics had moved beyond the idea of Zeus being the mythological god who lived on Mount Olympus to understanding him as a representation of the divine, the logos, the rational, creative principle that permeates the universe.

In the reading from Chapter 17 of The Acts of the Apostles that we heard on Sunday, the writer portrays the Apostle Paul as quoting both Aratus and the poem attributed to Epimenides as he seeks to engage with the people who had gathered at the Areopagus. He was engaging with them because he recognised them as being fellow seekers of religious truth. To engage with them he quotes writings from their own tradition that contain themes that resonate with the understanding of the divine held by those who had encountered Jesus. In both passages quoted one could simply replace “Zeus” with “Jesus” and the text would be recognised as Christian.

The powerful encounter at The Areopagus serves as another reminder that the early followers of the way of Jesus were part of a sophisticated movement. And that many of those who were called to leadership, like Paul, were highly educated people; well-read, not only in their own religious tradition but in philosophy and other disciplines as well.

This reading serves as a counterpoint to the modern idea that simply quoting a scripture verse out of context is somehow the purist expression of the faith and the best technique for engaging with others. Paul on the other hand had a working knowledge of Greek Philosophy and had read the poets of traditions other than his own Jewish tradition. And he realised that good engagement with others includes respecting their tradition and the ways they too are bearing witness to truth, justice and goodness.

I see this passage as encouraging us to develop what Anglican theologian, Sarah Coakley, describes as a *Theologie Totale*. Developing a *Theologie Totale* involves allowing the insights of our tradition to be ratified, honed, challenged, and even transformed by the insights of other disciplines that are also seeking to understand the way the world works and the nature of existence; disciplines such as biology, psychology, sociology, physics, geology, astronomy, philosophy and other faith traditions.

This process can aid our understanding of how God does and doesn't work, and what it is and what it isn't to be human. It can also gift us with the humility that enables us to be open to the insights of others and the enriching of life and faith that comes as a gift from their faith altering insights. In my own life and faith I have found the insights that science brings to our understanding of life and existence to be particularly enriching, as well as transforming of my faith.

I am presently on Salt Spring Island in British Columbia, Canada. Over the years of visiting this part of the world I have had the privilege to worship in a number of vibrant Anglican communities. Those experiences have led me to be particularly touched by the way the Church here is seeking to learn from the wisdom of the Indigenous people. As is the case in many parts of the western world, including Australia, the Church here is learning significant lessons from the Indigenous people about the spirituality that leads to a more sound and sustainable relationship with the land and its creatures.

First published in the Cathedral Precinct eNews on 11 May 2026

16-year-old Flinders student becomes Queensland's youngest 2026 Youth Parliamentarian as the Youth Member for Nicklin



Matthew Flinders Anglican College Year 11 student James Grisman is the youngest member selected for the 2026 YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament — he is pictured with Principal Michelle Carroll and Member for Nicklin Marty Hunt MP in May 2026 (Image supplied)

Matthew Flinders Anglican College is celebrating a significant leadership opportunity for Year 11 student James Grisman, who has become the youngest member selected for the 2026 YMCA Queensland Youth Parliament (QYP).

At just 16, James has secured a prestigious role as the Youth Member for Nicklin — centered in the Sunshine Coast hinterland — and will serve as a pivotal link between Sunshine Coast youth and the state's decision-makers, with mentoring support from the Member for Nicklin Marty Hunt MP.

Standing out in a merit-based field of candidates aged up to 25, James' appointment serves as testament to the leadership development and real-world learning experiences provided at Flinders for students to become compassionate and aware citizens.

Principal Michelle Carroll said James' success reflects the College's mission to empower students to lead with intent.

"The Flinders community is incredibly proud of James. His selection as the state's youngest Youth Member is a reflection of the immense determination and character we encourage in all our students," Ms Carroll said.

“James has participated in our Dramatic Arts program and explored Humanities subjects to hone the public speaking and critical thinking skills essential for the floor of Parliament.

“He is a shining example of a Flinders student translating classroom learning into real-world advocacy.”

The QYP program began with a launch weekend at Parliament House in Brisbane (17–19 April), where James joined 92 other Youth Members to brainstorm legislative ideas and participate in mock debates.

James explained his schooling journey at Flinders had contributed to his community-minded approach and confidence.

“I have been a student at Flinders since kindergarten, and my subjects and opportunities at our school have definitely been important in helping me prepare for this role,” James said.

“My Year 11 elective subjects are humanities-based and my involvement has certainly invigorated my interest in and expanded my knowledge of political topics.

“My experiences in school productions as part of the Dramatic Arts program has developed my confidence and public speaking abilities and played a part in encouraging me to take part in the QYP.

“Youth Parliament is a chance to move beyond the classroom and learn how to turn passion into meaningful policy.

“I’m planning to study political and international subjects at university, and know that Youth Parliament will serve as a great opportunity for me to learn more about how it really works.

“The application process was nerve-wracking, but it forced me to get clear on my worldview and how Nicklin can better serve its youth.”

As the youth voice for the Nicklin region, James will be immersed in unique educational opportunities, experience parliamentary operation firsthand, mingle with members of Government and Opposition, and have a say in fiery debates on topical issues.

Member for Nicklin Marty Hunt MP praised the program, which provides young people with a front-row seat to democracy.

“It’s fantastic to see a young local like James stepping forward and earning his place in Youth Parliament,” Mr Hunt said.

“Opportunities like this give our next generation a real voice in shaping the future of our communities.

“James’ passion for tackling issues like housing affordability and turning ideas into meaningful policy so young people can continue to live and thrive on the Sunshine Coast is exactly the kind of leadership we want to encourage.”

James said he is dedicated to addressing local challenges facing his generation.

“I want to address the ‘brain drain’ on the Coast by improving housing affordability and local infrastructure, ensuring young people can afford to live and work where they grew up,” James said.

“I am deeply interested in youth issues and political involvement, and I want to make positive change. I want my voice to matter and to broaden my perspective by listening to other people from all across the state.”

The program culminates in a rare opportunity for Youth Members to sit in the very seats occupied by state lawmakers at Parliament House in Brisbane during Residential Sitting Week (27 September–3 October).

There, they will debate Bills representing their communities and deliver personal statements on issues that impact their generation.

National • Friday 15 May 2026

Federal Budget takes important steps on inequality with historic tax reforms



Photo by Omar Lopez on Unsplash

Anglicare Australia has welcomed the Federal Government’s reforms to the Capital Gains Tax discount and negative gearing in this week’s Budget, describing them as some of the most significant steps to tackle inequality in decades.

Anglicare Australia Executive Director Kasy Chambers said the Government deserved credit for taking on difficult tax reform.

“For years, governments have avoided touching unfair tax concessions that deepen inequality and drive up housing costs. Tonight’s Budget changes that. Reforming the Capital Gains Tax discount is a significant and overdue step toward a fairer tax system.

“These reforms recognise that Australia cannot keep subsidising wealth accumulation while millions of people struggle to afford the basics. This principle matters: governments should not be using the tax system to fuel speculative investment at the expense of everyone else.

“The Budget also makes other strides on tax fairness, increasing the tax free threshold and giving relief to people on the lowest incomes. Polling conducted for Anglicare Australia in March shows that 69% of voters back this change.”

Ms Chambers said the reforms would help slow the growth in housing inequality over time, but warned they were not enough on their own to solve the housing crisis.

“The biggest gap in tonight’s Budget is the lack of new investment in public and community housing. Australia’s housing crisis will not be solved without building many more homes people on low incomes can actually afford. We still need to see a major expansion of public and community housing if we want to tackle this crisis.”

Anglicare Australia will continue to call for targeted cost-of-living support for people surviving on the lowest incomes.

“Not everyone feels the cost-of-living crisis equally. People on low incomes spend most of their money on essentials like rent, food and electricity. They have no buffer left. Without an increase to JobSeeker and related payments, many people will continue to face impossible choices every day — although it is heartening to see the Government flag major reforms to employment services.

“If done right, these would give badly needed relief to people on a hamster wheel of activities that are not leading to paid work.

“This Budget takes inequality more seriously than we have seen in a very long time. The tax reforms announced tonight matter, and they will make a difference. The next step must be direct investment in social housing and properly supporting people on the lowest incomes.”

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán: Churches in Ukraine are united in commitment to peace



Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán of the Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church speaks during the meeting of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations with the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, 14 April 2026 (Photo: Office of the President of Ukraine, www.president.gov.ua)

Head of the of the Reformed Church in Trans-Carpathia for more than 20 years, Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán has recently been appointed chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations. The WCC invited him for an interview to learn more about what unites churches in Ukraine, and how the world can support churches and people of Ukraine affected by the ongoing war.

As Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine has entered its fifth year, hundreds of drones and missiles are targeting Ukrainian cities daily, not ceasing even during the days of Easter celebrations. How the war is affecting churches and church communities?

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán: I would like to distinguish between two groups: religious communities in the war-affected regions and those in the rear. Let me begin with the latter. Church communities in the rear have experienced a decline in membership; at the same time, there has been a notable strengthening of solidarity, particularly in assisting displaced persons and supporting those engaged in military service. Within Orthodox communities, some tensions have emerged, with past ties to Moscow now often perceived as a disadvantage.

In the war zones, according to publicly available information, Russian forces do not tolerate Christian denominations, individuals under the jurisdiction of the Kyiv-based Orthodox leadership, or their activities in occupied territories. Religious buildings are widely destroyed, and Orthodox churches are no exception. In many places, communities have been nearly eradicated. A significant portion of religious infrastructure has been completely devastated.

What unites all Christian communities and other religious organizations, is the shared longing for an end to the war, and a commitment to prayer for peace. This common prayer for peace brings unity in the protection of human life and creation.

Amidst all the violence and suffering, how do you keep your faith alive?

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábrián: Prolonged suffering and vulnerability prompt people to ask profound questions: why is this happening to us? Disillusionment with worldly powers, failed attempts to end the war, and shortcomings of political leadership have led many to turn toward God. In grief and hardship, people are increasingly drawn to prayer.

We ourselves have come to experience that our faith and hope ultimately rest in God alone. As we often say today: it is not we who sustain faith, but faith that sustains us.

How important is the unity among churches in Ukraine today? What unites churches in Ukraine?

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábrián: Unity among church communities is of great importance. One of the key pillars of Ukraine's resilience lies in tolerance among churches and believers, the shared desire for peace, and respect for the value of human life. Religious freedom experienced in recent decades is a fundamental value that all denominations seek to preserve and continue to uphold. Despite our differences, this freedom binds us together.



Meeting of the members of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations with the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, 14 April 2026 (Photo: Office of the President of Ukraine, www.president.gov.ua)

Few months ago you were appointed as a chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations. What are your plans, and what do you see as the main tasks at the moment?

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán: Among our responsibilities, I consider it especially important to highlight significant public events. One such example is the National Day of Prayer, during which supporters of Ukraine and members of parliament joins together in prayer—for peace, for the safety of those serving in the armed forces, for the recovery of the wounded, and for the comfort of widows and orphans.

Maintaining dialogue with the Presidential Office is also vital for strengthening the faithful in Ukraine. Communication between state institutions and religious communities is of great value, and I believe that this high-level cooperation should continue in the future, ensuring that the spiritual mission and social engagement of churches receive due recognition.

At the same time, I consider the most important work to be that which often remains unseen: daily spiritual and social service. This includes supporting severely wounded soldiers, assisting their families, and caring for orphaned children and widows who depend on public support and on the solidarity of religious communities. Looking ahead, I also see the need for legislative initiatives that, following the end of the war, will ensure fair opportunities for war veterans with disabilities and for families who have lost loved ones.



Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán of the Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church in Ukraine, chairman of the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations (Photo: Trans-Carpathian Reformed Church)

What are the most important ways churches and Christians can support people and churches of Ukraine?

Bishop Sándor Zán Fábíán: On a spiritual level, I regard prayer as essential. Those who pray learn to value peace, strive to preserve it where it exists, and actively work to create it. This calling is reflected in the words of Jesus: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God."

There are many ways to express solidarity with the people of Ukraine, and each form of support is meaningful. For example, churches and Christians worldwide can contribute through programs that provide access to prosthetics or by establishing funds to support the education of orphaned or partially orphaned children. These needs are not only post-war concerns; they have been urgent throughout the past years and remain so today. In the future, the restoration and reconstruction of religious buildings will also pose a major challenge for all churches in Ukraine.

We are grateful for your continued prayers and for both spiritual and material support. I sincerely hope that peace will soon be restored in Ukraine, in Russia, and among all nations in conflict. May compassion grow in the world, and may indifference and injustice diminish. May Almighty God hear our prayers and, through His creative power, bring peace where it is most needed.

["We want to do everything possible so that the world will not forget Ukraine" \(WCC news release, 21 April 2026\)](#)

[Learn more about the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations](#)

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