

Like a wave



Bishop John Roundhill and Frances Thompson on the Mid North Coast of NSW in July 2026

I am writing this reflection at a town on the Mid North Coast of NSW. It is absolutely stunning in this winter season. It could be one of many townships nestling close to the coast, gifted with one or two bays and a complex history that goes back 65,000 years.

But for once it is not the history that makes me stop, but the beauty of the sea and the dark clouds above, along with a few rainbows. I have taken photos, but I don't think phones can capture the simple beauty of the place — the pine trees, the reddish rocks, the golden sand, the river running into the ocean and relentless waves breaking before they release sheets of white foam. The soundscape of the thudding waves almost masks the exciting twitter of birds. Where other places might be described as "grand" or "majestic" or "pretty" or "peaceful" I am finding it hard to get a better word than "beautiful".

The transcendentals of beauty, truth and goodness are things that theologians in the Thomist tradition, following [St Thomas Aquinas](#), believe that humans seek. Beauty is sought by the soul, truth by the mind and goodness by the heart.

I have to agree that sitting, watching and listening to the ocean in this most beautiful place is good for the soul. Watching the waves at one beach, where the shape of the bay made waves run across each other and interact with each other, also reminded me of work that The Rev'd Deb Bird from The Parish of Kenmore-Brookfield and I have been doing in Brisbane.

We have begun taking our talk, “God of Wonder: The Science of the Big and the Small”, on tour. Deb speaks about the wonder of the universe we live in, and I am not spoiling her talk when I say there is far more going on in this universe than first meets the eye. Modern observatories such as the [James Webb Space Telescope](#) and the [Vera C. Rubin Observatory](#) are giving us discoveries that are, at times, spine-tingling in their impact. Deb also explores some mind-bending ideas about the fate of the universe. If the accelerating expansion of the universe continues, then in the far distant future, light from galaxies beyond our local group will become so faint that future observers may no longer be able to detect them. They would have no direct observational evidence for what we can see now. If any beings are still around, they will have to trust ancient records and inherited testimony. In that sense, the cosmological truth would no longer be limited to what can be scientifically observed, but would depend on being able to trust what has been faithfully received.

I then follow up this talk with a chat about the very small and the amazing world of quantum mechanics. If you are not familiar with this term you might have heard the term “wave mechanics”. When things get very small they behave in ways less like particles and more like waves. Seeing waves interfere with each other at the beach was a visual reminder of the curious world of the teeny-tiny and how this unusual behaviour of waves helps us understand them. This is a world of entanglement where particles are correlated with each other, even over vast distances.

Our talk is being greeted with great engagement and enthusiasm. There is something quite profound to ponder — that there is beauty at the scale of the cosmos, at the scale of our human lives (such as the seaside) and even at the microscopic level. We live in a cosmos of wonder.

With so much that troubles us in our world at the moment, there is much that troubles our souls. While not all of us can spend time on glorious beaches, there are other ways to engage with the beauty of creation, and these too might be good for the soul.

Editor’s note: Join Bishop John Roundhill and The Rev’d Deb Bird on Sunday, 19 July 2026 at 5.30pm at St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly for “God of Wonder: The Science of the Big and the Small”: an exploration of the “privileged moment” we inhabit where the universe is finally visible to us. Discover why wonder is the essential antidote to cynicism and how the vastness of creation doesn’t make us insignificant, but proves we are once-in-a-universe possibilities. Light meal of soup and bread will be offered. Free event — donations to cover light meal are welcome. More information available on the [St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly website](#).

Restorative practices workshop 2026: reflections and learnings 2.0



"The workshop's most significant learning for our context centred on recognising that restorative conversations shift the focus from rule-breaking to relationship-building," says TSS Headmaster Andrew Hawkins (Image supplied)

Andrew Hawkins — Headmaster, The Southport School (TSS)

We have been using restorative practice here at TSS for many years and it has been very effective for our school setting.

A key insight emerging from the restorative practice workshop is the recognition that restorative practice is fundamentally a relational way of being, not simply a strategy for managing behaviour. The workshop highlights how restorative approaches shift attention from rules and consequences toward understanding harm, repairing relationships and nurturing accountability grounded in empathy. This reframing invites our school community to see conflict as a moment for growth, dialogue and reconnection rather than punishment.

The workshop's most significant learning for our context centred on recognising that restorative conversations shift the focus from rule-breaking to *relationship-building*.

Applying this insight in daily leadership means modelling restorative language, creating space for reflective conversations and embedding practices, such as circles and facilitated dialogue, into pastoral care and staff culture. It requires slowing down, listening with intent and guiding students and colleagues to articulate impact, responsibility and pathways forward. Over time, this cultivates a more trusting, compassionate and resilient school environment.

As an Anglican school headmaster, restorative practice is deeply aligned with our school's mission and identity. It embodies Christian principles of grace, forgiveness, reconciliation and the inherent dignity of every person. By prioritising healing over blame, our school leadership can safeguard the integrity of the school's pastoral vision and lead a community where relationships are honoured, repaired and strengthened in ways that reflect the heart of the Anglican tradition.



"My role as the facilitator of restorative practice is facilitating the conversations so the individuals or groups find their own solutions," says The Rev'd Mamuor kun Peter from The Parish of Caboolture (Image by *anglican focus*)

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

The most important thing I learned in this particular workshop is that the focus should not be on me, but on the individuals or groups who are in conflict, while also ensuring I remain non-judgemental.

Every workplace has conflict at some time. Not being judgemental means that I stay neutral and avoid seeing one individual or group as being wrong or right. My role as the facilitator of restorative practice is facilitating the conversations so the individuals or groups find their own solutions.

There will be some occasions where I will need call upon a more skilled restorative practice practitioner within our Diocese.

Restorative practice is about re-building a healthy relationship — this is necessary in the Church because it's important for our community to be peaceful.



"I am excited by diocesan plans to invest in the training of facilitators in order to assist parishes and schools in resolving difficult," says The Rev'd Jilleen Chambers from The Parish of Kilcoy-Woodford

The Rev'd Jilleen Chambers — Parish Priest, The Parish of Kilcoy-Woodford

Jesus gave us the commandment to love one another as he loves us because by doing this everyone will know that we are his disciples. How often do we allow interpersonal conflicts, past hurts and misunderstandings get in the way of fulfilling this commandment?

Although I have consciously used learnings from restorative justice in pastoral work, I was blown away by the power of facilitated group conferencing to enable dispute resolution and resolve the trauma of harmful interactions — even those that have been long buried, but continue to mar our witness as followers of Jesus.

The skills learned at the Setting Relations Right workshop will underpin my plans to utilise the restorative conference process to provide a supportive environment for participants to listen and relate to one another. The simple but profound process of creating listening relationships enables us to understand each other and work together to resolve traumatic incidents that have the potential to damage relationships and cause ongoing stigma and hurt.

I am excited by diocesan plans to invest in the training of facilitators in order to assist parishes and schools in resolving difficult — sometimes seemingly intractable — interpersonal conflicts that have the power to negate our Christian witness.

Q&A with devoted mum, rugby league fan and ACSQ Human Resources and Safety Business Partner, Cyndi Rogers



ACSQ Human Resources and Safety Business Partner Cyndi Rogers will soon be attending Deanery meetings and visiting parishes across our Diocese as part of the rollout of the Safety Review Program: she looks forward to meeting with parish clergy and lay leaders over a cuppa to discuss how the Safety Team can best support your parish (Image supplied)

Where do you currently live?

I grew up a proud Sydneysider and now call Brisbane home.

What's one thing you've had to adapt to since moving to Queensland?

Being a proud Sydneysider and raising my young family in Queensland means State of Origin can get very lonely! I'm completely outnumbered, but I remain loyal to the Blues.



Cyndi and Jason Rogers enjoying their first State of Origin game together in June 2018, with the Blues taking home the win (Image supplied)

Can you tell us a little about your career journey?

I've worked in Human Resources and Workplace Health and Safety for the past 20 years, beginning my career in the corporate sector across finance, banking and insurance in Sydney, London and Vancouver. I eventually found my true calling in the not-for-profit, faith-based sector.

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

I've been part of Anglican Church Southern Queensland since late 2025 as the Human Resources and Safety Business Partner.

What does your current role involve?

I have the privilege of working across both Human Resources and Workplace Health and Safety, supporting our leaders, staff and volunteers with everything from employee wellbeing, workplace relationships and complex case management to leadership support and creating healthier, safer workplaces. Every day is an opportunity to help people navigate challenges and foster positive, inclusive workplaces where everyone can thrive.

What do you most love about your role?

What I love most about my role is that it combines my two greatest professional passions — Human Resources and Workplace Health and Safety — and gives me the opportunity to genuinely care for and support our people every day. Whether I'm helping someone through a difficult situation, improving workplace safety or simply being there to listen, it's incredibly rewarding to know I've made a positive difference in someone's day.



Finance and Diocesan Services Commission and Episcopal Office team members chatting in the FDSC's 2026 ACSQ Synod stall at Churchie, with (L-R): Lina Wang (Financial Transaction Officer), Glanita Amarnath (ANFIN and Treasury Manager), Helen Briffa (Assistant to Bishop Cam Venables), Joanne Rose (Bishops' Secretary), Ann Joseph (Executive Assistant to Archbishop Jeremy Greaves), Cyndi Rogers (ACSQ Human Resources and Safety Business Partner) and Love Legorio (Accountant) (Image by *anglican focus*)

What is a highlight of your current role?

Attending Synod for the first time has been one of the standout moments in my role. I loved spending time at the FDSC stall promoting wellbeing, serving cake and meeting parish clergy from across our Diocese. It was such a great opportunity to connect with people face to face and hear about the amazing work happening in their communities.

I also enjoyed watching the Synod proceedings from the gallery and seeing how motions are discussed and passed. It gave me a much deeper appreciation of how the Diocese comes together to make important decisions and support its mission

What projects or activities are you currently working on?

I'm incredibly excited to be developing a new safety review program for our parishes because it means I get to head back on to the road, meet more of our parish communities and support safe, healthy and positive workplaces across our Diocese.



Cyndi Rogers receiving her Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management in 2019, proudly celebrating with her mum, Lynda, and dad, Johnny (Image supplied)

Having expertise in both Human Resources and Workplace Health and Safety is unique, so what inspired you to build a career in Workplace Health and Safety alongside your passion for Human Resources?

Yeah, there aren't many of us out there! I'm passionate about people and believe everyone deserves to feel safe, supported and valued at work. We spend so much of our lives in the workplace, so my goal is simple — to help ensure everyone goes home happy, healthy and safe to their families at the end of each day.

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

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland's greatest strength and asset is its dedicated staff and volunteers, and by continuing to equip, empower and support them, they can make an even greater difference in the lives of the communities they serve every day.

What is the kindest gesture you have received since joining the Anglican Church Southern Queensland?

One of the kindest gestures I've received since joining ACSQ was spending time with Archbishop Jeremy, sharing conversations about both work and life. Afterwards, he sent me a handwritten card thanking me for being me. The card still sits on my desk today as a reminder of the importance of kindness and appreciation.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

The Dalai Lama inspires me most because of his unwavering compassion, humility and his belief that kindness has the power to create positive change in the lives of others — these are qualities I strive to bring to my work and everyday interactions.

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

I believe Reconciliation starts with listening, learning and building genuine relationships. By working together with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples with respect, humility and openness, we can better understand one another, acknowledge the past and create stronger, more connected communities for the future.



Cyndi Rogers at the finish line of the Great Ocean Walk in February 2017, completing the 44km charity walk in support of survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking (Image supplied)

What is a social justice or advocacy space that is important to you?

Before the wonderful chaos of raising a young family, I lived a very different life and spent many years supporting humanitarian and charitable initiatives. One of the highlights of my humanitarian work was raising funds by completing a gruelling 44-kilometre walk across the rugged terrain of Victoria's

Great Ocean Road, spending hours on the trail to support survivors of modern slavery and human trafficking.



Cyndi Rogers with her squad pausing to celebrate reaching the halfway point of the Great Ocean Walk in February 2017 (Image supplied)

What's a part of your story that most people don't know?

One thing many people don't know about me is that I was born in a refugee camp in Thailand. My parents fled Vietnam by boat in the early 1980s with my four siblings and my uncle, carrying only the clothes on their backs. After being rescued off the coast of Thailand, they spent two years in a refugee camp where I was born before we settled in Australia when I was just a one-year-old.



Cyndi Rogers as a baby at a refugee camp in Thailand in 1983

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

"Kindness is contagious". Imagine the difference we could make if every act of kindness inspired another.

What is your karaoke go-to song?

It's got to be "I Will Survive" by Gloria Gaynor — it's a classic and impossible not to sing along to.

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

The best advice I've ever received came from my mum: "Kindness goes a long way," and it's something I've carried with me throughout both my personal life and my career.



Cyndi Rogers and her Batman squad assembled for Jamie's Batman-themed 3rd birthday party in 2023, with husband, Jason, and sons, Jamie and Joshua (Image supplied)

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

These days, my weekends are all about my boys' social lives, from Saturday morning soccer and birthday parties to endless playdates. It's a wonderfully busy stage of life, and sharing these experiences with an amazing group of mum friends has been one of the greatest joys. Somehow along the way, they became my besties, too. Now the boys have their friends, and us mums have ours. It's a win-win!



Cyndi Rogers with fellow “soccer mums” Tina and Vienna coaching their kids’ soccer match in July 2026 (Image supplied)

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

It’s amazing how quickly a plate of fresh oysters and a glass of champagne can lift my spirits. Add good company, and my day is instantly better.

What makes you nostalgic and why?

Two things make me nostalgic. Watching my boys grow up reminds me how quickly time passes and how important it is to be present and cherish the little moments. And Sydney will always hold a special place in my heart because it’s where I grew up and where much of my family still lives — I miss them very much.

What is your secret skill?

I’m double-jointed in my elbows — it makes for a great party trick!



Cyndi and Jason Rogers celebrating their wedding day at Sirromet Winery in January 2020 (Image supplied)

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

I'd love to relive my wedding day, but this time with my two boys there to share it with us. They constantly look at our wedding photo hanging on the wall and ask why they weren't there, so it would be incredibly special to experience that day again with our whole family together.



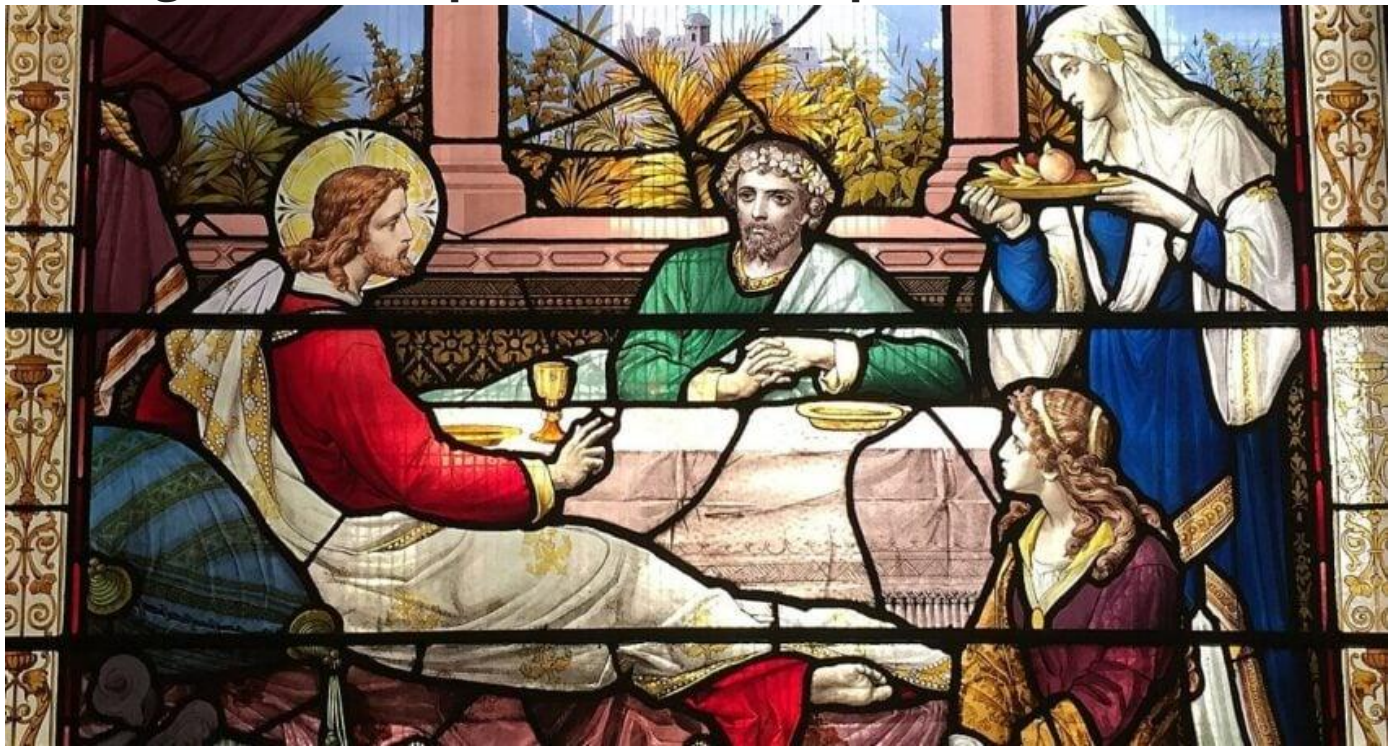
Cyndi Rogers and family — husband, Jason, and sons, Jamie and Joshua — “off to Neverland”, celebrating a friend’s Peter Pan-themed birthday party in 2025 (Image supplied)

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

My unanswerable question is, “What are your hobbies?” Between raising two young boys with my husband, working full-time and caring for my elderly mum, who lives with us, I don’t have much time for “hobbies”. I’m still trying to figure out where people find the time — but if being a mum counts, that’s my favourite hobby.

Editor’s note: Cyndi Rogers will soon be attending Deanery meetings and visiting parishes across the Diocese as part of the rollout of the Safety Review Program. She looks forward to meeting with parish clergy and lay leaders over a cuppa to discuss how the Safety Team can best support your parish. If you would like Cyndi to visit your parish sooner or arrange a meeting, please email [Cyndi Rogers](#) for more information.

The regenerative space of friendship



(Photo by Andrewrabbott, CC BY-SA 4.0 <<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>>, via Wikimedia Commons)

*Ours yet not ours, being set apart
As a shrine to friendship,
Empty and silent most of the year,
This room awaits from you
What you alone, as visitor, can bring,
A weekend of personal life. ...*

*Books we do have for almost any
Literate mood, and notepaper, envelopes,
For a writing one (to "borrow" stamps
Is the mark of ill-breeding):
Between lunch and tea, perhaps a drive;
After dinner, music or gossip.*

*Should you have troubles (pets will die
Lovers are always behaving badly)
And confession helps, we will hear it,
Examine and give our counsel:
If to mention them hurts too much,
We shall not be nosey...*

*Felicissima notte! May you fall at once
Into a cordial dream, assured
That whoever slept in this bed before*

*Was also someone we like,
That within the circle of our affection
Also you have no double.*

— W H Auden, "From For Friends Only" (for John and Teckla Clark)

On Wednesday (July 29) we will keep the Feast of Mary and Martha of Bethany, two people who along with their brother, Lazarus, are presented to us as Jesus' friends. Friends, who can also be described as disciples, but whose presence reminds us that not all of Jesus disciples would have been his friends, if we use that word in its more intimate or cosy sense.

In the Gospel according to John, the writer has Jesus refers to those at the Last Supper with him as friends to signify the relational rather than hierarchical nature of the fledgling Christian community, but I get the sense that the writer of The Gospel according to Luke, in particular, wants us to understand that Mary and Martha were something more to Jesus. It could be that the writer of Luke adds this take on the life of Jesus to accentuate his humanity and vulnerability.

The way Jesus' relationship with Mary, Martha and Lazarus is portrayed invites me to imagine that their home was one of the places where Jesus could "let his hair down"; one of the places where he could go and not be stalked by those hoping for him to fail in some way; a place where the refreshing amiability of friendship would have given Jesus the space to truly relax and recharge; a place where he could sort out his head and have his soul nourished; a place where others had his interests at heart; a place like that captured in W H Auden's poem, "For Friends Only".

As I approach the celebration of The Feast of Mary and Martha, I give thanks for those who offer me the regenerative space of friendship and pray for the grace to be someone who can hold that space for others.

First published in the Cathedral Precinct newsletter on Monday, 27 July 2026.

From lilies of the valley to St Francis of Assisi: inspired by mercy

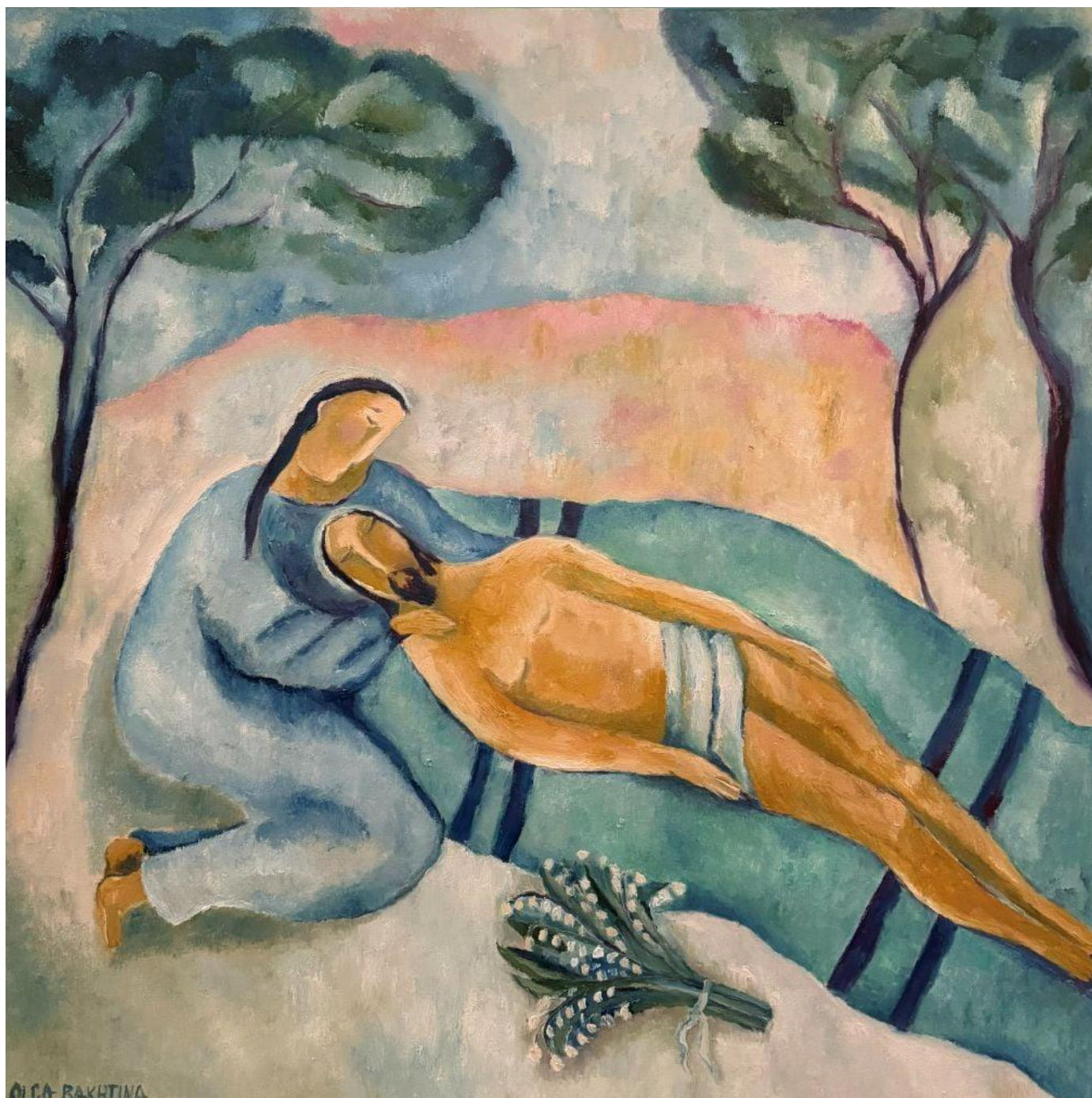


"Mercy", the latest exhibition of award-winning local artist Olga Bakhtina, is showing in St John's Cathedral until Saturday, 22 August 2026 (Image supplied)

As a mother of three and as a daughter my favourite Biblical stories are connected to the [Nativity](#) and the [Flight into Egypt](#). When I paint or draw Biblical stories featuring the mother and child relationship, it's a prayer for my children and for my mother.

Biblical stories have always fascinated me because they are, above all, stories about people. Although they were written thousands of years ago, they continue to reflect the same human emotions and experiences we know today: love and betrayal, compassion and indifference, fear and courage, hope, and mercy. Human nature has changed very little.

My paintings and drawings revisit these familiar narratives through a contemporary lens, exploring the timeless relationship between humanity, faith and the possibility of transformation.



"Pieta" (2026) by Olga Bakhtina, oil on canvas, 90cm x 90cm

I chose to call my current exhibition *Mercy* because it feels like something our world needs now more than ever — in international conflicts, in politics, in our communities, within our families, and in the way we treat ourselves. I also love that mercy echoes the French *merci*: which combines compassion and gratitude — two simple words that have the power to change how we see one another.

I have held four exhibitions of Christianity-inspired artworks in St John's Anglican Cathedral since 2022.

My current *Mercy* exhibition in St John's Cathedral brings together new works alongside a selection of older favourites. Throughout the paintings I created in 2026, lilies of the valley appear as a recurring motif symbolising compassion, renewal and mercy.

Lilies have appeared in religious iconography for more than 1,000 years, variously symbolising renewal, hope and holiness. I chose to include lilies of the valley in my recent works because they are the least cultivated of the lily varieties — lilies of the valley are wildflowers and easily missed.

In my painting of the “Pieta” Mary cradles Jesus’ dead body, with a small bouquet of lilies of the valley lying beside Jesus. The lilies recall the Annunciation, when the Archangel Gabriel brought Mary news that would change the course of her life. As a mother, I often think of Mary. When the infant Jesus was presented in the Temple, Simeon foretold both His sacrifice and the sword of sorrow that would pierce her own heart. How did Mary live with that knowledge, watching her child grow?

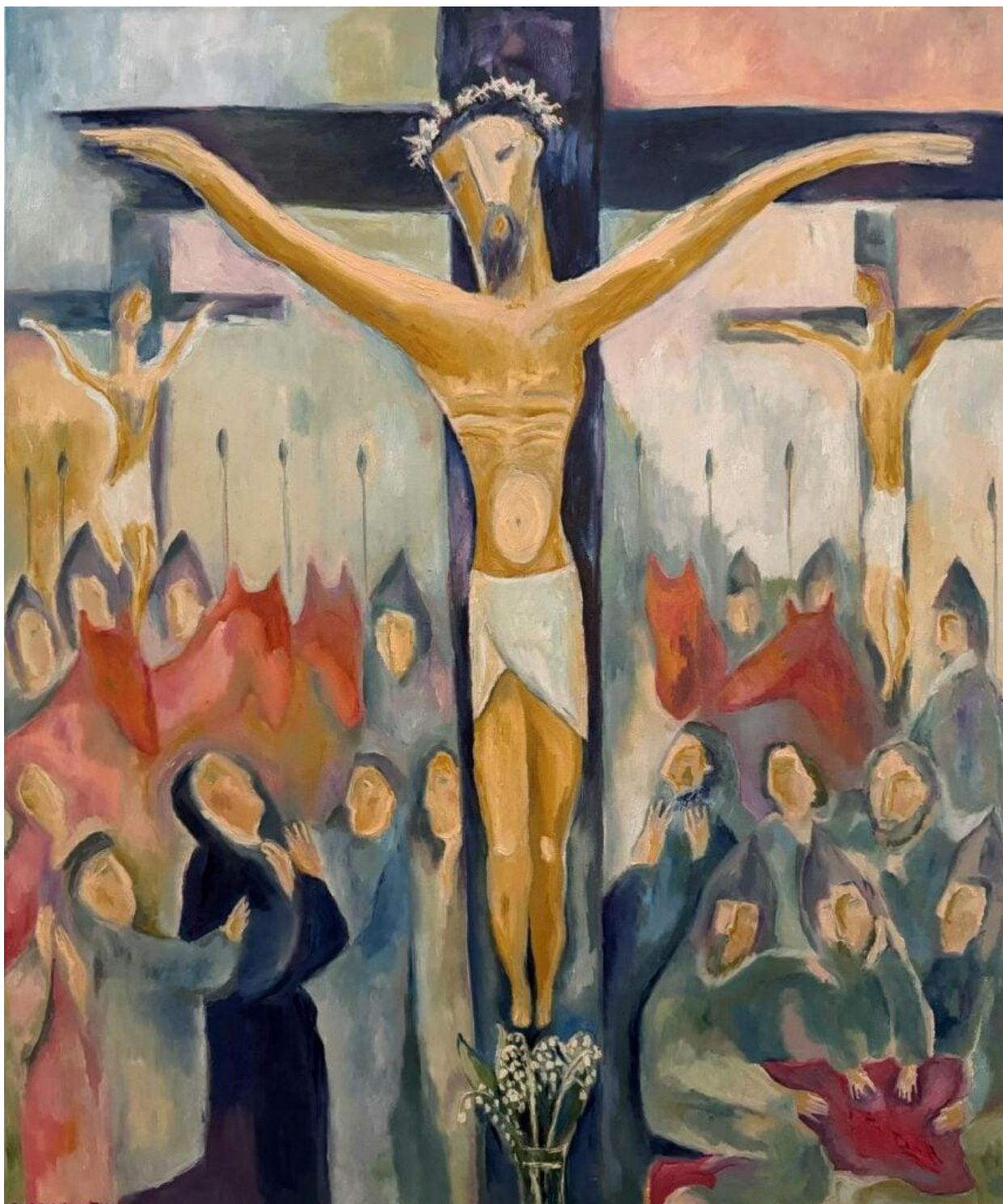


“St Francis and the Birds” (2026) by Olga Bakhtina, oil on canvas, 90cm x 90cm

Additionally, the exhibition presents a painting and a series of charcoal drawings of [St Francis of Assisi](#), whose life and teachings are deeply connected to mercy. This year we commemorate 800 years since the death of St Francis. My painting “St Francis and the Birds” depicts St Francis stopping on the

roadside near Bevagna, Italy, to preach to a flock of birds, calling them his “little sisters” and speaking to the birds as fellow participants in creation. This painting features a distinctly Australian twist.

Editor’s note: Award-winning local artist Olga Bakhtina’s current art exhibition showcases works representing the theme of “Mercy”, and features Biblical narratives and St Francis of Assisi. The *Mercy* exhibition of paintings and charcoal drawings may be visited in St John’s Anglican Cathedral (373 Ann St, Brisbane) until 4pm Saturday, 22 August 2026. Entry to the exhibition is free, with pieces available for sale via the [Cathedral Shop](#) or directly through the artist.



“Crucifixion” (2026) by Olga Bakhtina, oil on canvas, 120cm x 90cm

What does artificial intelligence mean for our Church?



"Through presentations, discussion and reflection, participants will explore what AI is, how it is already affecting our work, and how we might engage with it wisely, responsibly and faithfully," says Dr Stephen Harrison about a forthcoming "Exploring AI Together" seminar (Image supplied)

"Hang on, did AI write this?" asked my team member about an email that our team was sent. There were some features that gave it away — predictable lists of "threes", lots of em dashes, corporate sounding filler and...complete lack of soul.

The content of the email was fine, but it did not sound like the person who had supposedly written it. There was no warmth, no personality and no sense that a real human being had thought carefully about the people receiving it. It communicated information, but it did not "communicate" the human writer.

Maybe in time AI will get so good that no one will notice the difference...but does that mean we should use it? And what happens if the sermons sound like AI?

Artificial intelligence (AI) is being increasingly discussed in both formal and informal Church settings. Several questions about AI, including regarding liturgy, were raised during the Lay Conference at our recent Synod. Churchie hosted an AI panel discussion exploring ethical and leadership imperatives in July. AI is also a popular "watercooler" conversation topic in our Diocese's workplaces.

Different parts of our Church are also using AI in their daily work. [Matthew Flinders Anglican College students](#) are engaging with real-world immersive problem-solving challenges using AI. [Holy Hermits Online](#) community members are using AI to create artworks. And, [resources](#) are being published on our Diocese's *anglican focus* news site to assist clergy.

AI is rapidly changing how our people work, learn, communicate and make decisions.

Yet many people across our parishes, schools, ministries and agencies are still asking a very relevant question:

“What does this mean for the Church?”

To help answer this question the Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s Social Responsibilities Committee is hosting a one-day “[Exploring AI Together](#)” seminar event at St Francis College on Saturday, 29 August 2026.

The “Exploring AI Together” seminar will be a practical and accessible learning day designed specifically for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland. This is an introductory event, so participants do not require technical knowledge.

Through presentations, discussion and reflection, participants will explore what AI is, how it is already affecting our work, and how we might engage with it wisely, responsibly and faithfully.

Speakers and topics include:

- Dr Bek Duyckers (Coomera Anglican College deputy principal and educational leader), who will provide a clear, non-technical introduction to AI.
- Dr Bek Duyckers and Dr Stephen Harrison (Anglicare Southern Queensland’s Director of Mission), who will explain how AI is already impacting our Church’s work — in both obvious and unapparent ways.
- Angie Mooney (Adapting Ministry in Complex Times Community Activator at St John’s Cathedral and Holy Hermits Online community member), who will explore the human and ethical dimensions of AI, including its impact on vulnerable people, fairness, accountability, privacy and trust.
- Dr Jason Zagami (a Griffith University senior lecturer in the School of Education and Professional Studies), who will speak about how AI can be used responsibly in ministry, governance, education and community services.

A discussion panel — featuring Angie, Jason and Dr Adam Couchman (St Francis College’s Academic Dean) — will explore what AI means for Christian understandings of wisdom, human dignity, relationships and vocation.

There will also be an opportunity for structured reflection to help participants integrate learning into practice.

This one-day seminar will be particularly relevant for:

- clergy and parish leaders
- parish councillors and wardens
- Synod members
- members of diocesan commissions and committees
- Anglican school council members
- anyone interested in how emerging technologies are shaping ministry and society.

Editor’s note: [Register](#) by 9am Monday, 24 August 2026 to join in the free one-day “Exploring AI Together” seminar, which will be held at St Francis College on Saturday, 29 August 2026. Lunch and morning tea will be provided.

"By the time we are locking up a child, we are often responding to a failure that began many years earlier"



"If we want safer communities, we must invest more in what prevents offending and less in what merely responds to it after the fact," said Dr Stephen Harrison from the Social Responsibilities Committee, pictured with Bishop Daniel Abot at the 2026 ACSQ Synod (Image by anglican focus)

Mr President, members of Synod.

The title of this motion is deliberately provocative.

It is provocative because it challenges a deeply held assumption in our society — the assumption that if we simply imprison more people for longer periods, our communities will become safer.

Yet when we look carefully at the evidence, we discover a troubling reality.

Australia spends almost seven billion dollars each year on prisons.

More than 60 per cent of people currently in prison have been imprisoned before.

And around 43 per cent of people released from prison return within two years.

If prisons were successfully preventing reoffending, these numbers would look very different.

The truth is that many people cycle repeatedly through our prisons without the underlying causes of their offending ever being addressed.

And when that happens, everyone loses. Victims lose. Communities lose. Taxpayers lose.

And the individuals themselves lose.

The [Justice Reform Initiative](#) has brought together former judges, police commissioners, corrections leaders, victims' advocates, academics, First Nations leaders and community organisations from across the political spectrum around a remarkably simple proposition:

If we want safer communities, we must invest more in what prevents offending and less in what merely responds to it after the fact.

At its heart, this motion is about asking a simple question:

What actually works?

Not what sounds tough. Not what makes a good headline.

But what actually works to reduce crime and improve community safety?

The evidence consistently points in the same direction.

People who enter the criminal justice system are disproportionately drawn from communities experiencing significant disadvantage.

Many have experienced childhood trauma. Many have experienced family violence. Many have grown up in poverty.

Many have experienced homelessness, educational disengagement, mental illness, disability, substance dependence, or a combination of these factors.

In other words, by the time many people enter prison, society has already failed them many times over.

This is particularly true for young people.

The Justice Reform Initiative notes that most children who enter the youth justice system come from backgrounds characterised by trauma and disadvantage.

Many have experienced contact with child protection systems.

Many have been excluded from school.

Many are carrying burdens that no child should have to carry.

This is a reality Anglicare Southern Queensland encounters every day.

Through our family support services, foster and kinship care programs, homelessness services, mental health services, youth programs and community services, we see firsthand the factors that place children and young people at risk.

We know that offending behaviour rarely emerges in isolation.

It is often connected to a much deeper story.

A story of trauma. A story of disadvantage. A story of unmet need.

And that is why [Anglicare](#) has consistently advocated for earlier intervention, stronger family supports, better access to mental health care, stable housing, educational engagement, disability supports, and community-based responses that address the causes of offending before a young person reaches a courtroom or a detention centre.

Because by the time we are locking up a child, we are often responding to a failure that began many years earlier.

This motion also asks us to recognise the profound impact of incarceration on First Nations peoples.

More than 30 years after the Royal Commission into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, First Nations Australians remain dramatically overrepresented in our prisons.

This overrepresentation cannot be understood apart from the continuing impacts of dispossession, intergenerational trauma, systemic disadvantage and exclusion.

Likewise, we know that prisons contain disproportionately high numbers of people living with mental illness, cognitive impairment, acquired brain injury, psychosocial disability and substance dependence.

In many cases, prison has become the place where society manages complex social and health problems because appropriate support was unavailable earlier.

The Justice Reform Initiative does not argue that prisons should be abolished.

Nor does this motion.

There will always be circumstances where imprisonment is necessary to protect the community from serious harm. Public safety matters and victims matter.

But if our goal is genuinely safer communities, then we must also ask how we prevent future victims.

How we reduce future offending.

How we break cycles that repeat generation after generation.

The evidence points towards community-led initiatives, diversionary programs, restorative justice, rehabilitation, therapeutic interventions, mental health treatment, housing support, education, employment pathways and culturally informed responses.

These approaches do not ignore wrongdoing.

Rather, they seek to address its causes while holding people accountable and reducing the likelihood that harm will occur again.

As Christians, this should resonate deeply with us.

Scripture consistently affirms both justice and mercy.

It affirms accountability, but it also affirms restoration.

Every person is created in the image of God.

Every person possesses inherent dignity and worth.

That includes victims of crime. And it includes those who offend.

The Christian tradition has never understood justice merely as punishment.

Christian justice seeks restoration of relationships, healing of communities and the possibility of transformation.

We believe people can change. We believe redemption is possible. We believe that no person's life is beyond hope.

And because we believe that we should support public policies that create the conditions for change rather than simply managing failure after it occurs.

This motion is not asking Synod to become experts in criminal justice policy.

It is asking us to recognise a simple truth.

When evidence repeatedly shows that early intervention, rehabilitation, diversion, mental health support, housing, education and community-led responses produce better outcomes than incarceration alone, then continuing to rely primarily on imprisonment makes little sense.

If we want safer communities, we must invest in what works.

If we want fewer victims, we must invest in what prevents offending.

If we want justice, we must seek not only punishment but transformation.

And if we believe in the dignity and potential of every human person, then we should support approaches that offer hope alongside accountability.

For these reasons, I commend the motion to Synod.

Editor's note: The following "Jailing is Failing" motion, moved by Dr Stephen Harrison and seconded by Bishop Daniel Abot, was carried at our Diocese's recent [Synod](#), which was held at Churchie on 25-26 June 2026:

That this Synod:

1. Notes:

a. that over 60% of Australian inmates have been incarcerated before, indicating that prisons do not stop recidivism, with nearly half of those released returning within two years;

- b. that imprisonment costs \$7 billion annually (2024-2025);**
- c. that the prison system disproportionately impacts First Nations peoples, contributing to ongoing cycles of trauma, dislocation, and systemic disadvantage;**
- d. that in Queensland, a significant number of young people are drawn into the criminal justice system at an early age, often shaped by experiences of poverty, family instability, trauma, and limited access to support — factors that are better addressed through care and intervention rather than incarceration;**
- e. that many people within the prison system live with mental illness, cognitive impairment, or psychosocial disability, and that prisons are frequently ill-equipped to provide appropriate therapeutic care, resulting in further harm and entrenchment rather than recovery;**
- f. that community-led initiatives, early intervention, diversionary programs, and therapeutic responses have been shown to be more effective than imprisonment in reducing reoffending and promoting safer communities.**

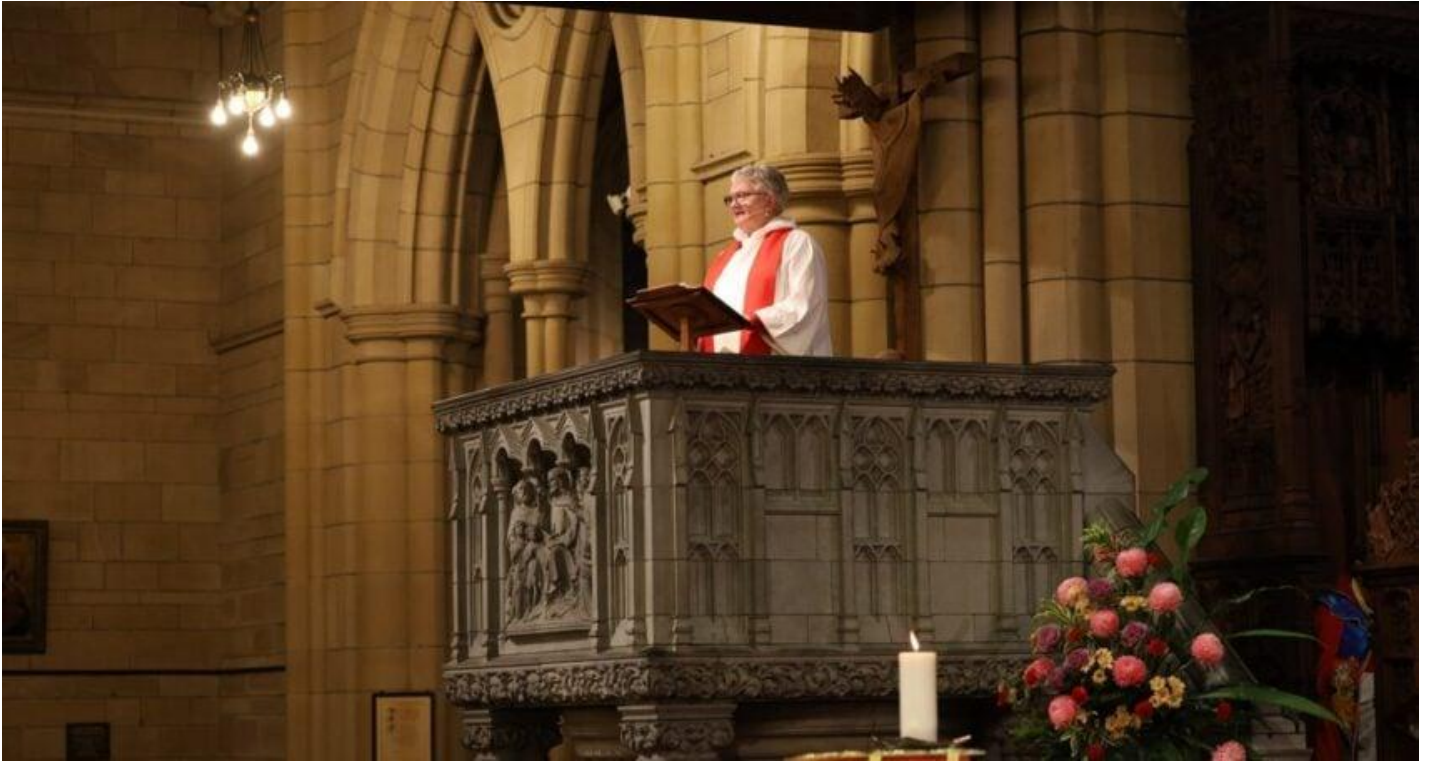
2. Calls on the Queensland Government to:

- a. recognise that jailing, as a first and primary response to offending, is failing to keep communities safe,**
- b. invest more in evidence-based alternatives to incarceration.**
- c. ensure that correctional facilities are appropriately staffed and resourced to provide safe, therapeutic and trauma-informed care for people in custody, particularly young people and those experiencing mental illness, cognitive impairment or who have other complex support needs.**

3. Gives thanks for the ministry of Chaplains in prisons.

Explanatory notes: [Justice Reform Initiative](#) website.

Synod sermon 2026: "Be careful what you pray for; you might get it!"



"At Synod we also check the settings on our collective spiritual health. We want to be the spiritually healthiest organisation we can be. Spiritual health includes transparency, diligent record-keeping, and accountability," The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Smith AM (Image by anglican focus)

Did the preacher choose that Old Testament reading and the psalm especially for our Synod, I hear you ask? With all that besieging and famine, all that fleeing and scattering and deserting and defecting and capturing and slaughtering and burning and being carried off to weep by the rivers of Babylon? Is that what we have to look forward to this weekend? Is the preacher telling us we're going into exile?

No, and no, my brothers and sisters; I did not choose the readings tonight; the lectionary did. And no, we are neither in exile nor are we heading there; although, like the exiles, perhaps we do often feel like we are living in a strange land, where it's really tricky to sing the Lord's song.

Let me speak to that first.

We are not in exile, not like the people in the story from the Bible.

Admittedly some of us here are migrants or refugees, and there have been struggles and losses and trauma to get us here. If that's you, yes, you are literally a long way from what your heart probably still thinks of as "home", even while you're putting down roots in this new and often confusing place.

Many more of us are the children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren of migrants, but this is the only land we've ever called "home".

And some of you are First Peoples, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Your story of “home” here goes back not hundreds but tens of thousands of years; and some of that story is about other people coming here recently, as uninvited and disruptive settlers. If that’s you, perhaps you often have times when you’ve been made to feel like an outsider in your own and your ancestors’ home.

But whoever we are, we are not in exile. Whoever we are, 21st century Australia is not Babylon. It is a strange land, yes; it is conflicted, and imperfect, and hard to navigate, and it is constantly changing. But it’s not Babylon. None of us is in exile.

Exiles look back with nostalgia. Exiles think the answer to “How can we sing the Lord’s song in a strange land?” is simply: “Stupid question. We can’t sing here. We’ve lost our voice, we don’t think God’s listening, we don’t have anything worth saying, and nobody here really wants to listen to us anyway.” That’s exile thinking, and we are not exiles. We’re not in enemy country. Nobody’s stopping us from practising our faith. There’s no going back to another time, another idealised, romanticised place when being an Australian was easy, or being an Anglican was a walk in the park. We don’t look back.

Instead, we look forward with hope. Not the hope of rebuilding what we think we used to have. We hope to grow into something new, and here, and now. To grow into a better Australian society together — an Australia with dignity and justice and respect for everyone who lives here. To grow into an Anglican Church that lives lighter, not living off our inherited privileges. A Church not living off the dregs of the respect we used to take for granted, and not living defensively under the shadow of the shame of our horrible mistakes either.

Instead, we want to grow into an Anglican Church that lives lighter, and with agility, and suppleness, and the ability to improvise. To grow into an Anglican Church that is still an institution — we’ll always have a lot of the institution about us, and there are good things about that, including longevity and accountability — but an institution that doesn’t take itself too seriously, an institution that doesn’t dig bunkers. An institution that does hoist some sails to the mast, so it can go where the wind of the Spirit blows.

Imagine us growing into a Church that can laugh at itself, a Church with cheerful humility! Imagine a Church that spreads light-heartedness around, with non-anxious generosity! A Church that realises that, of course, we can sing the Lord’s song in this strange land, and sing it not like a dirge or a drone, but like a dance tune!

So, no, I did not choose the Old Testament reading; but perhaps there is some value in reading about that long-ago, disastrous defeat and depressing exile, to remind us we are facing a different and more hopeful scenario here and now.

I didn’t choose the Gospel reading either; and Jesus healing the leper is not directly relevant to Synod. But it can also tell us something about your life together in Christ as the Diocese of Brisbane, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, as your Synod begins.

Synod always includes prayer: tonight at this Eucharist, and at various times during the meeting. Synod is governance and compliance. Synod is receiving reports, financial and budget reviews, governance checks, and hearing from all the great and small entities that admit to being Anglican somewhere on their website. Synod is carefully phrased legislation, and it’s mostly courteous and occasionally adversarial debate about things the rest of society might occasionally have an interest in.

Synod is electing the people who will represent the Diocese to itself and to the national Church for the next few years. But all that business, both stuffy and stimulating, depending on your mastery of standing orders and your skill in debate, all that necessary business does not on its own a Synod make. Synod is also made by prayer.

At Synod we also check the settings on our collective spiritual health. We want to be the spiritually healthiest organisation we can be. Spiritual health includes transparency, diligent record-keeping, and accountability. The spiritual health of an organisation, just like the spiritual health of an individual, also includes painful honesty about our shortcomings and our sorrows. Spiritual health includes being whole-heartedly thankful and joyful about our achievements and our blessings, about all the abundance that God is giving us. And at the foundation of everything we are as both an organisation — an institution — and as the Body of Christ, at the foundation of everything is prayer.

We pray because we are small, and God is not. God is vast: vast in love and judgement and forgiveness and healing. We pray because we are limited, and Jesus is not. Jesus Christ is alive, and he is all about abundance and far horizons and resurrection power. We pray because we are timid, and the Holy Spirit is not. The Spirit is brave, outrageously bold, a wild risk-taker with nothing to lose and everything to give. We pray because the Trinity is holy and glorious and eternal and, well, *God*. So here we are, ready to love God through Synod, and to let God love us, for the sake of our spiritual health.

Prayer has many permutations. Praise, thanksgiving, lament, confession, blessing, dedication — all these are good, and we can find them all in their proper places in tonight's Eucharist, which is the ultimate Christian prayer. But petition — asking God for help — petition is also core prayer business.

And we know that God is always responding to our most specific requests. The Gospel stories are full of such intense requests, often for healing. Remember the mother who asks Jesus to cast the demon out of her daughter? Remember the father who says there's a spirit that stops his son from speaking, and dashes him to the ground and into the fire? Remember the father whose little daughter is at the point of death? Remember the Roman centurion who says, "My beloved servant is paralysed, in terrible distress"?

Not all the requests to Jesus, not all the prayers, are verbalised. Sometimes the actions do the asking. Remember the people who cut through the roof of the house and dangle their paralysed friend through the ceiling? With Jesus, asking is always okay, and there's no rules about the right or wrong way to ask.

As a Church, we Anglicans have a good track record for praying for the world, and for people in need. We're good at bringing the people we care about to God for help.

What we're perhaps not so good at is asking for God's help *for ourselves*. The people in the Gospels are not so shy. They are not sitting there feeling miserable, saying "There's always someone worse off than me." They are on their feet and asking. Remember the woman who's been bleeding for 12 years, who grabs Jesus' clothes in the middle of the crowd? Remember the blind man in Mark's gospel, who shouts at Jesus, and when Jesus asks him, "What do you want me to do for you?" he says: "Lord, I want to see again." And, of course, the leper in today's story. He knows what he wants, and he's not backward in asking for it: "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." He wants to be clean, which means being reintegrated into his community. He wants to be set free from all the physical and social and spiritual constraints of his disability. He knows what he wants, and he asks for it.

So do let's keep praying for other people; but let's also get serious, about what we really want God to do for us, individually and collectively. What are we game to ask Jesus to do for us?

We're probably not going to ask him for stuff, like Janis Joplin did in the 1960s classic, "Lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz?" Great song, lousy prayer. Stuff, Jesus would immediately remind us, is more the problem than the solution for our troubles. But maybe...

Lord, if you choose, you can make us extraordinarily good at communicating the Good News to Australian society.

Lord, if you choose, you can make us magnificently hospitable to newcomers and strangers.

Lord, if you choose, you can make our schools an exceptionally good place for hearing about Jesus.

Lord, if you choose, you can drag us, kicking and screaming, up from disenchantment or depression or division or just plain dullness, and get us dancing with delight to be the Diocese of Brisbane, the ACSQ.

Lord, if you choose, you can...

How will you complete this sentence?

And what if Jesus replies: "I do choose! Be...be extraordinarily effective communicators. Be brilliantly hospitable. Be fabulous faith educators. Be Anglican party animals. Be all of this!" If Jesus says, "I do choose," what next? Are you ready for the consequences?

Because answers to prayer mean change. You've heard the saying: be careful what you pray for: you might get it. So it might be you, not the bishop, who gets to be the extraordinary communicator. It might be your parish that has the radical culture change from cosy for the regulars to magnificently engaging for outsiders. It might be your school where the penny drops that kids are exceptionally keen to meet Jesus. And I'm praying that it will be your Diocese that gets a spring in your step where you might have been just trudging along. Be careful what you pray for; you might get it!

For the leper in the story, his healing brought the change he wanted, and also, of course, a cost. Jesus specifies part of the cost: going to deal with the temple bureaucracy, paying for the offerings required under the law of Moses to finalise the cleansing process. Then there will be the emotional and social cost of putting together life after disease.

Real change never comes cheap. But there is also, always, a high cost to *not* changing. For us, the cost of not changing will be that the gap will widen between us, our society, the gap between us and the not-yet-Christians — people we live and work and play with. Us not changing means we'll be shouting across that gap, misunderstanding each other, distorting the message, exhausting ourselves. Nobody likes being shouted at from a distance.

My invitation, then, is that through this Synod, and beyond, you will have the courage to ask for change, and pleasure in actively embracing it. Will there be financial costs? Of course. Institutional costs? You bet. Spiritual costs? Yes, indeed. Cultural, liturgical, pastoral, educational, personal costs? All those and more. Are the costs worth paying? Absolutely.

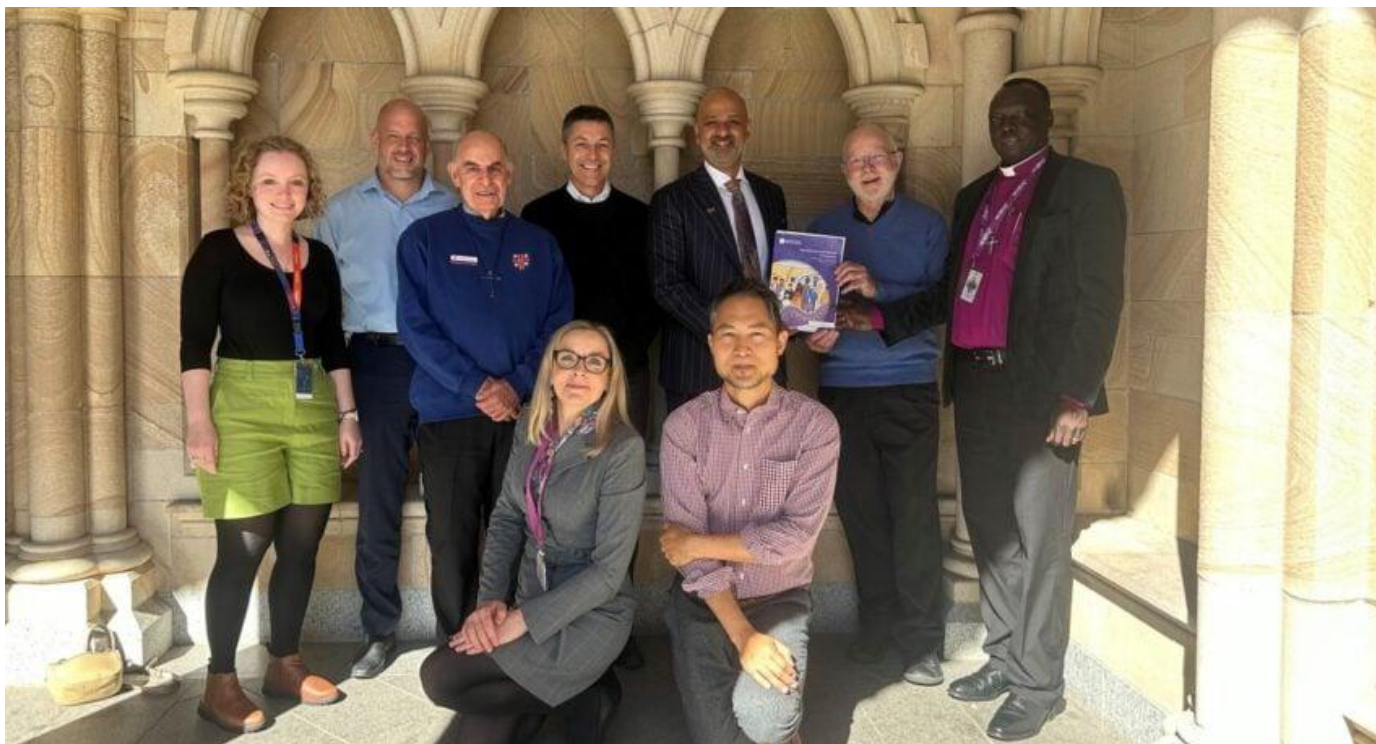
Lord, if you choose, you can change me. If you choose, you can change us.

"I do choose," says the Lord Jesus. "Be wonderfully, terrifyingly, creatively, beautifully, joyfully changed." Amen.

Editor's note: This Synod sermon was given by The Rev'd Dr Elizabeth Smith AM on Friday, 25 June 2026 in St John's Anglican Cathedral, Brisbane.

Justice & Advocacy • Tuesday 28 July 2026 • By The Rev'd Sam Sigamani

"I celebrate the richness of Australia's multicultural life"



Race Discrimination Commissioner Giridharan Sivaraman met in-person and online with Social Responsibilities Committee members and other Anglican Church Southern Queensland clergy and staff to discuss the National Anti-Racism Framework in 2026 (Image by anglican focus)

My family and I have experienced racism first-hand since moving to Queensland in 2023. A member of my family was once referred to by the colour of their skin in a disrespectful way, and I have been subjected to derogatory comments about my nationality, including being told to leave the country because of my appearance. More subtly, I sometimes encounter condescending attitudes — even within Church contexts — reflecting an assumption that I have less knowledge, credibility or insight because of my cultural background. I would describe this as a form of “epistemological hegemony” — the assumption that some voices and perspectives are inherently more valuable than others. These experiences remind me that racism is not always aggressive or violent — it can also be expressed through words, attitudes and assumptions that diminish a person’s dignity and sense of belonging.

Racism like this — or in any other form — stands against one of our most foundational Christian beliefs: that every human being is [created in the image of God](#). The doctrine of the image of God affirms that whoever a person is, however they look, wherever their origins may be, and whatever their beliefs may be, they share in that God-given dignity and worth.

Racism damages this fundamental truth. It diminishes the dignity of those whom God has created and loved. Therefore, the Church must always affirm and defend this foundational tenet of our faith: that every person bears the image of God.

I celebrate the richness of Australia's multicultural life, a richness that is reflected so beautifully in the diversity of our Anglican Church in Southern Queensland. Our congregations bring together people from many cultures, languages and backgrounds. This diversity is not something we merely tolerate; it is something we celebrate as a Christian gift. It reflects the breadth of God's creation and the gathering together of God's people.

As a Church, we are called to listen. We are the ears of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ in the world. Our listening must be trauma-aware, respectful, humble and ongoing. It must never cease. We cannot speak about reconciliation without first listening to the stories, experiences, and wounds of those who have been affected by racism.

Along with other Anglican Church Southern Queensland clergy and staff members, I joined in a meeting with the Race Discrimination Commission, Giri Sivaraman, last month. Commissioner Giri shared about the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#), including about how all sectors need to effectively address interpersonal systemic and institutional forms of racism.

The [National Anti-Racism Framework](#) is a valuable resource — informed by intentional listening to broad community members and representatives from different sectors. It offers not merely ideals, but a practical pathway toward change. It has been informed by real voices and lived experiences from across Australia. If we are serious about addressing racism, we must centre the voices of those who experience it.

The recently carried Synod motion commending the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission in developing the National Anti-Racism Framework is significant because it moves us from intention to action. It asks us to go beyond affirming Christian principles towards exploring practical ways of embodying them in our Diocesan way of life and advocating for them in the wider community.

I believe the Church cannot be separated from the wider society it lives among and serves. We are part of the world that God loves and seeks to redeem. Indeed, many of the values we hold dear as a society — human dignity, justice, equality, and reconciliation — have deep roots in our scripture and the Christian tradition.

By voting for the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#) motion, our Synod affirms that our nation and our Church should be places of deep belonging for all people. We affirm that every person is worthy of dignity and respect. And we commit ourselves to the ongoing work of building communities that reflect the reconciling love of Christ.

I am told that we are the first Church nationally to formally commend the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#). I am proud of our Synod for taking this important practical step and supporting a whole-of-society approach to eliminating racism. This resolution provides an opportunity to demonstrate that the Church can model a different way: as a community of welcome, truth, fairness, justice and reconciliation.

Editor's note: The following motion, moved by Dr Stephen Harrison and seconded by The Rev'd Sam Sigamani, was carried at our Diocese's recent [Synod](#), which was held at Churchie on 25-26 June 2026:

That this Synod:

- 1. celebrates the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of the Australian community as a gift that strengthens our common life;**
- 2. notes the profound harm caused by all forms of racism—including prejudice against First Nations peoples, people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, Islamophobia, and antisemitism—and their impact on individuals, communities, and social cohesion;**
- 3. commends the work of the Australian Human Rights Commission in developing the National Anti-Racism Framework;**
- 4. calls on the Diocesan Council to explore implementing the Framework within the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, as an expression of our commitment to dignity, justice, and reconciliation;**
- 5. calls on the Queensland Government to adopt and implement the Framework at a state level;**
- 6. calls on the Australian Government to establish a national anti-racism taskforce:**
 - a.to oversee the implementation of the Framework;**
 - b.to be co-chaired by the Race Discrimination Commissioner; and**
 - c. to include representation from peak bodies and cross-jurisdictional government leaders;**
- 7. requests the General Manager to write to the Prime Minister and the Premier of Queensland conveying this resolution and the Synod's support for coordinated national action on anti-racism.**

Leading in the age of complexity



"Leadership gets measured by growth, rankings, budgets, outcome and KPIs. Those things matter. But they're not the ultimate measure. Faithfulness is. Faithfulness to our values, our calling, the people in our care," said Nick Johnstone, Principal of Toowoomba Anglican School (Image supplied)

There are speeches you expect to hear. Then there are speeches that quietly change the way you think.

I attended the Anglican Church Southern Queensland Synod over the weekend expecting thoughtful discussion about governance, ministry and the future of the Anglican Church here in my Diocese and, yes, all of that happened as expected. What I didn't expect was one of the clearest reflections on leadership I've encountered in many years.

Archbishop Jeremy Greaves didn't speak about finding easy answers. He spoke about learning to lead faithfully in an increasingly complex world. As I listened, I kept thinking: he's not just describing the Church. He's describing every school, every organisation, every leader trying to find their footing right now.

Complexity isn't the enemy

We tend to approach leadership as though every problem has a solution waiting to be discovered. Write a better policy. Create a new structure. Develop another strategic plan. These things matter (in fact I'm writing a new strategic plan at the moment). But Archbishop Jeremy reminded us that many of today's challenges aren't merely difficult. They're genuinely complex. The "VUCA" acronym jumps to mind: Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity and Ambiguity. I'm sure you have heard it before.

They involve people rather than processes. Relationships rather than regulations. Competing values where no obvious answer sits waiting.

Schools understand this. Artificial intelligence. Student wellbeing. Commonwealth funding limitations. Parent expectations. Faith formation. Belonging. None of these get “fixed” by a policy. They require wisdom, discernment and real relationships built over time.

Complexity isn’t something to escape. It’s the environment we’re called to lead in.

The temptation of certainty

Perhaps the greatest temptation for leaders is believing that certainty equals strength.

In uncertain times, people look for clear answers. We can be tempted to think that if we just speak louder, draw sharper lines, or sort people into those who are “right” and those who are “wrong,” complexity will dissolve. It won’t. The current state of politics in the US and in the UK and here at home in Australia illustrates this.

Archbishop Jeremy challenged us to distinguish between the essential truths that ground us and the many questions where thoughtful, faithful people honestly disagree. That’s not weakness. That’s maturity.

As Anglicans, we’ve long spoken about comprehensiveness. Remaining deeply grounded in Scripture, the Creeds and the historic faith, while recognising that faithful people may discern differently on matters that aren’t at the heart of the Gospel. It’s the discipline of holding conviction with humility. Recognising that we often discover more wisdom through generous conversation than through louder argument.

In an age shaped by outrage, polarity and performative certainty, that might be one of the Church’s most countercultural gifts. And one of the school’s, too.

Culture before structure

One sentence from Archbishop Jeremy has stayed with me: “Structural reforms may sometimes be necessary, but they do not by themselves create trust, generosity or communion.” Every leader should sit with that for a moment.

A new timetable won’t create belonging. A revised org chart won’t build trust. A strategic plan, no matter how well written, can’t manufacture culture. Culture gets built through thousands of daily interactions. How we listen. How we disagree. How we forgive and encourage and choose to lead one another. Structures support culture. They don’t replace it.

Integrity over certainty

The most personal moment in the address came when Archbishop Jeremy spoke about striving to lead with integrity rather than projecting certainty. That landed.

Too often, leadership gets mistaken for always having the answer. But the most trusted leaders I know aren’t the ones who pretend to know everything. They’re the ones honest enough to acknowledge complexity, courageous enough to make hard calls anyway, and humble enough to keep listening after they do.

Leadership right now is less about winning arguments and more about creating space for genuine discernment. That takes patience. It takes courage. And honestly, it takes a kind of hope that doesn't come easily.

Schools as communities of discernment

As educators, we feel pressure to provide certainty for every question. I understand that pressure. Parents want answers. Students want direction. But maybe our calling is something richer than certainty. Maybe our schools should be places where difficult conversations can happen with greater dignity. Where students learn not just what to think, but how to think. Where difference doesn't automatically become division. Where every person is treated with dignity. That's education at its best.

What are we building for those who come after us?

One story from the Archbishop's address has particularly stayed with me. Reflecting on 150 years of Anglican witness in Bundaberg, he asked a simple question. What are we building for those who come after us? He observed that churches can become curators of the past rather than creators of the future. The same challenge applies to schools. This year, Toowoomba Anglican School celebrates 115 years of educating young people. We treasure our heritage. We honour those who came before us. But our responsibility isn't simply to preserve what was. It's to steward what comes next. The people who founded Toowoomba Anglican School weren't looking backwards. They were looking forward, faithfully, hopefully, expectantly. That's our task, too.

Faithfulness before success

Near the end of his address, Archbishop Jeremy quoted Rowan Williams: "We're not told to make it work; we're told to be faithful." I've been sitting with those words for a couple of days now.

Leadership gets measured by growth, rankings, budgets, outcome and KPIs. Those things matter. But they're not the ultimate measure. Faithfulness is. Faithfulness to our values, our calling, the people in our care.

In schools, as in churches, it was never really about what we build. It's about who we become.

In a world that rewards certainty, speed and division, maybe our most important contribution is to model something different. Communities marked by integrity rather than simplistic ideology. Discernment rather than easy answers. Courage rather than fear. Hope rather than despair.

Greek philosopher Heraclitus is quoted in saying "Change is the only constant". The future will stay complex. Leadership has never really been about having all the answers anyway. It's always been about walking faithfully with others, trusting that even when the path ahead isn't clear we are inclusive, authentic and act with integrity.

First posted on Nick Johnstone's LinkedIn Page on 1 July 2026.

The Cross and the Olive Tree: Cultivating Palestinian Theology amid Gaza



"The Cross and The Olive Tree is an honest, carefully argued and accessible collection — it is an important read for clergy and justice advocates. With its essays containing only 142 pages, this collection would work well as a small-group study," says The Rev'd Deb Bird from The Parish of Kenmore-Brookfield (Image supplied)

The *Cross and the Olive Tree* is a collection of essays by emerging and established Palestinian Christian theologians exploring concepts of memory, place, responsibility, imagination, reconciliation and martyrdom towards discerning faithful Christian witness in a time of [genocide](#).

The book's consistent claim is that Palestinian theology cannot be separated from life in Palestine. Its stories cast the central images of the cross of the Christian faith against the olive tree of Palestine that they might seek to "interpret each other" (p.xxxii). Taking three uses of olive oil as an organising metaphor, the editors describe the Palestinian theology: the anointing oil of pastoral church theology; the soap oil that cleanses faith of oppressive theological interpretation; and, the oil of the lamp that is the lived theology of people.

Gaza-born Yousef AlKhouri's opening essay "Teita's Faith" expands the category of "theologian", conducting a sweeping historical survey of Gaza's ancient and enduring Christian presence, before presenting stories of his grandmothers Naima and Jamila who faithfully preserve Gaza's Christian history in their practice of hospitality and enemy-love. AlKhouri recalls a band of Israeli soldiers forcefully entering the family home during the First Intifada. According to the account Naima simply continued her baking and as the soldiers left her home, she handed one soldier a warm loaf to share with the others. The author understands this as "faithfulness over resentment" (p.22), a call to enemy-love that disrupts the expected relationship between oppressor and oppressed and the women emerge as uncredentialed but authoritative theologians whose lives express a "real, raw outworking of faith" (p.4)

Marah Sarji continues a focus on women linking Palestinian and Guatemalan histories, noting the ways women continue to create and sustain life amid violence. Writing from her experience as an Afro-Palestinian woman, Azmera Hammouri-Davis fleshes out the interrelationship of faith and doubt in the Biblical figure of Hagar and the ways the wilderness becomes a survival, encounter and new possibility.

I particularly appreciated Lamma Mansour's account of prophetic imagination as a bridge "between Already Here and Not Yet" (p.63), and as a faithful practice able to "disrupt the despair, cynicism and fatalism" that can take root under oppression (p.70). Her chapter marks a pivotal turn in the volume towards Daniel Munayer's frank examination of the structural barriers to liberation and reconciliation, and John and Samuel Munayer's theologically demanding discussion of martyrdom. The latter challenges narrow ideas of "martyrdom" as heroic death, reorientating it as a comprehensive, communal and continuing commitment to truth, solidarity and liberation in even the most marginalised places.

Together, the contributors critique Biblical interpretations used to legitimise Israel's ongoing [occupation](#) and the [ethnic cleansing](#) of Palestinians from their ancient homelands and resist any easy movement from the experience of crucifixion to a much hoped for resurrection. Sarji warns that "liberation is not a predetermined event following suffering" (p.43), arguing that our understanding of resurrection cannot make suffering necessary or guarantee political redemption, rather it is a thing glimpsed at whenever death-dealing powers are resisted through care, memory, imagination and solidarity.

For me, *The Cross and the Olive Tree* is both a warning to resist speaking about Palestinians without first listening to Palestinian Christians and a challenge to stay with the emerging insights of a generation of Palestinian theologians wrestling with what it is to seek liberation and reconciliation under an illegal [occupation](#).

The Cross and The Olive Tree is an honest, carefully argued and accessible collection — it is an important read for clergy and justice advocates. With its essays containing only 142 pages, this collection would work well as a small-group study.

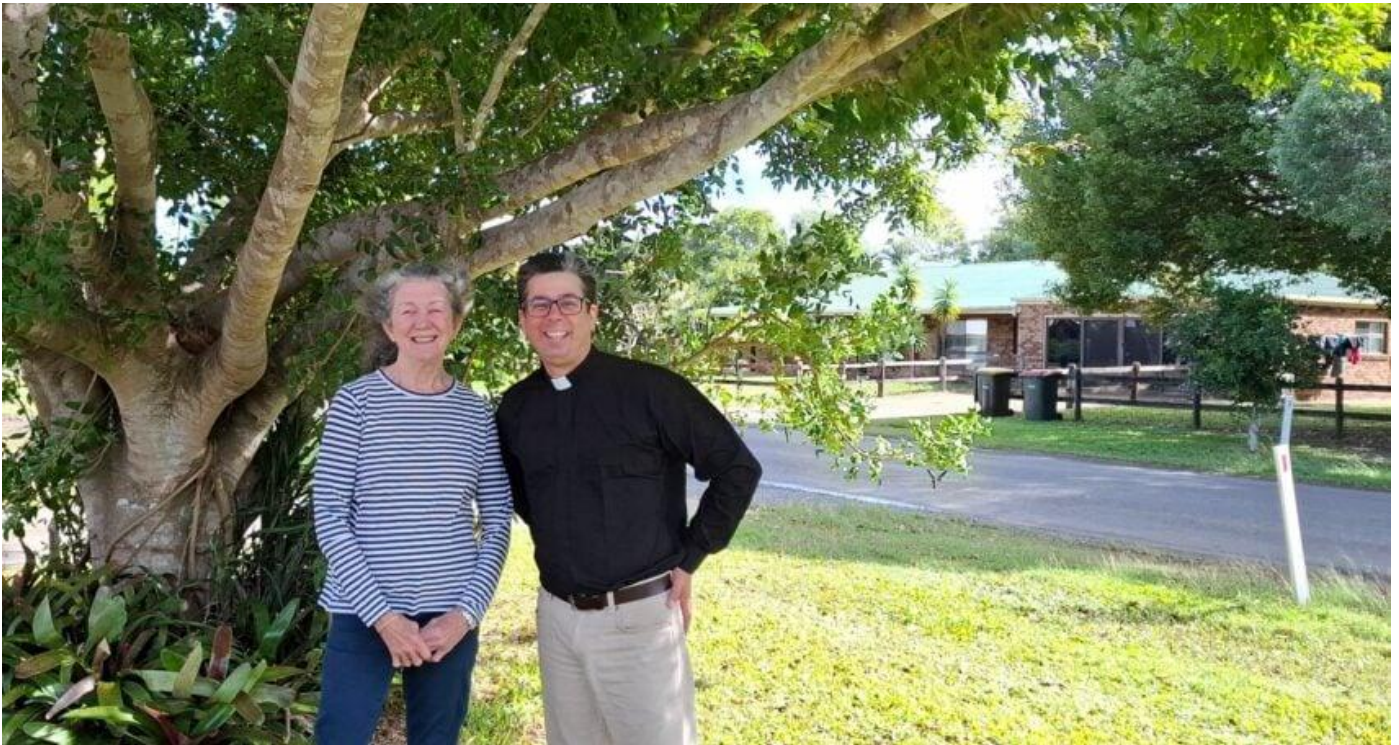
It is, as the editors write, theology "written during crucifixion" (p.xviii) that yet finds its hope in refusing to allow violence to determine the limits of human dignity, Christian imagination or participation in God's liberating work.

The Cross and the Olive Tree: Cultivating Palestinian Theology amid Gaza is available for loan in the [Roscoe Library](#).

Munayer, J.S. and Munayer, S.S. (eds) 2025, [The Cross and the Olive Tree: Cultivating Palestinian Theology amid Gaza](#), Orbis Books, Maryknoll, NY.

Editor's note: Dr Lamma Mansour (a Christian Palestinian writer, speaker and sociologist from Nazareth) and Dr Yousef AlKhouri (Academic Dean and Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies at Bethlehem Bible College, who was born in Gaza) will be touring Australia between 28 July and 3 August 2026. Their national "Bearing Witness" tour is sponsored and funded by the National Council of Churches in Australia. For more information or to register, please visit the [Palestinian Christians in Australia](#) website.

“Susan Harrison shows me the importance of true teamwork”



The Rev'd Greg Loumeau from The Parish of Hervey Bay and Susan Harrison from the Fraser Coast Domestic and Family Violence Alliance outside St John's, Hervey Bay in July 2026 (Image supplied)

Readers are advised that this content references domestic and family violence.

I first met Susan Harrison in her home about five years ago, along with other parish representatives, after she offered to assist our parish with some administrative queries. She has been part of the wider Hervey Bay Parish community for over 30 years.

Susan is very involved in [Zonta](#), whose mission is “Building a Better World for Women and Girls” and the Fraser Coast Domestic and Family Violence Alliance. Over the years, as I have come to know her better, Susan has consistently struck me as someone who has a heart for the safety of women and girls. She is always *there*, working diligently behind the scenes. When she speaks, she does so after carefully listening to others and what she says is always well thought through and valuable.

Susan Harrison shows me the importance of true teamwork. She uses the analogy of a rowboat and how much more can be achieved when there is a team working together to row a boat instead of an individual. Her example shows that everyone's contribution counts and that when each person's contribution is valued, the dignity of all individuals working together is upheld, as well as the dignity of the people the team is advocating for.

Susan's approach inspires me to acknowledge the gifts that all individuals bring, as well as the outcome of a team's effort — servant leadership includes acknowledging, encouraging, empowering and showing gratitude for the gifts that individuals contribute.

Editor's notes: 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.

Justice & Advocacy • Wednesday 29 July 2026 • By The Rev'd Peter Jeffery

Gold, paella and the prayers of a football club



The Rev'd Peter Jeffery (front left) in 2025 with fellow Bardon Latrobe Football Club Over 35s, who represent eight different nationalities

Our nation's football teams have never looked like one homogenous "country".

Since 1922, players born in more than [40 nations](#) have pulled on the Socceroos jersey* — a fact that tells its own story about who we are becoming as a people.

That story plays out every week at local clubs across the country — in both men's and women's teams.

Playing community football in Brisbane, I am regularly asked to pray from fellow players, who come from many different countries:

"Can you pray for the elections in my country? We are in desperate need of change."

“Pray for our community — we can no longer publicly celebrate our heritage with confidence.”

“Can you pray for my family in the midst of civil war?”

“Can we give thanks for my citizenship?”

At a recent team social tournament, these people gathered with players from Northern Ireland, Scotland, England, the United States and Switzerland.

At our training sessions there is a plethora of international jerseys — a number that swells during a World Cup. Yet when we gather to watch the Socceroos, all are adorned in gold — many accents of Babel, one voice as at Pentecost.

Local Australian clubs have historically showcased their cultural heritage — watch any Football Federation Australia Cup match and the broadcast will almost certainly find its way to a clubhouse canteen built around that identity. Brisbane’s own Jade North became, briefly, the first Indigenous captain of the Socceroos — a milestone that deserved more attention than it received.

The shifting composition of our national team mirrors the changing demographics of immigration: from the United Kingdom and Ireland and Europe, then Central and South America and Asia, and over the past decade, players increasingly coming from [South Sudan](#), among others who have sought refuge here. The Socceroos team continues to evolve with our nation.

During the recent [Refugee Week](#), which was held during the World Cup period, I paused before the start of one of our team’s games, pondering what football quietly achieves in our suburbs — where our parishes serve. The back four arrive with four different accents. Families connect over a round ball. If we are lucky, a team-sized paella is cooking on the sidelines, whether Spain wins the World Cup or not.

Call for expressions of interest: Potential commissioners for the new Ministry Development Commission



"I look forward to working alongside Archbishop Jeremy in the role of Ministry Development Commission Implementation Officer, as we encourage practising Anglicans to prayerfully consider whether you, or someone you know, may be called to serve in this important new ministry," says The Rev'd Mel Conway, Implementation Officer for the Ministry Development Commission (Image by anglican focus, 2026)

I am often asked what I love most about being an Anglican and what I love most about the Church.

As an Anglican I love the way we blend tradition with new ideas and developments.

What I love most about the Church is that we can come from different backgrounds and bring our whole selves to worship and service, including our gifts, knowledge, skills and experience.

So I have enthusiastically accepted the part-time role of Implementation Officer for the Ministry Development Commission (MDC), with my first key task being helping Archbishop Jeremy and the Diocesan Council as they seek to identify practising Anglicans — with the appropriate gifts, knowledge, skills and experience — to serve as MDC commissioners.

The Ministry Development Commission, will provide "direction and leadership in equipping, supporting and empowering people and communities for the flourishing of parishes and other faith communities..."

The new Ministry Development Commission will combine the Ministry Education Commission and the Parish and Other Mission Agencies Commission, as well as the Clergy Development, Training and Wellbeing Team; the Reconciliation team; and, the Social Responsibilities team (including our Justice Unit).

As explained by Archbishop Jeremy in a recent *ad clerum*, the Ministry Development Commission will, in part, involve:

1. forming, educating and supporting clergy and laity

2. strengthening the current and future leadership of faith communities;
3. providing accessible and contextually grounded theological education;
4. supporting faith communities to cultivate belonging, outreach and partnership within and beyond their communities
5. serving as a catalyst for faithful innovation in mission and ministry across our Diocese.

A new commission needs governance, so Archbishop Jeremy is inviting expressions of interest from practising Anglicans (both lay and ordained) who feel called to serve as MDC commissioners.

[The Diocesan Governance Canon Amendment Canon 2026](#) outlines the desired diversity, skills, qualifications, experience and representation for the new commission, with applicants especially encouraged to consider:

- senior strategic leadership experience
- knowledge of parish life and ministry development
- experience in adult education, theological formation or leadership development
- expertise in community engagement, wellbeing, Reconciliation or social responsibility
- skills in innovation, entrepreneurship or organisational development
- capacity to work collaboratively across the Diocese
- commitment to the values, ethos and mission of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

The commission will include both clergy and laity, and Archbishop Jeremy encourages applications from people across metropolitan, regional and rural contexts, reflecting the breadth and diversity of our Diocese.

Commissioners will be practising Anglicans, and those appointed from this expression of interest process will serve an initial term of up to three years.

If you wish to be considered, please submit the following by Monday, 3 August 2026 via email to Joanne Rose at bsecretary@anglicanchurchsq.org.au:

1. **A brief expression of interest document** (one-page maximum) outlining your motivation for serving as a commissioner for the Ministry Development Commission and the gifts you would bring.
2. **A curriculum vitae** or a brief summary of relevant skills, qualifications and experience.

If there is someone in your parish or faith community whom you think would make a faithful and effective Commissioner, but who might not feel ready to nominate themselves, please email me (with the person's permission) Melissa.Conway@anglicanchurchsq.org.au. I will then follow up to discuss a potential expression of interest.

I can also be contacted by people who wish to self-nominate if they have any questions.

Please see "Schedule 1" (from the bottom of page 2 onwards) of the [Diocesan Governance Canon Amendment Canon 2026](#) for more information about the new commission, including membership (such as the experience, skills and qualifications appropriate for members of the MDC).

I look forward to working alongside Archbishop Jeremy in the role of Ministry Development Commission Implementation Officer, as we encourage practising Anglicans to prayerfully consider whether you, or someone you know, may be called to serve in this important new ministry.

Burleigh Heads Anglican Church: Development partner expression of interest process



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves, Anglican Church Southern Queensland (Image by anglican focus)

Burleigh Heads Anglican Church has proudly served parishioners and the wider community for many decades.

Through its worship, outreach, and community engagement, Burleigh Heads Anglican Church offers a vibrant and meaningful ministry to Burleigh Heads and beyond. The current parish buildings — including the church, hall, thrift shop and commercial property — support this work, both missionally and financially.

Looking ahead, Burleigh Heads Anglican Church sees an opportunity to redevelop the parish's site in a way that better reflects and supports its existing mission. A renewed parish centre would enhance the church's ability to grow its ministries, deepen its engagement with the community, and respond more effectively to emerging needs.

Therefore Priest-in-Charge, the Reverend Eron Perry, and the parish's lay leaders are seeking a development partner, with funds raised to replace existing buildings and create a multilevel parish centre.

An expression of interest process will commence soon towards identifying a potential development partner, who would complement the site while helping to fund the multilevel parish centre.

I look forward to finding out what complementing options will be identified in the expression of interest process.

The timing of any development will be dependent on the outcome of the expression of interest process.

The parish is working with our experienced Property Team on this fledgling project.

Eron will continue to talk with his church community, greater Gold Coast Anglican network and the parish's neighbours about their plans as they evolve.

Please join me as I keep Eron, the Burleigh Heads Anglican Church parish council and parishioners, and the wider Burleigh Heads community in my prayers.

Reflections • Wednesday 29 July 2026 • By Dr Stephen Harrison

Anglicare Sunday 2026: "Embodying Christ's love and helping to build compassionate, just and inclusive communities"



The Rev'd Morris Rangiwai and Anglicare Southern Queensland Director of Mission Dr Stephen Harrison enjoying an Anglicare Tea for Tomorrow celebration at St Matthew's Anglican Church, Holland Park in November 2025

"Anglicare saved my life!"

This was the greeting I received one Sunday at the door of a church after a recent visit when I shared about Anglicare's work.

The parishioner who greeted me then shared a touching story. Her elderly husband had become very unwell and the support that Anglicare staff gave them not only helped them with daily living, but also sustained her emotionally and spiritually through a challenging time.

I have heard many heartwarming stories while serving as Anglicare's Director of Mission since 2022. Stories like the one I share here inspired me to launch the first "Anglicare Sunday" in 2023.

This annual day in our Diocese's calendar provides an opportunity for our parishes, schools and ministries to give thanks for, celebrate, and pray for the ministry of Anglicare and all those who share in its work.

For more than 150 years, Anglicare has been part of the Church's response to human need in our state. Inspired by the Gospel and grounded in our shared faith, Anglicare continues to walk alongside people in times of hardship, offering care, support and hope.

Today, this ministry takes many forms. Through aged care, community services, mental health support, foster and kinship care, youth support and family services, homelessness support and advocacy, Anglicare serves thousands of people across Southern Queensland each year — embodying Christ's love and helping to build compassionate, just and inclusive communities.

Anglicare Sunday is also an opportunity to recognise and celebrate the staff, volunteers, chaplains, supporters and parish and school communities who make this ministry possible. It also invites us to reflect on how we, as the Church, are called to participate in God's mission of love, service and hope in the world.

This year we celebrate the occasion across our Diocesan community on Sunday, 13 September. While our [parishes](#), [schools](#) and [early learning centres](#) have long-supported Anglicare, commemorating Anglicare's work annually on the second Sunday in September celebrates Anglicare's mission in a special way.

Anglican Church Southern Queensland's parishes, schools and ministries are invited to commemorate Anglicare Sunday again this year and to join in praying for all who are served by, and served through, Anglicare.

Liturgical resources, prayers and materials (such as "Tea for Tomorrow" resources) may be [downloaded](#).

Editor's note: To find out more about Anglicare Sunday, please [email](#) Anglicare Southern Queensland's Director of Mission Dr Stephen Harrison.

Tough Questions: What is Worship?



"We are worshippers by nature, and if we do not worship God, we inevitably give ourselves to the counterfeit worship of something else," says The Rev'd Charlie Lacey from St Andrew's, Springfield

The Bible contains countless verses that command, invite, and encourage believers to worship and praise God. But what exactly is worship? It may seem like a simple question, and certainly not a 'Tough Question', as per this series, yet many Christians have a hazy understanding of what the word really means. For some, worship is simply the part of a church service where everybody sings, but this view is too narrow by far.

Worship, properly understood, is a posture of the heart whereby a person is wholly orientated towards God. It is praise of the highest good and admiration of that which is most admirable, and it should be present in every area of our lives. In other words, worship is not merely an activity, but a way of life that continually gives glory to God.

In the ancient world, animal sacrifice was central to worship for both Jews and pagans, but everything changed with the coming of Jesus. The Apostle Paul teaches that, rather than offering animals, believers are called to offer themselves as living sacrifices.

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God — this is your true and proper worship."
(Romans 12.1)

In the same spirit as Paul, St Augustine challenged the pagan Roman view of sacrifice when he wrote, "Thus a true sacrifice is every work which is done that we may be united to God in holy friendship." Worship, then, not only glorifies God but deepens our friendship with him.

As we lay aside worldly ways in favour of God's ways, every part of our lives can become an act of worship, giving glory to God and drawing us ever nearer to him.

It is often asked why God calls us to worship him, and some even accuse God of being petty or egotistic. To answer this, we must first recognise that human beings are created to worship. We are worshippers by nature, and if we do not worship God, we inevitably give ourselves to the counterfeit worship of something else.

This isn't limited to the ancient pagan devotion to sun, moon, oceans or forests. For the modern person, whatever holds the highest place in their life becomes the object of their worship, whether money, possessions, family, sport, or, as is so often the case, ourselves.

If worship is inevitable, it would make sense to worship the only one who truly merits and deserves our worship, namely the God who has made himself known to us through the person of Jesus Christ. Moreover, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, "the world rings with praise." That is, human beings spontaneously praise the things that they value. He concludes, "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed."

The Westminster confession states that, "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." If we follow Lewis' logic, we can only enjoy God to the fullest extent when we worship him.

In conclusion, we have been created to worship; it is part of what makes us human, but our inclination to worship is often misdirected. Worship, in its fullest sense, is a way of living that glorifies God, deepens our relationship with him, and enables us to experience the joy of knowing him. It is a posture of humility and gratitude towards the only one who is worthy, expressed through every aspect of our lives, which of course includes singing God's praises in church.

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

“All of us, together”: Anglicare celebrates “50 Years of Deadly”



Scott Hautaniemi and Rosie Lang, business owners of Culturally Informed Practices, with Anglicare's First Nations Lead Jess Simpson at Anglicare's NAIDOC Week pop-up market on 6 July 2026 (Image supplied)

Anglicare Southern Queensland has celebrated NAIDOC Week with a variety of events across its services, celebrating this year's theme “50 Years of Deadly”.

Day respite centre clients, staff and special guests gathered to celebrate the official naming of the Nalingu Respite Centre, with *Nalingu* meaning “All of us, together”.

Anglicare's First Nations Engagement Lead Jessica Simpson said the name held deep significance, having been gifted to the organisation by respected Elder and Nalingu client Ruth Hegarty.

“It is a tremendous honour to have Aunty Ruth and her family gift us the name *Nalingu*, which was originally given to her by her mother, Ruby,” Ms Simpson said.

“‘All of us, together’ speaks to the heart of what our respite centre represents: connection, belonging, care and community.

“It reminds us that no one stands alone — we are connected through the relationships we build, the stories we share, the care we provide, and the respect we show one another.”

Special guests and clients were also treated to a weaving session hosted by Aunty Georgina from First Nations business Dhiyaan Dhinawan.



Anglicare CEO Sue Cooke with respected Elder Aunty Ruth Hegarty and Anglicare Service Manager of Home and Community Services Kelly Gray in front of the new Nalingu Respite Centre during NAIDOC Week on 6 July 2026: the name *Nalingu* was gifted to Anglicare by Aunty Ruth and means “All of us, together” (Image supplied)

Throughout the remainder of the week, Anglicare staff and communities participated in a range of cultural celebrations, including hosting a First Nations small business mini market, cultural weaving and hat burning lessons, and the creation of a collaborative NAIDOC Week artwork led by First Nations artist Uncle David O’Neil.

Ms Simpson said the activities were a meaningful way for Anglicare to educate team members and clients on First Nations ways of being and doing, while connecting them to Community.

“These celebrations and activities create space for people to come together, share stories and experience culture in ways that build understanding, respect and a stronger sense of belonging,” she said.

“By hosting the mini market, we were able to showcase and directly support First Nations businesses, while giving staff and members of the broader community a meaningful and accessible way to engage with culture.

“The market featured everything from earrings, paintings and homewares to bush medicine products, clothing, cultural artefacts, weaving kits and hand-painted dolls and we’re thankful to all of the business owners who participated, sharing their products and knowledge with our community.



Eight Mile Plains Anglicare team members enjoying a traditional painting activity led by First Nations artist Uncle David O'Neill during NAIDOC Week on 9 July 2026 (image supplied)

"At our Eight Mile Plains office, the collaborative artwork session led by Uncle David allowed our teams to learn through creativity and conversation, while contributing to a reflective piece that honours connection, culture and the shared commitment to the people and communities we serve."

Anglicare CEO Sue Cooke said NAIDOC Week is an important reminder that recognition, respect and learning must continue throughout the year.

"NAIDOC Week is an important time to celebrate the strength, resilience and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, but it is vital that this recognition and respect continues throughout the year — not just during NAIDOC or Reconciliation Week," Ms Cooke said.

"At Anglicare we do this by respecting cultural protocols and bringing cultural protocols into our work every single day, from Acknowledgements of Country through to ceremonial activities, such as smoking ceremonies and Welcome to Country.

"By continuing to listen, learn and walk alongside First Nations communities, we can help create services and workplaces where culture is understood, valued and celebrated by everyone."

Scaffolding down as Anglicare prepares to open new Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service in Logan



“After years of planning, fundraising and construction work, seeing the scaffolding come down makes it feel more real than ever that we will soon be opening our doors to young people in need of safe, supported and stable housing,” says Sue Cooke from Anglicare Southern Queensland about the new Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service in Logan

Anglicare Southern Queensland’s \$14 million Youth Homelessness Accommodation Service has reached another major milestone, with the scaffolding now fully removed as the organisation prepares to open the doors in September this year.

The service will provide 30 units for young people aged 16 to 25, who are experiencing homelessness or are at significant risk of becoming homeless, and includes 24 studio apartments for individuals and six one-bedroom apartments for couples or young families.

Anglicare CEO Sue Cooke said the removal of the scaffolding marked an exciting moment for the project and the local Logan community.

“After years of planning, fundraising and construction work, seeing the scaffolding come down makes it feel more real than ever that we will soon be opening our doors to young people in need of safe, supported and stable housing,” Ms Cooke said.

“We are in the final stages of preparing the building for its new residents and transforming each apartment into a modern, welcoming place where young people can relax comfortably and feel at home.”

Ms Cooke said the service’s opening in two months’ time would come at a critical juncture, as young people across the South Brisbane–Logan corridor continued to face increasingly unaffordable rents and a significant shortage of immediate-need accommodation.

"In Logan alone, median rents have risen by 71 per cent since 2020 (AIHW, 2025), increasing from \$350 to \$600 and placing further pressure on people already struggling with the cost of living," she said.

"Our 2026 Rental Affordability Snapshot assessed 741 listings across Logan–Beaudesert and found just two suitable properties for households on income support. Only 68, or 0.8 per cent, were affordable and appropriate for minimum-wage households.

"For young people without a stable home, the impacts can be immediate and far-reaching, from couch surfing and crisis accommodation to disengaging from school, training or employment.

"Through stable housing and the right support, we know that young people are more likely to stay connected to education, find employment and move towards long-term housing.

With the official opening just two months away, Anglicare is calling on Logan businesses, community groups and local supporters to help furnish the new apartments.

Ms Cooke said each of the 24 studio apartments will require approximately \$2,300 in essential furniture and household items, including a bed, sofa, dining table, storage and other practical items needed for independent living.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Logan community for the support shown throughout the development of this service.

"As we prepare to open our doors, we are inviting local businesses, community groups and supporters to help furnish an apartment, donate essential items or make a financial contribution of any size."

"A room is only the beginning. It also needs the everyday essentials many of us take for granted — a comfortable place to sleep, somewhere to share a meal, a space to store your belongings and an environment that feels truly your own."

"Many of the young people who come to us have been living out of backpacks and suitcases, carrying their belongings from place to place.

"We want to give them a space where they can finally unpack, take a breath and feel that, for once, they do not have to keep moving.

"Every contribution will help create a safe and dignified space where a young person can feel supported, regain stability and take the first step toward rebuilding life with confidence and hope."

Anglicare is proud to be delivering this service, but cannot do it alone. The support of local businesses, donors, partners and advocates will help ensure each apartment is ready to welcome young people when the doors open in September.

To find out more about helping furnish the apartments or supporting the Youth Homelessness Accommodation Project, please visit the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#).