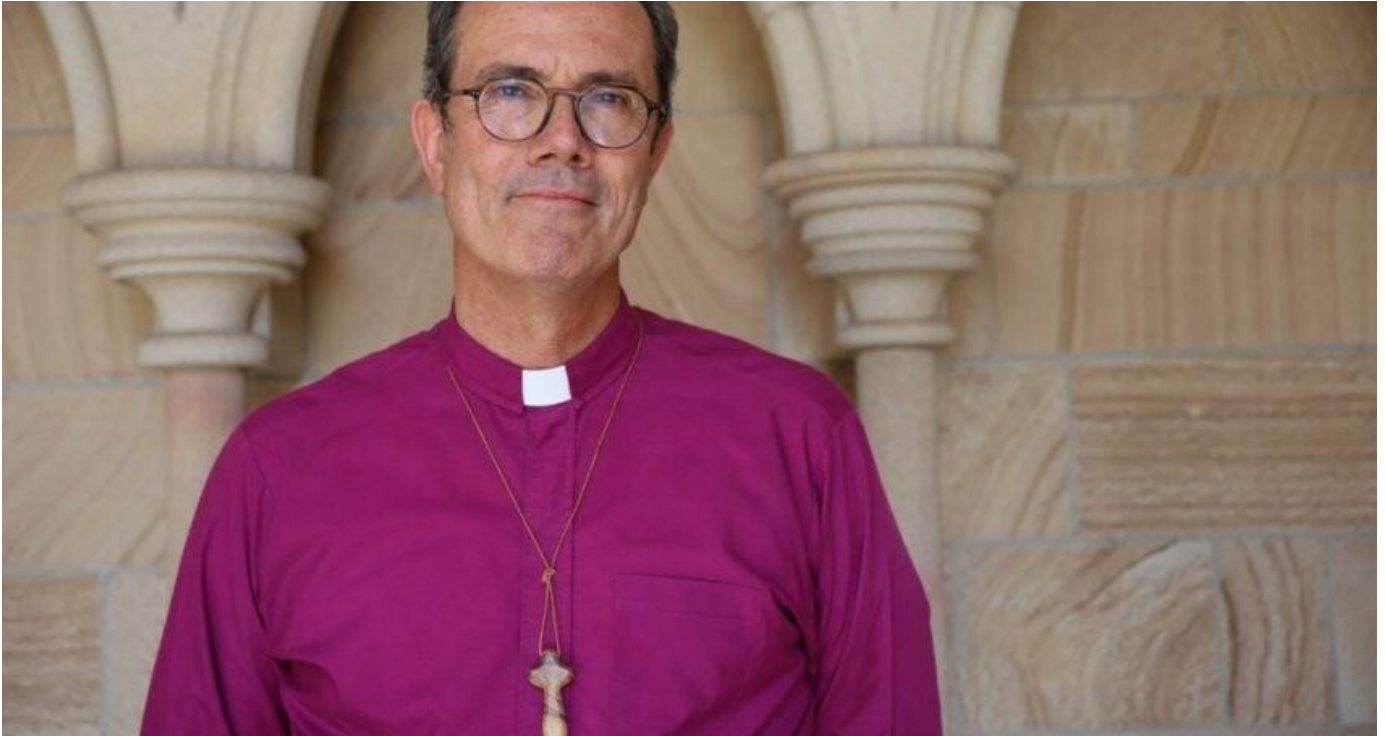


“Helping our Pacific neighbours find community and friendship”



"Australian Anglican congregations have a key role to play in helping our Pacific neighbours find community and friendship, and we can be so thankful for this. As our lives continue to weave together with theirs, and as we journey together in faith, there is a developing openness to new possibilities and partnerships," says Bishop Cam Venables (Image by anglican focus)

I recently drove to Texas — not the one in America, but the small town on the Queensland–New South Wales border. Twenty-one people gathered for church that evening, and a long table had been booked for dinner at the pub next door. It was busy and lively, and it was a joy to catch up with everyone there.

I slept at the church that night and then drove up to Inglewood for morning worship. Earlier this year the Inglewood church had Eastern Bent-wing bats (*Miniopterus orianae oceanensis*) in the sanctuary, but these had been carefully relocated, and St John the Evangelist was as neat as a pin. On one side of the sanctuary there is a lectern that holds long strands of shell money from the Solomon Islands. These are a gift from St Peter's Church — Tatarabe Community — Auki.

Beside the lectern there is a letter from the leaders of St Peter's Church that reads:

"We are so grateful and are happy indeed for your kind support assisting our community with the gift of \$6,000 towards the renovations of our church. In response to the gift, our community would like to present you our gift of shell money...In our culture the Shell Money is very valuable and is used for: bride price; compensation payments; peacemaking and reconciliation; funerals and important

ceremonies; it is a symbol of respect and obligation; and is used to bond two parties in their relationship...our friendship is beginning and will be continued."



"On one side of the sanctuary there is a lectern that holds long strands of shell money from the Solomon Islands. These are a gift from St Peter's Church — Tatarabe Community — Auki," says Bishop Cam Venables about St John's, Inglewood (Image supplied)

The [Pacific Australian Labour Mobility](#) (PALM) scheme enables Australian businesses to hire workers from nine Pacific countries when there are not enough local workers in Australia. Many people who come from the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu are Anglican and over the last eight years at least six Western Region parishes have been blessed by their fellowship and singing — Kingaroy, Gatton, Clifton, Warwick, Stanthorpe and Charleville.

As well as worship on Sundays there have been many meals shared, Bible study groups participated in, visits to the Solomon Islands, bike riding, fence making, and...myriad expressions of genuine care. Our local economies are well served by these friends who bring their skills and energy to such industries as fruit picking, meat processing and aged care.

Most of the money that workers earn goes back to the Solomon Islands or Vanuatu to support their families and local communities. This income has paid for school fees and hospital bills; water tanks and metal roofs; and, new small businesses.

This may sound like a win-win situation and in many ways it is. However, workers who come to Australia sacrifice years away from their family and so miss out on birthdays, funerals, weddings and

sporting events. When working in our Western Region there is not an opportunity to take a canoe out fishing or go and dive for turtles on the reef! So, the question asked by exiles in [Psalm 137](#) can resonate truly, "How can we sing the Lord's song in a strange land? (Psalm 137.4)".

Australian Anglican congregations have a key role to play in helping our Pacific neighbours find community and friendship, and we can be so thankful for this. As our lives continue to weave together with theirs, and as we journey together in faith, there is a developing openness to new possibilities and partnerships. Could the next priest of Kingaroy or Gatton parishes be someone from the Anglican Church of Melanesia?

I hope so.

Spotlight Q&A • Wednesday 26 August 2026 • By The Rev'd Sue Grimmett

Q&A with priest, pilgrimage leader, advocate, dog lover and avid reader, The Rev'd Sue Grimmett



The Rev'd Sue Grimmett under the stars near Uluru on the Coomera Anglican College Desert Retreat in 2023 (Image supplied)

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live and worship in Indooroopilly, Brisbane.

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

After roles in other denominations, I have been involved in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland since 2011. I have been a youth worker, a school chaplain, a prison chaplain, an Assistant Priest at St John's Cathedral and I am currently Rector of St Andrew's, Indooroopilly,

What does your current role involve?

As a parish priest I spend a lot of time with members of my community in conversation, planning for faith formation and worship and creating spaces that strengthen and support our community in following the way of Jesus. There is also so much writing, including sermons, reflections, emails, messages to community members and other faith and ministry leaders around our Diocese.

What do you most love about being a priest?

My absolute favourite thing about being a priest is the privilege of presiding at the Eucharist and holding a space of worship where our community enters so wholeheartedly. My other great love is sharing life in community; being present and walking alongside others in the sacred times and turning points in life — birth, marriage, illness and death.

What is a highlight of your current role as a parish priest?

I love the way our parish has evolved to have such a wide footprint in our local community by responding to those experiencing food insecurity through our partnership with Street Care and by taking new clothing to those in need through our partnership with Anglicare and Thread Together. In some beautiful emergence, a gentleman who came to our launch of the parish's Community Care Hub saw the possibility of adding to our supply of fresh fruit and vegetables by approaching local supermarkets and discerning where there was still wastage. He, and a small band of friends he recruited from his local senior citizens club, now deliver to us weekly.



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

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

One thing happening now that is very meaningful is the development of restorative practices across our Diocese. Seeing this work develop is very dear to my heart because to me it expresses the Gospel in action, valuing as it does the dignity of all, insisting on the truth and prioritising setting relationships right.

One thing I am currently looking forward to the most is the [Pilgrimage to the Sacred Caucasus](#) (Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan), which is coming up in May 2027. I am fortunate to be the spiritual director of the pilgrimage.

What are the spiritual and communal benefits of going on pilgrimage?

Pilgrimage is different to any kind of travel. It is a journey prayerfully dedicated to God and open to experiences of place and peoples, history and culture, all the while developing relationships with fellow travellers and encountering yourself in new ways.

What advice do you have for people considering a vocation to ordained ministry?

I would say to be prepared for a life that is demanding, requiring every part of yourself and absolute authenticity, while offering the richness of community through holy and meaningful work in the service of love. Show up with the integrity of just being yourself and surrender to the adventure of it all!



The Rev'd Sue Grimmertt (far right), then Cathedral curate, joined in the 10-hour "Nauru Files" live reading vigil outside the Department of Immigration and Border Protection in August 2016 (Image supplied)

How did you discern your call to the priesthood?

I was already working as a lay Chaplain in schools and the sense in my prayer time of being called deeper into sacramental ministry was strong. This was helped by two dear friends from my church bringing some paperwork to me one day to apply for entry to formation and announcing they would not leave until I had filled it out.

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

I grew up in a family that had strong Methodist traditions and Christian commitment and my faith in Christ began in my childhood. After that the journey was more convoluted, taking me through several different denominations before I found a lasting home in the Anglican Church.

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

Being a Christian is about following the way of Jesus, and this means that I am being invited to be a co-creator of the kingdom of God; a kingdom of justice, mercy and peace. I am also by the Spirit's grace, in a process of change and becoming, and lately the three most important aspirational words that I hope will shape my life choices are mercy, gentleness and humility.

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

The Church is not a gallery of saints nor a museum of perfect people, but more like a hospital where we all come in our need. At its best our Church communities welcome all who come, sharing the love and grace we have received and working in the Spirit to live out that love in tangible ways in our communities.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

"Let the dawning day bring me revelation of your tender, unfailing love."

I have had the strange experience recently of writing the words for my own tombstone as I plan to be buried with my mother who died last year. We had to find something suitable for all of us, and I felt these words from [Psalm 143](#) were central and hopeful for both living and dying.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

So many, but St Mary MacKillop is one whose commitment to seeing a need and seeking to do something about it through a life that was brave, prayerful and active inspires me, particularly given the many struggles and hardships she faced in 19th century Australia.

Why is it important to Acknowledge Country and what are some of the ways your parish does this?

The Acknowledgement of Country is so important and we offer an acknowledgement before every worship service and formal gathering. For us it is a way of grounding our worship in time, place and relationship, recognising that we who come so recently to this ancient land need to honour those who

were here before us, helping to steward country that has never been ceded. We also have a printed Acknowledgement of Country near our church entrance, which is encouraged by our Diocese's [Reconciliation Action Plan](#).



1,500 people turned up to the nation's largest Sanctuary vigil at St John's Cathedral on Monday 8 January 2016 to pray for hundreds of men, women and children whom the Federal Government was threatening to deport back to Nauru and Manus. Cathedral Dean The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt led the vigil, which was planned in haste (Image supplied)

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

I think the bravest thing I have seen anyone do is The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt in 2016 [declaring St John's Cathedral](#) a place of sanctuary, creating a groundswell of community support to enable a group of refugees threatened with deportation to offshore detention to remain in Australia. Dean Peter was the Chair of the Australian Churches Refugees Taskforce at the time and so he led a nation-wide "sanctuary" ecumenical movement, which was so effective that no person from the "Let Them Stay" cohort was forced back to the Nauru or Manus camps.

Perhaps the kindest thing is also the ongoing work of the cathedral community in the everyday care and support of the rough sleepers.

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

Don't change your mind in a spirit of desolation after making a choice in a spirit of consolation — a very old piece of advice from St Ignatius I have learned to trust. It came from Fr Vince Hurley, one of my Jesuit Spiritual Directors who led me through the Spiritual Exercises.

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

Cello, reading fiction and drinking coffee by the river.

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

Writing instruments, coffee, cello.

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

"You belong here" because so many people feel not good enough and isolated from community and connection to place. To affirm belonging is to affirm a person's inherent worth and the love in which they were created and are held in being.

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

Telling the Truth: The Gospel as Tragedy, Comedy and Fairytale by Frederick Buechner. The Rev'd Canon Dr Jim McPherson first recommended it to me, and it still remains for me one of the best articulations of the truth, hope and joy of the Gospel.

Where do you do your best thinking?

While I am walking my border collie — something about movement loosens up the grey cells!

What's your best childhood memory?

Coming down to the creek where I used to sit and play for long hours and discovering the hugest catch of swordtail fish in my home-made fish trap.

What is your karaoke go-to song?

Bonnie Tyler's (may she rest in peace) "Total Eclipse of the Heart".

What is your earliest memory?

Running down the stairs of my grade one classroom telling the other children I knew how to spell "people". I remember they did not seem interested!

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

Walk by the river — that slow moving water can hold everything.

What is the most surprising thing that happened to you recently?

When I was travelling this year in Sri Lanka with my daughter, a young driver transported us between towns. On the way back on our last drive with him, he stopped in at a police station and came back beaming, holding a piece of paper to show us. It was his new driver's licence!

What makes you nostalgic and why?

Watching *The Goodies*. I loved *The Goodies* as a child.

What is your secret skill?

Making perfect vegemite toast — I surveyed my three children separately about this question and it was unanimous.

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

The day I found my first coin on the archaeological dig site of Bethsaida. I went on the study tour / pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 2013 with The Rev'd Dr Greg Jenks. The whole trip was an incredible pilgrimage experience, but I was at my happiest sitting in the heat and the dirt of the trench at the dig site — finding the first coin was such an exciting moment.

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

A really cheesy vegetarian lasagne.

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

I have a figurine of Treebeard the Ent from *The Lord of the Rings*. The hobbits keep falling off his shoulders and he gathers dust, but I love him.

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

What really is the extent of our free will?

Editor's note: Find out more about the May 2027 "Pilgrimage to the Sacred Caucasus" (which will be led by The Rev'd Sue Grimmett) by gathering at St Andrew's, Indooroopilly or online (via Google Meet) for an information session on Sunday, 30 August 2026 at 6pm (AEST) / 4pm (AWST). [Register online](#) to attend.

NAIDOC Week 2026: Highlights and reflections



Uncle Paul Paulson (Mununjali Elder and Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Anglican Schools Commission) led a NAIDOC Week 2026 celebration in the Darnell Room for Cathedral Precinct clergy and staff (Image by anglican focus)

Uncle Paul Paulson — the Director of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education, Anglican Schools Commission

I especially enjoyed this year's NAIDOC Week celebrations at St Hilda's School, with a highlight being an exhibition of sport shoes that the students had painted in the colours of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags.

It's important for me to celebrate NAIDOC Week every year because it connects me into the First Nations communities where our schools are based.

I absolutely love this year's theme "50 Years of Deadly" because it celebrates our resilience, longevity and excellence.

In my NAIDOC Week presentation I wanted Cathedral Precinct clergy and staff to get a glimpse of what an Elder in today's society thinks about NAIDOC Week and how it should be celebrated. I was also keen to share about the depth, width and scope of my role and the impacts that are being achieved in our schools, and how First Nations kids are thriving in our schools. I also wanted to communicate that my job is quite extensive and that every school is different, yet we are achieving wonderful things as a collective First Nations community.



"In my role, it is especially important to pause and reflect on how we support children, families and educators to build culturally safe, inclusive and respectful environments," says Catriona Macgregor — Director, Early Years, Anglican Schools Commission (Image by *anglican focus*)

Catriona Macgregor — Director, Early Years, Anglican Schools Commission

Over the years, I have had the privilege of celebrating NAIDOC Week with many children and families. I have fond memories when working at Riverwalk Robina Early Learning Centre where we would celebrate NAIDOC as a community. It was fabulous for children to be immersed in story-telling, art and rich experiences that celebrate our First Peoples.

In my role, it is especially important to pause and reflect on how we support children, families and educators to build culturally safe, inclusive and respectful environments. Celebrating NAIDOC Week helps strengthen understanding, encourages meaningful conversations and reinforces our responsibility to value First Nations perspectives throughout the year, not only for one week.

This year's theme "50 Years of Deadly" reminds me that our First Nations Elders continue to fight for acknowledgement and respect.

From Uncle Paul's presentation, I took away the importance that all children feel a sense of belonging in their early years and in their school communities.

In my role as Director of Early Years I am proud to ensure the delivery of the Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration in all our education and care services, as part of the National Quality Framework. The Alice Springs (Mparntwe) Education Declaration commits governments to ensuring all children learn about the diversity of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, and to seeing all

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children thrive in their education and all facets of life. Contributing to this goal, the [National Agreement on Closing the Gap](#), led by the [Coalition of Peaks](#) (a representative body of more than 80 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community-controlled peak organisations and members) and all Australian governments, identifies early childhood education, care and development as a national policy priority.



"Taking part in NAIDOC Week reminds me that learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is an ongoing journey, and every conversation and experience helps build greater respect, understanding and connection," says Cyndi Rogers, Human Resources & Safety Business Partner for the ACSQ (Image by *anglican focus*)

Cyndi Rogers — Human Resources & Safety Business Partner, ACSQ

One of my favourite parts of NAIDOC Week each year is picking my kids up from school and seeing the beautiful artwork they have created and hearing what they have learnt about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. It is wonderful to see the next generation developing an appreciation for the rich histories, traditions and stories of Australia's First Nations Peoples, which always sparks meaningful conversations at home.

Taking part in NAIDOC Week reminds me that learning about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures is an ongoing journey, and every conversation and experience helps build greater respect, understanding and connection.

I believe “50 Years of Deadly” is a fitting NAIDOC Week theme because it celebrates the achievements and resilience of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples while reminding us to continue creating inclusive workplaces and communities where culture is valued every day.

A real highlight of Uncle Paul’s presentation was the damper he made for the team to enjoy. I was especially excited because eating damper brought back wonderful memories of making it on school camps as a child. It felt incredibly fitting because sharing food is a meaningful way of bringing people together, building connections and keeping culture alive through shared experiences.

I was particularly moved by the beautiful artwork Uncle Paul shared in his NAIDOC Week PowerPoint presentation, and learning how each piece tells a story and reflects a deep connection to Country, history and culture.

This has inspired me to borrow some children’s picture books from the library so I can teach my young boys more about First Nations art and what it symbolises.



“It is always important to celebrate the important contributions of First Nations peoples to our country. In a broader sense what we celebrate in many ways tells us what we value,” says Geoff Newton, Acting Executive Director of the Anglican Schools Commission (Image by *anglican focus*)

Geoff Newton — Acting Executive Director, Anglican Schools Commission

NAIDOC Week is difficult for schools to commemorate because it falls in the holidays, so I have usually been involved in Sorry Day and National Reconciliation Week events. I particularly enjoyed the First Nations Traditional Games Festival, hosted at [Hillbrook](#) where I used to serve as the principal, and it was always great to see the students from many schools play games thousands of years old.

It is always important to celebrate the important contributions of First Nations peoples to our country. In a broader sense what we celebrate in many ways tells us what we value.

This year's NAIDOC Week theme, "50 Years of Deadly", is both a reflection and a recognition of the strength, cultural authority and community leadership that have carried NAIDOC forward, and a reminder that our future as a nation will continue to be shaped by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices.

Uncle Paul's presentation to Cathedral Precinct team members encompassed the origins of the 1920s civil rights protest movement and NAIDOC Week's emergence in the 1970s as a celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and leadership. He also shared his family's story and his role in bringing young people together in our schools to better understand First Nations histories.

Young people see possibilities more clearly than barriers and we can take great hope from the experiences and opportunities that Paul and many teachers are providing for students in our Anglican schools. I look forward to continuing to support this work.



"I think this year's NAIDOC Week theme, "50 Years of Deadly", reflects both achievement and resilience. It acknowledges the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the past 50 years while also encouraging us to continue learning and supporting reconciliation," says Anastasia Dimintevskaya, Financial Controller, for the ACSQ (Image by *anglican focus*)

Anastasia Dimintevskaya — Financial Controller, ACSQ

My NAIDOC Week highlight was attending Paul Paulson's "All about NAIDOC Week" presentation and morning tea. What stayed with me wasn't a single moment, but the tone — natural and sincere, rather than dry or official. Paul shared the history and significance of NAIDOC Week and then spoke about the wonderful work being implemented in Anglican schools across our Diocese. The enthusiasm of students in his PowerPoint photos did more than any statistic could. The event concluded with home-baked damper, and that simple act of sharing food captured the spirit of community and hospitality, which stood out to me.

Stepping out of the usual work rhythm to pause and reflect on the histories, cultures and achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples makes the recognition real rather than

symbolic. If I pause only when it's convenient, it would be hard to prioritise. Setting aside the time says the opposite.

I think this year's NAIDOC Week theme, "50 Years of Deadly", reflects both achievement and resilience. It acknowledges the contributions of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples over the past 50 years while also encouraging us to continue learning and supporting reconciliation.

The meaning and sense of community behind events like Paul's is what naturally draws people in — there's no need for a hard sell when the substance is genuine. Paul's presentation is proof of that.

Paul's presentation inspires me to be more intentional about listening to and learning from First Nations voices and supporting opportunities for meaningful engagement in both my work and future NAIDOC Week activities.



"As someone raised by former Army officers, a key learning that I took away from Uncle Paul's NAIDOC Week presentation is what he shared about Reginald Walter Saunders MBE (1920-1990), a Gunditjmara man who served in the Australian Infantry Battalion in World War II," says Michelle McDonald — Director of News and Community Engagement for the ACSQ (Image by *anglican focus*)

Michelle McDonald — Director of News and Community Engagement, ACSQ

My all-time NAIDOC Week highlight is joining in last year's [Musgrave Park Family Fun Day](#). This annual family fun day is the nation's biggest NAIDOC Week festival. I especially enjoyed it last year because I took more time to yarn with First Nations artists and artisans at their stalls, where I purchased t-shirts

and hand-painted dolls. One young woman I spoke with harvests grass, which she dyes and weaves into earrings, while also running classes to teach others how to weave.

From a personal perspective, it's important for me to join in NAIDOC Week celebrations because they nourish me, especially the conversations I have with Elders. In the context of my Anglican Church Southern Queensland roles, it's important for me to celebrate NAIDOC Week because when I meet new people — such as the CEOs of First Nations-owned businesses and the leaders of First Nations community organisations — I can then connect them with other staff and clergy, which is mutually beneficial.

This year's NAIDOC Week theme "[50 Years of Deadly](#)" shines a light on First Nations Elders, including on their generosity, courage in the face of ongoing adversity, wisdom and pride.

As someone raised by former Army officers, a key learning that I took away from Uncle Paul's NAIDOC Week presentation is what he shared about [Reginald Walter Saunders MBE](#) (1920-1990), a Gunditjmara man who served in the Australian Infantry Battalion in World War II.

In my role as *anglican focus* Editor it's important for me to publish about the Australian Defence Force service of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, especially given the terrible [discrimination](#) they faced upon their return home.

Reflections • Friday 7 August 2026 • By The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt

"The sharing of simple meals is enough to enable us to build community"



"While I very much enjoy the way that food has become an art-form and the incredible complexity of the techniques that produces exquisite dishes, it also good to have the story in Matthew and the Eucharistic practice of the Church to remind us that the sharing of simple meals is enough to enable us to build community," says The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt (Image by Yan Krukau on Pexels)

1

*Words can't do
what bird bones
can: stew
to the stony
essence
of one
small soul, the spent
sacrifice boiled down
to the hard white
matter that nourishes
the mighty
predator, who flourishes
on the slaughtered
animal and water.*

2

*Who feeds
another is like bones
to him who eats
(I say "him" only
because it is a man
in my house
who eats and a woman
who goes about
the matter of sustenance),
food being always
a matter of life and
death and each day's
dining
another small dying.*

3

*Scallops seared
in hot iron
with grated ginger,
rice wine,
and a little oil
of sesame, served
with boiled
jasmine rice, cures
the malaise
of long, fluorescent
weekdays
spent
in the city
for money.*

*I am afraid
 I can't always be
 here when you need
 a warm body
 or words; someday
 I'll slip
 into the red clay
 I started with
 and forget
 who you are,
 but
 for now, here's
 my offering: baked red
 fish, clear soup, bread.*

—Adrienne Su, *Four Sonnets About Food*

When we had dogs, we were advised that they would benefit from having a diet that did not change. Apparently, it is better for their digestive system and so also better for those of us who allow dogs in the house. Most of our dogs were also voracious eaters. Within a minute or two of the food bowl hitting the ground the food was gone. In one case we likened our dog to a vacuum cleaner; she didn't chew her food at all.

At the utilitarian level food is the source of energy and nutrients. It is literally the staff of life. But for humans it also plays important roles in the development of relationships and community.

A shared meal provides the space for people to engage with each other so that they come to know each other. When part of a meal, as people come to know each other, pauses in conversation are not as awkward as they would be otherwise. Meals also provide a space in which the agenda can be fluid, moving from one subject to another; moving on and doubling back; the meal space allowing us to build relationships that are both nuanced and profound.

It is of little surprise then that the shared meal plays a central role in religious practice. Many religious traditions include the offering and/or eating of food as part of their practice. In Hinduism, for example, gifted food, known as *naivedya*, becomes *prasada*, a source of blessing and grace after being offered to a deity. Adherents use the practice to express their gratitude. In Exodus 24 Moses and the elders of Israel eat with God as part of the process of forming the covenant. For Christians, the community is formed as it gathers around the table for the eucharistic meal. We encounter Christ who gives himself to us and in the process we offer ourselves to serve God's purposes in the world. The word Eucharist means 'to give thanks'.

On Sunday we heard the version of the feeding of the five thousand that appears in the Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 14.13-21). Following the devastating news that John the Baptist has been killed by Herod, Jesus withdraws to a lonely place to process his grief. The people, desperate to be with him, follow. When his disciples suggest that Jesus send the crowd away to get something to eat he tells them to use what they have to feed them. The simple fare they possess proves to be enough. A community is built around the sharing of those simple foodstuffs

While I very much enjoy the way that food has become an art-form and the incredible complexity of the techniques that produces exquisite dishes, it is also good to have the story in Matthew and the Eucharistic practice of the church to remind us that the sharing of simple meals is enough to enable us to build community; to build communities that can make a difference in the world.

*... but
for now, here's
my offering: baked red
fish, clear soup, bread.*

First published in the Cathedral Precinct newsletter on Monday, 3 August 2026.

Justice & Advocacy • Wednesday 26 August 2026 • By The Rev'd Andrew Schmidt

“Meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu challenged me to recognise the value of every person”



Cape Town, South Africa, October 1991. Archbishop Desmond Tutu welcomes the first WCC delegation to South Africa in 30 years to the Anglican cathedral (Photo: Peter Williams/WCC)

I was recently at a wedding, and one of the get-to-know-your-fellow-guests questions was, “Who is the most famous person you have met?” Answering this question I described a cold, dark and stormy night in 1994 when I was tucked into an office in the Cathedral in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. I was gathered with a group of young people who were preparing for confirmation. Just down the hall was a different meeting with bishops and other “important” people. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, who became the Archbishop of Cape Town in 1986, joined our meeting for a bit — just to chat to the young people coming through.

I think this is telling about the importance Archbishop Tutu placed on young people, whom many others would not have seen as important. Archbishop Tutu was incredibly busy serving in a range of

justice spaces — including, obviously, anti-racism given the impacts of apartheid — and his willingness to take the time to speak to some young people showed me a lot about his character.

Archbishop Tutu showed the nation that while systemic racism plagued our country, it need not. And, his willingness to connect with individuals taught me that we are more likely to pour energy into justice when we see that the person we are with as the most important in that moment. If the server at my local take-away is the most important person to me while they are serving me in that moment, and the system they work in is unjust, how can I stand by and do nothing, or perhaps even benefit from the injustice?

Meeting Archbishop Desmond Tutu challenged me to recognise the value of every person.

Reflections • Thursday 20 August 2026 • By The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt

To reteach a thing its loveliness...



"...sometimes it is necessary to reteach a thing its loveliness," says The Very Rev'd Dr Peter Catt (Image by Ben Mater on Unsplash)

*The bud
stands for all things,
even for those things that don't flower,
for everything flowers, from within, of self-blessing;
though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness,
to put a hand on its brow
of the flower
and retell it in words and in touch
it is lovely
until it flowers again from within, of self-blessing;
as Saint Francis*

*put his hand on the creased forehead
of the sow, and told her in words and in touch
blessings of earth on the sow, and the sow
began remembering all down her thick length,
from the earthen snout all the way
through the fodder and slops to the spiritual curl of the tail,
from the hard spininess spiked out from the spine
down through the great broken heart
to the sheer blue milken dreaminess spurting and shuddering
from the fourteen teats into the fourteen mouths sucking and blowing
beneath them:
the long, perfect loveliness of sow.*

— Galway Kinnell, "Saint Francis and the Sow"

*... though sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness...*

Western culture causes us to focus intensely on being an individual. This focus encourages us to be somewhat self-centred. Many positive things have flowed into the lives of many as a result of this focus. For example, the focus on the individual helps us to affirm that people matter, that each person matters; that I matter. This helps us to ensure that people are protected from harm. I (each of us) have the right not to be harmed.

The focus on the individual also causes us to engage in self-promotion and self-actualisation.

On the surface one would think that such a focus on the self would help us to feel good about ourselves. But not unsurprisingly, when one digs deeper into the whole individualistic project, this focus on the individual seems to be having the opposite effect.

Social media has proven to be a great boon for the development and maintenance of connection. Through it I have reconnected with people I knew at school, and it has allowed me to stay in contact with people I have come to know in the various places I have lived and worked.

Social media however has also fed into the "me" project in ways that have led us, not only to promote ourselves, but also to compare ourselves with others. For many this has engendered a sense of being in competition with others. This in turn has led some to feel threatened by the lives of others or led them to see themselves as somehow inadequate. These feelings lead us to desperately seek "likes" and attention. While so called "influencers", by projecting lives of impossible luxury and sophistication into the mix, massage the feelings of inadequacy, which can lead us to become envious or self-deprecating.

In the poem, "St Francis and the Sow", Galway Kinnell speaks of the way St Francis through an act of gentle attention enabled a sow to rediscover the "perfect loveliness of sow". A creature, the name of which, is often used as a way of denigrating people, is proclaimed to be beautiful simple because it is what it is.

At the heart of the Christian understanding of personhood is the idea that we are each unique and uniquely loved; loved and loveable simply because we are. Loved and loveable because we are made in the image of God.

*...sometimes it is necessary
to reteach a thing its loveliness...*

I am grateful to those in the Cathedral community who through their acts of gentle attention and acceptance enable others to catch a glimpse of their loveliness.

First published in the Cathedral Precinct newsletter on Monday, 17 August 2026.

Justice Unit Note: Season of Creation (1 September 1 to 4 October) is a time for Christians to come together in prayer and action for Creation. See upcoming events and resources, for individuals and faith communities, on Doing Justice's [recent eNews, Season of Creation edition](#).

Films & TV • Thursday 20 August 2026 • By Jonathan Sargeant

The Odyssey



"Odysseus and his men face numerous trials, each portrayed with staggering creative elan by Nolan. This film deserves to be seen on the biggest screen you can find," says Jonathan Sargeant (Image by Universal)

With a three-hour running time, ancient source material and an audience mostly interested in known properties and low-grade fizz, can auteur Christopher Nolan bring his cerebral and detailed filmmaking style to excite in the 21st century milieu?

The ethics of translation are a fascinating thing. To receive something — a work of art, a poem, a novel — and then convert it into your own language so that it speaks to your own audience requires much more than just a knowledge of the source language. The words themselves...will we translate word for word? Or should "meaning" enter the fray? There are cultural layers to language, as well as political needles to thread. Will the themes of an ancient text speak to modern crowds? Or should new ideas be mined? Of course, these are questions any person of faith should consider as they ponder their sacred texts. But they also apply to a film like Christopher Nolan's *The Odyssey*.

The original story might be familiar. The epic poem, attributed to Homer, crystalises older oral traditions dating back to the late 8th century BCE. Essentially the fictional tale of the lengthy journey of return by Odysseus (Matt Damon in Nolan's version) and his men from the Trojan War, the episodic tale used a nonlinear narrative in the original and Nolan retains the essence of this too. The film becomes a story about stories as various characters recount their experiences of a journey that stretched for many years, far longer than expected, while those on the home front endured a kind of parallel gruelling siege. Since her husband is feared dead, Odysseus' wife Penelope (Ann Hathaway) is beset by 108 boorish suitors, whom Zeus' Law of hospitality demands must be housed and entertained for the duration. Robert Pattinson's Antinous is the apex of these less than heroic men, seemingly happy to endlessly leech off Penelope's household as she rebuffs any approaches, loyal to her husband and his memory.

Meanwhile Odysseus and his men face numerous trials, each portrayed with staggering creative elan by Nolan. This film deserves to be seen on the biggest screen you can find. He effectively reimagines the Trojan horse, an encounter with the cyclops, Polyphemus, the passage past the enticing song of the Sirens and the deadly transformative generosity of Circe in truly memorable and nerve-shredding style. The latter, in particular, stays bubbling in the mind. Samantha Morton's portrayal of the goddess Circe is intensely full of rage and is more than likely to catch Oscar attention — the sequence in which she turns the greedy soldiers into pigs as a punitive metaphor for their gluttony is unforgettable. It's emblematic of another feature of this amazing filmmaking: over the course of the film, there is no reliance on the easy option of CGI. Instead, Nolan emphasises practical filmmaking in ways that make the audiences' willing suspension of disbelief very easy to achieve. You'll be scratching your head at how certain effects have been so credibly achieved.

As the story unfolds, each encounter tests the soldiers' loyalty to Odysseus. Damon captures a weary, yet graceful, ennui to the character, making apparent layers of moral injury from each conflict into which he is drawn by the gods. And while Homer's telling of the tale features those gods striding the narrative and imposing their will, Nolan restricts this deific intercession to Zendaya's ethereal Athena. She not only inspires the central character's journey, but also a critical note of doubt to the lead character's hubris.

It is that growing sense of angst that Nolan uses to draw the various narratives together. He repositions this tale, formerly one of glory and adventure, into a kind of elegy for a fatally wounded empire, for whom the regret and trauma of its warriors and civilians alike are the ultimate inescapable outcome of its blood-thirsty arrogance and egotism. The modern parallels are not hard to discern.

Noteworthy, too, is the theme of hospitality engendered by Zeus' Law which states that strangers should always be treated well lest they reveal themselves to be gods in disguise. To Christian ears, this ancient Greek concept of "xenia" includes a Golden Rule-styled phrasing. It becomes the moral fulcrum upon which any civilisation may be judged. And it's no spoiler that these ancient Greeks are found wanting and the nature of judgement is to be ingeniously recast as their own most-feared enemies.

Nolan is known as a filmmaker unafraid of epic scale. His 2017 version of the allies' Dunkirk evacuation of World War 2, fittingly titled *Dunkirk*, is a case in point: large cast, multiple story lines writ across a broad European canvas, with themes of the heroism of common people. That film was critically acclaimed, if not with some historical critiques. This film is also epic in nature (and had some ridiculous casting nitpicking even before its release), yet the personal is always in focus. The emotional journey of Damon's Odysseus and Hathaway's Penelope (and Tom Holland's stoic Telemachus too, as

the son of Odysseus and Penelope) are the anchors that ensure the spectacular vision of the film is both external and internal. Each one is a living breathing character, but also an archetype that rings true for ancient and modern ills, ambitions and heartaches.

It's no secret that critical respect has come steadily throughout Nolan's career. Always technically innovative, mostly emotionally articulate and with a slavish devotion to telling a great story, he has not disappointed here. In fact, this might just be the apex of his career so far.

In the end, *The Odyssey* is a triumph, certainly a top-ten film of the decade so far. Nolan has fashioned a transcendent cinematic experience where time flies by like wind through Ithaca's olive trees. He has taken an ancient text and re-invigorated it for the 21st century, finding such laser-like, thematic focus that audiences are returning for multiple viewings of an almost three-hour long film. *The Odyssey* is a canny parable for our time — a cautionary tale that entertains as much as alerts, with multiple layers that reward the audience with each moment, a dream-led extraordinary spectacle with crucial substance.

The Odyssey adeptly amazes.

***The Odyssey*, directed by Christopher Nolan and rated M, is currently showing in cinemas.**

Editor's note: If you are interested in learning more about film, the arts, and the many intersections with life, faith and social justice, Jonathan Sargeant is teaching DA3013Z God and Contemporary Culture: Theology and the Arts in 2027. Please contact Jonathan Sargeant for more information via jonathan.sargeant@anglicanchurchsq.org.au.

Making our neighbourhood a table



"The conclusion of Baroona Farm is not so much an ending as a transition into a more dispersed season for the 'Grow Together Network', carrying what we have learned into new places and relationships. The opportunity before us now is to help others discover their own invitations-in-waiting, in congregations with underutilised land, communities rich with local knowledge, and neighbourhoods where people long to grow, contribute, belong and share," says Bishop Sarah Plowman, chair of the Grow Together Network (Image by anglican focus)

In July the final harvest from Baroona Farm, located at St Francis College, was gathered, weighed and distributed. Over a period of seven years, a once disused tennis court came alive, producing thousands of kilograms of fresh food, which has been shared with refugees and people seeking asylum across Brisbane. In doing so, it fulfilled its mission to "grow food and community with and for the nutritionally vulnerable." In its final year alone, Baroona Farm produced more than 760 kilograms of culturally important foods.

Yet its harvest cannot be measured in food volume alone. A neglected patch of hard ground became a flourishing green space. People learned how to grow food and care for soil. Strangers became neighbours, knowledge was shared, and new possibilities took root.

The conclusion of Baroona Farm is not so much an ending as a transition into a more dispersed season for the "Grow Together Network", carrying what we have learned into new places and relationships. The opportunity before us now is to help others discover their own invitations-in-waiting, in congregations with underutilised land, communities rich with local knowledge, and neighbourhoods where people long to grow, contribute, belong and share.

We acknowledge the First Nations peoples of the land on which we gather. We honour their continuing custodianship of land and waters, and the knowledge held and shared across generations.

Part of our growth together is to listen, learn and act in respectful relationship with Country and its custodians.

The title of a new Season of Creation liturgical guide, *Make Our Neighbourhood a Table*, invites us to imagine the local feast expansively. A neighbourhood is nourished by more than food. We are sustained by healthy soil and clean waterways; by trees, insects, birds and the diversity of creation; by places of faith, learning and care; and, by the gifts, stories and cultures of local people. A true feast also asks us to notice who is missing from the table, who experiences food insecurity, and whose wisdom or contribution has been overlooked. These are all gifts of God's table: creation received with gratitude, cultivated with care and shared so that all may flourish.

Inspired by our Baroona Farm experiences, these resources are offered to help your community celebrate the 2026 Season of Creation by exploring the food environment of the place where you live. They also connect with this year's [Season of Creation theme](#), "Living Water". May they spark your imagination, deepen your attention, and help you uncover the abundance and need already present in your neighbourhood.

Taste your place. Find its gifts. Listen for its invitations. Pass on what you learn — and widen the table so that others may share the feast.

Editor's note (updated 24 August 2026): This reflection was first published in the *Make Our Neighbourhood a Table: Cultivating the local feast* Season of Creation liturgical resource, which was produced by the ACSQ's Grow Together Network. This great resource includes scriptures, reflections, prayers and practical ideas for commemorating this year's Season of Creation, which commences on 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (and the first day of Spring in Australia), and ends on 4 October, St Francis of Assisi's Feast Day. Download your Season of Creation PDF resource from the [Grow Together Network](#) webpage.

What does a just society owe its children?



"As we mark the International Day of Peace on 21 September, I find myself returning to Djuwan's words and a question they raise that sits at the heart of both peace and justice: what does a just society owe its children?" says Dr Krystal Lockwood

In 2019, 12-year-old Arrernte and Garrwa boy, [Djuwan Hoosan](#), [addressed](#) the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva. On this international stage, Djuwan powerfully conveyed the lived reality of growing up Aboriginal in Australia. His critique exposed how systems treat Aboriginal children — how school made him feel like a failure, how he was afraid of being taken from his family, and how he was worried about being locked up in jail. Although many focused on the barriers Djuwan described, what I found most compelling was how he spoke about what made him feel safe and strong — central to this being family, culture, love, and belonging. His hopes for the future were equally clear. He wanted other children to grow up safe and strong calling for Aboriginal-led education, an end to the imprisonment of children, and the opportunity for young people to be strong in culture and language.

As we mark the [International Day of Peace](#) on 21 September, I find myself returning to Djuwan's words and a question they raise that sits at the heart of both peace and justice: what does a just society owe its children?

When we speak about youth justice in Australia, we usually focus on what to do after a young person causes harm. Across Australia, governments have won elections on campaigns like "[Adult Time for Adult Crime](#)", and [tougher responses](#) across policing, detention and sentencing.

Talking about what to do after a young person causes harm are important conversations. Harm matters, victims matter, and societies need fair and effective responses when harm occurs.

Yet justice cannot be reduced to what happens after a harm is reported. A truly just society is also concerned with what comes before: the environments in which children grow up, the opportunities available to them, and the conditions that enable them to flourish.

My research focuses on understanding the [environments](#) that support children and young people to thrive, particularly when the [criminal legal system impacts their lives](#). The [wider literature](#) is remarkably consistent. Young people flourish when they are valued, loved and safe; when their basic needs are met; when they have opportunities to learn and participate; and, when they develop a strong sense of identity, culture and belonging.

For First Nations young people, these foundations are deeply connected to culture, family, community and Country. [Research](#) shows that wellbeing is shaped not only by individual experiences, but by connections to identity, culture, community, land and collective ways of being. At the same time, racism, exclusion and the ongoing impacts of colonisation continue to affect opportunities for young people to thrive.

Yet culture is more than a protective factor or a pathway to better outcomes. It is a matter of justice in itself. Connections to culture, language, family and Country contribute to safety and wellbeing, while also reflecting a young person's right to develop a strong sense of identity, belonging and purpose. Viewed in this way, connections to culture are not simply a means of improving outcomes. It is part of what justice requires.

One of the challenges for youth justice systems is that they are often expected to resolve problems that emerged long before a young person came into contact with the law. By that stage, opportunities to strengthen the conditions that support healthy development have frequently been missed.

The theme of this year's International Day of Peace is "[Invest in Peace: For Everyone, Everywhere, Every Day](#)". Investing in peace is not only about responding to harm. It is also about creating the conditions in which children and young people can flourish. For all young people, this means being safe, valued and supported. For First Nations young people, it also means ensuring access to the foundations of wellbeing that are deeply connected to family, culture, community and Country. Investing in peace therefore means investing in the conditions that support healthy development, wellbeing and belonging.

In many ways, this was the essence of Dujuan's message to the United Nations. It was not only a call for reform. It was a vision of what children need to flourish: family, culture, love and belonging. If we take seriously the idea of investing in peace, these are not peripheral concerns. They are the foundations upon which just societies and futures are built. For First Nations young people, ensuring access to those foundations is not simply good policy — it is what justice requires.

Editor's note: Dr Krystal Lockwood will be giving this year's annual Brisbane Peace Day Lecture, alongside Dr Pakeri Ruska, at St John's Cathedral on Monday, 21 September. The lecture event will begin at 7pm and will close at 9pm. Entry is free; however, please [register online](#) for catering and seating purposes (donations to help cover event costs are welcome).

"Water is a gift from God for us to share"



"Before we share the food that we bring we lotu (pray) God's blessing on the food and give thanks for Creation. As islanders our food comes from water — from the sea or from the water-dependent plantations," says The Rev'd Eleanor Mancini (Image supplied)

I grew up in Nuku'alofa, the capital of Tonga. Nuku'alofa is located on the north coast on the main *motu* (island) of Tongatapu.

We are "outdoor people" — away from the televisions and other screens.

The *Moana* (ocean) carries the memory of our ancestors, provides food and livelihoods, shapes our spirituality and holds the future of next generations. The *Moana* (ocean) gathers us as one household of God.

Tongan families and parishioners love to gather on the beach for picnics, especially when we celebrate special occasions or annual celebrations. We create our own games, sing hymns and traditional Tongan songs, play guitar and drums, and dance. Before we share the food that we bring we *lotu* (pray) God's blessing on the food and give thanks for Creation.

As islanders our food comes from water — from the sea or from the water-dependent plantations. From the sea we eat *ika* (fish), *uo* (crayfish), *paka* (crab), *masolo* (mussels), *oisita* (oysters) and *limu* (seaweed). From the plantations we grow *ufi* (yam), *talo* (taro), *siaine* (banana), *niu* (coconut), *lesi* (pawpaw), *avoka* (avocado) and other fruit. All families grow their own fruit and vegetables.

If families were not near a freshwater river, families dug up their own well in their backyards, so they could collect water for drinking, washing and cooking. My father dug up the well for my family — we drew up the water using big metal buckets tied to a long rope because the water was very deep. As a skinny child, I had to be careful not to fall into the well, especially when the bucket became full and heavy. Nowadays most Tongans have plumbing and water tanks for collecting drinking water, although some Tongan families still use wells.



Eleanor Mancini (née Halapua) in Tonga in 1973 near her father's plantation, including *nui* (coconut trees) (Image supplied)

When my priest father finished his daily work at the church and school he would walk straight to the sea to fish for the family's dinner, as well as tend to the plantation. As my dad caught the *ika*, I put the *ika* in the baskets, which my mother weaved from *niu* palm fronds. We caught *ika* through a net or by *pa*, which is like a round fish trap that we made from sticks and wire.

In Polynesia water surrounds, sustains and connects us. Living water is life — new life. As Christians we share a common faith in Christ and praying for Creation is very important because our living waters are being wounded by warming seas, pollution, plastics, extractive industries, biodiversity loss and failures to do justice for creation.

Water is a gift from God for us to share.

Water features a lot in the Bible. In [Ezekiel 47.9, 12](#) water is a vision of healing that calls us to participate in God's work of healing:

"Wherever the river goes, every living creature that swarms will live, and there will be very many fish, once these waters reach there. It will become fresh; and everything will live where the river goes."

"On the banks, on both sides of the river, there will grow all kinds of trees for food. Their leaves will not wither nor their fruit fail, but they will bear fresh fruit every month, because the water for them flows from the sanctuary. Their fruit will be for food, and their leaves for healing."

My favourite scripture is:

“On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, ‘Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, “Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water” ([John 7.37-38](#)).”

In the annual [Season of Creation](#) we reflect on Jesus Christ, through whom all things were created and redeemed.

Please join me in praying this *Moana* (ocean) prayer, which was written by my brother, The Right Rev’d Dr Winston Halapua (Archbishop Emeritus Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia):

Loving and Embracing God,
You are the God of the universe and all Creation.
You create and give life, and see that your Creation is good.
We praise you for your gift of Creation.

We thank you for the Moana.
We thank you the great Oceans flowing into one another
and around the continents and islands.
We thank you for the life-giving of the Oceans,
for the oxygen, food and resources they continually provide.
We thank you that the Ocean is the home for most species, small and great.

We are people of the Moana.
Our ancestors navigated by the stars and crossed the waves to find new homes.
The waves breaking on the reef thunder with the message
of your constancy and your love and care for Creation.

May we hear the voices of sea creatures endangered by the selfish greed of humanity.
May there be a deep listening to the voice of waters rising to engulf land.
May ears be open to the groaning caused by refusal to honour Creation.
May eyes be open to the suffering caused by power which destroys.

We beat a lali drum, alerting people around Planet Earth
to the destruction of nature and human life threatened by climate change.
We blow a conch, calling for the worship of a God of immense goodness.
Our forbears set out across the Moana.
We set out on a venture to protect our home — the Planet Earth.
Help us to challenge short-sighted greed,
Help us to address unjust structures and practices
and to change our relationship with creation to one of care.

We affirm our guardianship of the precious gift of Creation.
We have a vision. We have courage. We have your guidance.
We have the presence of the Risen One
whose power to love is greater than all the powers of destruction.
Grant that together we may bring peace to our Planet Earth,
to its many creatures and its many people.
We lotu (pray) in the name of our God –

Creator, Redeemer and Life-giving Spirit.
Amen

Editor's note: The annual Season of Creation commences on 1 September, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (and the first day of Spring in Australia), and ends on 4 October, St Francis of Assisi's Feast Day. Check out the [Season of Creation](#) website for resources and commemoration ideas and download this wonderful ACSQ Season of Creation [prayer and reflection resource](#), which includes an introduction by Bishop Sarah Plowman, the Grow Together Network chair.

Faith book reflections • Wednesday 26 August 2026 • By Dr Stephen Harrison

The book I am talking about the most and why: Dr Stephen Harrison



"Many Christians I encounter have some awareness of Dalits or caste, but little understanding of the reality of discrimination," says Dr Stephen Harrison (Image supplied)

I was delighted to receive *Celebrating Dalit Pride: Lectures on Dalit Theology* by Bishop Vedanayagam Devasahayam from The Rev'd Daniel Jayaraj (rector of The Parish of Chermside) after I spoke at an Anglican Men's Society conference. At the time, I had no idea how significantly the book would challenge my understanding of caste, Christianity and the experience of Dalit people in India.

I was deeply affected by Chapter 2, "The World of the Dalits". While I knew something of India's caste system, I had little understanding of the discrimination, humiliation and exclusion Dalit people continue to experience in everyday life.

I was also struck by Devasahayam's exploration of how caste has been reproduced within Christianity. There is something profoundly disturbing about practices that diminish human dignity and are contrary to the Gospel finding a place in the Christian faith.

This book made me realise how little attention I had given to the experience of Dalit people and how little we seem to hear about it in Australia. I moved from seeing caste as something distant from me to recognising a responsibility to pay attention, learn and, where I can, speak about it. It has made me want to introduce others both to the book and to Dalit voices and experiences.

Devasahayam writes in the preface:

"Experiences of discrimination, humiliation and shame, due to my identity as a Dalit under the Hindu caste system began when I was a child...I endured it with a determination that the situation needed to be challenged and changed." (p ix)

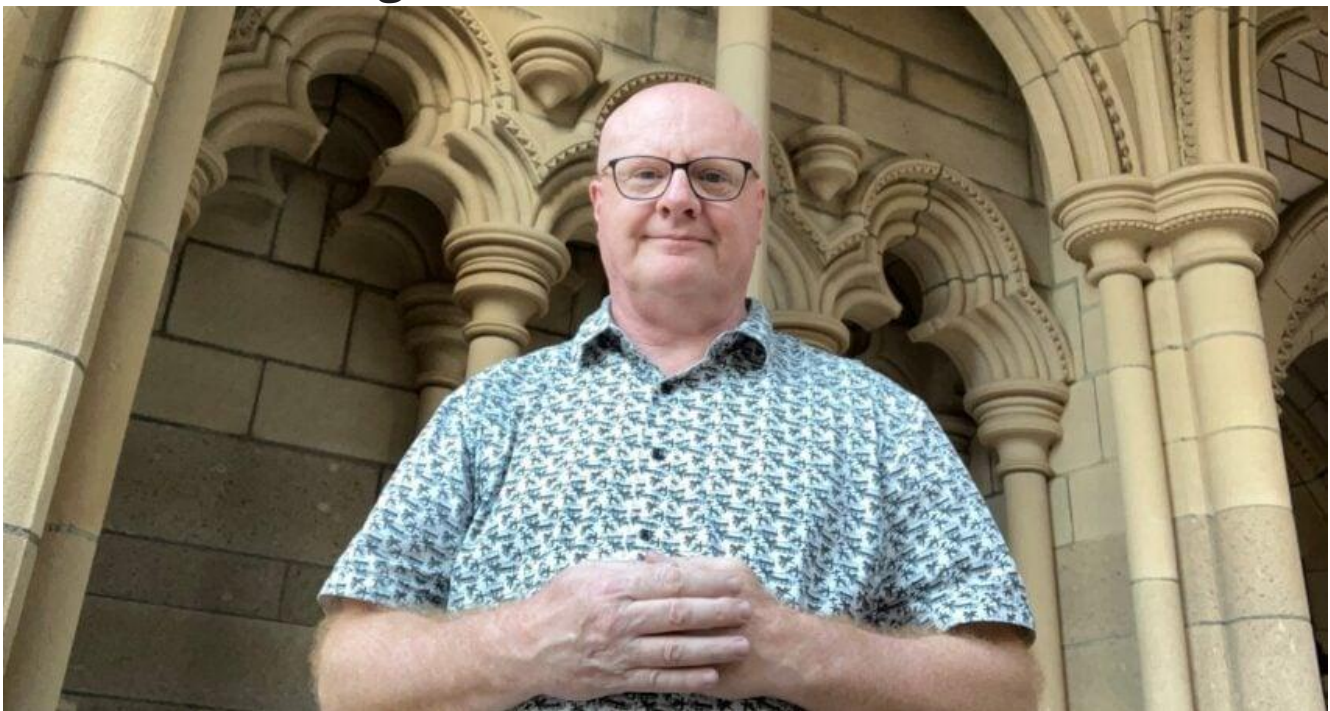
For me this captures how Dalit theology emerges not at a distance, but from lived experience of suffering and exclusion, as well as from resistance and hope. While I haven't given copies away yet, I have spoken about the book with dozens of people. Many Christians I encounter have some awareness of Dalits or caste, but little understanding of the reality of discrimination.

I recommend the book because it does more than explain Dalit theology. It helps us understand why such a theology emerged and gives theological expression to a struggle for dignity, equality and liberation that Christians everywhere need to hear.

V. Devasahayam, 2022. *Celebrating Dalit Pride: Lectures on Dalit Theology*. BTESSC, India.

Justice & Advocacy • Thursday 27 August 2026 • By Rob Bates

National Child Protection Week 2026: "Every Conversation Matters, Shifting Conversation to Action"



"The Child Safe Standards remind us that listening must be accompanied by action. When children tell us what helps them feel safe, we must respond," says ACSQ Director of Safe Ministry Rob Bates

At the Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) we believe that creating safe environments for children and young people begins with listening. Every conversation matters because every

interaction is an opportunity for a child, young person, family member, volunteer, clergy person or employee to be heard, respected and supported.

The theme of National Child Protection Week 2026, “Every Conversation Matters, Shifting Conversation to Action”, reflects the heart of the [10 National Child Safe Standards](#). We know that conversations alone do not keep children safe. Real safety is created when concerns are taken seriously, when children’s voices influence decisions, when leaders act on what they hear, and when organisations continuously improve their practices in response to feedback and experience.

Across the ACSQ child safety is everyone’s responsibility. We are committed to fostering a culture where children and young people are empowered to speak up, where families and communities are engaged partners in safeguarding and where clergy, staff and volunteers are equipped to recognise, respond to and prevent harm. Every disclosure, question, concern or suggestion is an opportunity to strengthen our commitment to safety.

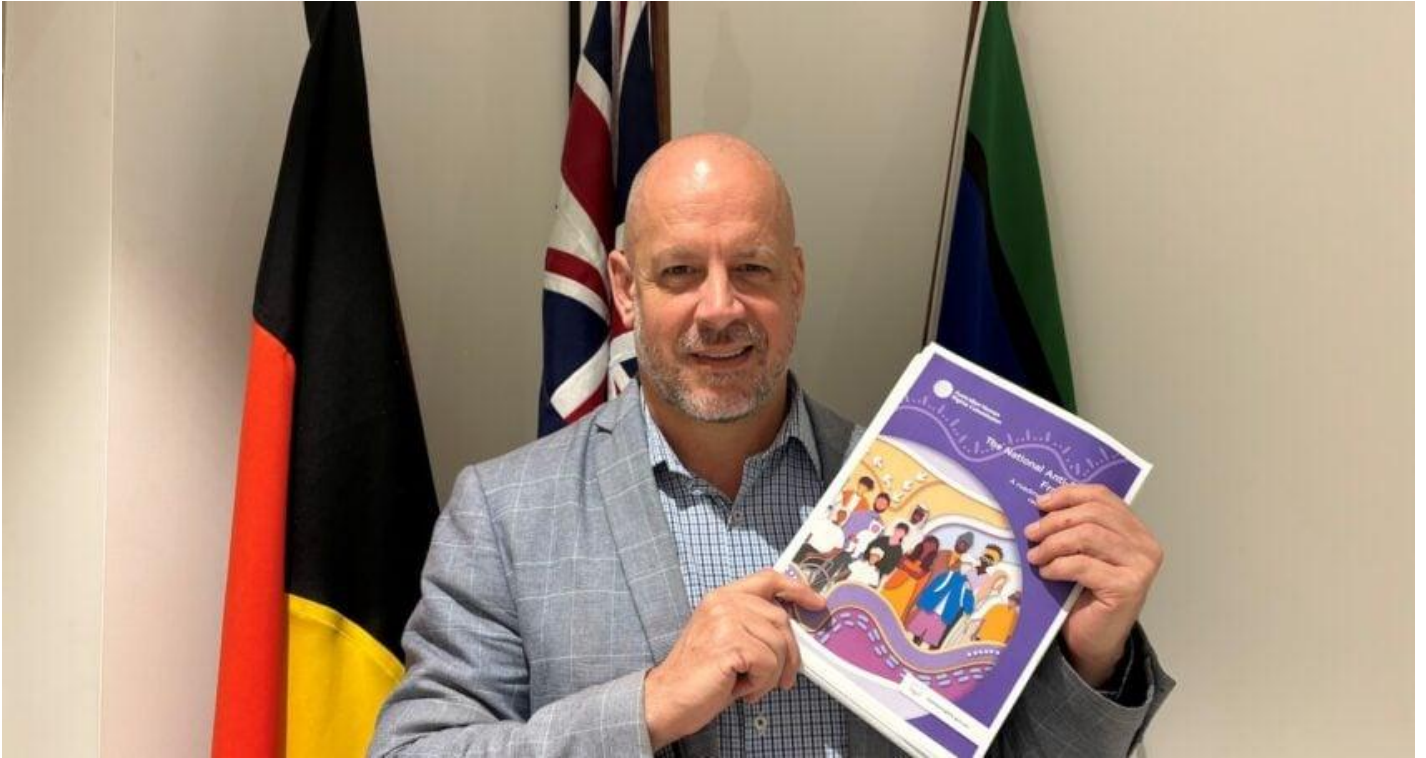
The [Child Safe Standards](#) remind us that listening must be accompanied by action. When children tell us what helps them feel safe, we must respond. When concerns are raised, we must investigate and address them. When risks are identified, we must act to reduce them. When we learn from experience, we must improve our systems and practices. In this way, conversations become catalysts for meaningful change.

[National Child Protection Week](#) provides an opportunity to reflect on how we are building a safer Church. It challenges us not only to talk about child safety, but to demonstrate it through leadership, accountability, education, safe recruitment, effective complaints processes, and a culture that values the voice and wellbeing of every child and young person.

Editor’s note: National Child Protection Week 2026 will be commemorated between Sunday, 6 and Saturday, 12 September. This year’s theme is “Every Conversation Matters, Shifting Conversation to Action”. Please visit the [National Child Protection website](#) for resources (including videos, posters and social media tiles), to pledge your action or to organise an event.

If you have any safe ministry concerns or would like the Safe Ministry team to attend any events to engage and meet with your people, please contact our office on 1800 242 544 or via [email](#).

“As Christians, our concern about racism begins with our faith”



Dr Stephen Harrison holding a copy of the National Anti-Racism Framework, which Diocesan Council is exploring the implementing of (following a motion carried at the ACSQ's recent Synod) 'as an expression of the ACSQ's commitment to dignity, justice, and reconciliation' (Image supplied)

An Anglican Church Southern Queensland staff member recently shared with me about how her young adult son, Arun, has experienced significant racism this year. Arun, who is also part of our Diocesan community, is of Tamil Indian descent through his father and largely Irish-English descent through his mother. Earlier last month while Arun was at a Brisbane festival, a group of other young people walked past making loud monkey noises at him. Arun's mother has also shared with me that sometimes when Arun walks on the footpath he experiences people randomly yelling out racist slurs from cars — slurs that are too profane and offensive to repeat here.

These are examples of interpersonal racism.

Arun says that these accumulating experiences make him feel unwelcome, unwanted and alienated. Hearing this story from Arun's mother makes me feel sick to the stomach for Arun and heartbroken for his mother, who obviously worries about her son's safety.

I also recently read in [a report](#) about two Aboriginal teenagers, Ash and Tai, who were shopping with friends when a security guard stopped them to search only Ash's and Tai's bags. None of the bags of the other young teenagers in their group were searched.

For some Australians, this might seem like a small incident — it was all over in a matter of minutes.

But for Ash and Tai, it was another reminder that they are judged not by their character or actions, but by negative stereotypes made about them because they are Aboriginal boys.

This is an example of systemic racism.

This story also shows how Ash and Tai's Aboriginal identity intersects with other parts of their identity as youth who are male. Ash and Tai were "profiled" by the security guard based on the prejudice he held about Aboriginal teenage boys.

Reading this story, I saw clearly that when people are treated in this way, their God-given dignity is not honoured but violated.

Racism is not always loud or obvious. It is not always a headline or a public controversy. More often multicultural Australians and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander folk are subjected to interpersonal and systemic racism in the nitty gritty of their everyday lives — such as while they are out enjoying a festival or shopping with their mates.

Whether we hear or read about racism, witness racism or experience racism, it impacts our Diocesan community, both directly and indirectly. It also impacts the wider community whom we are called to serve.

Many Australians can recall moments when they have been made to feel that they do not fully belong — when they have been treated with unwarranted suspicion, or excluded, or subjected to unequal treatment or abused.

For those who experience it, racism is not an abstract policy issue. It is deeply personal. It damages their God-given dignity, their belonging and their wellbeing — and that of their families.

And while individual stories matter, they also point to a broader reality. Racism can become embedded within systems and institutions in ways that are not always immediately visible to those who are unaffected by racism.

This is why The Rev'd Sam Sigamani and I moved a motion at our recent Diocesan Synod in support of the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#).

Australia is one of the most culturally diverse nations in the world — nearly one in three Australians were born overseas.

People from hundreds of cultural and language backgrounds contribute to our communities, our workplaces, our schools, our churches — to our whole nation.

As The Rev'd Sam recently wrote in [anglican focus](#), this richness is one of Australia's great strengths.

It enriches our common life. It broadens our perspectives. It deepens our understanding of one another. It reminds us that God's family is larger than any one ethnicity, culture, language or tradition.

Yet despite this richness, racism remains a reality.

Prejudice continues to be directed towards First Nations peoples and people from multicultural backgrounds.

The harm caused by racism extends far beyond individual incidents.

It affects people's sense of safety and belonging. It impacts educational outcomes, employment opportunities, housing, health, and participation in community life.

The Australian Human Rights Commission, which released the [National Anti-Racism Framework](#) in late 2024, has observed that racism continues to be experienced across many areas of Australian life.

While much progress has been made, there remains important work to do.

Following the carrying of the motion at our recent Synod, the question before us is not whether interpersonal and systemic racism exist.

The question is, "What we are prepared to do about it?"

Ultimately, by effectively addressing racism we uphold a vision of society that Christians seek to build — a society characterised by mutual respect, trust and safety, grounded in the knowledge that we are all created in God's image and likeness.

Pursuing this vision is a Gospel call — and achieving this vision will leave a profound legacy for our children and future generations.

Throughout Scripture we see God's concern for those who are marginalised, excluded or treated as less than fully human.

We see repeated calls to compassion and hospitality.

We see a vision of humanity gathered from every language, people and nation.

This vision challenges us to build communities in which every person knows they belong.

The National Anti-Racism Framework is a groundbreaking contribution to this vision.

Developed by the Australian Human Rights Commission the framework is a roadmap for governments, businesses and community organisations, including Churches, to meaningfully address all forms of racism in Australia.

Importantly, it is not simply a document about identifying problems.

It is a framework for constructive action that recognises that effectively addressing racism requires sustained effort. It requires leadership and practical action.

The National Anti-Racism Framework seeks to strengthen education and awareness, promote leadership and accountability, support community cohesion, and encourage coordinated responses across governments, businesses, and community organisations, including Churches like ours.

Importantly, the Race Discrimination Commissioner's April 2026 *Seen & Heard* [report](#) explains that:

"Implementing the [National Anti-Racism] Framework as the foundation of all anti-racism work in Australia is an approach supported by the Special Envoy to Combat Antisemitism in Australia and the

Special Envoy to Combat Islamophobia in Australia. The Framework recommendations have the capacity to tailor solutions to suit the needs of affected communities.”

The successfully carried Synod motion does not ask us to solve racism overnight.

Nor does it ask us to endorse a particular political ideology.

Instead, it asks us to support a thoughtful, evidence-informed framework developed by Australia's peak human rights body following extensive consultation with experts, business owners, community organisations and governments.

It asks us to explore what adoption of the framework might mean within our own Diocese.

It asks us to encourage governments to work with businesses and community organisations to implement a coordinated response through achievable and constructive steps.

The National Anti-Racism Framework recommends a whole-of-society approach, with a number of key priority areas, including legal, justice, health, education, employment, media and the arts, and data collection.

The Race Discrimination Commissioner, Giri Sivaraman, met with a number of our clergy and lay people in St Martin's House recently. One of things we discussed is this Synod motion. He suggested that if this motion is carried that our Diocese particularly considers the priority areas of health, education and employment. Understanding that we could focus on just three areas was encouraging. We were all moved when he said that he felt “nourished” by our meeting, which included a warm welcome, a morning tea and acknowledgment of his work with a small gift. I hope that every encounter we have with multicultural community leaders leaves them feeling nourished.

As Christians, our concern about racism begins with our faith.

We believe that every person is created in the image of God.

Every person possesses inherent dignity and worth.

Every person is loved by God and invited into relationship with God.

These beliefs go beyond abstract theological claims. They have practical consequences.

If every person bears the image of God, then every act that diminishes human dignity matters.

If every person bears the image of God, then exclusion, prejudice and discrimination cannot simply be dismissed as isolated and unfortunate social problems.

They become matters of Christian concern.

Effectively addressing racism through a whole-of-society approach is an expression of Christian discipleship, of the call to love our neighbour.

It is an expression of our commitment to ensuring that everyone's God-given dignity is upheld and that everyone can live in peace and safety.

The successfully carried Synod motion provides our Diocesan community with an opportunity to affirm the Gospel call and these Christian values.

To support practical action that will strengthen our communities.

And to contribute, in our own way, to building a fairer, safer, and more compassionate Australia, including for our young people, such as Ash and Tai and Arun.

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.**

Explanatory notes: [National Anti-Racism Framework](#), published on the Australian Human Rights Commission website.

Opening and blessing of the new Parish Centre, St Peter's, Gympie



"May everyone who crosses this threshold discover not simply that they have entered a new building, but that they have found a community that seeks to answer Christ's question each day: 'Do you love me?' by responding with lives of loving service," said Archbishop Jeremy Greaves (pictured here with parish priest The Rev'd Shaji Joseph) at a special gathering to commemorate the opening of the new Parish Centre at St Peter's, Gympie on Saturday, 25 July 2026 (Image by the ACSQ Property Team)

Today is a day of celebration and of giving thanks.

We give thanks not simply because a building has been completed, but because this Parish Centre stands as a visible sign of something much deeper: the faithfulness of God, and the faithfulness of generations of God's people in this place. It is, as we have heard, "the fruit of many years of prayer, vision, generosity and faithful work."

In the Gospel we have just heard, Jesus asks Simon Peter a simple but searching question: "Do you love me?"

Three times Jesus asks the question. Three times Peter answers. And each time Jesus responds in the same way: "Feed my lambs...Tend my sheep...Feed my sheep."

It is striking that Jesus does not say, "Build impressive buildings." He does not say, "Create successful organisations." Instead, he points Peter towards people. Love for Christ is always expressed in love for others.

That is why this building matters.

Its true value will never be measured by bricks and timber, by meeting rooms or kitchens, but by the lives that are welcomed here. It will be measured in conversations shared over cups of tea, in friendships that begin around a table, in children who discover they belong, in those who arrive burdened and leave with renewed hope. It will be measured by every act of kindness, every shared meal, every listening ear, every moment when someone encounters the love of Christ through the welcome they receive here.

I am especially grateful that this Parish Centre is already becoming exactly that kind of place through ministries like the Gympie Winter Shelter. It reminds us that Christian hospitality is never simply about being friendly; it is about restoring dignity, offering hope and making room for those whom the world too often overlooks.

Hospitality has always been one of the Church's greatest gifts to the world. Long before the word became fashionable, Christians were opening their homes, welcoming strangers, feeding the hungry and caring for those in need because they recognised the face of Christ in every person they met.

My prayer is that this Parish Centre will continue that tradition for generations to come.

May it always be a place where people are welcomed before they are judged.

Where strangers become friends.

Where neighbours become family.

Where faith is lived as well as proclaimed.

And where the people of Gympie glimpse something of God's kingdom in the ordinary acts of generosity and compassion that happen within these walls.

May everyone who crosses this threshold discover not simply that they have entered a new building, but that they have found a community that seeks to answer Christ's question each day: "Do you love me?" by responding with lives of loving service.

To God be the glory.

Amen.



Archbishop Jeremy Greaves with Sue Topalov (People's Warden), Rene Dekker (People's Warden) Dr John Wright (Rector's Warden) and The Rev'd Shaji Joseph at a special gathering to commemorate the opening of the new Parish Centre at St Peter's, Gympie on Saturday, 25 July 2026 (Image by Bishop Sarah Plowman)

This address was given by Archbishop Jeremy Greaves on Saturday, 25 July 2026 at a special gathering to commemorate the opening of the new Parish Centre at St Peter's, Gympie.

Anglicare Sunday — an annual invitation to connect and celebrate



The Rev'd Morris Rangiwai from St Matthew's, Holland Park and Anglicare InSync representative Claire Housden packing a car with donated items in 2026 (Image supplied)

How often do we recognise a significant need in our community, but then think “Well, what can I just do on my own or what could my small parish do about that?” Our community at St Matt’s in Holland Park is smaller than many parishes in number (albeit growing), but is big of heart. We have always tried to do our bit over the years to assist the Holland Park community. However, we have found that since partnering with Anglicare, our modest efforts have been greatly magnified. They have been leveraged by the support of many others, making a significant positive impact upon our community way beyond anything we would have been able to do alone.

Also, on a personal note, Anglicare ministries have greatly helped my family and that of other parishioners in the past, so it’s great to have an opportunity now to “pay it forward”.

The St Matt’s community has been greatly assisted by Anglicare over the years. Our Parish Pastoral Care team refers many people, who reach out to us for assistance, to Anglicare so they can access practical help. These referrals included providing emergency accommodation, in-home care and assistance with transitioning to higher care and accommodation.

The Anglicare team is also always available to provide sage advice and guidance to enable our folks to adequately navigate through the various government requirements in order to obtain the extra support that they need. Often, this advice is needed at short notice and in an emergency context. The dedicated and caring Anglicare team members always do their very best for our community when we reach out for that help.

As an example, some wider community members have reported that our Anglicare Community Information Sessions have been literally life changing for them by providing an actionable way forward when previously they had felt “stuck”, anxious and depressed or lost hope.

Our hearts break when we consider the large number and plight of people sleeping rough, particularly at-risk youth. Again, what can we do just as one smaller parish?

We are excited to have been the first to host a [“Tea for Tomorrow”](#) high tea fundraiser for Anglicare’s Youth Homelessness Accommodation Project — a \$14 million purpose-built facility in Beenleigh designed to provide safety, dignity and opportunity for young people aged 16–25. We also support Anglicare’s [InSync program](#), which provides practical assistance and support for youth, particularly those struggling with homelessness in Brisbane, Redlands, Logan and Beenleigh. Our parishioners donate canned and non-perishable foodstuffs, sanitary products and personal care items weekly to help keep InSync’s pantry stocked and ready to assist with emergency needs.

We are also cognisant of the other end of the age spectrum, with an epidemic of loneliness and isolation amongst our older community cohort. Accordingly, we have partnered with Anglicare to provide a monthly morning tea and informal Eucharist for their clients. These older folk greatly enjoy gathering with our parishioners and singing “old-time favourite hymns” while relishing the spiritual and pastoral fellowship enjoyed before and during the service.

In addition to the above activities, we have partnered with Anglicare to provide Community Information Sessions about topics requested by community members. These include “navigating the aged care maze”, “transitioning into higher care”, “living well with dementia”, “accessing in-home care” and “getting your personal affairs in order”. We are currently planning a “Dealing with Grief and Loss” workshop for 2027.

Last year, our local kindy, Anglicare and St Matt’s also came together to provide Christmas hampers and books to some of Anglicare’s foster families. These were warmly received and brightened up over 200 of our foster children’s Christmas celebrations.

Above all else, we urge our parishioners to pray and uphold Anglicare and its committed staff with whom we jointly minister. Our “prayer chain” prays weekly for different Anglicare ministries and initiatives. As our priest The Rev’d Morris Rangiwai says, “Our support for Anglicare must be bathed in prayer to be effective”.

Our Anglicare Sunday celebration is always a “red letter day” on our parish calendar. Over the last few years, we have been privileged to have the homily delivered by Anglicare’s Director of Mission, Stephen Harrison, and we welcomed our local Anglicare InSync representative Claire Housden, who updated us on InSync’s current projects and the impact of our modest efforts. On Anglicare Sunday we also host a “Tea for Tomorrow” high tea, with funds raised (along with the retiring collection) given for InSync’s nominated project.

We, at St Matt’s, enjoy our partnership with Anglicare and the strong relationships we have developed with Anglicare staff. Several years ago we felt the need to connect our parish and our parish’s wider community with Anglicare — our own Church’s caring ministry. Before we connected with Anglicare we really didn’t know what they did, how we could work with Anglicare or if Anglicare could help us. But now we feel that we and Anglicare are working together as one in our community — seeking to help practically where we can to assist those who need it.

As The Rev'd Morris said, "We thank God for Anglicare and its ministry in our community and that they welcome us to partner with them to seek to further build His kingdom here at Holland Park."

So, why not [reach out](#) to Zareena Rajan, Anglicare's Community Relationship Manager, to explore how your parish may be able to connect or further develop your relationship with Anglicare, including discussing how Anglicare can help your community and how your community can support Anglicare's vital work.

Editor's note: Anglicare Sunday liturgical resources, prayers and materials (such as "Tea for Tomorrow" resources) may be [downloaded](#). To find out more about Anglicare Sunday, please [email](#) Anglicare Southern Queensland's Director of Mission Dr Stephen Harrison.

International • Wednesday 5 August 2026 • By World Council of Churches

In Kerala, a bishop cultivates climate justice at 6:30 am



Bishop Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian in his integrated agricultural farm, demonstrating sustainable farming and care for God's creation. (Photo: CSI MKD Communications)

In one of the largest dioceses of the Church of South India, climate justice begins in a vegetable garden.

Across Kerala, in south India, many farmers have walked away from the land, convinced a shifting climate has made cultivation too risky. The Right Rev'd Dr Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian is walking back onto it. Each morning at 6:30, two hours before his first visitor arrives, the bishop of the Church of South India's Madhya Kerala diocese is out among the long beans.

He works alongside a farm labourer: watering, checking irrigation lines, harvesting, turning soil. Only then does he take up the administration of nearly 400 parishes.

Farming, for him, is not a hobby. It is discipleship.

“The land belongs to God. God has entrusted it to human beings to cultivate for the sustenance of life. If we neglect the land that God has given us, it is not merely wastefulness – it is sin.”

“I cannot ask people to cultivate their land if I am unwilling to cultivate my own,” he says.

Farming as climate justice

The plot bears him out. Long beans, bitter gourd, okra, yam, and plantains grow alongside a fish pond. The variety is deliberate: mixed cropping builds soil health, spreads pest risk, and copes better with an erratic monsoon.

He farms largely organically, and precisely. Fertiliser goes in through the drip lines – three grams to each plant’s root zone, five times across a hundred-day crop cycle, alongside organic manure. Fermented cow dung and urine feed the soil. Pond water irrigates the beds, so nutrients circulate rather than drain away.

The diocese markets the produce. Over the past four years it has averaged around 800,000 Indian rupees (approximately 8,300 US dollars) a year, though vegetable prices fluctuate. The income goes back into the church’s ministry.

None of this is nostalgia. Serving congregations in Kerala, he has pressed parishes to put unused church land back into cultivation. “If we cultivate wisely and sustainably, agriculture can still provide a dignified livelihood,” he says. “Proper farming can reduce poverty and help build climate-resilient communities.



Bishop Dr. Malayil Sabu Koshy Cherian with his wife Dr Jessy Sarah Koshy (Photo: CSI MKD Communications)

A mislaid inheritance

The idea is not new, only mislaid. When the Church Missionary Society established churches in Kerala in the 19th century, it acquired land and encouraged families living in poverty to farm it toward self-reliance. Cities grew, families migrated, and much of that land went quiet.

“The future of humanity depends not only on what we preach in our churches, but also on how we care for the land that God has entrusted to us,” he reflects.

Madhya Kerala is not unusual in owning land. The question is what a diocese does with it.

“Churches own land almost everywhere climate change is felt. What happens on it is ours to decide,” said Athena Peralta, director of the WCC Commission on Climate Justice and Sustainable Development. “Restorative agricultural practices protects both climate and biodiversity.”

The WCC’s Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action (2025–2034) has made climate and biodiversity its 2026 theme, and asks congregations for ecological metanoia – a repentance, a turning of heart in how we live with creation. In Kerala, that turn starts at 6:30, in a vegetable garden.

Understand a bit more

Ecological metanoia. *Metanoia* is a Greek word meaning a change of heart and mind. In the context of climate justice, ecological metanoia calls communities of faith to acknowledge their contribution to the destruction of creation and to change direction – personally, collectively, and systemically. It goes beyond guilt to embrace renewal and solidarity with those most harmed by ecological breakdown.

[Ecumenical Decade of Climate Justice Action](#)

[From lament to action: WCC gathers multiple faiths on biodiversity day](#)

[WCC, Caritas, World Vision launch “Give your loaves and fish”](#)

[IPCC AR6 WGII, Chapter 5: Food, Fibre and Other Ecosystem Products](#)

[FAO: Climate change and agriculture — strengthening the role of smallholders](#)

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 29 July 2026.

Prayers for Ukraine affirm values of freedom, human dignity, peace



Ecumenical prayer service at St Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv on 24 August 2026 marked the 35th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence (Photo: Protodeacon Andriy Sydor/OCU)

Prayers for Ukraine rang 'round the world on 24 August, from large ecumenical services to quiet reflections, all expressing solidarity and determination for justice and peace. The day also marked the 35th anniversary of Ukraine's independence.

An interfaith prayer service held at St. Sophia Cathedral in Kyiv was attended by Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and First Lady Olena Zelenska, as well as heads of various churches and leaders of religious organizations.

After a chamber choir performed the Lord's Prayer, representatives from various churches and religious organizations took turns offering prayers for Ukraine. They called for an end to the war and for just peace, for protection for the Ukrainian people, for the return of children, prisoners, and those missing in action, for the healing of the wounded, and for unity.

Prayers were offered by Primate of the Orthodox Church of Ukraine Epiphanius, Head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church Sviatoslav, Head of the Kyiv-Zhytomyr Diocese of the Roman Catholic Church in Ukraine Vitalii Kryvytskyi, Head of the All-Ukrainian Union of the Churches of Evangelical Christians-Baptists Valerii Antoniuk, President of the Union of Jewish Religious Organizations of Ukraine Yaakov Dov Bleich, Supreme Mufti of Ukraine Sheikh Ahmed Tamim, Bishop of the Transcarpathian Reformed Church Sándor Zán Fábíán, and Senior Bishop of the Ukrainian Pentecostal Church Anatoliy Kozachok.

His Beatitude Sviatoslav Shevchuk, representing the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, expressed gratitude to God for “the gift of freedom, for the gift of a free, united, and independent Ukrainian state.”

He appealed to Christ, the King of Peace, asking for “an end to the war, victory over the unjust aggressor, and the gift of just, heavenly peace for our homeland and for our people”.

He implored to God for unity among the Ukrainian people. “Grant that we have unity and freedom, and that Your eternal divine love may reign in all things,” he prayed.

The ecumenical prayer took place as part of the World Day of Prayer for Peace in Ukraine, which the Ukrainian Council of Churches and Religious Organizations had called for. The gathering concluded with a joint performance of Ukraine’s spiritual anthem, “Prayer for Ukraine”.

Metropolitan Epiphany, Orthodox Church of Ukraine, reflected on how Ukraine has fought for the truth, for language, for faith, for freedom, and for the right to freely make choices. “And for the last 12-and-a-half years, we have been forced to fight for the right to live on our own, God-given land, for the right not to depend on anyone and to be the masters of our own home, to determine the fate of our state, our people, our Church,” he said.

“Therefore, the word ‘independence’ is inseparable to the words ‘struggle,’ ‘dignity,’ ‘freedom.’”

The metropolitan noted that Ukrainian people are worthy of their independence.

“Thirty-five years is a long time by human standards, but relatively short for the history of a nation,” he said.

“However, we know that we have a glorious 1,000-year history of Ukraine-Rus’; we have strong roots and an ancient faith, our own culture and traditions, our native church, numerous saints.”

He reflected that all the people, like cells in the body, make up the “body” of the state. “And as long as we hold together, as long as we care for each other, protect and defend, as long as we preserve the ‘soul’ of our people, our Ukrainian Church — the Ukrainian people will live, have the strength to fight and, with God’s help, will prevail,” he said.

“Great and One God, protect Ukraine!”

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 25 August 2026.