

“The Bishop is a ‘symbol of unity’ for the Church”



Bishop Sarah Plowman was delighted to join so many of our Anglican Church Southern Queensland women at an International Women's Day event at Government House on 5 March 2026, with women representing parishes, Mothers Union, schools and community groups (Image supplied by Bishop Sarah Plowman)

As the second anniversary of my consecration as Bishop rolls around, I've been reflecting about Church life and the Bishop's role in it.

It seems like just a little while ago that we gathered as a Diocesan family at the Synod Eucharist in 2024 when I began this wonderful and special journey of “being a bishop”. Yet so much has happened and I've learned so much on this journey, that I feel it simply can't have been only two years!

The most important thing that's been reinforced to me during this time is that the “Anglican Church Southern Queensland” is more than a name, workplace or not-for-profit organisation — it's a family, connected by a shared hope in Jesus and a shared way of telling and living the story of faith.

Sunday by Sunday I'm reminded of this while worshipping with congregations around our Diocese. I have the joy of experiencing the many and varied expressions of our living and growing a family of faith. Sunday is definitely the day when I feel most fulfilled in my ministry.



Our most northern church, All Saints' Anglican Church in Monto, is a vibrant, happy part of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland family where Bishop Sarah is welcomed each time she visits (Image supplied by Bishop Sarah Plowman, taken in 2025)

Archbishop Jeremy reminded me recently that the Bishop is a “symbol of unity” for the Church. We understand this to mean that wherever we go, we Bishops are living signs of the wider Body of Christ in our Diocese and our global Anglican community. The presence of the Bishop in a local parish, school or agency reminds us all that our Church is not limited to those with whom each of us worship with or work alongside week by week. We are connected to all the communities who share our Diocese’s mission — parishes with a wonderful array of worship styles and outreach activities; Anglican schools teaching faith and Christian values to enrich their academic offering; Anglicare serving those who need loving care; and, all the other expressions of mission across our Diocesan family.

Even the more challenging times in our life together are made more bearable because we belong to a Diocesan family that stretches beyond our own particular area of mission. In critical moments, I have seen school, parish and Ann St staff seamlessly working together to provide support and guidance, enriching us all and building the sense of unity that the Bishop embodies.

The Bible tells us that the Church is the Body of Christ, rejoicing and suffering together. The Message version of the Bible puts [1 Corinthians 12.26](#) like this:

“If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.”

It’s a privilege to see this verse come to life in our Anglican family week by week.

The body is not just one parish, one school, one ministry, one agency — but a family sharing the mission of God and together proclaiming the Good News of Jesus. Bishops get a special experience of this truth — I think that’s one of the best things about Episcopal ministry. I hope that each time you

see one of us you're reminded that our Anglican family is broad and diverse, filled with people of all ages, stages and styles.

Whenever you can, pray for our Diocesan family and find ways to bridge parish or other boundaries, encouraging and supporting one another in both joyful and tough times.



“Our Anglican Church Southern Queensland family was well represented at the Anglican Board of Mission 175th Anniversary Dinner in Sydney on 29 October 2025: supporting mission agencies is one of the ways we belong to the Body of Christ” (Image supplied by Bishop Sarah Plowman)

As Synod approaches, I believe we can give thanks that our Anglican family is so full of diversity and hope. I am grateful that wherever I travel, the Prayers of the Faithful in Sunday services always include prayers for our Diocesan family.

More and more frequently, I am finding enthusiasm for partnership between parishes. Sometimes this is a local partnership between neighbouring parishes, or a long-distance friendship between a city parish and a country parish, or a wider network of parishes intentionally working together in shared mission.

I also find schools partnering with parishes in service; schools and parishes supporting Anglicare ministries with love and selflessness; and, schools supporting initiatives led by our Justice Unit.

Such partnering is another sign of our unity in Christ — one that makes a Bishop's heart sing and gives me such hope for the future of our Church.

In the lead up to Diocesan Synod it is my prayer, while reflecting on two years of ministry as a Bishop, that I will always maintain the joy of being part of the Anglican family — our part of the Body of Christ, in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

St Martin's Catholic Cathedral Ypres glass: Medieval origins, World War I history and St John's Anglican Cathedral memorial



St John's Anglican Cathedral honorary historian Denzil Scrivens in the Darnell Room of St Martin's House (St John's Anglican Cathedral Precinct, Brisbane) with the stained glass retrieved by Sergeant James Young Garven (6th Field Company, Australian Engineers) from St Martin's Catholic Cathedral ruins in Ypres, West Flanders in World War I (Image by anglican focus, 27 May 2026)

World War I and the Battles of Ypres, West Flanders

During World War I, the Belgian town of [Ypres](#) in West Flanders occupied a strategic position. It stood in the path of Germany's planned invasion across the rest of Belgium and into France from the north. The German Army surrounded the city on three sides bombarding it throughout much of the war. To counterattack, the British and French, who were among the original [Allied powers](#), made costly advances from the Ypres Salient, a major part of the Western Front, into the German lines surrounding the hills.

Five major battles were fought in the Salient between 1914 and 1918, with the fighting constant throughout the war. The German Army used asphyxiating poison gas [for the first time](#) in Ypres in April 1915. The most significant was the Third Battle of Ypres, commonly known as the [Battle of Passchendaele](#), in July to November 1917.

The battles resulted in horrific loss of life and injury. At Passchendaele alone — when all [five Australian divisions](#) in Europe fought together for the first time — the Allies suffered [275,000 casualties](#), including [38,000 Australians and 5,300 New Zealanders](#), with [nearly 500,000 casualties](#) suffered by the armies on both sides.

In the course of the war, the town of Ypres was almost completely obliterated by artillery fire. Ypres' gothic-style St Martin's Cathedral, named after St Martin of Tours and built between 1230 and 1370, was destroyed.



St Martin's Catholic Cathedral, Ypres, West Flanders was destroyed in World War I (Image by [National Army Museum](#), UK)

The [Diocese of Terwaan](#) (French, Thérouanne) was dissolved into three Catholic dioceses — Boulogne-sur-Mer, Saint-Omer and Ypres in 1561. The church of St Martin's (Augustinian) monastery was then elevated to the status of cathedral. [St Martin's Cathedral](#) was the Episcopal See of the Diocese of Ypres until 1801. It was a cathedral until the [Concordat of 1801](#) when its bishopric was dissolved and incorporated into the Diocese of Ghent during the Napoleonic era. However, it became a [titular see](#) in 1969 and remains known as "St Martin's Cathedral".

After World War I, [a public meeting](#) was held to decide how Ypres was to be rebuilt — whether in the medieval style or as a modern city. It was [decided](#) to rebuild Ypres in the medieval style, "exactly in its original image". This included St Martin's Cathedral which was fully rebuilt in the Gothic style. Ruins of the old cathedral are [still visible](#), particularly in the lapidary museum adjacent to the cathedral. St Martin's Cathedral still operates today as a functioning Roman Catholic community within the Diocese of Bruges. At 102 metres, it is among the tallest buildings in Belgium.

During the war, various fragments from the ruins of St Martin's were "souvenired" by Allied soldiers. Some are housed in institutions, including the Imperial War Museum in London ([yellow and blue stained glass](#) fragments with lead moulding) and the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (a [cedar panel](#) from a pew).

The Stevens' family donation

[James Young Garven](#) was a Sergeant in the [6th Field Company, Australian Engineers](#) in the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). Born in Paisley, Scotland, he was a resident of Sandgate in Brisbane, Queensland. He was Presbyterian.

Sergeant Garven was present in the Ypres Salient in the early part of 1917 (exactly when is unknown). Thereafter, he fought at the [Battle of Lagnicourt](#), northern France. During the battle on 26 March 1917 he was killed, aged 29. He was mentioned in despatches and is buried in the Queant Road Cemetery, Buissy, France.

In June 2024 Sergeant Garven's granddaughter Janice Stevens of Brisbane, and her husband Peter Stevens, offered to donate to St John's Anglican Cathedral four fragments of coloured leadlight glass that Sergeant Garven retrieved from the ruins of St Martin's after a terrible battle. However, the circumstances in which Mrs Stevens' grandfather acquired the glass are undetermined.

There are four pieces of glass — three are circular and blue and black in colour and another is a square-shaped leaf pattern that is brown in colour.



The four pieces of stained glass are held within a cross, which is mounted in a shadow box made of silky oak, allowing light to enter behind the cross and reveal the glass pieces. Also mounted is Sergeant James Young Garven's leather pouch, which he used to carry the stained glass after finding the glass fragments in the ruins of St Martin's Cathedral, Ypres, West Flanders in World War I (Image by *anglican focus*)

Sergeant Garven kept the pieces in a small leather pouch, which was standard AIF issue. After Sergeant Garven was killed his commanding officer forwarded the glass fragments and the pouch to

Garven's widow Jane Garven, Mrs Stevens' grandmother. Both the glass and the pouch remained in the family's possession after 1917.

The family considered donating the fragments to St John's Anglican Cathedral after Peter Stevens read a *Queensland RSL News* magazine article about the Cathedral's war memorials, which I wrote in 2024.

Sergeant Garven's family considered a number of options, including returning the fragments to Belgium via the embassy (which they discovered would be a protracted process) and donating the pieces to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra (with the fragments possibly being stored rather than displayed).

They instead contacted St John's Cathedral in Brisbane, trusting that the Cathedral would find an ethical way forward. The Cathedral Dean, The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt, and I met with Janice Stevens (and her husband, Peter Stevens) regarding the Ypres glass.

St John's Cathedral agreed to accept the glass fragments "in principle" if St Martin's Cathedral agreed to St John's displaying the glass, ideally in St Martin's House on the Cathedral precinct, where the Cathedral offices are based. St Martin's House was formerly known as "St. Martin's War Memorial Hospital" — erected in the memory of World War I servicemen and nurses and where returning soldiers and nurses were treated free of charge. St Martin's House also shares the same namesake as Ypres' Cathedral — St Martin of Tours.

After meeting with Janice Stevens and the Dean, I subsequently contacted the Australian Government's [cultural heritage](#) section in the Office of the Arts. They confirmed that because the glass was "souvenired" before the 1954 Hague [Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict](#) and the 1970 UNESCO [Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property](#), no *legal* obligation existed to return the glass to Belgium.

However, on the basis of *ethics* on 8 October 2024 Dean Peter Catt emailed the Dean of St Martin's Catholic Cathedral, The Rev'd Fr Miguel Dehondt, proposing that St John's Anglican Cathedral displays the glass pieces in St Martin's House as a war memorial, on the basis of either St Martin's Cathedral gifting them to St John's Cathedral or making them available on permanent loan.

On 21 October 2024 Alexander Declercq, President of the St Martin's Catholic Cathedral Council, emailed back saying that:

"We have no objection whatsoever to the proposal of displaying the fragments as you suggest...As for loan or gift, since there is probably, as far as I understand, no conclusive evidence of the origin of ownership of the stained-glass fragments, this seems not a 'formal' decision to make. But please feel free to do as you propose."

The Ypres Glass Memorial design concept

Peter Stevens (who passed away in 2025) proposed that the four glass pieces be mounted on a cross. This intention has been honoured in the Ypres Glass Memorial, which is being dedicated at 11.30am on Sunday, 7 June 2026 in the Darnell Room of St Martin's House.

The memorial is a stressed wooden cross made of French oak — the same type of timber most likely used in the construction of the original St Martin’s Cathedral in Ypres and in the recent restoration of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris.

The four pieces of glass are held within the cross, which is mounted in a shadow box made of silky oak, allowing light to enter behind the cross and reveal the glass pieces. Also mounted is Sergeant Garven’s leather pouch, which he used to carry the glass, along with the following inscription:

“This cross incorporates four pieces of stained-glass from the ruins of the 14th Century Cathedral of St Martin’s in Ypres, Belgium, destroyed in World War 1. In 1917, the glass was retrieved from the ruins by Sergeant James Garven of the Australian Imperial Force.

“In 2025 the glass was donated to St John’s by Mrs Janice Stevens, Sergeant Garven’s granddaughter, in memory of her grandfather and others who lost their lives in the War, many in the Ypres Salient. Also shown is the pouch in which Sergeant Garven preserved the glass.

“Displayed by consent of St Martin’s Cathedral, Ypres.”

The Memorial was crafted by leading Brisbane joiner Jack Barnes, who has undertaken extensive work for St John’s Cathedral, including a Gothic-style altar screen for one of the side chapels and a timber mosaic floor for the Oratory.

The Ypres Glass Memorial is displayed in the Darnell Room, the primary event and meeting room of St Martin’s House.

Editor’s note: The Ypres Glass Memorial will be dedicated in the Darnell Room of St Martin’s House (St John’s Cathedral Precinct, 373 Ann St, Brisbane) at 11.30am on Sunday, 7 June 2026.

Q&A with parishioner, artist, active Thread Together volunteer, native beekeeper and devoted grandmother, Wendy Chenoweth



The Rev'd Sue Grimmett (Rector of St Andrew's, Indooroopilly) and Wendy Chenoweth (parishioner of St Andrew's, Indooroopilly and Thread Together volunteer) sorting clothes for the Thread Together Clothing Hub on Saturday, 16 May 2026 (Image by anglican focus)

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I have lived in Brisbane for most of my life, and worship at St Andrew's Anglican Church, Indooroopilly.

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

As a St Andrew's, Indooroopilly parishioner I started volunteering with Thread Together in mid-2021 when the volunteer role I had at a food bank ended due to reduced government funding. This coincided with Thread Together needing more help, so I started as a van packer and driver.

Can you tell readers more about Thread Together?

Thread Together is a [partnership](#) with St Andrew's, Indooroopilly and Anglicare Southern Queensland, providing brand-new clothes, shoes and bags — via a mobile wardrobe (van) and clothing hub — to people who need them, including people experiencing homelessness, refugees and newly arrived people, young people at risk, individuals and families recovering from natural disasters, and those facing financial hardship.

Thread Together actively works to reduce waste and keep clothing in circulation. The clothing is end-of-line, excess stock that manufacturers and retailers would normally send to landfill.

What does your current role involve?

I do a bit of everything, but my main role is to order stock from Thread Together Sydney, help organise the delivery and manage the storage space at St Andrew's. I also enjoy packing the van and driving to various sites.

What do you most love about your role?

I love putting my faith into action by following Jesus' example of showing love and compassion to others. Fresh new clothing given in a non-judgmental and respectful fashion supports our clients' dignity, choice, and hope.

What is a highlight of your current role?

One day I was driving the van through the Brisbane CBD. As we pulled up to a stationary line of traffic, I recognised one of our regular clients, who sleeps rough at a bus stop, standing on the footpath. I wound down the window and greeted him by name and said "Love your shirt!" We smiled at each other and he did a little bow. He was wearing one of the shirts he had chosen the previous week during a Thread Together site visit at St John's Cathedral.



Wendy Chenoweth receiving the "Volunteer of the Year Award" at the Anglicare Southern Queensland "Our People Awards" in 2025, pictured here with Archbishop Jeremy Greaves and Anglicare Southern Queensland CEO Sue Cooke (Image by Anglicare Southern Queensland)

Congratulations on receiving the Anglicare Southern Queensland “Volunteer of the Year Award” at the “Our People Awards” last year — what does this award mean to you?

I very much feel that I accepted the award as a part of a team — it is a joy to work with my St Andrew’s, Anglicare and other volunteer friends at Thread Together. They all deserve an award.

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

Ordering and receiving the deliveries of clothing is quite fun — a pallet of boxes arrives, and it is a bit like Christmas. We wonder, “What will be inside?”

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

I have been a believer most of my life. My faith gives me purpose and meaning. I am a follower of Jesus, and my life choices are informed by his example.

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

Micah 6.8 instructs us “to act justly, to love faithfulness, and to walk humbly with your God”. This is the way I try to live my life

I am a very practical person, and I try to put into action what I believe.

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

St Andrew’s is an outward-looking parish. I love it because of its non-judgmental and open-armed acceptance of others, paired with excellent teaching, space for contemplation and work in the community.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

Hard to choose, but: [1 John 3.18](#) “My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth” because we can talk all we want, but actions speak louder than words.



Keen cyclists Wendy Chenoweth and her husband, John, leaving home for a pedal around the Brisbane River in 2025 (Image supplied)

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

Other than Jesus, my lovely husband, John, has a deep and thoughtful faith that inspires and challenges me.

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

Jesus consistently stood up for people who were pushed to the margins and vulnerable in society. In following his example, we should work to understand, heal and advocate for First Nation Peoples, acknowledging the past hurt and dislocation caused by colonisation.

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

The kindness and support of our church community, friends and strangers during my mother's terminal illness at a young age. In particular, I will never forget the kindness and gentle care given to my mother by a very special nurse who looked after her during her long hospitalisation. She treated Mum with quiet respect and allowed her dignity during the most difficult of times.

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

"If you are feeling a certain way — bored, frightened, uneasy — chances are those around you will be feeling the same way". My husband, John, gave me this advice.

What is the funniest thing that happened to you recently?

Just recently my little grandson called me "Bro"!

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

I am an artist. I paint large, narrative [oil paintings](#). Although they are not overtly Christian, they are informed by my faith. I love it when my work speaks to the viewer and they find their own meaning in it.



Wendy Chenoweth's painting *Earth's Crammed With Heaven*, which was inspired by the Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem, "Aurora Leigh" (Image supplied)

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

My bikes. I was a very keen cyclist in years gone by, but the roads are too scary now, so the bikes sit in my studio. I ride occasionally, but really, I only need one bike now.

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

My coffee machine, coffee and milk.



Wendy Chenoweth with a very active native stingless beehive on her front deck in 2026 (Image supplied)

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

The Australian Native Bee Book by Tim Heard. I keep and create new native stingless bee colonies to sell or give away. It's a delightful hobby and I always give a copy of the book with each hive.

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

Spend time with one of my many grandkids — and try not to be tempted onto the trampoline.

Editor's notes: If you would like to volunteer with Thread Together, please visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) and click on the "Enquire now" button.

If you are a service provider / support organisation and you would like to refer a client to the Thread Together clothing hub, please visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) and click on the "Booking form" button.

If you are yet to be linked to a support organisation, please contact one of the organisations in this list and ask for a referral to the Thread Together clothing hub via the [booking form](#).

If you are interested in the possibility of a Thread Together mobile wardrobe visit to support clients at your site, please [email](#) Anglicare Southern Queensland.

School, parish combine for Pentecost service



The Rev'd Charlie Lacey from St Andrew's, Springfield preaching at the Pentecost service at The Springfield Anglican College on Sunday, 24 May 2026 (Image supplied by The Springfield Anglican College)

The Springfield Anglican College (TSAC) and St Andrew's, Springfield gathered at TSAC's Secondary campus on Pentecost for a joint service, marking a significant milestone for the school and parish.

TSAC Principal Steven Morris said the school and the parish have a unique relationship with the connection grounded in both faith and shared location.

"While St Andrew's, Springfield regularly worships on the College grounds, this was the first occasion that the parish and school formally combined for a liturgical celebration," Mr Morris said.

"It highlights the strong and growing connection between the two."



The Springfield Anglican College (TSAC) Principal Steven Morris (centre) with St Andrew's, Springfield Priest-in-Charge The Rev'd Charlie Lacey (left) and TSAC Chaplain The Rev'd Jonathan Kemp (right) at the Pentecost service at The Springfield Anglican College on Sunday, 24 May 2026 (Image supplied by The Springfield Anglican College)

Led by St Andrew's, Springfield Priest-in-Charge The Rev'd Charlie Lacey (who also serves on TSAC Council) and supported by TSAC Chaplain The Rev'd Jonathan Kemp, the service focused on the theme of the "Gifts of the Spirit", in keeping with the celebration of Pentecost.

A moving highlight of the service saw parishioners recite the Lord's Prayer in five different languages: Afrikaans, Kinyarwanda, Swahili, Indonesian and Mandarin. This echoed the account in the Book of Acts, where the Holy Spirit descends upon the disciples and enables them to praise God in many tongues.

The Rev'd Charlie said the multilingual prayer was a powerful reminder that since the Day of Pentecost, the message of the Gospel has reached every corner of the globe.

Today, the Lord's Prayer is prayed in countless languages, demonstrating the Gospel's ability to transcend borders and cultures.

The Rev'd Charlie also reflected on the significance of the occasion, noting that the service was a visible expression of partnership in worship, mission and community.

TSAC Captains said that it is important for the College and parish communities to celebrate important liturgical days together.

"The highlight of the service for me was learning about the stories and meaning behind Pentecost, as I had never attended a service like this before — I really appreciated how the explanations made the message easy to understand and engaging," Leila A said.

"It is important for Anglican schools and parishes to celebrate significant Church days together because it strengthens the sense of community and shared faith.

"It also helps students develop a deeper understanding of the Anglican traditions and values that shape the school."

"The most enjoyable part of the service for me was watching how immersed everyone was in worship," Simmy N said.

"Additionally, The Reverend Charlie Lacey was excellent in his ability to provide an inclusive service, specifically for the children within the church.

"The preachings were clearly able to communicate the message to people of all backgrounds and ages, with the help of members of the church.

"I think when we celebrate these significant moments in the church together, we build a sense of community and build partnership.

"When we come together like this, we are able to worship and learn while the Holy Spirit works within us."

Music also played a central role in the celebration, with combined music from the TSAC Junior Choir, TSAC Chorale and Vocal Collective.

Their contribution complemented an outstanding solo from St Andrew's, Springfield parishioner Doris Henry, showcasing the richness of talent across both communities.

Books & Guides • Tuesday 2 June 2026 • By Associate Professor Robyn Wrigley-Carr

Then May the Senses Fall: Evelyn Underhill's Forgotten Fiction



"This volume brings together in one place Underhill's short stories and is an enriching read," says Associate Professor Robyn Wrigley-Carr

Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) was a significant spiritual writer in the first half of the twentieth century in England and internationally. She authored 39 books and hundreds of articles and reviews and this extensive corpus is still cherished by many readers today.

This recent publication, *Then May the Senses Fall: Evelyn Underhill's Forgotten Fiction*, enables us to easily access seven of Underhill's short stories. Though six of these have been previously published, they are not easily accessible because they are housed in two obscure periodicals.

One short story, "At the End of the Garden", contained in this collection has never been published and was sourced from the Evelyn Underhill Archives at King's College, London.

The short stories are: "The Death of a Saint", "The Ivory Tower", "The Mountain Image", "At the End of the Garden" (previously unpublished), "Our Lady of the Gate", "A Green Mass" and "The Threefold Quest".

This book also includes six of Underhill's published poems from her poetry collections: *Immanence* (1912) and *Theophanies* (1916). The poems included are: "Clouds", "Supersensual", "Celestial Beauty", "For Hilda", "The Lady Poverty" and "Ichthus". The editors included these six poems because they "illuminate and deepen" themes in the short stories.

One published essay is also included in this book — “A Defence of Magic”. The editors argue that it explores Underhill’s understanding of living in two worlds — her seen physical world and her spiritual reality. Following each short story or poem, Gillard and Stauffer have provided their reflections — “outros” — drawing upon Underhill secondaries and their personal commentary on each short story or poem.

The editors contend that Underhill’s early “creative” literary writings of short stories and poetry provide (the first decade of the twentieth century) an essential backdrop for understanding and fully appreciating her later writings. The book’s primary aim is to provide Underhill enthusiasts with easy access to her short stories, enhanced by a selection of her poems reinforcing similar themes to enable immersion into her earlier writings forming the essential backdrop for her later corpus.

Though the editors briefly mention Underhill’s three novels written during this early part of Underhill’s writing career — *The Grey World* (1904), *The Lost Word* (1907) and *The Column of Dust* (1909) — it would have been interesting to explore where themes from her short stories and excerpts from these novels intersect and inform each other, given they were written during a similar timeframe.

The editors argue that Underhill’s involvement in the “Order of the Golden Dawn” for a few years is evident in the included essay, yet it also indicates her growing interest in Christianity. It is worth noting that these writings precede by at least a decade Underhill’s encounter with Christ through the influence of her spiritual director, Baron Friedrich von Hügel (1852-1925).

Following this experience, Underhill’s spirituality changes significantly. She describes her encounter with Christ as like watching the sun rise very slowly and suddenly she knew what it was. Thereafter reading the Scriptures and partaking in the Eucharist were utterly transformed for her. Underhill’s writings become more Christocentric and Trinitarian and she writes more about “saints” and less about “mystics”.

Reading the editors’ “excavation” of the many layers of correction on the manuscript of the unpublished short story — “At the End of the Garden” — reminded me of my own work when I discovered and edited *Evelyn Underhill’s Prayer Book* (2018). The manuscript of these prayers similarly had frequent crossings out and often options for a choice of three words that could be used for a particular part of a prayer, depending on which retreat Underhill was leading at the time. Their similar description of the many corrections and “layers of revision” on that short story manuscript shows the way that Underhill wrote and rewrote her prayers and short stories. It is interesting to ponder why this particular short story was never published.

Having immersed myself in Underhill’s later corpus, it was interesting to read these early short stories. I had not read these short stories before and I enjoyed the rich themes and imaginative writing. In closing I will provide a few quotes and reflections from Underhill’s first short story in this collection — “The Death of a Saint”. A description of Father John, the “saint” who is dying in this short story, provides a taste of Underhill’s descriptive writing: “His very keen dark eyes, which made the sweetness of his smile seem a paradox, were ensigns of a fretting sword within” (p.4). In this short story, Father John’s deathbed final wish is to enter a secret room that he visited daily. His two bedside attendants had assumed this secret room was an oratory where he prayed, given Father John always exited this room more peaceful. In his dying moments, Father John enters the room, staying there for over an hour. Eventually his attendants enter to discover that the room is actually an artist’s studio and Father John’s paintings line the walls. His subjects are “grotesque, morbid, unspeakable secrets of the world” yet these works of art all portray a likeness to Father John. They discover Father John stooped over,

dead, with a paintbrush in his clenched hand, below a portrait of himself — the paint scarcely dry. They discover that their saint was “only an artist after all!”. Then they recall the effect of Father John spending time in that room, so the short story closes with: “had he been less of an artist, he might not have been quite so much of a saint” (p.13).

This volume brings together in one place Underhill’s short stories and is an enriching read. However, I urge readers of this volume to remember that this collection is only one small aspect of Underhill’s voluminous output, and to balance this read with some of her later works, particularly her published retreat talks, which I find particularly spiritually nourishing.

Bill Gillard and Robert Stauffer (Eds), 2025. *Then May the Senses Fall: Evelyn Underhill’s Forgotten Fiction*. New York: Monkfish.

Reflections • Friday 5 June 2026 • By The Rev'd Mary-Anne Rulfs

Mission as pilgrimage: Transformative human encounter on the way from here to there



The Rev'd Mary-Anne Rulfs and Bishop Frenzel Piluden planting giant bamboo to form a windbreak at the Integrated Sustainable Agriculture Program (ISAP) farm in The Diocese of Santiago in 2026 (Image supplied by the Anglican Board of Mission)

Pilgrimage. It sounds so religious. So other-worldly. Irrelevant, even.

I think we can safely assume that the notion of pilgrimage is widely misunderstood in contemporary Australian culture, and even in the Church. We’re a people who love to go places, do things, upload

the social media post and then look out for the next experience — scrolling, researching and checking in with friends and colleagues for their recommendations for our next adventure.

We rarely sit still or remain undistracted for long enough to pay attention to what is really happening around us in real time, and be moved by whom or what we encounter. To notice, and allow God to open our eyes, ears and heart to God's spirit right before our eyes.

Many people in Australian Anglican communities have the means to go to interesting places and do many exciting things in their free time. Whether it feels like a holiday when they return probably depends on their approach to the many factors that impact a trip. The weather — was it favourable or not? Family dynamics — did people get along? Travel arrangements — did they go smoothly and as expected or were they annoyingly unpleasant and inconveniently disrupted? And the people encountered along the way — were they incidental to the trip, or were they actually intrinsic to the whole experience and a vital element in the memories formed? Was there time, or even a desire, to stop, breathe, appreciate and be captivated by the wildness, beauty and cultural landscape of the places visited? To ask, "How am I feeling right now? And what is that about?"

Was the trip experienced in discretionary bites of sound and experience, or participated in as a long-playing encounter, living the full suite of experiences that provide meaning and texture to the whole?

I recently visited the Philippines for 10 days, along with my husband and another Anglican Board of Mission (ABM) supporter from Sydney. Meagan Schwarz, Key Relationships Manager for ABM, coordinated the trip and accompanied us. Although we intentionally embarked on the visit as pilgrimage, I was doubtful this would be possible. After all, I had work obligations to meet while away, both during meetings in the Philippines and at home, online. So, was it disingenuous to describe our trip as pilgrimage?

As it turns out, not at all. In fact, understanding and accepting the experience as pilgrimage has re-framed my whole approach to what holistic mission as pilgrimage might look like for people who form communities within Christian schools in the Anglican tradition. As Director of Mission for the Anglican Schools Commission in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, I have been trying to distil the distinctives of what an experience of education in an Anglican school looks like, feels like, and sounds like. The notion of pilgrimage is helpful for framing our shared quest to nurture great humans through witnessing to the love of God, fostering a sense of dignity and care for God's children everywhere, inviting people to faith, forming disciples of Christ, and caring for creation.



Episcopal Church in the Philippines clergy, including The Rev'd Janny Vine Sangdaan Batoy — Principal, Episcopal Diocese of Santiago Children's Learning Center Inc. — at the 2026 service of blessing and thanksgiving for the new classroom block that was completed with the assistance of Archbishop Jeremy Greaves' Anglican Board of Mission Advent Appeal (Image supplied by the Anglican Board of Mission)

On our first day in Manila, we spent time exploring the idea of pilgrimage. I very quickly recognised that we didn't have to be on the Camino de Santiago, walking in the footsteps of Jesus around Jerusalem or the Galilee, or walking one of the many pilgrim ways in the UK to be on pilgrimage. To be on pilgrimage was simply to embark on an intentional journey in response to the stirring of God's spirit. To be fully present to whoever, wherever and however we found ourselves. To be foreigners and yet at home. To be present to the sights, sounds, smells, tastes and physical sensations of all that we would encounter, discovering more of God on the way and participating in the truly life-giving and surprising life of the Spirit. This was to be profound. As our trip continued, these encounters became some of the most humbling experiences of my life. They have been transformative.

On our return, when people asked "How was your trip?", I found myself saying "It's been one of the most deeply human encounters of my life". I know it has changed me for good.

Perhaps the most humbling few hours, which completely unravelled me, was the time we spent worshipping in the Krus na Banal (the Cross of the Crossroads) Episcopal Church, in the province of Capiz, part of the Missionary Diocese of Visayas. We worshipped with the local community and then, afterwards, met with members of a local livelihood association. At this "cross at the crossroads", I experienced a stripping away of striving, and allowed myself permission to accept that being fully present to the life of God around me — paying attention to my neighbour and the details of the world around me as much as myself — is enough.

You see, ABM's development arm, [Anglicans in Development](#) (AID), partners with the Episcopal Church in the Philippines (ECP), and particularly with its E-CARE (Episcopal Community Action for Renewal and Empowerment) Foundation. The mission of E-CARE is to support self-reliant and sharing communities through asset-based community development (ABCD) and the "Receivers to Givers" policy, where receivers are encouraged and equipped to become givers also.

The Lonoy Oyster Association is one such E-CARE community partner. The members of the association meet once monthly for mutual support, Bible study and prayer. They have benefitted from being resourced to develop other livelihood activities to provide income during the long wait for their oysters to mature. The Church is growing through its partnership with local families who are benefitting in so many ways from the mutual support and care of the partnership. As we worshipped on that Sunday morning, we were alongside many people from the association, along with their family members.

One man in particular stands out in my memories. He helps to manage several livelihood associations and had come with us the afternoon before to help plant some mangrove propagules, part of a replanting project to assist with fish spawning. I thought he was a regular worshipper. However, it was his first time worshipping with this Episcopal community, and he was clearly very moved by the welcome and hospitality extended to him. One person. Yet our world is full of people like him. I couldn't help thinking about how we place hospitality and inclusion at the heart of Anglican school life, and the ways that people experience transformation as a result.

Likewise, the privilege of hearing the stories of people in the Lonoy Oyster Association — and in other livelihood associations we spent time with — humbled me in ways I've rarely experienced.

There are many such stories from our time in the Philippines. And you may have your own from your past experiences of pilgrimage and encounter.



The Rev'd Mary-Anne Rulfs (Director of Mission, Anglican Schools Commission, Anglican Church Southern Queensland, centre) with L-R, Meagan Schwarz, Brad Rulfs and Romelyn and Padi Daniel visiting the Episcopal Church in the Philippines' Visayas Missionary District (Image supplied by Meagan Schwarz / Anglican Board of Mission)

I do wonder whether we could be more effective in witnessing to God's love in the world, forming disciples and caring for others and the earth if, in all our school and parish processes, we used more of a pilgrimage approach — to nurture a more contented and connected way of being. To focus less on angst about self. To develop the capacity to lessen striving or distraction and be present to others, allowing us to settle into who we are in more life-giving ways that more effectively share God's life and love with those we encounter.

We are currently welcoming seven school and university chaplains from the Episcopal Church in the Philippines as they undertake professional learning. This is an initiative emerging from ECP's strategy to strengthen chaplaincy as an intentional 21st century ministry to grow the Church in the Philippines.

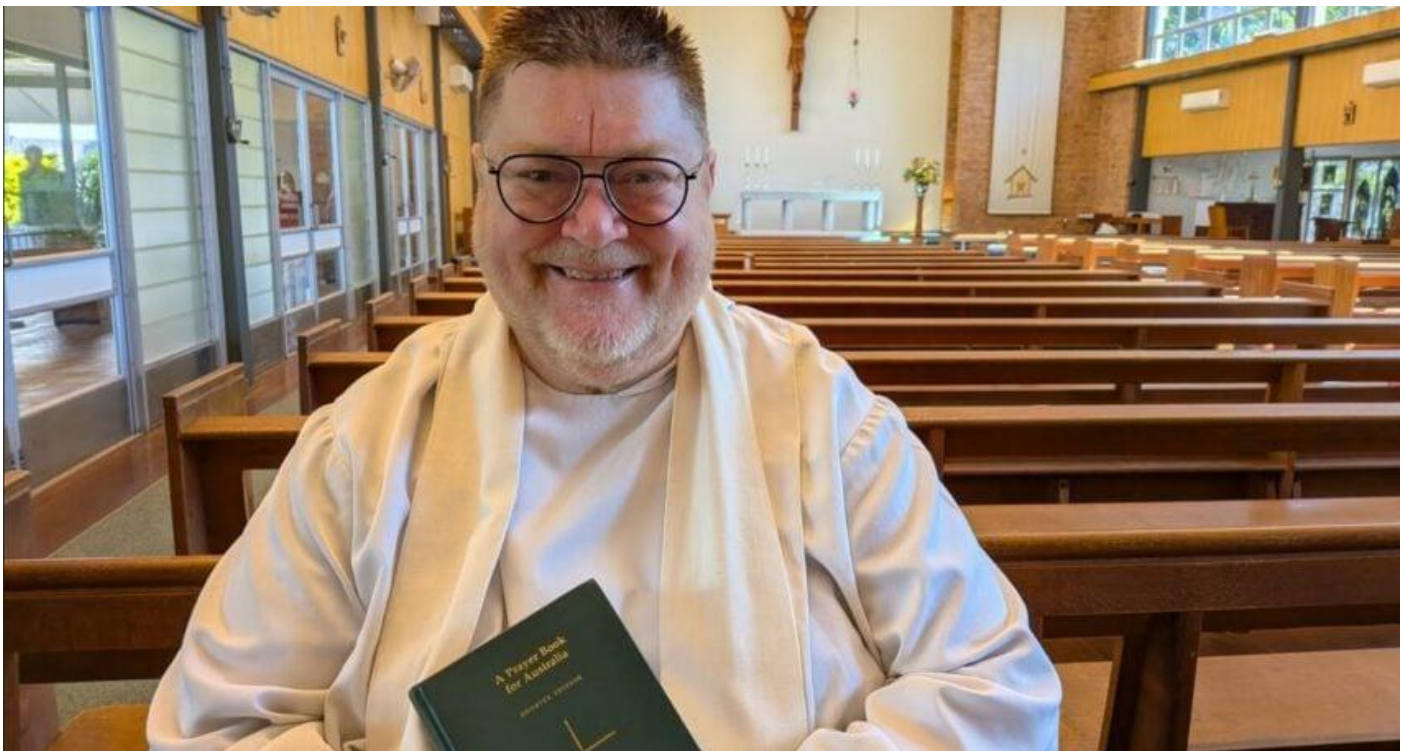
I am framing this visit as pilgrimage, both for our visitors and for chaplains in our Diocese as we host our colleagues. We have much to learn from each other about our life in Christ and our ministries in the varied contexts represented.

As we spend time together — worshipping, learning, sharing hospitality, enjoying the opportunity to visit new places — this time of pilgrimage is providing space for transformative human encounter that strengthens our capacity to be effective 21st century missionaries in our schools, parishes and beyond.

Editor's note: Please visit the [Anglican Board of Mission website](#) for more information.

Reflections • Tuesday 2 June 2026 • By The Rev'd Shane Hubner

Why I dislike the use of projector screens in church services



"I believe that prayers should be prayed and the Scriptures should be proclaimed and heard. If screens need to be used, I think it is best for the screen to go blank when the Scriptures are proclaimed, the sermon preached and the prayers prayed," says The Rev'd Shane Hubner

Since I retired from full-time ministry in 2024 after almost 30 years as a parish priest, I have found the transition a bumpy time.

I am still adjusting to sitting in the pews as a parishioner rather than being in the sanctuary presiding and preaching. However, one of the silver linings is the time and opportunity to visit different churches on Sunday mornings. It has been an eye-opening experience to the variety of Anglican worship, one which has led to the topic of this short reflection.

In my experience few churches use screens well enough to overcome the serious drawbacks their use potentially brings to worship.

Before exploring these drawbacks, I want to acknowledge how important to me is our identity and history as Anglicans, who base our worship on the Prayer Book — the foundational tool for ordering and authorising different forms of worship. I strongly believe that the Book of Common Prayer and its authorised descendants, such as the Prayer Book for Australia (APBA), give us our Anglican identity, exemplifying the Latin phrase *lex orandi, lex credendi* — “the law of praying is the law of believing”. In other words, our common worship, as ordered in the Prayer Book, demonstrates our faith.

Now to five drawbacks I find with the use of screens in worship.

1. Flow of the liturgy

The use of a projector screen places the power for the smooth running of worship in the hands of the person charged with pushing the arrow on the computer keyboard or PowerPoint clicker so the next slide appears, rather than with the presider or celebrant. In all my experiences of screen use in worship, there has always been at least one time when the liturgy's flow was interrupted, whether while singing a hymn or reciting the creed or saying prayers, because the person charged with this task had lost concentration for a moment or mixed up the slides.

It requires immense concentration for the entire length of the service to ensure that button is pushed or clicked at the precise moment. Presiders and celebrants are required to be fully concentrating — thinking always a little ahead, including about whether the readers, intercessor or musicians are ready to perform their role at the correct time. In effect, this new “role” of slide operator requires more concentration than we require of clergy, and because of that concentration this person may not be able to enter the worship as fully as they may like. In having this volunteer position, we run the risk of denying that person the opportunity to engage fully in the Sunday worship.

There is an additional discussion around the issue of whether celebrants worship as they lead or worship at a different time, but the facilitation of good liturgy is one of the key roles of clergy.

2. An alternative focus in worship

The screen draws the attention of worshippers to the screen, thus becoming the visual focus during the worship, rather than the lectern, pulpit or Eucharist. I have experienced worship where screens were placed either side of the church, meaning that I was looking away from the altar or lectern for the entirety of the service. Screens have a habit of demanding our attention — one feels the need to keep looking at the screen in case an important item is missed. When all the liturgy's text, including all the scripture and prayer words, are projected it is almost impossible not to keep reading from the screen, instead of focusing on the reader or presider. I have the same complaint when presented with

a printed order of service, which includes all the words, but at least one can put the booklet (and indeed Prayer Book) down. It is very hard to escape the visual dominance of a projector screen.

I believe that prayers should be prayed and the Scriptures should be proclaimed and heard. If screens need to be used, I think it is best for the screen to go blank when the Scriptures are proclaimed, the sermon preached and the prayers prayed. I experienced one service where there was a Gospel procession, but everybody's eyes were focused on the screen for Gospel's words.

I think the same applies to printed orders of service that contain all the liturgy's text. I ask whether, when the presider is praying the Great Thanksgiving, we need to have our eyes up on a screen. If one must use a screen, then I think it should be blank during this focal point of worship.

3. Anxiety about what comes next

I like to arrive early for services and prepare myself for worship by having a good understanding of what is going to happen, including glancing at the hymns, readings and notices, if available. Then I feel settled and ready to enter the liturgy. When presented with nothing — no Prayer Book or hymn book or printed order of service — at the door and realise that the service will be projected, I become a little anxious. I like to know what is going to happen and to feel settled. But then again, that may just be me. Others may relish the uncertainty.

4. Understanding Anglican worship

It is my opinion that the use of screens in worship inhibits us in learning the treasures of Anglican worship. I think screen-based services dilute our Anglican identity. As Anglicans, *how* we worship *is* how we believe. For Anglicans, prayer comes *before* creeds and articles of faith. The problem with the use of projector screens (and printed orders of service, for that matter) is that they impede enculturation of the worshipper to the Anglican liturgy's richness. When I was Primate's chaplain putting together the closing liturgy for the General Synod of 2004, I wanted to insert a trial Thanksgiving Prayer. Renowned Australian Anglican liturgical scholar Charles Sherlock AM offered the following advice: "Shane, a lot of blood has been spilt over the centuries concerning the words of thanksgiving prayers and we have a long process involved in the changing of them. Don't mess with order and structure."

The problem with projector screens is that one really does not know the provenance of the liturgy's words. There may be copyright notices at the end of most printed orders of services and sometimes on the closing slide of projected liturgies; however, if projected liturgies are the norm Sunday by Sunday where is the teaching that this all comes from — a Prayer Book that identifies us as Anglicans?

5. The power of the technology

My final argument stems from the under use of the power of data projectors. It has been my experience that most churches that use data projectors only project the text of the liturgy and the lyrics to be sung, perhaps with an occasional graphic. It seems such a waste of the technology on hand. When doing research on best-practice Anglican worship at the turn of the century, I attended a church in Washington DC that used the projector effectively. The preacher used a three-minute clip from a recent movie to illustrate powerfully a major theme for their sermon. For example, when praying for those who had died, a photo was shown on one screen of a parishioner who had died in the previous week alongside a poem he had written for the congregation on the other screen. There was not a dry eye in the church.

I understand when people tell me it is a lot easier and saves money to use a projector screen, rather than handing out a Prayer Book, hymnal and pew bulletin when people arrive at church. I understand that people may feel more comfortable with the use of projector screens if they are new to worship. I just wish it was done more professionally.

I also acknowledge the necessity for some churches to use screens to ensure equitable access, such as for people who are vision impaired.

A professional development session at a ministry conference would be useful — for both clergy and lay volunteers. Basics, such as what background to use, how many words per slide and how to layout words, could make improvements. There are many resources available for the use of video clips, which churches could use to maximise the full power of the projector.

Until I experience a church using projector screens well, I will prefer hand-held resources in worship.

Reflections • Monday 25 May 2026 • By The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Smith AM

Taking up the challenge of Good News language learning



The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth J Smith AM (pictured here in St John's Anglican Church, Kalgoorlie) was made a Member of the Order of Australia in 2020 for her liturgical contributions in Australia and beyond (Image supplied)

If you feel you've sung "God gives us a future" too many times, you can blame my long-ago Year 8 English teacher, Mrs Rosenberg. She gave us the task of putting alternative words to a pop song. This was difficult because pop music was pretty much banned in our strait-laced household, but it was homework, so I was allowed to turn on the radio. It was very poor poetry, but it was my first attempt at fitting my words to a tune. A few years later, I put "mosses" and "lichens" into a tune from *Mary Poppins* for a university Botany excursion singalong. Other light-hearted parodies followed.

In the 1980s, the Movement for the Ordination of Women needed songs that didn't have "brothers", "men", "fathers", "lords" and "kings" in nearly every verse. I quickly discovered how people really dislike it when you change just a few words in a song they know backwards. The same people will, however, gladly sing completely new words to a familiar tune. This led me to try my hand at feminist-friendly hymn texts. "God gives us a future" was one of those.

Hymns and songs are very hard to write. Their rhyme and rhythm must be precise or they simply don't work. Intercessions are easier, but they, too, need to have simple vocabulary, direct style and symmetrical structure. For decades, I wrote endless sets of Sunday intercessions, refining my craft.

More complex liturgical forms also invited my attention. I still struggle to write a decent collect — long sentences and subordinate clauses take some serious wrangling. But other prayers — confessions, canticles, gathering prayers and Eucharistic prayers — are an enjoyable challenge even though they demand serious theological discipline. I want people to be confident that when they say "Amen" at the end that they have prayed something true and important, as well as faithful to the tradition that continues to feed us, even if the style and language are generations apart.

To bring the Good News of Jesus to the diverse communities where we live, Australian Anglicans need language that feels natural and idiomatic — language that is less "Church of England" and more contemporary. Posh won't cut it. Clichés often shut down a God-conversation moment after it starts. Mimicking your favourite podcaster or preacher will not sound like you. Amongst ourselves we speak fluent "Anglican" based on generations of Prayer Books, but fewer and fewer people we live among understand this lingo. We need to keep finding our unique voices for mission in our particular contexts.

This means 10 per cent inspiration and 90 per cent disciplined work. It's a job for everyone, not just for preachers, teachers and the "experts" on liturgy commissions. Just as children practise speech until they become fluent and creative, so can adults. What will you say in your community's distinct voice about grace, joy, failure, forgiveness and blessing?

Part of my vocation now is to encourage and mentor other Anglicans to take up the challenge of Good News language learning. If you want to find your voice and practise your craft, let's talk.

Editor's note: The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth J Smith AM will be giving this year's Felix Arnott Lecture at St Francis College on Tuesday, 9 June 2026 at 5.30pm (the lecture will commence at 6pm), with in-person and online options. The lecture's title is "In our own accent: Australian English in worship and mission". Please register [online](#) by 11pm Friday, 5 June to attend.

"No one mentions courage"



"Icons of the Ascension and Pentecost almost universally place Mary at the centre of the group of disciples. This fresco found in the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Holy Trinity, Jerusalem displays this classic arrangement," says The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt (Photo by Jozef Sedmak from Dreamstime.com)

*We know the scene: the room, variously furnished,
almost always a lectern, a book; always
the tall lily.*

*Arrived on solemn grandeur of great wings,
the angelic ambassador, standing or hovering,
whom she acknowledges, a guest.*

*But we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions
courage.*

*The engendering Spirit
did not enter her without consent.
God waited.*

*She was free
to accept or to refuse, choice
integral to humanness.*

Denise Levertov, "From Annunciation"

No one mentions courage...

The Bible readings over the last two Sundays have included fleeting references to the fact that Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women, were present with the male disciples at the Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1.6-14) and during the events that took place on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2.1-21).

The Gospels are meaning-dense documents, the products of years of reflection and of the telling and retelling of stories that inspired the early followers of The Way of Jesus. Every detail in those stories is deliberately placed to convey information of deep significance. This means that fleeting mentions, which may seem to be of little consequence because of their brevity, are in fact pointing us towards highly significant insights. The deliberate mention of Mary in these pivotal texts by the writer of Luke-Acts invites us to consider afresh what role she plays in our understanding of the faith.

The writer of The Gospel according to John, also uses a narrative device to accentuate the role Mary plays in the Church. As Jesus hangs on the cross, the writer draws the reader into an interaction between Jesus, Mary and the beloved disciple (John 19.25-27). One of the suggestions that scholars make regarding the identity of the beloved disciple is that the character represents "every disciple", including you and me. So, when Jesus says of Mary to the beloved disciple, "Behold your mother", the writer is conveying something profound in terms of the role Mary played for the Johannine community.

Francis of Assisi, among others, referred to Mary as the Spouse of the Spirit, linking her presence at Pentecost to The Annunciation (Luke 1.26-38), the event through which she develops a profound relationship with the Spirit. Her participation in the Pentecost experience can be seen as a renewal of the bond that was formed when she agreed to partner with the Spirit at The Annunciation; linking the beginning of the story, as it pertains to the physical presence of Jesus, to the end.

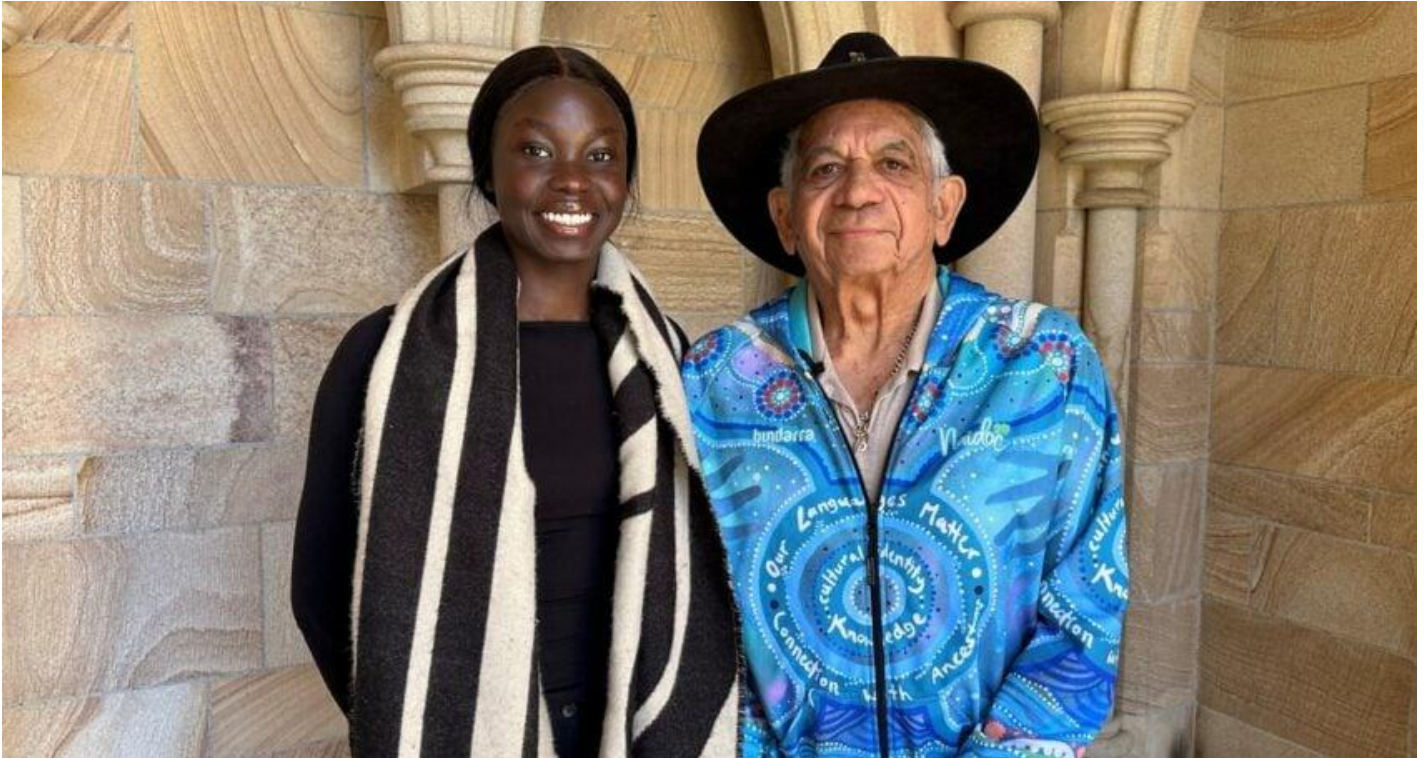
Orthodox iconography reminds we westerners, particularly those of us touched by the Reformation, that large portions of the Church have continually honoured Mary's central role in the story of God's love for humanity. Icons of the Ascension and Pentecost almost universally place her at the centre of the group of disciples. This image of the fresco found in the Russian Orthodox Cathedral of Holy Trinity, Jerusalem displays this classic arrangement. While many icons of Mary with baby Jesus show her holding her hands in what is known as the Orans position, the orientation of the hands adopted by priests as they pray the Eucharistic Prayer.

And yet, the Orthodox, along with the rest of the Church, have struggled to fully embrace the counter-cultural implications that Mary's leadership carries for the way humanity conducts itself. There is evidence that the Early Church enjoyed significant leadership by women. However, it was not long before the Empire's dominant male-centred culture reshaped the Church. The reshaped Church then largely reshaped its interpretation of women and therefore of Mary's role. As Levertov notes, "... we are told of meek obedience. No one mentions courage..."

We are all creatures of our time and culture. The Gospel continually stands before us inviting us to reflect on how we can challenge and transform the culture so that God's Commonwealth can come more fully on earth as in heaven.

First published in the Cathedral Precinct eNews on 25 May 2026

“Uncle Bill shows me the importance of storytelling”



"I admire him because he educates community members about the history of Aboriginal people in Brisbane," says Alima Deng about Uncle Bill Lemson, pictured together outside St John's Cathedral on Thursday, 4 June 2026 (Image by anglican focus)

Uncle Bill Lemson is a member of the Cathedral community. I first met him after church one Sunday last year when he introduced himself to me. He was very welcoming and kind and connected me with a lot of other young people in the Cathedral.

I admire him because he educates community members about the history of Aboriginal people in Brisbane. He invites me to weekly yarning circles, which are held after a morning service on Sundays in the Darnell Room. He organises these yarning circles for the Cathedral.

In one of these yarning circles Uncle Bill shared about Dundalli (1820-1855) and how he wants to see Dundalli commemorated as a war hero, such as through a statue in Anzac Square in Brisbane. In the yarning circle I learnt that Dundalli was an Aboriginal man from the Dalla language group who was recruited to assist in the resistance against Europeans in the Brisbane area because of his experience in Aboriginal law. He was [charged with false crimes](#) and executed.

Uncle Bill shows me the importance of storytelling in keeping Aboriginal cultures alive and in building respectful relationships.

I am writing this reflection in National Reconciliation Week. This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is "[All In](#)". Uncle Bill reminds me that Reconciliation is everyone's responsibility.

To care and to cure: Ensuring that no Queenslanders face Motor Neurone Disease alone



"By raising awareness and encouraging community support, we can continue to provide critical care today while working towards a future free from MND," says MND and Me Foundation CEO Jane Milne

Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is an umbrella term used to describe a group of progressive neurological conditions in which the motor neurones, the nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord, gradually deteriorate and die. As these neurones fail, the brain loses its ability to communicate with the muscles, leading to increasing weakness and loss of function. People living with MND experience a decline in their ability to move, speak, swallow and eventually breathe.

In Australia MND affects thousands of individuals and families. Approximately 90 per cent of cases occur sporadically, with no known cause, while around 10 per cent are inherited. The average life expectancy following diagnosis is just 27 months, and every day, two Australians are diagnosed and two lose their lives to this devastating disease. Internationally, MND is often referred to as Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS) and in the United States it is also known as Lou Gehrig's disease.

The [MND and Me Foundation](#) was established by Scott Sullivan, a young father who, upon receiving his own diagnosis, recognised a critical gap in care and support for people living with MND in Queensland. Although Scott passed away in 2014, his vision continues through the Foundation's mission "To Care and To Cure".

Today the Foundation is committed to funding both vital research into effective treatments and ultimately a cure, as well as immediate care services for Queenslanders living with MND. Recognising the urgency that defines this progressive disease, the Foundation provides practical, timely support — ensuring individuals receive the right assistance, at the right time, at no cost to them.

A key principle guiding our work is to complement, rather than duplicate, existing services. We focus on filling critical gaps — particularly for those over the age of 65 who are ineligible for NDIS support. This includes funding essential equipment not covered by My Aged Care, as well as offering trial equipment to assist those navigating access to funding pathways. A significant proportion of our support is directed to individuals who would otherwise face this journey with limited resources.

At the heart of everything we do is the belief that a diagnosis of MND should not mean a loss of dignity, independence or basic human rights. We are dedicated to ensuring that every person impacted by MND, and their support network, receives care grounded in respect, equality and compassion.

Each week we meet individuals and families facing the confronting reality of Motor Neurone Disease. One such story is of a 78-year-old woman from regional Queensland who, like many others, found herself navigating a complex and often under-resourced system. Living alone and relying solely on her aged care package, her needs quickly outpaced the support available. Through the MND and Me Foundation she was able to access funding for essential equipment and allied health services that allowed her to remain safe in her home, maintain her independence and preserve her dignity. Her story is not unique, but it is a powerful reminder of why timely, compassionate support matters so deeply.

There is currently no cure for MND and the progression of the disease is relentless. However, with the right support, quality of life can be preserved for as long as possible. The MND and Me Foundation listens closely to the needs of those we serve, adapting our support to each unique situation. We are driven by a simple but meaningful goal: to ensure that no Queenslanders face MND alone.

By raising awareness and encouraging community support, we can continue to provide critical care today while working towards a future free from MND.

Editor's note: This year's St John's Cathedral Loaves and Fishes luncheon will proudly support the MND and Me Foundation, with Queensland Human Rights Commissioner Debbie Platz APM giving the address. The luncheon will be held on Tuesday, 2 June 2026 between 12.30pm and 2pm at St John's Anglican Cathedral, 373 Ann St, Brisbane. Individual tickets or tables of eight may be booked. [Register online](#) to secure your seat.

How do services cater to the needs of women escaping domestic or family violence within women's homelessness programs?



At Anglicare, when a woman presents to one of our homelessness services, we'll conduct an initial safety and risk assessment

Readers are advised that this content may be distressing — it references domestic and family violence.

Purpose of support within women's homelessness programs

Women's homelessness programs are designed to provide gender-specific support to women (and sometimes their children) who are experiencing, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

Organisations, like Anglicare, help clients to re-build their self-worth and make more sustainable life choices. Support is tailored to help each client reach their potential and sustain their tenancies while developing life skills.

Leading reasons for women's homelessness support

Domestic and family violence (DFV) is the leading cause of homelessness amongst women in Australia. Approximately 45% of all women and girls seeking the assistance of a housing and homelessness provider identified DFV as [the leading cause for them needing support](#).

In addition to DFV, some of the other biggest reasons/ causes that lead to women and children experiencing homelessness in Australia include:

- The housing crisis and affordability constraints
- Financial insecurity
- Lack of social and affordable housing
- Mental health challenges
- Substance abuse
- Unexpected life events.

DFV clients considered a national priority for homelessness support

Due to DFV being the leading cause of homelessness to women and children, this cohort are considered a national homelessness priority, as per the [National Housing and Homelessness Agreement and the National Plan to End Violence against Women and Children 2022-2032](#).

Understanding the needs of women escaping DFV

The needs of women escaping DFV vary. Therefore, support should be tailored to their individual circumstances and meet them wherever they're at on their journey.

Clients escaping DFV require immediate, safe and long-term accommodation or housing, and access to specialised, trauma-informed support.

In addition to safe accommodation and trauma-informed support, they might also require:

- Support with securing longer-term housing
- Financial assistance
- Safety planning and security
- Essential needs (i.e., food, vouchers, clothing and personal hygiene products)
- Other support services, for instance legal advice, counselling and mental health services, support with their children, and more.

Women's homelessness services will identify the needs of each client by conducting a holistic and trauma-informed assessment, which will then inform their case management plan.

Crisis and safety response

Homelessness support for women escaping DFV typically involves crisis and safety response planning to prioritise immediate safety, confidentiality, and specialised care.

At Anglicare, when a woman presents to one of our homelessness services, we'll conduct an initial safety and risk assessment. This helps us determine if the perpetrator is searching for her, if there are immediate dangers, if she has children, and if she requires other needs such as medical support.

As part of the crisis and safety response model, if it's unsafe for a woman to return home, emergency accommodation will be arranged. At Anglicare, that might be at one of our shelters or other crisis accommodation options. In addition to the immediate safety and security offered through accommodation, the model also prioritises:

- **Trauma-informed support** through safety planning, emotional support, protection orders and filing of police reports, plus more
- **Case management and goal planning** to support women to apply for social housing or rental assistance, income support, legal advocacy, employment/ education pathways, support for children, help with their health and wellbeing, and more
- **Coordination with other domestic violence services.**

Additional support might be sought and provided to assist Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander women, migrant women or refugees, LGBTQIA+ women, and other vulnerable groups of women including those with disabilities.

Trauma-informed and person-centred practice

Our [women's homelessness service](#) is trauma-informed and prioritises:

- Person-centred practice and early intervention
- Collaboration and participation
- Empowerment and independence.

For many of the vulnerable women who come into our services after fleeing violent homes, trauma-informed and person-centred practice ensures that care is tailored to meet them wherever they're at in their journey. Furthermore, respecting their individual backgrounds and circumstances.

Trauma-informed support is underpinned by the following principles.

1. Safety – ensuring physical settings are safe and promote safe interactions
2. Trustworthiness and transparency – organisational decisions build and maintain trust with clients
3. Peer support – recognising peer support and mutual self-help for establishing safety, hope, trust and collaboration
4. Collaboration and mutuality – partnership and equality between staff and clients
5. Empowerment, voice and choice – allowing clients to share in decisions, choice, goal setting and advocacy
6. Cultural, historical and gender issues – incorporating policies, protocols and processes that [respond to the cultural and racial needs of clients.](#)

When delivering trauma-informed and person-centred practice, practitioners look for the signs and symptoms of trauma and trauma responses. Then, they should respond sensitively to the individual circumstances of the client to understand their experiences to engage effectively with the service.

Integrated and holistic support services

In women's homelessness support, integrated and holistic support services take a client-centred approach to look at combining interventions that provide immediate and safe accommodation with coordinated access to other services. Support from other services might include help with their mental and physical health, financial assistance, employment opportunities, legal advice, and more.

By providing interconnected care, women's homelessness services can help address the underlying causes of each person's experience with homelessness and help them to make sustainable, long-term decisions for their future.

For women fleeing violent homes, integrated and holistic support typically combines safety planning and trauma-informed care (as mentioned above) with coordinated service delivery between domestic violence services, legal aid, police reporting, counselling, child protection, and other forms of mental health support.

Integrated and holistic support is important for helping this cohort to navigate multiple systems consistently. It ensures that multiple services and programs can coordinate referrals and share/streamline processes more effectively.

Housing pathways and long-term stability

Typically, for women experiencing homelessness due to fleeing domestic and family violence, their housing pathways include immediate crisis accommodation, transitional housing and long-term housing outcomes.

Anglicare's women's homelessness services offer temporary accommodation options. This includes shelter and crisis accommodation. However, when providing accommodation support, we work with clients to address the barriers to housing and link them with relevant support services to help them secure sustainable housing.

Long-term stability is the ultimate goal of our services. It addresses the underlying causes of homelessness and provides women with the foundation for recovery, safety and rebuilding stability and independence. Long-term stability is permanent and aims to break the cycle of violence and homelessness.

Collaboration and partnerships

In women's homelessness services, collaboration and partnership is imperative to creating cohesive and holistic support that meets the client-centred needs of each woman (and sometimes their children). It creates more effective service delivery and helps to address some of the root causes that lead to homelessness.

While no single service can meet all the complex needs involved in helping clients achieve their goals, they can effectively partner to support and advocate for their needs.

Culturally safe and inclusive practice

Domestic and family violence occurs in a range of different households and affects people from diverse cultures and communities.

There is a big overrepresentation of homelessness clients who identify as First Nations in Australia. Approximately, 29% of those seeking specialist homelessness support due to DFV are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. Another overrepresented group are women from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Moreover, 18% of homelessness clients [spoke a main language other than English at home](#).

Therefore, women's homelessness services assisting those affected by DFV need to be equipped to support their needs and address barriers in culturally safe and inclusive ways.

Some of the biggest barriers that affect people from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds include:

- Limited CALD-specific information
- Language and communication barriers
- [Distrust of authorities](#).

To overcome these barriers and address the needs of women from culturally diverse backgrounds, services should be:

- Providing tailored, client-centred support
- Utilising staff who speak a range of languages or providing language interpretation services
- Training staff on cultural competency
- Building trust through community engagement to ensure women feel safe and not judged for seeking support
- Co-designing services with clients of CALD backgrounds.

Monitoring and evaluation

To monitor and assess the effectiveness of their programs, women's homelessness services implore a range of evaluation tools. In a previous blog, [How effective are homelessness services](#), we explored some of these tools, including:

- Measuring housing and homelessness through the number or percentage of clients moving into stable housing after being supported, understanding retention rates, determining the length of time between initial point of support to permanent housing etc.
- Client experience and satisfaction surveys or interviews.
- Determining wrap-around support success through employment or training/education rates, income, wellbeing, connection, etc.

Challenges and barriers

There are numerous challenges and barriers that continue to impact women's homelessness services, particularly those helping women escaping DFV.

These challenges and barriers include a shortage of safe, affordable and long-term housing, underfunding for housing and homelessness, and DFV services, lack of support for CALD communities, geographic constraints, and large-scale systemic gaps.

Continuous improvement and innovation

Domestic and family violence is a national crisis and unfortunately the number of women and children seeking the support of homelessness services because of it, each year, is increasing.

According to Homelessness Australia's CEO, Kate Colvin, significant investment in homelessness services is critical in helping women to escape violence and not being stuck in unsafe homes. Across Australia, almost one quarter of people experiencing DFV who sort homelessness services missed out on short term accommodation and almost 50% missed out on transitional housing. More concerning, [over 70% of those needing long-term housing missed out.](#)

Government and policy makers need to invest in more programs and services that can provide accommodation and housing solutions. Boosting investment in frontline homelessness and DFV services, will help provide clients with a dedicated practitioner and necessary accommodation that can support them in their recovery and to create sustainable long-term plans.

In an earlier blog, we also explored some other [strategies that governments and service providers can implement to increase accessible, available and affordable housing.](#) These can also be applied to homelessness services which provide DFV specific support to women and children escaping violence.

- Investment in more screening programs identifying at-risk families
- Providing increased assistance to First Nations, CALD and LGBTQIA+ individuals as well as other vulnerable groups including those who identify with a disability
- Improving connection and partnerships between services
- Improving and increasing rural support for clients facing geographical constraints.

Conclusion

At Anglicare, we're proud to offer a range of housing and homelessness services to women including adult women and young women with children. We also provide support and assistance to women in contact with the criminal justice system who are connecting with housing and support after incarceration, as well as providing tenancy support for people completing court-referred drug and alcohol treatment.

To learn more about our women's homelessness services, [please click here.](#)

Whilst our women's homelessness services provide trauma-informed care for women escaping domestic and family violence, we also provide a range of domestic and family violence programs. To learn more about these programs, [please click here.](#)

First published on the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) on 2 March 2026.

“Welcoming the stranger starts long before someone reaches our shores”



Wahyudin is the leader of the Tamangapa KSB team and volunteers to help his community better prepare for, respond to and recover from disasters to help keep people from being displaced (Image by Joel Pratley / Act for Peace)

When Maya* fled Syria with her children, she arrived in Jordan carrying more than a few belongings. She carried uncertainty, fear and the overwhelming responsibility of trying to rebuild a life from nothing.

Like many refugees, Maya wanted what every parent wants — safety, stability, and hope for her children’s future. But starting again in a new country with limited opportunities made that feel almost impossible.

Then something changed.

Through the FORSA (meaning “opportunity”) project, supported by Act for Peace and local partners, Maya joined vocational training in food preparation and productive kitchens. She gained practical skills, confidence and eventually a small start-up grant to launch her own home-based catering business.

Slowly, life began to shift.

Her income increased. She was able to repay debts that had weighed heavily on her family. For the first time in years, she could begin saving and planning for the future again.

Today, Maya is one of the most successful participants in the program.

“The FORSA program completely changed my life and helped me reach where I am today,” Maya said. Stories like Maya’s remind us that refugees are not defined by what they have lost.

They are people with skills, resilience, leadership, and dreams for the future — people rebuilding their lives with dignity when given the opportunity and support to do so.

This Refugee Week, [Act for Peace](#) is inviting all Australians, including Australian churches, to look beyond the headlines and see both the realities and possibilities facing displaced communities around the world.

Because displacement does not begin at a border. Often, it begins much earlier.

In Indonesia, communities are facing repeated flooding driven by climate change. Families lose homes, livelihoods and stability overnight. For many, the risk of future displacement grows with every disaster season.

But through Act for Peace’s CLEAR (Community Led Early Action and Resilience) program, local communities are preparing before disaster strikes. Communities are developing evacuation plans, strengthening livelihoods and learning how to respond together in times of crisis.

It is preventative work — but deeply human work, too.

It means families are more likely to remain safe in the places they call home. Children can continue attending school. Parents can continue earning an income. Communities can recover faster and remain connected to one another.

In Zimbabwe, communities rebuilding after destructive Cyclone Idai are restoring access to clean water, strengthening local leadership and rebuilding livelihoods after devastating loss.

Across these programs, the focus remains the same — not dependency, but partnership. Not short-term charity, but long-term resilience. And that matters because behind every statistic is a person.

Right now, more than [123 million people](#) around the world have been forced from their homes by conflict, disaster and climate change. But Refugee Week reminds us that people who have experienced displacement are not strangers to fear, hope, grief or courage.

They are our global neighbours.

For generations, Churches across Australia have responded through prayer, hospitality, advocacy and practical support. Through Act for Peace, that legacy continues today alongside trusted local partners supporting refugees and displaced communities to:

- find safety
- rebuild livelihoods
- strengthen resilience
- restore dignity and belonging.

Refugee Week is about pausing to listen to stories like Maya’s and recognise that transformation is possible when communities stand alongside one another with compassion and consistency.

And perhaps most importantly, it is a reminder that welcoming the stranger begins long before someone reaches our shores.

It begins whenever we choose not to look away.

*Maya's name has been changed for safety reasons

Editor's notes: Act for Peace is the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Please visit the Act for Peace website to find out how you can support their great work, including through a [one-off donation or regular giving](#), organising a [fundraiser](#) or following Act for Peace on [social media](#).

Refugee Week will be celebrated this year between Sunday, 14 June and Saturday 20 June 2026. This year's Refugee Week theme is "A Million Stories". Check out the Refugee Council of Australia website for [resources](#) and [posters](#).

Justice & Advocacy • Monday 1 June 2026

"Recovery from torture is a gradual process"



"As a survivor of torture, I believe that committing an annual day in support of victim-survivors of torture is important. This day in the United Nations calendar honours those who have been tortured, preserves historical truth, educates future generations, promotes justice, and helps prevent future crimes against humanity," says Girmay Gebremedhin from the Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma (QPASTT) (Image by anglican focus)

Please be advised that this content may be distressing because it references torture and war.

My favourite memories growing up in Eritrea usually have to do with playing street soccer with my friends after school. We didn't have a factory-made leather soccer ball, so we made our own out of old clothing and old towels, enclosed by denim that we secured by string and twine. I remember one time at home collecting fleecy stuffing from old jackets, as well as dish sponges, which we jammed into the ball to make it extra bouncy. We played with a ball until it was wrecked and then made a new one.

Once, when I was around 12 years old and playing soccer with my friends, missiles started to rain down like water unexpectedly, so we rushed to nearby bushland for safety. While we hid in the bush for three days, a lovely woman helped protect us, along with her three children — she was an incredible mother. After the bombing stopped, I ran to my house to check that my mum and four siblings were ok. We then fled to the village of my birth.

After I escaped with my mother and siblings hundreds of miles from the war for safety and protection I continued my high school education at a local countryside school that had no electric lights or clean water. I walked 10 to 15km each way to attend school every day. While I missed my soccer friends and the place I grew up, because I needed to assist my mother and siblings it was important for me to quickly find ways to adjust to the new environment and create connections with the village community.

My resilience has served me well through life.

I have survived torture twice. I was tortured by the Eritrean government's military prosecutor between 2004 and 2005 while I was in the army. I was then tortured as a civilian while seeking refuge in Egypt by the Egyptian state security.

I then sought refugee status via the United Nations refugee program. I advocated for myself and a group of seven other people seeking safety. We received full protection from the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Egypt.

Before arriving in Australia in 2011 on a refugee visa, I worked with the United Nations and the Africa and Middle East Refugee Assistance (AMERA) in Egypt for four years.

I am now the Team Leader for Community Partnerships at the [Queensland Program of Assistance to Survivors of Torture and Trauma](#) (QPASTT), which is a Queensland not-for-profit and community-based organisation providing counselling, advocacy, capacity building and community development activities at individual, family and community levels. In my QPASTT role I help coordinate community partnerships and state-wide community development. As part of this work, I serve in the [Queensland Community Alliance](#) by working alongside multicultural and inter-faith leaders in Alliance participation, such as in public assemblies, listening actions other Alliance initiatives. It is through the Queensland Community Alliance that I am connected to the Anglican Church Southern Queensland because the ACSQ's Social Responsibilities Committee and The Parishes of Logan and Mt Gravatt are fellow Alliance members.

As a Lived Experience Advisory Board member for the Pacific [International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims](#) (IRCT), I have a responsibility to be a voice for the voiceless, find pathways to justice, and bring about peace for hundreds of thousands of torture survivors and those at risk of torture.

And, as a member of the [Queensland African Communities Council](#) executive team I assist community members with complex cases and newly arrived refugees in accessing direct services and support.

These roles are very rewarding because I understand the needs of people from refugee backgrounds and victim-survivors of torture through my lived experience.

As the [QPASTT website](#) explains, people from refugee backgrounds have commonly experienced traumatic events before arriving in Australia. As well as escaping persecution, some people have been

tortured and many have been separated from loved ones. All have been forced to flee because there is nothing that they could do to stop the persecution and trauma.

Trauma affects the way people feel, think and act and can overwhelm their ability to cope and engage with others. QPASTT's services are based on a refugee trauma recovery framework that sees trauma recovery as a journey from oppression and persecution towards liberation from the harms of trauma. We believe that recovery involves a focus on healing, belonging, thriving and justice.

The best way that clergy and lay leaders can pastorally care for and support victim-survivors of torture is through building trust, connection and relationship. I think the Church offers a natural space for victim-survivors of torture, and their loved ones, by offering spiritual healing and comfort in safe conversations; welcome in safe spaces; and, advocacy by centring the voices of people with lived experience.

There are many scheduled and non-scheduled ways that parishes and ministries can create intentional spaces for education and advocacy. "Scheduled" examples include [Refugee Week](#), which is commemorated in June annually, and the [UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture](#), which is commemorated annually on 26 June.

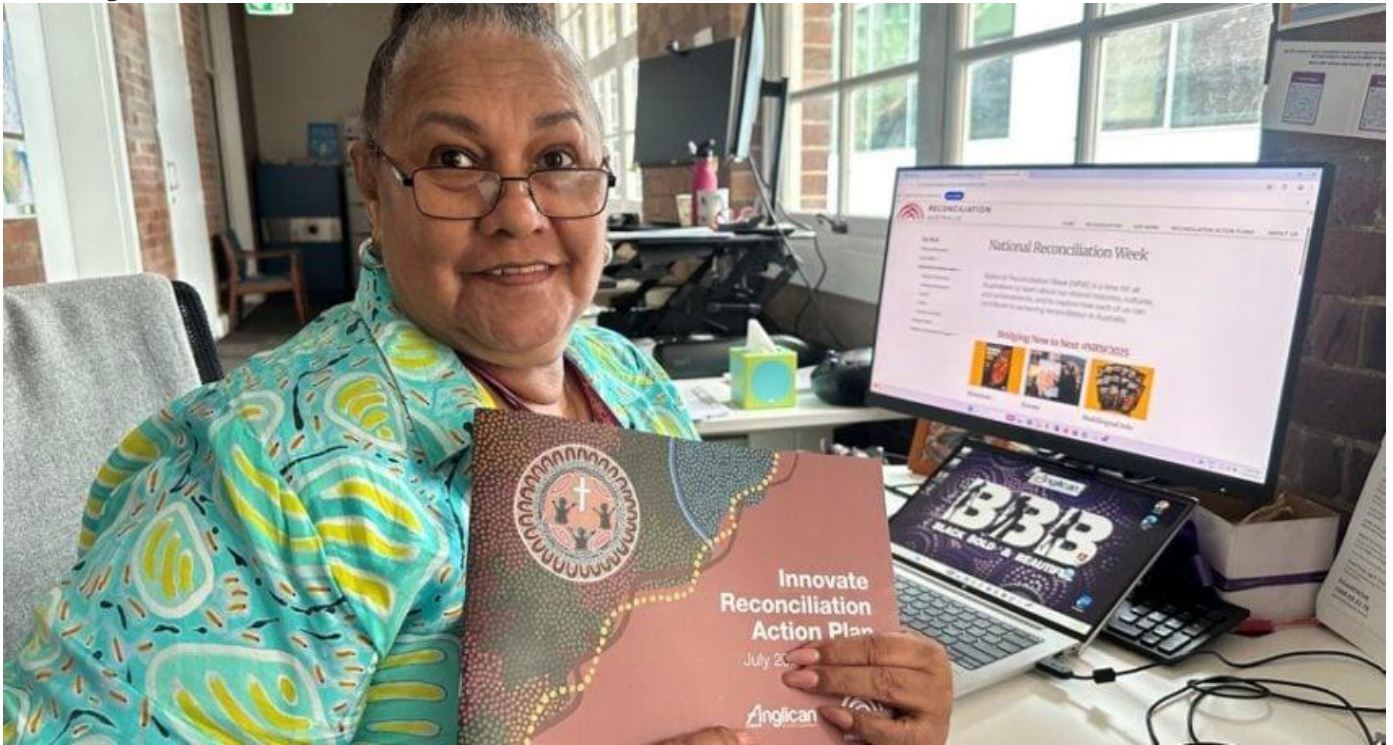
On 12 December 1997, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed 26 June as the United Nations International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, with a view to the total eradication of torture and the effective functioning of the [Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment](#). As the [United Nations](#) explains, through this observance both Member State and individuals should "unite in support of the hundreds of thousands of people around the world who have been victims of torture and those who are still tortured today."

As a survivor of torture, I believe that committing an annual day in support of victim-survivors of torture is important. This day in the United Nations calendar honours those who have been tortured, preserves historical truth, educates future generations, promotes justice, and helps prevent future crimes against humanity. Commemorating the day also promotes healing, emphasises accountability, raises awareness of human rights, and increases the worldwide commitment to ending torture, which is a crime under international law. I see this kind of annual commemoration as a moral obligation and an act of advocacy, particularly for those who have been killed.

Having experienced the challenges of resettlement firsthand, I always emphasise the importance of understanding and acknowledging the diverse experiences of refugees. I also emphasise that recovery from torture is a gradual process, especially for those affected by torture and trauma, so building trust, connection and relationship go a long way to helping folk heal.

Editor's note: Refugee Week will be celebrated this year between Sunday, 14 June and Saturday 20 June 2026. This year's Refugee Week theme is "A Million Stories". Check out the Refugee Council of Australia website for [resources](#) and [posters](#).

My favourite National Reconciliation Week memory and this year's "All In" theme



"This year's National Reconciliation Week theme is 'All In', which is 'a call for all Australians to commit wholeheartedly to reconciliation every single day'," says ACSQ Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator Sandra King OAM (Image by anglican focus)

My favourite National Reconciliation Week memory is celebrating 20 years of National Reconciliation Week, which was themed "More than a word: Reconciliation takes action" in 2021. I planned First Nations-led activities for the whole week, encouraging non-Indigenous people of all walks of life to participate, including a Working Wise Women discussion group with Professor Jackie Huggins and Chantay Link; my "Untold History" presentation to Anglican Church Southern Queensland clergy and staff; chef Dale Chapman doing a cooking demonstration with native spices; Willie Muckan sharing about his life as a Christian man; supporting the 150-year celebration of the Torres Strait Islander peoples' "Coming of the Light"; listening to Stolen Generation survivors Aunty Flo Watson and Aunty Rhonda Collard-Spratt; and, encouraging people to see First Nations films to learn more about us as the First Peoples of Australia.

The theme this year's National Reconciliation Week theme is "[All In](#)", which is "a call for all Australians to commit wholeheartedly to reconciliation every single day".

Connected to 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.

Our Diocese has a long history in supporting Reconciliation, and the initiatives and projects keep growing.

Anglicare Southern Queensland CEO Sue Cooke and Anglicare RAP Working Group member Anna Zilli have taken a significant step in supporting First Nations peoples by appointing Wiradjuri/Gamilaroi woman Jessica Simpson as Anglicare's First Nations Engagement Lead in the Mission, Research and Advocacy team. Anglicare Southern Queensland also actively organises Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement to Country speeches and discuss issues relating to our people at events.

There are a quite a few parishes who include an Acknowledgement of Country before they start their services and other gatherings. Many parishes also actively engage in National Reconciliation Week, as well as NAIDOC Week and Coming of The Light activities.

Our Anglican schools are currently embedding Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander perspectives in all disciplines in the curriculum. Paul Paulson, as the Director of Indigenous Education for the Anglican Schools Commission, has introduced the annual Traditional Games Festival, which involves many schools. Another significant Anglican Schools Commission initiative is the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Student Symposium where First Nations school students conduct their own cultural workshops; share stories; and, attend their own career expo with universities and corporate partners.

This year I have asked all Anglican Church Southern Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group representatives to organise an event or program to celebrate Reconciliation Week, especially because the theme is "All In", and I'm looking forward to hearing about the events and programs.

Editor notes:

The Parish of Greenhills welcomes community members to a National Reconciliation Week service at 7pm on Wednesday, 3 June 2026 at St John the Evangelist Anglican Church, 181 Wardell St, Enoggera. Please see [The Parish of Greenhills Facebook](#) for more information.

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.

Coomera Anglican College's 2026 annual desert awakening



Coomera Anglican College 2026 Desert Retreatants at Kata Tjuta, with (top, L-R) Imogen Whitaker (staff), Jadon O, Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, Peter Materne (spouse of staff), Eden H, Haylee Reid (staff), Loch R, Amy E, Logan V, Gemma W, Imogen C and Isaac M and (bottom, L-R) Alicia N, Naomi P, Harry G, Cordelia N, Dom Fay (staff), Connor S, Olivia M, Helena N, Erin L and Emilio M (Image supplied by Coomera Anglican College)

Dom Fay — Head of Faith and Spirituality: Secondary, Coomera Anglican College

In [Genesis 28.16](#), Jacob falls asleep by the side of a desert road and dreams what is now a very famous dream. Waking up, he says what are now very famous words: “Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it!”

Our tradition is full of these kinds of stories — stories of waking up. While they vary enormously in their finer details, the formula is relatively similar. First, a direct encounter with the sacred, generally through an experience of awe, wonder or love. Second, a suddenly expanded sense of what it is to be alive. Third, an entirely new way of seeing everything.

Coomera Anglican College's Desert Retreat is an annual week-long experience offered to Year 11 students with a hunger for a similar kind of awakening.

The annual CAC Desert Retreat is framed around visits to places like Rungtjirpa (Simpsons Gap), Angkerle Atwatye (Standley Chasm), Kata Tjuta (the Olgas) and Uluru, with awe and wonder helping to create moments of sacred encounter where different ways of seeing and being become possible.

On the 2026 Desert Retreat, 17 Coomera Anglican College (CAC) students journeyed to the heart of Australia with CAC staff members Dom Fay, Natasha Materne, Imogen Whitaker and Haylee Reid, as well as Archbishop Jeremy Greaves. Two months on, these are some of their reflections.



Year 11 Coomera Anglican College 2026 Desert retreatants on an Alice Springs hilltop (Image supplied by Coomera Anglican College)

Erin — Year 11 student, Coomera Anglican College

On the third day of our time in Alice Springs, we sat upon a hilltop surrounded by vast mountain ranges, the sun's fading warmth and rustling long grass amongst wildlife and cool breezes.

Up there, the world felt quiet, with no suburban sound pollution or light pollution in the exposed, glittering sky. I remember thinking, "Is this what peace feels like?" It was fulfilling in contrast to the constant rush of everyday school life.

Stories of loss were shared, resonant songs were played and many tears were shed. Experiences like these turn strangers into families and the everyday busyness of life into something deeper and more meaningful, proving that we are more alike than we sometimes feel on the surface and that I was, and am never, alone.

After connecting on such a profound level, adjusting back into school life was challenging, where everything required competition and friendships felt more surface-level. I missed life on the Desert Retreat.

This trip taught me the importance of being less indulgent in gossip, rumours, judgement and hate — that love is the answer. In the isolated desert heart of Australia, I encountered much-needed silence. Somehow, a place so far away came to feel like home.



Year 11 Coomera Anglican College 2026 Desert retreatants singing in the common area of Campfire In The Heart in Alice Springs (Image supplied by Coomera Anglican College)

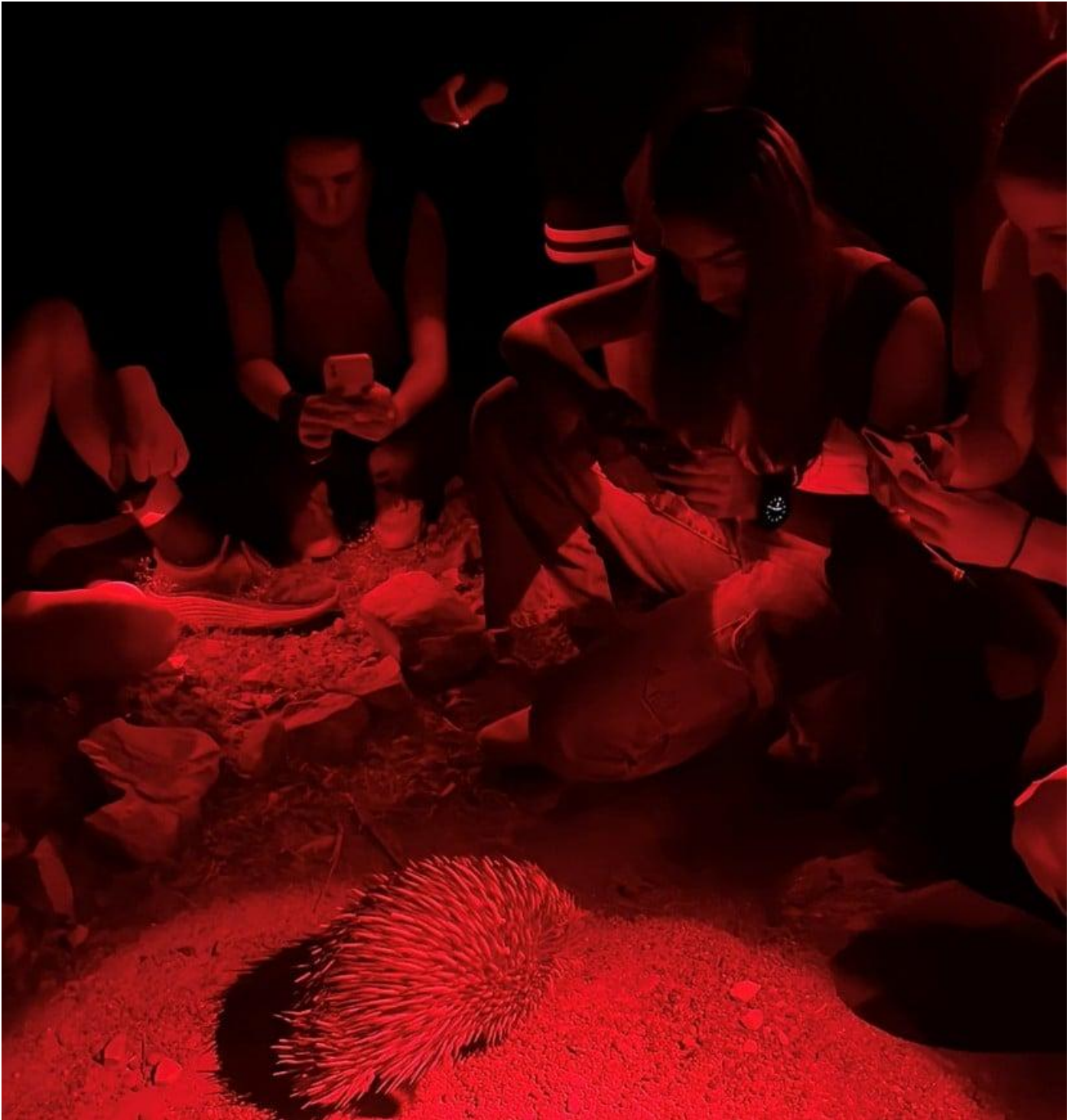
Loch — Year 11 student, Coomera Anglican College

We stayed at a retreat centre called Campfire In The Heart in Alice Springs. One unforgettable memory took place in the common area where almost everyone had gathered during some free time. In this moment there was so much shared joy amongst the group.

From playing cards to all singing along to whatever song we could play on the ukelele, it was clear that our sense of community was growing closer by the second. As we moved through multiple renditions of “Riptide” by Vance Joy and our retreat theme song, “You’re the Voice” by John Farnham, we shared questionable pitch, but unforgettable happiness that will stick with me forever.

The connection and depth of the Desert Retreat taught me that hope can always be found, and that if you keep seeking you will find meaning.

Bringing this lesson home has helped deepen my relationships and my sense of who I really am. I am convinced that experiences like this are incredibly important, especially for teenagers, who are always busy with school or sport and don’t have the chance to slow down in their daily lives. I am so grateful for the chance to see things in a deeper way and live in a more emotionally connected space.



Year 11 Coomera Anglican College Desert Retreat participants with an echidna in April 2026 (Image supplied by Coomera Anglican College)

Naomi — Year 11 student, Coomera Anglican College

One night later in the trip, illuminated by unforgettable stars, we visited Alice Springs Desert Park for the nocturnal tour. On the tour, we met bilbies, a friendly echidna, malas, and many other beautiful creatures.

We walked quietly, taking notice of every creature living its own, unique life. By taking the time to slow down and walk quietly to avoid scaring the animals away, we found we could almost fall in sync with

their rhythm — one felt much closer to how we too are meant to live, far away from the frenetic pace of life at home.

All the animals did was exist — there were no tricks or performances — and yet the whole group was amazed. I started thinking about one of the retreatants who commented that the riverbeds existed in their place in the universe and were marvellous in essence — just for being there. It gave the group the opportunity to wonder: what if we were just as marvellous? What if just by being, we were right where we were meant to be?

I could not help but feel the harmony within everything natural calling out to us, assuring us that we were just as precious as the riverbeds. Not through any kind of performance, but just by being.

Since the retreat, me and my fellow retreaters have worked to hold on to how held and reassured we felt in that moment, knowing that we, too, belong in this universe just as we are.



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) (Image supplied by Coomera Anglican College)

Olivia — Year 11 student, Coomera Anglican College

On the second last day of the trip, we woke early and headed to Uluru for the sunrise, followed by the base walk.

As we started the walk, we all broke into small groups and had profound chats with the people around us. The walk took us around three hours to complete and during that time, myself and another retreatant were in constant conversation with two of our leaders.

They had also gone to CAC, graduating a couple of years ago. In this conversation, they were offering us advice on situations we were in that they had also gone through.

It was so refreshing to hear that other people had gone through similar situations and had come out on the other side. They helped me understand that I'm not alone with my struggles and that I don't always have to be independent — there are people around me who support me, even through the hardest times.

The retreat gave me space to reflect and helped me begin to grow into the person I strive to be. It gave me time to understand that my choices define me and that I need to surround myself with love in order to thrive. It gave me room to ask the bigger questions, whilst still focusing on where I was. I made deeper connections with people and myself that I will forever cherish.

I have never felt so free to be vulnerable anywhere else than when I was surrounded by people who were asking the same questions I was.

The world is so much bigger than what we think it is; we need to take the time to look and find what we're searching for in the midst of all the chaos. The retreat gave me the start of that journey.

Homilies & Addresses • Monday 25 May 2026 • By Archbishop Jeremy Greaves KCSJ

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2026



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves gathered with other Christian leaders and school students in St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral on Tuesday, 19 May 2026 to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (Image by Kymberlee Gomes from The Catholic Leader)

[John 12.31-36](#) | [Ephesians 4.1-13](#) | [Isaiah 58.6-11](#)

In the name of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

There is something deeply hopeful about Christians gathering together like this.

In a world so often fractured by suspicion, ideology, violence and fear, the simple act of praying together across traditions is itself a kind of testimony. This morning, Anglicans and Catholics, Orthodox and Protestants, Christians from many histories and cultures, gather not because we have solved every theological difference, but because Jesus Christ has already drawn us toward one another.

As Saint Paul writes in Ephesians:

“There is one body and one Spirit...one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.”

Not many bodies competing for Christ.

Not many Spirits pulling in opposite directions.

One body.

One Spirit.

One hope.

This year's [Week of Prayer materials](#) come from the Churches of Armenia: one of the oldest Christian nations on earth. Their reflections emerge from a history marked by suffering, displacement, martyrdom and resilience. Again and again in the liturgy prepared for this week, one image returns: light.

Christ is described as “Light from Light for Light.”

And perhaps that is exactly the image we need in this moment of history.

Because many people today feel surrounded by darkness.

There is the darkness of war and political division.

The darkness of rising antisemitism, Islamophobia and hatred. The darkness of loneliness and anxiety.

The darkness of ecological grief.

The darkness of mistrust — including mistrust of the Church itself.

And into that darkness Jesus says in the Gospel:

“Walk while you have the light... believe in the light, so that you may become children of light.”

Notice that Jesus does not simply say, “Admire the light.”

Or “Talk about the light.”

He says: walk in it.

Christian unity is not ultimately an institutional project.

It is a way of walking.

Walking together toward Christ. Walking honestly. Walking humbly. Walking in repentance. Walking in love.

And Saint Paul is beautifully practical about what that requires:

“with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love.”

Humility.
Gentleness.
Patience.

Not exactly the values rewarded by modern public life.

We live in a culture that often prizes outrage over understanding, certainty over wisdom, and victory over reconciliation. Even Churches can become trapped in those habits: defending territory, protecting identity, speaking past one another rather than listening deeply.

But Christian unity cannot be built through triumphalism. Only through conversion.

The unity Christ desires is not the erasure of difference. The Church has always been gloriously diverse: culturally, liturgically, spiritually.

The Reverend Benjamim Cremer, a Wesleyan pastor and writer who is based in Idaho in the United States, wrote recently, "The world is not impressed by a church where everyone who is essentially the same is getting along with each other. The world needs to see the church practice what is extremely difficult to accomplish: an incredibly diverse group of people loving and advocating for one another."

The Armenian liturgy from which this morning's service comes reminds us of the extraordinary richness of the Christian tradition across centuries and continents.

Unity is not sameness.

Rather, unity is learning to see one another first not as rivals, strangers or threats, but as fellow members of the Body of Christ.

And Isaiah reminds us that this unity must never become abstract or sentimental.

The prophet asks:

"Is not this the fast that I choose:
to loose the bonds of injustice... to let the oppressed go free...
to share your bread with the hungry?"

In other words: if our prayer for unity does not make us more compassionate, more just, more merciful, then we have misunderstood the Gospel.

Christian unity exists not for the Church's self-preservation but for the healing of the world.

And perhaps that matters especially in Australia right now.

We inhabit a society increasingly fragmented by inequality and fear. Many people no longer look to Churches expecting wisdom or grace. Some carry wounds inflicted by the Church itself.

Others simply assume Christianity has become another partisan tribe in a crowded ideological marketplace.

Which means our unity, imperfect though it is, matters enormously.

Because when Christians pray together, serve together, advocate together, and suffer together, we offer the world a different possibility.

Not uniformity.
Not domination.
But communion.

A community held together not by ideology, ethnicity, politics or power, but by the self-giving love of Christ.

And that witness matters.

It matters when Churches stand together for the dignity of refugees.
When we speak together against violence.
When we care together for the poor.
When we defend truth in an age of manipulation.
When we honour creation together.
When we pray together for peace in Gaza, Ukraine, Sudan, Armenia and so many wounded places.

When we do these things, then the world might just catch a glimpse, however faintly, of the Kingdom of God.

The Armenian prayers for this week include these words:
“Let your life-giving radiance kindle within us a deeper love for one another.”

That is perhaps the heart of Christian unity. Not merely agreement.
But deeper love.

And that love begins, as it always does, with Christ himself.

The one lifted up on the cross.
The one who draws all people to himself.
The one who breaks down the walls we build.
The one who calls us out of darkness into light.

So perhaps our task in this Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is simply this:

To walk a little further into that light.
To allow Christ's light to expose our pride, our fear, our prejudices and our divisions.
And then, by grace, to become people through whom that light may shine.

Children of light.

For the sake of the Church.
For the sake of the world.
And for the glory of God.

Editor's note: This sermon was given by Archbishop Jeremy Greaves at St Stephen's Catholic Cathedral, Brisbane on Tuesday, 19 May 2026 to celebrate the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

“The way we name abuse shapes our ability to recognise it”: The Rev'd Deb Bird



"The way we name abuse shapes our ability to recognise it. If our understanding is limited to physical violence, we may overlook the devastating impacts of any number of forms of degradation on a life," says The Rev'd Deb Bird (Image by anglican focus)

Readers are advised that this content may be distressing — it references domestic and family violence.

In the name of God — Creator, Incarnation and Life-Giving Spirit. Amen.

We gather for Evensong at the threshold of the day. Work is laid down. The noise settles. The Church has always prayed in this space because the thresholds make room for another voice to speak — the voice of scripture, the voice of a neighbour, the voice of conscience, the voice of God.

The Church, however, is not the only holy space in our lives. Our homes and the intimate relationships into which we pour our hearts, our energies, our bodies, our souls — too often domestic and family abuse crosses the thresholds of these most sacred spaces. And then almost imperceptibly, the voice of affection becomes one of control, attentiveness becomes surveillance, disagreements become intimidation.

Scripture warns about what flourishes in secrecy. Violence concealed behind closed doors endures as a painful reality in our communities. Yet perhaps the most subtle and insidious form of harm is the corruption of language itself. The words we are immersed in shape our cognitions, imagination and expectations. The words spoken to us become voices in our heads, telling us who we are and what kind of world we inhabit. These voices can nurture trust and belonging, but they can just as easily diminish and destroy.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel famously said, “our words create worlds”. And distorted words create distorted realities — worlds where abuse can be minimised, explained away, or hidden completely. The [Book of Proverbs](#) recognised this long ago: “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” And that is, in part, why domestic and family violence cuts so deeply against the grain of God’s creation.

At the [beginning of our faith story](#) is a world shaped by words. The Spirit of God hovers over the waters and into the formlessness God speaks: “Let there be...” Let there be light. Let there be sky and sea. Let there be creatures that swarm and soar. Let there be humankind. Let there be faithful companionship. Let there be the opportunity to rest, to be restored, to be renewed.

What God’s words in Genesis call forth is not merely a functioning universe, but a flourishing one, woven together with mutuality, blessing and belonging. The shape of God’s words is life. And words can help us participate in that life. Phrases like “You are loved”, “You belong”, “You are precious” become shelter. They create space for a person to grow and become the fully expressed creations we are intended to be.

This is, I think, one of God’s first gifts to us — not power over creation, but the power of language to affirm, to bless, to call forth life in our fellow creatures. And one of the first strategies of abuse is to corrupt it — to twist words that should nurture into tools of fear, control and diminishment.

We often imagine that violence begins with a raised fist. But long before a hand is raised, there is first contempt, manipulation, undermining, gaslighting. Lives diminished one word at a time until a person begins to doubt their own worth, their own memory, their own reality — which is why the language we use to respond to Domestic and Family Violence must be chosen carefully.

When we hear the phrase “domestic violence”, we think first of physical harm. Yet devastating abuse takes place in much broader forms — coercive control, emotional manipulation, financial control, spiritual abuse, elder abuse, technological surveillance and other expressions that each work for the gradual erosion of another person’s freedom and sense of self.

The way we name abuse shapes our ability to recognise it. If our understanding is limited to physical violence, we may overlook the devastating impacts of any number of forms of degradation on a life. We may also fail to see the profound impacts on children, family and friends. Naming abuse truthfully is not merely an exercise in accuracy, but often the first step towards safety, support and healing.

But truth-telling alone is not the whole Gospel. If Genesis reveals the shape of God’s words, [Ephesians](#) asks whether our communities bear the same shape:

“Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only what is useful for building up, as there is need, so that your words may give grace to those who hear.”

If God’s words create, and abusive words diminish, then our Christian words are called to restore. Paul imagines a community shaped by words such as humility, gentleness, patience, kindness — words that build up rather than tear down. The Church then must therefore take great care with its own speech. We have not always done so.

Sometimes Scripture has been wielded as a weapon rather than a source of freedom. Sometimes forgiveness has been demanded without repentance. Sometimes suffering has been branded as holiness.

The Gospel calls us to do better. The words we pray become the world we imagine and participate in and so the Church must continually examine its modes of formation and communication. Any language that excludes, diminishes or renders women, children and vulnerable people less visible or less affirmed cannot finally serve the Gospel of the God who calls creation good.

It takes only a couple of seconds for a life to change irreversibly — a threat spoken, a hand raised, a life taken. Tonight we remember those who have been forced across such thresholds. Every human being bears the image of God and whenever a person is betrayed — in words, in body, in spirit — something of God's intention for creation is denied.

So tonight we light candles in solidarity with victim-survivors.
We light them in grief for those whose lives have been lost.
We light them for those who continue to live with wounds seen and unseen,
and those whose circumstances cry out for transformation.
We light them in hope that fear will not have the final word.

And we light them as a commitment that we will find more words for hope:
that when others stand at painful thresholds, we will listen attentively, speak carefully,
and make room for more life-giving voices to shape our world.

For from the beginning the shape of God's word has always been life.
And wherever dignity is defended, and words of life are spoken,
God's work of creation continues.

Amen.

Editor's notes: This sermon was given by The Rev'd Deb Bird at St John's Cathedral on Sunday, 31 May 2026 at the Cathedral's annual Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month Evensong service, which was co-hosted by [Queensland Churches Together](#). The full service may be viewed on [St John's Cathedral YouTube](#).

Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Month is commemorated in May in Queensland. This year's theme is "Together Queenslanders can prevent domestic and family violence". Visit the [Queensland Government website](#) for more information.

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: Michelle McDonald, ACSQ Director of News and Community Engagement



"The mainstream media rarely mentions the more than 18,500 Palestinians, including at least 1,500 children, who've been detained by Israel since October 2023, and the systematic torture of Palestinians detained," said Director of News and Community Engagement Michelle McDonald

I remember as a child in the mid-1980s hearing the nouns "Palestinian" and "Israel" on the TV and radio news. From the news narrative, I formed the view that Palestinians were the "baddies" and that Israeli authorities were the "goodies". Aware that the United States supported Israel and informed by close extended family that the United States was the "goodie" because it "saved us" in World War II, this view was reinforced during my adolescence.

So the 1980s to early 1990s were formative years when I took in anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, pro-Israel and Reagan-aligned narratives on the television and radio.

A turning point came in 1996 when I met Palestinians for the first time while volunteering full-time for a Sydney-based Catholic youth outreach team. I recall asking a young teen — mature and measured beyond her years — where her family was originally from. She replied, "Palestine". I asked, "Where's that?" — because even though I'd heard the noun "Palestinian", I was yet to understand that Palestine is a place. Sighing, she replied, "Never mind — everyone takes Israel's side."

Another turning point came in the late-1990s when I stumbled across a *New Internationalist* magazine while researching for an anthropology essay in the university library. Unlike the mainstream media I'd consumed until then, the independent publication explained Palestine's history accurately and comprehensively.

These experiences in my childhood, adolescence and early adulthood showed me that we are shaped by both media narratives and the stories people share. And, I learnt while studying anthropology that humans shape the world through the stories they tell — this includes the stories told by journalists.

Newsrooms have a responsibility to write news stories factually, transparently and rigorously. While there's been a shift since last year, particularly after the [Federal Court found](#) the ABC breached the *Fair Work Act* by terminating journalist Antoinette Lattouf's employment largely because of an [email campaign](#) by pro-Israel groups who threatened litigation. They demanded that the ABC fire Lattouf after she shared, on her personal Instagram account, a Human Rights Watch video reporting that Israel was using starvation as a "weapon of war" in Gaza .

Despite this shift, much of the mainstream media's coverage of Israel's human rights violations against Palestinians remains flawed and distorted for several reasons.

For example, historical context before 7 October 2023 is rarely provided, the media often omitting the ongoing impacts on Palestinians after the state of Israel was created in [1948](#) and after Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in [1967](#).

The mainstream media rarely mentions the more than [18,500 Palestinians](#), including [at least 1,500 children](#), who've been detained by Israel since October 2023, and the systematic torture of Palestinians detained.

There is still inadequate coverage about Israel's [genocide](#), [apartheid](#), [ethnic cleansing and war crimes](#), with the term "conflict" still commonly used instead of "genocide" or "occupation" as though the two parties are equivalent in might and as though Israel is not perpetrating human rights violations on an egregious scale. The term "eviction" is still commonly used instead of "ethnic cleaning", as though Palestinians in the West Bank are being violently kicked out of their homes and off their ancestral homelands for skipping the rent.

The term "Palestine" is still often avoided, despite more than 80 per cent of United Nations member states, [including Australia](#), formally recognising the State of Palestine last year.

There is a reluctance to name Israel for what it is — a rogue state, [as Russia is named](#), including in the Murdoch media — despite the [International Court of Justice](#) declaring in 2024 that "Israel's presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territory is unlawful". We are currently witnessing further ["flagrant violations of international law"](#) with the military assaults on Iran and Lebanon by Israel and the United States.

The mainstream media often capitulates to the pro-Israel lobby's pressure to exceptionalise antisemitism, with the exceptionalising of antisemitism and the concealing or minimising of Islamophobia by the Queensland Police Service [in its media statements](#) arguably contributing to the local mainstream media's narrative.

Flawed and distorted reporting is distressing on a professional level given that the [Committee to Protect Journalists](#), the CPJ, reported in February that "The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) has committed more targeted killings of journalists than any other government's military since CPJ began documentation in 1992". Most of these workers were [Palestinians](#) reporting from Gaza, who somehow found the resolve to keep broadcasting and writing despite the risks and even though their family members were killed, their homes and workplaces bombed and they were starving because of Israel's food blockade.

The lack of independence and impartiality in Australia's mainstream media is not new. In his 2021 book, *Dateline Jerusalem: Journalism's Toughest Assignment*, veteran journalist John Lyons, [thoroughly unpacks](#) the influence of the "pro-Israel lobby", including on the Murdoch media and the ABC. Lyons writes that "...the Israeli-Palestinian issue is the single issue — the only issue — which the [Australian] media will not cover with the rigour with which it covers every other issue (para 2, p.6)."

The media should be able to report impartially on Israel's crimes because holding the state of Israel to account is legitimate, as it is for any other state. As a Christian journalist with a sound knowledge of scripture and an understanding that not all Jews are Zionists and that not all Zionists are Jews, I have a particular responsibility to make clear that criticism of Zionism, [as a political ideology](#), is not antisemitism, and to make clear that criticism of Israel, which is underpinned by Zionism, is also not antisemitism.

Traditional media is called the "Fourth Estate" because it's meant to function as an independent watchdog — holding the powerful accountable — and informing citizens so they can make educated decisions.

Instead, much of the Australian media's flawed and distorted reporting legitimises Israel's impunity. It also augments the Australian government's political cover. The [Albanese government](#) refuses to use the term "genocide" in the Gaza context — for if the government acknowledges this genocide, flouting Australia's obligation, as a Contracting Party to the [Genocide Convention](#), "to prevent and punish genocide" becomes politically untenable.

Independent media, free of government and corporate interests, is becoming increasingly crucial in serving the Fourth Estate's functions. I am here today, in part, because I stumbled on the *New Internationalist* magazine as a young university student.

There is always hope, so I'd like to finish constructively with some suggestions. We can:

- subscribe to independent media
- write letters to the editor about both sound and flawed reporting
- [commemorate](#) the International Day to End Impunity for Crimes Against Journalists
- support the informed citizens who challenge laws that privilege some voices while silencing others
- donate to the crowdfunding campaigns of brave journalists who are being vexatiously sued
- campaign for a more robust media regulatory framework
- and, contact our elected representatives, demanding that they uphold the international rules-based order.

Author's note: This address 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.

Pentecost message 2026: "The Holy Spirit invites reimagined communities of unity"



(Image by toja33 on Pixabay)

"When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place... All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongue as the Spirit gave them ability... They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone because many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common." Acts 2.1,4 and Acts 2.42-44

Pentecost invites us to reimagine communities that care for and share what we have in common. In a world divided by war, hunger, poverty, violence, injustice, and ecological disasters, Pentecost reminds us that we are called to life together. Acts 2 says they were gathered in one place where they were "filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles" that served as indicators of a renewed community in Christ.

Their coming together was not just one homogenous group but was representative of a grand host of people from many places, customs and ideas breaking bread together and sharing what they had in common. This is a lesson for us today. Despite the troubled season of their time, they accepted the invitation to come together and modelled a new way of sharing common life in Christ with the gift of the Holy Spirit at the center.

Each of us is left to ask what this means in our season of troubled times. Regardless of the season, place or circumstances we are called to be agents of new and renewed Spirit filled communities that show love, envision and practice shalom, promote and engage food security, care for creation and seek justice not only within our faith communities but outside of them. Acts 2.45 states: "They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together

in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

May we too find new and renewed ways to carry out this same calling today. The Holy Spirit invites us to new things, possibilities and hope and brings us into communities where justice, peace and love abound. Let us this Pentecost invite the Spirit to transform us so that we can be more like Jesus.

Let us pray.

O God, we confess we have not done all that we can do to invite new and renewed communities of shalom inspired by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Forgive us and help us to fully receive the power and grace the Holy Spirit has for our lives in community and for the integrity of God's creation.

Help us to see and live into a renewed vision of shalom that models the oneness experienced at Pentecost locally, nationally, and globally.

We pray for a transgenerational revival that reconciles and restores us with repaired communities that have been broken.

Teach us and lead us anew to be filled with a holy awe of You that can lead and inspire us to be messengers and agents of your signs and wonders.

Amen.

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Anglicare Southern Queensland unites leaders to drive social impact ahead of Brisbane 2032



National Shelter CEO Jackson Hills, Anglicare Southern Queensland CEO Sue Cooke, The Village Retirement Group CEO Simon Forsyth, Councillor Vicki Howard, Loretta Ryan and the University of Queensland Prof. Cameron Parsell — panellists and MC, Loretta Ryan at the Partners in Purpose Corporate Lunch on Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at Victoria Park / Barrambin (Photo: Anglicare Southern Queensland)

More than 140 leaders across the corporate, government, community, education and social services sectors gathered at Victoria Park / Barrambin for Anglicare’s inaugural Partners in Purpose Corporate lunch.

The sold-out event, hosted by ABC Radio Brisbane Breakfast presenter Loretta Ryan, explored how partnerships, collaboration and shared leadership can address some of Queensland’s most pressing social challenges, such as housing insecurity and youth homelessness.

Anglicare Southern Queensland CEO Sue Cooke said the event was an opportunity for community leaders to move conversations around social impact into meaningful action.

“We are being called to respond to one of the most urgent challenges facing our community today. Australia is facing a youth homelessness crisis, and Queensland is acutely affected, with more than 28,000 young people experiencing homelessness each year,” Ms Cooke said.



Melanie Mayne-Wilson, Margaret Humphries, Lesley Briggs, Sue Cooke, and Lesley Gee pictured at the Partners in Purpose Corporate Lunch on Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at Victoria Park / Barrambin (Photo: Anglicare Southern Queensland)

“As we look ahead, the question is not whether the need exists, but what each of us will choose to do about it. Real leadership means moving beyond short-term philanthropy towards long-term partnerships that create lasting change.

“It means using the strengths of business, government and community organisations to address the root causes of housing insecurity and homelessness, not just the symptoms.”

The afternoon featured a thought-provoking panel focused on mobilising corporate leadership for social impact ahead of Brisbane 2032 and the role cross-sector collaboration can play in building stronger and more connected communities.

Joining Ms Cooke, panellists included Jackson Hills, a respected community sector leader with expertise in housing, policy and advocacy; Vicki Howard, Brisbane City Councillor and Civic Cabinet Chair for Community and the Arts; Professor Cameron Parsell, Professor of Social Sciences at The University of Queensland and ARC Industry Fellow; and, Simon Forsyth, CEO of The Village Retirement Group.



Event panellists National Shelter CEO Jackson Hills and Councillor Vicki Howard, Central Ward, Brisbane City Council on stage at the Partners in Purpose Corporate Lunch on Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at Victoria Park / Barrambin (Photo: Anglicare Southern Queensland) (Photo: Anglicare Southern Queensland)

Cr Howard said the true legacy of Brisbane 2032 would be measured not only by infrastructure, but by the lasting social impact created for communities across Queensland.

“It’s not going to be about the infrastructure. It’s going to be about the legacy that is left as a result of the Olympics and Paralympics,” Cr Howard said.

“The answer to homelessness is to provide housing for all, and while great work is already happening across Brisbane, we know we need to put the accelerator on some of that work. Brisbane has a real opportunity to shine in 2032.”

Discussions explored what meaningful corporate leadership for social impact looks like in practice, with Mr Hills calling for stronger system-wide responses to homelessness and long-term structural reform and Professor Parsell drawing on research into poverty, homelessness and evidence-led approaches to social disadvantage.

Mr Forsyth highlighted the role of the corporate and development sectors in driving social outcomes through cross-sector collaboration, while Ms Cooke emphasised Anglicare’s frontline experience and the importance of integrated, person-centred approaches to housing and homelessness support.

Panellists also reflected on the opportunity Brisbane 2032 presents to create a lasting social legacy for Queenslanders experiencing disadvantage, emphasising that success should be measured not only by infrastructure and economic outcomes, but by the positive and lasting impact left on communities.



Anglicare Southern Queensland's Partners in Purpose Corporate Lunch hosted at Victoria Park Golf Complex on Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at Victoria Park / Barrambin (Photo: Anglicare Southern Queensland)

Funds raised by the event will go towards Anglicare's Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service, which will provide 30 apartments for young people aged 16-25 who are experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness.

The project goes beyond providing safe accommodation, with an integrated focus on building stability and independence through trauma-informed support, education and employment pathways, life skills development, and strong community connection.

The event welcomed representatives from Anglican schools and the wider Anglican community, with many attendees describing the event as a valuable opportunity for connection, learning and meaningful conversation.

Anglicare Southern Queensland is continuing to build partnerships with schools, churches, businesses and community organisations that want to make a meaningful difference in the lives of vulnerable Queenslanders through volunteering, fundraising, advocacy and community engagement initiatives.

To learn more about partnering with Anglicare Southern Queensland or supporting its Housing and Homelessness services, visit [Anglicare Southern Queensland](https://www.anglicaresq.org.au/fundraising).