Gathered church services suspended from Monday 23 March

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) has today decided to suspend church services from next Monday, 23 March until further notice due to recent developments in the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Any parishes that wish to suspend services immediately are free to do so. The decision to suspend services has not been taken lightly; however, with many of our congregations in our 133 parishes in the high-risk groups of contracting the virus, this is a necessary decision.

While the Government has only restricted gatherings of 100 or over, it is vital at this time that we care for, and stand in solidarity with, our elderly and at-risk parishioners. Encouraging them to attend public worship by holding regular services would be to fail our vocation of care and compassion.

We must now focus fully on how we stay connected with, care for and minister to our church members and the wider community. This will mean being creative and using whatever technology and approaches are available to us.

We will continue to monitor the situation and review it on an ongoing basis.

Some churches will start livestreaming their services from this weekend, including St John’s Cathedral in Brisbane and St Bart’s in Toowoomba. ACSQ is also offering grants to parishes to assist them with
the cost of purchasing equipment/subscriptions/licences that will enable them to communicate in the absence of face to face gatherings.

This pandemic is causing profound disruption to our everyday lives and to the ministry of our Church communities. It is likely to intensify before the situation begins to improve.

I am very aware that the COVID-19 pandemic is causing a high degree of stress and anxiety for clergy, parish staff and volunteers. I want to encourage all of them to care for one another and for themselves.

Government and public health advice should be monitored constantly and followed. Please continue to regularly check our advice page as we seek to support and resource parishes and ministries in every way possible.

We are also looking at other ways we can continue to support parishes and further information will follow in coming weeks.

*News • Thursday 19 March 2020 • By Archbishop Phillip Aspinall*

**Caring for each other and staying connected during this challenging time**

Since the beginning of the year, we have been closely monitoring Queensland Department of Health and Australian Government updates on the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. In response, I have been communicating with clergy and other Diocesan leaders with guidance and information based on Queensland Health’s and the Australian Government’s latest recommendations, including through emailed *Ad Clera.*
Last week the World Health Organisation characterised the coronavirus (COVID-19) situation as a pandemic. This pandemic is causing profound disruption to our everyday lives and to the ministry of our Church communities. It is likely to intensify before the situation begins to improve. We are taking steps to care for and protect our clergy and members of our churches, ministries, service organisations and staff, many of whom are in the demographic groups most vulnerable to the virus.

A [webpage](#) has been created to provide clergy and other Church leaders with ongoing advice and resources to:

- Support planning for ministry perhaps in new ways;
- Provide resources for continuing ministry;
- Provide guidelines for worship gatherings and church events;
- Assist people with protecting themselves and others.

This [webpage](#) is being reviewed daily and updated as needed. I am encouraging our community’s leaders to check the webpage regularly.

While the physical health of our communities remains paramount, COVID-19 presents a danger for our Church beyond that of the physical wellbeing of our members. It could cause us to lose focus on our call to proclaim the Kingdom of God. Historically, in times of social need, the Church has always made a significant contribution to caring for and protecting others, and the current pandemic situation is no different. While there may be many usual activities and services that we cannot continue in the coming months, with creativity and planning we will have a key role to play. It is not time for the church to retreat from ministry, but to step up.

In the news and on social media over the past few weeks, we have seen people in our local communities behaving in both unhelpful and helpful ways. As Christians, this is a time to remember our call to care and compassion, as well as to protect others.

To carry out this call, we need to be patient with each other and willing to share. Importantly, we need to be mindful of those most at risk in our community who may need additional support, such as older people and those with pre-existing medical conditions who may decide to self-isolate. Simply picking up the phone regularly to check in or offering assistance with grocery or pharmacy shopping and other errands are simple, but meaningful, ways we can help vulnerable people feel connected and supported.

To protect ourselves and others we need to practise good hand and respiratory hygiene, cooperate with medical professionals and calmly heed the COVID-19 advice regularly updated by [state](#) and [Federal](#) governments.

During this time, I also encourage members of our Diocesan community to stay connected. This is especially important for those who are temporarily unable to attend church or other activities. As well as encouraging members of our Diocesan community to stay connected through their local church’s communication channels, we also invite people to:

- **Subscribe** to the fortnightly ‘Wednesday Weekly’ to keep up to date with general ACSQ announcements and to access [Sunday Devotions](#), including lectionary readings.
- **Subscribe** to the fortnightly ‘anglican focus’ e-news’ to keep up to date with Episcopal and other general ACSQ news and to access [Sunday Devotions](#), including lectionary readings.
- ‘Like’ [ACSQ Facebook](#).
• Contact their parish priest or church leader to discuss possible alternatives if digital access or literacy is an issue.

For more information on the above options, please visit the faithful + effective website.

Please also be aware that Cathedral Precinct operations in Ann Street and St Francis College in Milton will soon undergo some changes, with the likelihood of a number of staff working from alternative locations. We are planning for this in a careful and methodical manner in order to maintain business continuity for Diocesan support services, including vital functions like payroll. Out of consideration for the health of our parishes, you might find that there are also fewer site visits and face-to-face contact from personnel based in Ann St. However, please be assured that staff are still available and contactable via phone, email and Skype.

I pray and trust that all members of our Diocesan community will think about how they can remain connected, care for each other, serve the wider community and maintain the disciplines of the Christian faith during this challenging period.

Be assured of my ongoing prayers for you and your community.

Please join with me in the following prayer:

**A prayer from the National Council of Churches**

Gracious God,
We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit's discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop Phillip Aspinall
Good advice for taking your church online

If you are in the midst of moving your church online, there is a lot to think about: Adrian Jackson (@adrianjackson) shared the following great advice on Twitter.

As a former Assistant Media Director for a mega church, I have spent most of the last ten years being asked to think about ways to take church online. I've had a massive, stressful week and don't have time to answer every idea so I'm going to thread some suggestions here.

1) **Start simple.** We don't have the time to do this right, we are responding to an emergency we haven't planned for.

2) **Prioritise connection over production or liturgical beauty.** The best thing you can do for your community this weekend is connect with them. Instead of stressing about Facebook Live, write a separate text message to each person in your church, asking how they are.

3) **Reduce screen time.** We're all being asked to spend more time in Zoom meetings or reading emails on top of being glued to news feeds. Send people something they can print out or a playlist they can listen to.

4) **Move away from scheduled activities.** While people need to maintain routines in isolation, we're all being asked to attend more meetings and this is causing schedule anxiety. Find ways people can connect in flexibility.

5) **Focus on spiritual practice over liturgy and preaching.** What we need most is assistance in letting go of stress and regaining connection with God and with others.

6) **Lower expectations.** We all need a little grace. Think twice before asking your teenager or church tech guy for help. Everyone is coming to us.

7) **Invite, don’t ask or tell.** Make everything you do optional. Listen to your congregation’s needs and let them reflect.

8) **Keep reassessing.** None of us know what’s going to work. Last Sunday I would've told you to consider a small group on Zoom. I've spent all week on Zoom meetings and would rather not go to another one. People don't know yet what is going to work for them.

9) **Thank you.** For every person who is trying to do things differently. For every person who is caring for others. For every person who is feeling exhausted. Thank you.

10) **Forgive the mistakes.** If your church isn't getting it right or doing it the way you would like, be patient. None of us trained for this, we’re all learning.

First published on the faithful + effective website on 21 March 2020.
St Cuthbert – opening the door to the heart of heaven

Statue of St Cuthbert in the Lindisfarne Priory ruins on Holy Island, Berwick-upon-Tweed, UK

St Cuthbert's cross hangs in my living room window for very good reason. Cuthbert (634-687) is the greatest of the Northern Saints, pointing not only to vital elements of our English-speaking Christian heritage, but also to powerful central features of our continuing faith. His Feast Day is 20 March, and his life and witness offer us glimpses into a holiness which can enliven our own contemporary world, as it did its own.

Wor Cuddy

In what was the ancient Celtic Christian Kingdom of Northumbria (now northern England and south-east Scotland), Cuthbert is known affectionately as ‘Wor Cuddy’ (or ‘Our Cuddy’), his nickname. This is particularly the case in County Durham, where I was born. For, from early days, Cuthbert was the great spiritual ‘Protector of the North’, not least in that area, between the Rivers Tyne and Tees, known for centuries as ‘the Liberty of Durham’. Today Cuthbert's cross is still found across the region, including on the County Durham flag. It is a vivid reminder of the close relationship between Cuthbert and his people, the halifol ('people of the saint'). Even for many who are not explicitly religious, Cuthbert speaks to the heart and spirit of that people and place, just like Durham’s great Cathedral, built by the Normans in 1093, in which Cuthbert’s tomb has always had a central place. However, his significance transcends his context.

Also known as ‘the Wonder Worker of Britain’, for miraculous happenings attributed to him, Cuthbert lived at the transition between Celtic and Roman Christianity. Indeed, the story goes that, in 651, while working as a shepherd boy on the Northumbrian hills, Cuthbert had a vision of the soul of the great Celtic missionary St Aidan being carried to heaven by angels. This inspired him, at age 17, to become a monk at the monastery of Old Melrose, seeking to be a shepherd for Christ. Thus, in his influential narrative of the origins of the Ecclesia Anglicana, Saint Bede pointed to Cuthbert as both the fulfilment of the Celtic mission and the inaugurator of the reformed Catholic tradition, which he, and we,
inherited. For Cuthbert became Prior of Lindisfarne and later Bishop, helping to integrate the wider 'Roman' church traditions with those of the Indigenous, or 'Celtic', past.

If there is something to be said for Cuthbert, as an abbot and bishop of a transcendent *via media* ('middle way') of his day, Cuthbert's profoundest significance lies in his inspiring spirituality, of which three aspects are particularly valuable today. Firstly, his embodiment of key features of Celtic Christianity; secondly, his deep Scriptural grounding; and thirdly, his contemplative prayerfulness.

**God in Creation and pilgrimage**

Among Celtic Christian features that have become attractive today are the rediscovery of God in Creation and the importance of viewing life's journey as pilgrimage. These are strongly present in Cuthbert. Five centuries before St Francis of Assisi, he was an ancient model of what we might call an 'eco saint'. The common eider sea birds are known as 'Cuddy ducks' in England's north east, as tradition has it that Cuthbert, an early conservationist, helped save their lives from hunters.

He lived an extremely humble and ascetic life, close to people who were poor and in intimate relationship with the natural world. Indeed, one of the most beautiful Cuthbert stories concerns his connection with other creatures. Late at night, it is said, after his fellow monks had fallen asleep, he would sometimes sneak out of the monastery and head to the sea, to wade into water up to his neck, raise his arms to the sky, and pray with the rhythm of the waves. One night another monk decided to follow him discreetly. He saw Cuthbert wading deep into that cruelly cold North Sea, praying in his customary fashion. He prayed throughout the night, and at dawn returned to the shore and knelt for more prayer. However, when Cuthbert emerged from the sea he was not alone. Two otters followed him, panting on his feet to dry them, and snuggling against his body to warm him with their fur. The otters stayed with Cuthbert as he finished praying, kneeling before him in the sand. They did not depart until he offered them his blessing.

In life, and still more after his death, Cuthbert also called his people to life as a pilgrimage in response to God's grace. Originally buried in Lindisfarne Priory in 687, his body was later taken by his followers to save it from Viking destruction. Over subsequent years, it journeyed throughout the region as a focus for sanctity, until placed in Durham Cathedral, becoming the primary attraction for visiting pilgrims. In recent years, the rediscovery of pilgrimage as a spiritual tool has led to new developments, such as the creation of the hundred kilometre 'Cuthbert's Way' between Melrose and Lindisfarne.

**Scripture at the heart of holiness**

Such spirituality was profoundly grounded in holy Scripture. For Cuthbert was not only immersed daily in the Scriptural reading of the hours, but he shone with the fruits of deep discipleship, not least in his commitment to reconciliation, care for people who were poor and a healing ministry. Thus, the famous Lindisfarne Gospels, an illuminated manuscript made of calfskin vellum, were made in his honour. Indeed, when his tomb was opened, in addition to claims that his body was uncorrupted (an ancient sign of profound holiness), on his breast was found the beautiful Gospel of John – today the oldest complete book of the English Church. It was a profound sign of what truly mattered to Cuthbert.
Living out of deep prayer

At the very centre of Cuthbert's life was a whole-hearted search for God. He is officially remembered in our Lectionary only as ‘bishop and missionary’. Yet, for all his tireless work for the Church and for people who were living in poverty on the margins, he was above all a hermit and a mystic. At various stages in his life, he thus sought to withdraw into deeper contemplation. At first, he lived alone on the small island adjacent to Lindisfarne, now known as St Cuthbert's Isle. Then, under pressure from visitors seeking his counsel, he retreated further to the remote Inner Farne island. His greatest gift to us is thus the invitation to nurture our own intimate relationship with God.

A sign of heaven

As highlighted above, Cuddy/Cuthbert has been many things. Perhaps, however, the following sonnet takes us to the truth: that Cuthbert’s deepest identity lies in him being ‘a sanctuary, a sign, an open door’ to ‘the heart of heaven’. The poem is titled ‘Cuddy’, from the collection The Singing Bowl, published by Canterbury Press, and penned by Malcolm Guite (poet, singer-songwriter, Anglican priest, and chaplain of Girton College, Cambridge):

‘Cuthbertus’ says the dark stone up in Durham
Where I have come on pilgrimage to pray.
But not this great cathedral, nor the solemn
Weight of Norman masonry we lay
Upon your bones could hold your soul in prison.
Free as the cuddy ducks they named for you,
Loosed by the lord who died to pay your ransom,
You roam the North just as you used to do;
Always on foot and walking with the poor,
Breaking the bread of angels in your cave,
A sanctuary, a sign, an open door,
You follow Christ through keening wind and wave,
To be and bear with him where all is borne;
The heart of heaven, in your Inner Farne.

For beyond all our identities is the mystic universal communion in which Cuddy lived and moved. So, in the spirit of Cuthbert, may the changing winds and waves of his, and my, native land winnow and wash us all with transforming love.
St Margaret's students pledge to support UQ COVID-19 vaccine research

A cohort of Year 5 students at St Margaret’s Anglican Girls School has pledged to support the development of the coronavirus vaccine, which has been highlighted in a heart-warming exchange with a lead University of Queensland COVID-19 vaccine researcher (L-R): Georgia Smith, Adelaide Bothwell, Charlotte Rhode, Imogen Wren

A cohort of Year 5 students at St Margaret’s Anglican Girls School has pledged to support the development of the coronavirus vaccine, which has been highlighted in a heart-warming exchange with a lead University of Queensland COVID-19 vaccine researcher.

Since January, the University of Queensland’s Professor Paul Young and his team of 20 researchers, from the School of Chemistry and Molecular Biosciences, have been working around the clock to develop the vaccine.

After hearing about the researchers’ tireless efforts, Year 5 St Margaret’s student Imogen Wren said that the girls felt compelled to contribute positively to the global crisis and support the locally-based researchers.

“We wanted to do something for the planet, and we realised the perfect thing would be to help with coronavirus research,” Imogen said.

“We needed to know whether any funds we raised would be helpful or not, so we decided to write a letter.”

Imogen penned a letter to Professor Paul Young, sharing their plans and pledging their support.

Their letter prompted a heartfelt and encouraging response from Professor Young, who wrote:

“It was extremely touching and humbling to receive your kind letter when I had a brief moment to step out of the laboratory today to check my e-mail.
“The whole team here are working really hard to deliver on this program, and your kind thoughts and donation mean more to us than pretty much anything else that has crossed our desks since we began this journey in early January. It will undoubtedly keep us strong.

“I find it inspiring when young people, such as yourselves, harness the power of philanthropy to solve the world’s greatest problems. Please accept this confirmation that your fundraising pledge will be put to good use in helping us fund our vaccine research.

“Now...back to the lab!”

Imogen, who was moved and humbled by Professor Young's response, said that she felt encouraged and empowered by Professor Young's reply.

“I felt like I was really doing something important,” she said.

You can watch the moment the girls received the news about Professor Young's reply on YouTube.

Northern Region Bishop Jeremy Greaves, who was the first to let anglican focus know about the St Margaret's girls’ initiative, said that he was impressed by the girls’ community spirit.

“It is easy to be paralysed by fear at times like this and so it was tremendously inspiring to see these young students from St Margaret's deciding to do something to help,” Bishop Jeremy said.

“It certainly gave me a bit of a nudge to work out what I might be able to do, and to give it a go rather than throwing up my hands and saying, ‘It's all too hard!’”

While the girls had originally intended on organising a family movie night fundraiser, with the community's move to social distancing, the girls are considering alternative fundraising ideas to help reach their philanthropic goal of at least $100.

The letter exchange has been shared on the school’s social media page, prompting an outpouring of support and encouragement from the community.
‘Utterly orthodox and utterly radical’


Shortly after commencing full-time theological studies at St Mark’s in Canberra, a group of friends and I watched the 1989 movie *Romero*, directed by John Duigan. This was the first time I had heard about the story of Archbishop Oscar Romero and I was deeply moved by the power of his ministry amongst the most vulnerable. In fact, I felt that watching this film so early on in my formation to ordained ministry not only grounded my reality of the sometimes-monumental challenges faced in ministry, but also demonstrated to me what it means to get in amongst the people and standing in solidarity with those who are oppressed.

Born in El Salvador in 1917, Romero recognised a call to ministry in the Catholic Church at an early age and at 14 entered seminary. At 25 Romero was ordained a priest and in 1970 he was consecrated an auxiliary Bishop in San Salvador and later became Bishop of Santiago de Maria.

While his ministry and leadership were praised by the church leadership, he was known to be more apolitical and complacent in his socio-political world views, despite the country of El Salvador descending into what we now know as the Salvadoran Civil War (1979-1992). During this period, El Salvador was fractured by widespread violence between the autocratic military led government and various left-wing guerrilla groups. Romero began recognising the injustices inflicted upon the people, particularly when noticing that children were dying because their parents could no longer afford basic medicines. This prompted Romero to do what he could for the poor through the resources of the church, but recognised that more needed to be done.
In 1977 Romero became Archbishop of San Salvador and many commentators noted that his election was perhaps due to him being a reasonably ‘safe’ leader and one who would not challenge the government. However, Romero continued to grow increasingly concerned. Three weeks after he took up office as Archbishop, a close friend, Jesuit priest Fr Rutilio Grande, was assassinated by government security forces at the behest of wealthy landowners. The shock and grief of this dramatically affected Romero and he was moved deeply, personally and spiritually. Some suggest that this was the turning point of his ministry towards more intentionally demanding justice and peace throughout the country, which he did through publicly speaking out against the violent regime.

Romero withdrew his attendance from official government occasions and set up a Diocesan legal office which recorded all murders and disappearances, as well as coordinated pastoral support for families and communities. Romero also ordered that all parishes be closed and that a communal Mass be held each week outside the Cathedral, often gathering over 100,000 people. During these Masses, Romero would intertwine biblical catechesis with social commentary, grounding the gospel in the El Salvadorian context – he is described as being “utterly orthodox and utterly radical”. He would publicly recall the horrors of the week prior – those who had been murdered and those who had ‘disappeared’. He was determined that the truth be told in the face of adversity and evil, which sought to cover up the human rights violations and pretend that nothing was happening.

Throughout the week, Romero would be there amongst the people providing on-the-ground pastoral care and support for individuals and communities. Romero knew that publicly speaking out would jeopardise his life, yet he continued to follow the path of discipleship.

“Throughout the week, Romero would be there amongst the people providing on-the-ground pastoral care and support for individuals and communities” (Image courtesy of https://cafod.org.uk/News/International-news/Oscar-Romero-life-timeline)
In 1980 when killings had reached over 3,000 people per month, Romero spoke directly to the soldiers and police in the congregation through one of his last homilies, saying:

“No soldier is obliged to obey an order counter to the law of God. No one has to comply with an immoral law. It is the time now that you recover your conscience and obey its dictates rather than the command of sin...Therefore, in the name of God, and in the name of this long-suffering people, whose laments rise to heaven every day more tumultuous, I beseech you, I beg you, I command you! In the name of God: ‘Cease the repression!”

The following evening on 24 March 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated, at the hands of a professional killer hired by right-wing military officers, at the altar of a local hospital as he celebrated the Mass. Before his death Romero had, almost prophetically spoke these words (p. 111):

“Those who surrender to the service of the poor through the love of Christ will live like the grain of wheat that dies...the harvest comes because of the grain that dies.”

Anglicans have identified with Romero since his leadership in liberation and proclamations of peace amidst war. Prior to becoming Archbishop of Canterbury, The Right Rev'd Dr Robert Runcie, then Bishop of St Albans, sought to support Archbishop Romero and challenge the British Government in their complicity with the Salvadorian government through a speech to the House of Lords.

Sometime later, on the eve of the enthronement of Bishop Runcie as Archbishop of Canterbury, Romero was killed and so the liturgy for the following day at Canterbury Cathedral was adapted to include a moving, yet symbolic, gesture with Archbishop Runcie visiting the Chapel of St Thomas à Beckett, who was martyred some 800 years earlier in 1170. In the chapel, Runcie offered prayers for the people of El Salvador and for Archbishop Romero.

The Anglican Communion honours this 20th century martyr with a stone statue, along with nine other modern-day martyrs, installed above the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, which was unveiled during the 1998 Lambeth Conference.

Oscar Romero was officially canonised by the Catholic Church in 2018 by Pope Francis. The ceremony was attended by a delegation from the Archbishop of Canterbury, including The Right Rev'd Dr Rowan Williams.

To me, the story of Romero is one of power and powerlessness. This is a tension that is held constantly throughout society today, but one that, in Romero's case, led to a sacrificial victim following the way of Jesus.

In Brisbane, many may know of the Romero Centre, based in Dutton Park, whose vision is to ‘support people seeking asylum’. A number of ministry groups within our own Diocese support the work of the Romero Centre, and most recently St Francis College has forged a partnership with the centre through ‘Baroona Farm’. Our urban farm project at St Francis College seeks to ‘grow food and community with and for the nutritionally vulnerable’ and so aligns perfectly with the legacy of Romero in seeking justice for all people.

I commend to you the movie Romero and the multitude of books written about this great man, as we could all learn something of proclaiming the gospel imperatives of Jesus in our world yearning for hope, peace and love.
‘Sharing the Dignity’ with women and girls who are homeless during the pandemic

Before working at All Saints Anglican School in 2013, I lived in Calgary, Canada, for 10 years. Calgary has a population of approximately 1.3 million of which almost 6000 people are homeless. Those of you familiar with Canadian winters will know just how bitterly cold they get. I remember one of my first jobs on reception at a large hotel in the city and seeing more and more people who were homeless entering the hotel lobby just to find warmth from the sub-zero temperatures. Like many of you may have experienced, the sight of someone looking dishevelled, unshaven and unclean, sometimes scared me, but it also stirred something within me to want to help.

I now volunteer with a charity called Share the Dignity and have done so for the past four years. Before I started working with this charity, I was pretty naïve about why so many women and their children end up on the streets. The number one cause of homelessness for women and children in Australia is domestic violence. Since a young age, I’ve always been involved with various appeals, like the Kmart Christmas wishing tree or filling a shoebox of Christmas gifts for a child in Asia, but it wasn’t until my good friend and colleague at All Saints, Ms Siegmann, became involved with Share the Dignity that I also got on board. The charity’s main initiative is to provide women and girls with free sanitary items, such as pads, tampons, menstrual cups and incontinence products, for those who cannot afford them. Share the Dignity has installed 115 #Pinkbox Dignity Vending Machines in places around Australia, such as community centres and domestic violence hubs, that can be accessed by people in need.
One of my roles as a volunteer is to help collect donations of these items in their twice-yearly sanitary drives, and then distribute them to local charities. On one occasion, there was a callout on our local message board looking for a volunteer on the Gold Coast who might have a few bags to deliver to a woman and her two children who were staying in an Airbnb after escaping from a violent family situation. The accommodation was provided by a local agency and the severity of this woman’s case meant that she had to be moved every two to three days to a new location to keep her and her children safe, so I only had the day to make the drop off.

I was only told was that she was a mother with two very small children and that all they had managed to escape with was one small bag each. It was early December and as a fellow mother, my heart broke for them with Christmas just weeks away.

Before I went to the house, I stopped off at Kmart to purchase a gift card with my own money to give to this woman, along with some of the bags that I had brought with me. I told her the gift card was to buy something for her two children for Christmas and that I hoped they were able to find a little peace that year. This woman, whom I will likely never see again, was so overwhelmed that a stranger actually cared about her, that she just held me.

Homelessness doesn't discriminate against class or age. I have seen women in their 50s and 60s, once happily married and in well-to-do homes, one day end up alone and on the streets, isolated from their extended families because of years of emotional, physical and financial abuse.

The current situation for women and children who are homeless has worsened with the recent coronavirus pandemic announcement, partly due to the associated hoarding or online ‘price gouging’ of supermarket and pharmacy products. I am worried about how they will be able to stay healthy, as well as safe. We all want to see mums and their kids thriving, well and safe. If you would like to help, pads, tampons, menstrual cups and incontinence products can be donated throughout March via the pink bins at all Woolworths supermarkets and ChemPro pharmacies. Monetary donations can also be made through the Share the Dignity website.
‘Angligang’ strikes a chord with CAC students

I first became a part of the Coomera Anglican College Worship Band program in Year 7 as a guitarist. I originally did this to be a part of a service group and to express my connection to my faith through music. At this time, I had only been playing the guitar for a few years and saw this as an opportunity, to not only enhance my musical ability, but also as a chance to express my love for God through praise and worship along with my friends and peers. After being with the band for only a year, I knew that what we had together was something special and something I wanted to be a part of as I moved into my new role as the band's drummer.

Through the constant support of my music teacher, Natasha Materne, the band has remained focused and continued to reach new heights every year. I have continued in this ensemble, even with the busyness of Year 12, because the band has now grown into a family of support for me and my peers. Everyone who is a part of this band genuinely wants to be there and excels in their musical ability, while also serving others at student and staff worships, Baptism services and other community events.

Recently the Senior Worship Band or ‘Angligang’, as we are now affectionately known, accomplished the amazing task of composing and recording our first ever single, ‘Faith, Hope and Love’, which is featured on our first CD, also entitled Faith, Hope and Love. In the song we sing the words, “the love that surrounds us, mends and makes us whole.”

I relate most strongly to these lyrics because the students who wrote the song have been together since the very beginnings of the band. We have grown together using music to express our faith, hope and love, and by performing the song we express the Christian faith evident in the College. I strongly believe that in the process of writing this song, we have come closer together as group of friends and created a unified band.
We consistently work to our strengths, constantly raising the bar of our performance levels. As a direct result, our band encourages those who are in the audience to sing and get involved themselves. It can be hard to get a bunch of teenagers to actively sing and participate in worship; however, I believe that one song at a time, worship is becoming a more interactive and open space for everyone at the College.

Faith is important to me, as I believe it is what helps me find purpose. Faith teaches us to be kind to one another, to love one another and to forgive one another. It teaches us how to be more loving and more like God, while also providing a chance to reflect on what is happening in our busy lives. One real reason I love being in this band and playing music here at the College, as opposed to any other band I am in, is because of the song lyrics we sing. Many of our songs pose thinking questions and contain lyrics about love, joy and forgiveness. This, in turn, brightens up my day and makes me happy too. We sing about other people’s troubles and how God’s love has guided them to wherever they are today. With a busy life, it is refreshing to take five minutes out of each day to find what I am thankful for, and faith teaches me to do just this. It fulfils me with greater self-worth and encourages me to be kinder, more generous and more loving.

The future of the worship band program at Coomera Anglican College looks very positive. We have no limit! Through the songs, the scriptures and lyrics, we have fun and find enjoyment in every rehearsal and worship, sharing a love for God and expressing this through music. Every year, more and more students are signing up to be a part of this movement because they want to be a part of this special group. As a memento, we have also recorded some of our favourite songs on a CD, so wherever we go we can sing and express the goodness of God.

Reflections • Monday 23 March 2020 • By Jennifer Basham

‘Caremongering’ in our communities

Churches around Australia recently suspended public worship and gatherings, and other civic and business life is operating remotely or shutting doors to mitigate the risk of coronavirus spreading.
A key to preventing the spread is ‘social distancing’. The word itself is a striking oxymoron, much like telling someone to ‘act naturally’ or that you will join them on a ‘fun run’.

Perhaps a more apt description is ‘physical distancing’. Because, although we must remain physically apart, now more than ever, we need each other.

We need both social solidarity and connection.

Right now, we especially need to reach out to those in our parishes and communities in the high-risk groups who are withdrawing to their homes to avoid getting infected for weeks, or possibly even several months.

News stories are springing up about the ways our community is actively responding to assist people in high-risk groups, including seniors, people with chronic health conditions and people with low immunity.

Individuals are letting their neighbors know that they are there to help, such as by dropping a postcard or note in the letterbox. Locally and internationally, neighbourhood and suburban groups are organising mutual aid groups on social media platforms like Facebook. For example, in Canada ‘caremongering’ groups have taken off so there is more of a focus on caring for vulnerable people in the high-risk groups, rather than panicking about individual needs.

And, businesses are doing their bit, too, with pubs cooking free meals for Seniors and gin distilleries turning production to hand sanitiser.

Similarly, churches and faith communities are looking for ways to connect and support each other.

Alongside important information about ongoing ministry, there are now also resources available for parishes and faith communities on the ACSQ website, to assist with using digital resources and community engagement.

For instance, there are options to help connect with people who are not online or have poor internet connections. One option, instead of a Facebook group, is organising a ‘Phone Tree’, or calling group. This is a simple and highly effective system for connecting a group of people by telephone.

If you are on Facebook, you can join our Christian COVID19 Resource Network or look out for community groups organising near you. Or you, and your church community, might help to start one if they don't exist already.

Two other good sites for similar resources, and where you can look for local groups, are:

Viral Kindness

Commons Library

_angular focus_ is keen to hear how your churches and ministries are staying connected and assisting others. Please email the Editor, Michelle McDonald, with your stories via focus@anglicanchurchsq.org.au
Q&A with new ACSQ RAP Coordinator, Aunty Sandra King OAM

Former trailblazing model and new ACSQ RAP Coordinator Sandra King OAM received a prestigious Australia Day Honours award for service to the Indigenous community

Aunty Sandra King is an Aboriginal Elder, community leader, business woman and former trailblazing fashion model. She is the proud mum of two daughters.

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

I am a Quandamooka (Stradbroke Island) and Bundjalung (Tweed Heads) woman. I started work as the ACSQ's Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) Coordinator in December 2019.

What does your role involve?

Supporting the engagement of parishioners, clergy, staff and other agencies in implementing the Anglican Church's Reconciliation Action 'Innovate' Plan through effective communication, coordination and administration of the RAP across our Diocesan community.

What projects and activities are you currently working on?

I’m currently working on presenting the ACSQ RAP ‘Innovate’ proposal, as well as finalising the list of First Nation peoples living in parish areas and preparing programs for Reconciliation and NAIDOC Weeks, to name a few. There is a lot of planning and discussion involved in presenting various programmes for all areas of the Diocese regarding Reconciliation. We have over a hundred years of trauma, heartache and ‘sorry business’ to deal with when it comes to reconciling Christian churches and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We all have to heal each other, learn to trust again, acknowledge and accept the past, regain our faith and move forward together.
One of the first steps to Reconciliation is learning Australia’s history and I had the opportunity to present the Untold Histories Program, as well organising an International Women’s Day luncheon with First Nation women speakers. I have also shared my views on the National Apology and why ‘Welcome to Country’ and ‘Acknowledgement of Country’ are important through anglican focus.

What have been the highlights of your roles so far?

I love the challenges that the RAP presents, developing programs and getting to know work colleagues. I also love the enthusiasm generated from the RAP Working Group.

What are your plans and goals for the next 12 months?

To present programs that will help heal the ACSQ and my people from what has happened in the past and to broaden awareness and change the negative perceptions of Australia’s history and our First Nation peoples.

You were recently awarded an OAM on Australia Day for ‘service to the Indigenous community’. Where were you and how did you feel when you were notified that you were to receive this honour?

I was at my Cathedral Precinct desk when I received the email. I wanted to scream with excitement, but I had to control it and try to keep it a secret. Well, I failed as Claudine, who sits nearby, heard my squeal! I’m still overwhelmed and very grateful. I love what I do for my community, especially for our disengaged women, youth and Elders. Michelle Obama’s quote pretty much sums me up: “Success isn’t about how much money you make...It's about the difference you make in people's lives.”

Why is it important for the community to mark Harmony Day?

In my view, Harmony Day is about engaging, educating and empowering each other to move forward together.

How is Harmony Day of importance to First Nation peoples and the process of Reconciliation?

It’s not only important for my people’s history, culture, connection to country and truth-telling stories to be acknowledged and accepted, but the same goes for all people of different nations, which are all part of Reconciliation.

This year’s Diocesan theme is ‘Being Together: Practising Peacemaking’. What are some practical ways that we can implement peacemaking?

Don’t be afraid to ask questions. Have an open mind. Listen. Step up and speak up if you see racism raising its ugly head in discussions in the workforce, among friends or in the home. If possible, attend an Indigenous event or invite an Indigenous colleague or his/her family to dinner or to a family BBQ.

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

Since I was young, I always knew that God was always there when I cried, laughed or experienced traumatic events or significant life encounters. Sadly, my Uncle, who was a Pastor of a Parish in Townsville, tragically passed away before he could baptise me. To marry my former Greek/Cypriot
husband in his church, I had to be Baptised, so with my parents’ blessings I became of Greek Orthodox faith in 1980 and have continued to be.

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

When I look back, it seems that every part of my life’s journey (from childhood to now) has always seen me breaking down walls or entering unknown territory, and while there are a lot of heartaches, I wouldn't change anything. I do ask, ‘Why me?’ and eventually (yes, I am a bit of a ‘hard head’) I get my answers. My ‘Silent Partner’ (God) is pretty ‘deadly’, you know (‘deadly’ is a word we say when describing someone or something that is brilliant, amazing and beautiful or simply the best).

**What is your favourite scripture and why?**

“Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go (Joshua 1.9).” My life as an Aboriginal daughter, girl, woman, mother, Aunty and now Elder, has its challenges in Australia.

**What person of faith inspires you the most and why?**

Mother Teresa because of the beautiful work she did selflessly for people living in poverty and the way she extended love and hope to everyone she touched. Of course my mum, because she taught me about who God is and about the faith, and the same goes with my family.

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

Wow...from the smallest to the biggest, all of them have impacted me. From just being there for someone or volunteering or presenting programs, I have been very fortunate to receive many kind gestures.

Hugs and tears from disengaged women, troubled teens and women of all ages hit me hard and I will always be grateful that I was in a position to help them to believe in themselves, face their challenges and learn how to make positive changes with their lives.

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

My parents have always told me to make the most of what you have, not to give up, not to judge others in the same way you have been judged, and that no matter how you dress or what you do, you will always be black (Aboriginal).

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

I love being around my mad family, going to dinner with friends (a group of prominent Aboriginal women meet often and discuss women's community matters over dinner and we call ourselves ‘B.A.B.S’ – a name that is a secret to us). When at home by myself, I love having a glass of scotch or port while listening to my music. I did love doing tapestry, but family and lack of free time put an end to that. A great massage can do wonders, too!

**In your younger years, you were a trailblazing fashion model. What were the highlights of this time and why?**
The highlight was my first audition for a commercial, which was a national one for Myer’s Miss Shop. I was up against beautiful professional models who were dressed in designer clothes and here I was, walking in with my afro, big earrings, denim shirt and flared jeans with big cork shoes...I got the main role and I was booked the following year to do another commercial.

It took four years after completing my courses to become a professional model in a time when Aboriginal people were still struggling to be accepted as fellow citizens and as equals. It was also the beginning of a dream career for an Aboriginal girl who lacked confidence and stuttered. It was the only career I could think of as a young girl, where I didn’t have to speak!

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

The lyrics to John Lennon’s ‘Imagine’. I think everyone should know the words to that song.

Where do you do your best thinking?

Two places – at home listening to my music or in the car

What is your favourite memory as a mum?

This is perfect for grandparents to do for their ‘grannies’ (grandchildren). When my girls were learning to ride their tricycle bikes, mum and dad made a carousel with their clothes line. Dad tied two old dog leads on opposite ends of the clothes line and then tied it to their bike handle bars, so that they were upright. Mum had balloons on strings tied all around each clothes line row with streamers as well. The girls jumped on their bikes and chased each other around and around with balloons and streamers flying up in the air to the music playing on the radio. My girls were the envy of all the kids on the block with their very own carousel. When we came to pick our girls up, I had tears when I saw them giggling with the neighbour’s children on their bikes. Making the most of the very little you have...a wonderful and beautiful memory for all of us.

What’s your best childhood memory?

Being invited to a school friend's birthday party in Year 4. This is the only birthday party I was ever invited to.

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

Talk to family and closest friends first for they are direct, loving, honest and at times totally Womba (mad/funny). I then have a chat with my silent partner (God), as I know there is always a lesson to be learnt from those times.

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

Why me?
Remote learning ready to launch at Glennie

The Glennie School is launching a comprehensive remote learning program, called ‘I Love Glennie Schooling’, when the campus closes on Friday 27 March, in order to help manage the health and wellbeing of its students, staff, families and extended community.

Teachers have long been prepared for the possible need to extend their current face-to-face teaching practices into a remote learning situation.

Glennie School Principal Peter Crawley said that teachers had prepared a suite of teaching and learning materials to provide a genuine schooling experience for girls across all year levels.

“We are well placed to deliver content that continues direct teaching and that will be complemented with practical and hands-on activities that the girls will be able to engage with at any time,” Mr Crawley said.

“By working in a remote capacity and not trying to live stream classes, we have taken into account internet network capacities, changed home environments in case parents are working from home alongside the girls learning at home, and the geographical spread of our boarders.

“Teachers will also be able to host online discussions, provide remote feedback and monitor student interaction with the learning materials provided to them.

“Through Glennie’s regular use of Google Classroom for messages and discussions, the girls are very calm and confident about extending this practice into a remote environment.”
Mr Crawley said that pastoral care remained a priority for teachers and other staff.

“The wellbeing of our students remains at the heart of all that we do at Glennie and regular wellbeing check-ins will be implemented as we move into a fully remote environment,” he said.

The Glennie School is also able to assist other schools and students by making remote learning materials available.

News • Friday 20 March 2020 • By Anglican Communion News Service

The Five Marks of Mission: Three – to respond to human need by loving service

Anna Saidi pumps clean water from a bore well in Tanzania, built by the Diocese of Masasi with funds donated to the Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund and the Government of Canada

All around the world human need abounds. With 10 years to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the earth and all of its inhabitants seem particularly precarious. In the world's poorest countries many people can no longer grow enough food to feed their families due to climate change or conflict.

Mums and babies die during childbirth at a much higher rate than in other parts of the world because they are without access to quality health care. Women and girls are not given the same rights to education or freedom from violence. And Indigenous communities here in Canada and other parts of the world do not live with the same rights of their fellow citizens.
The Primate’s World Relief and Development Fund, an agency of the Anglican Church of Canada, seeks to address those deep human needs by working with local partners in countries where the needs are greatest. We listen to organizations who are working directly with families and develop or support programs that are designed for them. For example:

- In Tanzania, the construction of 25 bore wells has brought clean water to many rural communities, improving community health and making it possible for girls to have time to go to school instead of walking kilometres each day to collect water.
- In Bangladesh, communities are growing mangroves in nurseries and transplanting them to low-lying shorelines to protect their homes from devastating floods.
- In Haiti, young people are learning how to recognise and prevent gender-based violence.
- In South Sudan, the world’s youngest country, 1,700 families are getting lifesaving food baskets each month.

People are also comforted and strengthened in knowing that half a world away, their human needs are being met with loving service. Says one partner working with refugees along the Thai-Burmese border: “The people of PWRDF offer love, kindness and friendship, which has been consistent over so many years. It helps the refugees feel valuable,” which in turns helps the program to succeed.

This third mark of mission – to respond to human need with loving service – is lived out not only through our generous donors, but through our vast network of volunteers. In my three and a half years as Executive Director of PWRDF, I have met scores of volunteers responding to need half a world away through loving service in their church community and beyond.

Jane is a dedicated member of her church and volunteer in Vancouver, British Columbia. She is always looking for ways to support her parish and the work of PWRDF. She welcomes newcomers warmly, organises diocesan celebrations, lugs PWRDF display boards from event to event and writes articles about PWRDF’s partners for the local diocesan newspaper. “It’s just what I do,” she told me at a PWRDF 60th anniversary event last year. “I love to see people connected. I’m happy to do whatever I can.”

I think of Cindy in Acton, Ontario organising euchre tournaments, Sue in Halifax hosting annual talent shows, Cathy in Burnaby, British Columbia, who carries on the tradition set by her grandmother to serve as a parish representative. Peter in Vancouver and Chris in Charlottetown are both quick to offer time and their gifts to organise learning days, captain a cycling team or offer suggestions to make PWRDF better for our partners.

The call to respond to human need with loving kindness is in our DNA. PWRDF began in 1958 when a bump in a coalmine in Nova Scotia caused a collapse and killed 75 miners. Canadians watched the news in horror as men were rescued and recovered from the mine, one of the first such disasters to be televised. Anglicans rallied to support the families, raising the equivalent of $1.2 million in today’s Canadian dollars (approximately £704,200 GBP). A year later, a fund was established at General Synod to formally handle humanitarian relief. Ten years later, the work expanded to include sustainable development.

Why tell people about PWRDF’s work? Telling their stories connects people in the pews to the work being undertaken on behalf of Anglicans in Canada. And it provides them an opportunity to live out our baptismal covenant to “strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.”
Maybe the word “volunteer” does not speak enough to the number of hours, the extent of “loving service” often given in the fray of managing busy family life and pressing work issues. Maybe better to say ambassadors, champions or promoters of justice, walking side by side, shoulder to shoulder with development professionals.

Responding to human need by loving service brings our gifts together. For PWRDF and our partners, it shows so well how we can go further, together.

First published on Anglican Communion News Service on Monday 24 February.

Features • Friday 13 March 2020 • By Fiona Hammond

BIBLE360: Exploring the Gospels via webinar

An Impressionist artist and a Cubist artist walk into a bar...no wait that’s the wrong intro! What if you asked four artists, an Impressionist, a Cubist, a Realist and an Expressionist to paint your portrait? Would you expect that each would produce exactly the same image of you?

Hopefully the outcome would be four images, all recognisably of ‘you’, with each capturing a significant characteristic or expression. Perhaps each artist found something important they wanted to express in their image, and so they emphasised a different element of your face, your demeanour or the background. The Impressionist hopes their image will be displayed in your old school. The Cubist wants to win the Archibald Prize with this one, so paints for the judges. The Realist is keen to present you as a child of nature to a politically savvy populace. The Expressionist is hoping for the Archibald Packing Room Prize. It is easy to see where and why differences happen when there are four artists involved!

Some say that the writers of the Gospels were like four portrait painters, with different audiences and emphases in mind – the common subject, of course, being Jesus!

It is likely that the Gospel According to Mark was written first, and with its strong links to the disciple Peter, it is easy to see why the early Christian community loved this expression of the life and work of Jesus. It was written for a Gentile audience, and so has interesting things to say about the Jewish community’s treatment of Jesus.

Matthew’s author used much of Mark’s material, but wrote for a Jewish audience, with emphasis on the Jewishness of Jesus and the links between the new Christian community and the Jewish one out of which was growing. No wonder there are differences between Mark’s and Matthew’s accounts.

Luke’s author wrote a couple of instalments (Luke and Acts), in the style of 1 and 2 Samuel, as if they were a continuation of the Jewish Scriptures, or the Old Testament, and the audience was...wait for it...ROMAN! There is a story in Luke’s infancy narrative that echoes the Roman story of two boys, Romulus and Remus, who, as mythological tradition has it, founded Rome.

There is just so much to explore when you read the Gospels, and whether you are reading them for the first time, or you know them like your heartbeat, the new BIBLE360 course, ‘Exploring the Gospels’, will have something for you to wonder about, dig into and enjoy.
This day-long face-to-face course is designed to get us all reading the Gospels for both inspiration and pleasure. During the seminar you will:

- Explore the nature of the Gospels and how they came to be.
- Understand how the early Church saw them.
- Discover ideas about how the Bible ended up with the four Gospels.
- Examine what makes each Gospel unique.

The FormedFaith team continues to provide opportunities for learning about faith, the Bible and our Church's mission, and is now offering the popular 360 workshops as a series of webinars. Join us live, online, as we explore the origins of the Bible in ‘BIBLE360: Intro to the Bible’. Part 1 will be held on Tuesday 14 April at 7pm. Register your interest by emailing Jonathan Sargeant via jonathans@ministryeducation.org.au and he will send you more info.

Films & TV • Friday 13 March 2020 • By Jonathan Sargeant

**Dark Waters**

Getting a film made in Hollywood is harder than one might imagine. Certainly, having some star power attached to a film gives it a helping hand. But it helps when a star of significant clout fights for a film to be made. Then, audiences stand up to listen to the story that has prompted such enthusiasm. American actor and producer Mark Ruffalo has a well-worn and well-known face and his passion to bring to the screen the true story of corporate lawyer Rob Bilott's fight for justice against the chemical company DuPont has produced an enthralling tale.

Based on [The New York Times Magazine feature](https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/16/magazine/the-lawyer-who-became-dupons-worst-nightmare.html), 'The Lawyer Who Became DuPont's Worst Nightmare' by Nathaniel Rich, **Dark Waters** begins when farmer Wilbur Tennant visits Bilott (Ruffalo) with a box of video tapes. Something has killed nearly 200 of Tennant's cows, and he suspects the culprit to be chemical by-products, used in the making of Teflon, buried in the landfill next to his farm.
Bilott has just been promoted and initially wonders if this case is both beneath him and ill-suited, given his usual corporate clientele, before taking on what was to become a game-changing law suit. Thus, begins a 20-year legal battle against one of the world’s biggest companies, traversing setbacks and failures towards a $671 million settlement.

Director Todd Haynes is better known as the creator of period pieces like 2015’s Carol with Cate Blanchett and 2002’s Far from Heaven with Julianne Moore. Here he has developed a showcase for the dogged determination of Bilott that, despite its length, never becomes anything less than gripping. Anne Hathaway, who plays Bilott’s wife Sarah Barlange, lends some family context to Bilott’s tale, making it clear that such a case deals a heavy cost to the relationships of those involved. It is to Ruffalo’s credit that his performance is suitably understated for such a serious tale, yet he remains a central focus of burning intensity.

What might have been a dry procedural tale becomes a film that exposes new twists at a rising pace. This David and Goliath story shows that justice and compassion are powerful companions and that even giant corporations can be brought to task when the truth is told.

Dark Waters, rated M, is directed by Todd Haynes and opened on 5 March.

Editor’s update (23/03/20): With non-essential services currently closed, look out for this film when it is released on streaming sites or DVD.

Sunday Devotions • Monday 23 March 2020 • By Bishop Bill Ray

Sunday Devotion: 29 March 2020, Fifth Sunday in Lent

What is your answer?

Main Readings: Ezekiel 37.1-14; Psalm 130; Romans 8.6-11; John 11.1-45

Supplementary Readings: Psalm 71.1-14; 2 Corinthians 11.21-31; Exodus 6.2-13; Psalm 131; Matthew 27.32-56

“Jesus said to her [Martha], “I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11.25-26)

During the 1990s, when I was a Rector of Wandal Parish in Rockhampton, I took a newly-ordained priest to a funeral that I was presiding over to provide him with some additional training. While the ‘Funeral Service’ in our Prayer Book omits the text “Do you believe this?”, at the start of the service I included this question in the Gospel reading, as this is what I was trained to do in my formation. Later the new priest commented, “When you added that question, it really challenged me.”

This passage of Scripture is one of the seven great “I am” statements of our Lord that are found in John’s Gospel. It has been said that the longest journey some people make in life is 33 centimetres, which is the distance in the average adult from the brain to the heart. This journey requires moving from knowing about the promise of eternal life, to really believing the resurrection in our hearts and living it in our lives.
From my study of theology, I was aware of the ‘academic’ aspects of this text. However, it was not until my brother was accidentally killed that this text moved from being something I studied to a reality in my life. While it is difficult to put into words, I had the assurance of eternal life – in that my brother was with God. We continue to grow in our understanding and appreciation of God’s gift of eternal life to us, as we grow in relationship with him.

Just as Jesus asked Martha, he asks us, “Do you believe this?”