Reflections • Friday 8 May 2020 • By Bishop Jeremy Greaves

What might be the invitation of the Spirit to you in these times?

"The 'personal' disciplines we might explore during this time of physical distancing are regular (likely daily) practices in which we engage so that we may be able to express our faith communally out of deep inner conviction and passion, rather than out of duty, custom, or fear"

A little over a hundred years ago, when the world was struggling to deal with the Spanish Flu, people were living with similar restrictions to those we are currently experiencing. People were unable to gather in schools, theatres, restaurants and churches, with people confined to their homes except for essential trips out.

In Brisbane, the telephone exchange shut down because there were not enough telephone operators untouched by the flu to keep things going – with people unable to make phone calls, they experienced isolation as never before.

In 1918, during the Spanish Flu period, The Rev'd S.O. Coxe, pastor of Handley Memorial Presbyterian Church, in Birmingham, Alabama, reflected on the need for a ban of public worship gatherings, writing that:

“But, while this providence is a severe one, affecting as it does all our plans and programs...may we not yet turn this season to best account by accepting it as an opportunity for the exercise of a fuller devotion to God and to the things of His Kingdom? Necessarily we shall be kept in our homes many hours that would otherwise be spent in recreation and amusement...And certainly if we should
improve these hours by prayer and meditation, the seeming curse of this scourge would not be unmixed with blessing.”

The writer of the book of Revelation asked hearers to look around and see what was happening in their world and listen for the invitation of the Holy Spirit: “Let anyone who has an ear listen to what the Spirit is saying to the churches.” (Revelation 3.22)

What might be the invitation of the Spirit to you in these times? It seems to me that one invitation could be to explore or re-engage with some of the practices that have always been part of being Christian, but which have been neglected over recent years, as gathering for Eucharist has been, for many of us, the only regular faith practice in which we engage.

Christianity has, from the very beginning, been as much about practice as it has been about belief, as Diana Butler Bass explains in Christianity After Religion:

“The early community that followed Jesus was a community of practice. Jesus's followers did not sit around a fire and listen to lectures on theology. They listened to stories that taught them how to act toward one another, what to do in the world. They healed people, offered hospitality, prayed together, challenged traditional practices and rituals, ministered to the sick, comforted the grieving, fasted and forgave. These actions included wonder, gave them courage, empowered hope, and opened up a new vision of God. By doing things together, they began to see differently... Jesus did not walk by the Sea of Galilee and shout to fishermen, “Have faith!” Instead, he asked them to do something: “Follow me.” When they followed, he gave them more things to do. At first he demonstrated what he wanted them to do. Then he did it with them. Finally, he sent them out to do it themselves, telling them to proclaim God's reign and cure the sick. When they returned from this first mission, they could not believe what had happened. They discovered that proclaiming the kingdom was not a matter of teaching doctrine; rather, the kingdom was a matter of imitating Jesus's actions.

At least one study from the US shows that there is a link between “personal spiritual practices” and congregational vitality, suggesting that the “more emphasis a congregation gives to the value of home and personal religious practices, the higher the congregation's vitality and the more likely it is to be growing in membership.”

One of the practices that I have been quite intentional about re-engaging with over recent weeks is the practice of centering prayer. While using the Centering Prayer app helps, it has taken some discipline to make sure I spend 20 minutes at the beginning of the day in silence, before the Daily Office or before looking at any emails, but it has made a tremendous difference to my sense of being able to pray through this time. Of course, there are many other spiritual practices and individuals and groups will choose to explore different options.

Various writers have recognised three types of spiritual practices – those that are individual and ‘personal’, upon which the more public or ‘communal’ practices are based and designed to build community. These in turn yield ‘missional’ practices – practices we undertake as we engage in our Christian ministry with others.

The ‘personal’ disciplines we might explore during this time of physical distancing are regular (likely daily) practices in which we engage so that we may be able to express our faith communally out of deep inner conviction and passion, rather than out of duty, custom, or fear. These include: Meditation.
Prayer, Fasting, Study, Simplicity, Discernment, Pilgrimage, Forgiveness, Solitude, Submission and Honouring the body.

These might be good practices to explore until the time comes when we can gather together again and engage in more public or communal practices. A great place to begin exploring the practices of the faith might be the Spiritual Practices website.

But there are many other places to look and explore.

The Baru Beat • Monday 18 May 2020 • By The Rev’d Rick Gummow

Skyscapes, opal seams and scrub solitude

"Because of the Bush Ministry Fund (BMF), the Anglican Church gets to reach people in all these places, even where there aren't buildings" (The Rev'd Rick Gummow)

A Maranoa-Warrego parishioner surprised her husband of many years by booking a cruise up the Queensland coast to sail around the Great Barrier Reef, much to his consternation. “But I get seasick!” he moaned. “How would you know, you've never been on a boat,” she replied. So off they went, with her doing all eight hours of driving to the Port of Brisbane herself. I asked her why her husband didn't help with the driving and she replied, “The last time he did that, when I dozed off, he turned around and I woke up at home.” “Sorry love, must have taken the wrong turn,” he said.

Of the many choices we humans make, often none surprises me more than where other people go to take a holiday, notwithstanding visiting family. What may surprise the urban and regional city dweller is that many people in the Maranoa-Warrego don't head east, but west, for their annual leave. They head out to the living heart of Australia or to the Channel Country, put up their tarps beside a creek using the tray of their vehicle for a bed, and stay for the duration of their leave.

I have only been to the edge of this country, and the longer we are out here the more I, too, yearn to go further ‘inwards and outwards’, where the population density is so low, that the likelihood of seeing
anybody is close to nil. The night sky is white with stars, without ‘light pollution’, and constellations that are unseeable from anywhere else in the world.

South West Queensland is not a uniform landscape. True, it lacks mountains, but so does the rest of Queensland apart from the far north. But that just makes the vistas available from the hills all the more majestic. As soon as you cross the Warrego River at Cunnamulla, heading west, the landscape changes quite dramatically and continues to change the further west you drive. The dirt becomes redder and redder, and after the Paroo River is crossed at Eulo (famous for its opals, honey, a particular saddler who does amazing leather work at a very reasonable price, and a truly beautiful camping site on the river), the properties get larger and are unfenced on the highway side.

There are few towns west of here and the largest of these, Thargomindah, only has two hundred people. There are some parishes in our Diocese, in both metropolitan and regional areas, with more people coming to a single service than the entire population of many towns in the Western Region.

One of these little towns is Yowah, and to reach it you leave the highway after Eulo and travel north west for 90 km. It is a town of opal miners, which means it’s a somewhat secretive town. But, what I love about Yowah is that it has a hill, called Yowah Bluff. It’s a bit like navigating a flat sea for months and suddenly seeing a hazy spike of land. The view from Yowah Bluff is spectacular. There are no towns at all to be seen, just hundreds of kilometres of scrubby trees and red earth in all directions. The stunning beauty of what you see hits you quickly.

These moments challenge our very understanding of silence and solitude. Once we are still and the conversations in our heads have stopped, we hear the earth and everything in it. The scratching of a beetle on a stick and the noise a kangaroo makes when it’s eating.

I visit a wonderful lady in The Lodge, the Cunnamulla residential aged-care home, who spent 40 years as an opal miner in Yowah by herself. She shows me photos of her underground cave, which was her home, as well as pictures of psychedelic-looking opal seams. There is a picture of her as a far younger person leaning at her mine-home's entrance with another person. A shotgun and a rifle are leaning against the red wall of her mine. I asked her about what she used the firearms for. “See that bloke,” she said pointing at the person in the picture with her, “he stole all my opals the mongrel. Didn't happen again I can tell you.” She suddenly looks up and dares me to ask her more.

Because of the Bush Ministry Fund (BMF), the Anglican Church gets to reach people in all these places, even where there aren't even buildings. They supply the vehicles and the fuel – the two biggest expenses – and half the clergy stipend. Please support the BMF and make it your parish mission field, if possible. Come out and visit – it will be a holiday the likes of which you couldn't have anywhere else on earth.
Reflections • Tuesday 12 May 2020 • By Michelle Philp

Hospital chaplaincy: highlights and challenges

Walking into an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) is daunting for anyone, with the sounds, smells, energy and the cool temperature hitting you as soon as you open the door. To add to my nervousness, I experienced this during my first week and in response to a referral. The Gold Coast University Hospital ICU has 40 beds, and its layout and size remind me of what a rabbit warren would look like. I take a deep breath and go and find the room.

As I return to the office, I wonder if I can do my role justice. I felt out of place. I felt like I was in the way. I did not like these feelings and at the time wondered whether the person I was visiting felt this, too. I knew that I needed to do something about this, as I want those I visit, the staff and families to have someone visiting them who is comfortable in the space.

So, I researched online and stumbled across a program in a Boston hospital, where Chaplains and Spiritual Carers invite staff from ICU to lunch events, with the staff visiting the Spiritual Care Centre to enjoy lunch and relax with foot and hand massages. The Boston report said feedback from staff was very positive. I was inspired by this example, and felt that if I could become familiar with the staff, I would feel more comfortable in ICU.

I organised a sponsored lunch, asked massage therapists to donate time, and set up chillout zones and mindfulness activities. The team from ICU attended, and the feedback was amazing. Holding such events has helped me to achieve a number of key things. Firstly, I am now the Ward Chaplain for the ICU – getting to know the hospital staff, in part through the lunch events, has enabled me to build
significant mutual trust. Secondly, more than 1500 staff from all over the hospital have attended these lunches. And lastly, the regular event has been nominated for the hospital value awards.

I have been working as a hospital chaplain for over three years. Previously, I was working in a women's refuge and I felt the need for a change, and was drawn to the position because it seemed like a diverse, challenging and awe-inspiring role, which it is. I am continually inspired by those I meet daily, whether fellow Chaplains or patients share their stories with me. At time likes this, I am reminded of what an honour it is to do this work. As Chaplains, we work as part of the allied health team to provide holistic healthcare in the way of spiritual and emotional support to patients, families, friends and staff.

One of my favourite highlights of my role, demonstrates the broader community's care and concern for our hospitals. Last year, I was visiting the ICU and walked past a room where I saw a nurse combing her patient's hair. I smiled and then walked into the room. The nurse explained that she was preparing her patient for the family who were arriving later that day to say goodbye. The nurse was using one of those small black finely toothed combs, and she was having trouble getting it through the patient's hair. The nurse also said she likes to apply either scented body lotion or perfume before the family comes to say goodbye, but that these were not available in the ICU. After speaking with this nurse and her team leader, I emailed the Parish of Surfers Paradise with a wish list that the nurses compiled, which included male and female deodorant, men's shaving items, perfumed body lotion, wide-toothed combs and hair ties. Within weeks I was able to take bags of newly donated items to the ICU. The nurses now have shelves full of toiletry items to provide care to ICU patients, thanks to the thoughtfulness and generosity of Surfers Paradise parishioners.

COVID-19 has given us many additional hurdles to overcome; however, in doing so, it has presented our communities with additional opportunities to be generous. I have collected many ‘thank you' cards from local day care centres and schools and distributed these personally to staff working on COVID-19's frontlines. These cards are now proudly displayed on the wards. The local Surfers Paradise Anglican Church has also ‘lent' me The Rev'd Trevor Sketcher three mornings a week. We share Morning Prayer together and then he visits patients on our visiting list who are on various wards, as well as staff. This has been an amazing gift. However, as COVID-19 has impacted the number of visitors that patients are allowed, this has in turn affected the nurses' social support system, and their feelings of isolation, as chaplaincy visits have consequently slowed down.

Chaplains ties in with the Third Mark of Mission “to respond to human need by loving service”, as it brings our gifts of compassion, understanding and just ‘being together’ to all our interactions in the hospital environment. I believe I am truly blessed to be part of an amazing team, a team that shares the same values and understands that we are guided by our love of God.

I would like to invite anyone who is curious about this incredibly rewarding work to spend time with a Chaplain – to ask questions and hear stories. We need many more volunteers to continue to serve those in the ACSQ's Regions' hospitals.

For more information on this special ministry, please email chaplaincy@anglicanchurchsq.org.au.
National Reconciliation Week (NRW) and the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation are held between 27 May and 3 June annually. These dates mark two significant milestones in the Reconciliation journey – the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

**Week of Prayer for Reconciliation – The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase, Wakka Wakka man and Co-Chair of Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group**

For me, to be reconciled means that people have to come together. The coming together involves a sharing of just who we all are. In that recognition we will see that we are all different. We are a diverse community. Reconciliation not only sees that difference but celebrates it and supports each other’s difference. Respect for each other is necessary in this coming together. In the coming together, only then people can find true peace.

We do live in a diverse nation. For tens of thousands of years, people have walked this land speaking different languages, having different stories and knowing their own song-lines. Not so long ago more people started to come and they, too, had different ways. Sadly, in many places, these ways were forced upon those who were already here. Through the recent history of the land other peoples have come bringing their different cultures. This all adds to the mix.

The original forcing of the coloniser’s ways has never really been fully known nor taught when it is. As a nation we have a great opportunity to reconcile ourselves with the past, each other and the land. All
of this so that we can continue to grow in harmony, respect, peace and love for one another. If we are to be Australians, we must come together as a people.

Reconciliation is a cornerstone of the Christian faith. We, as Christians first and Anglican Christians next, have a story with and in Jesus Christ. We have to tell that story to remember just who it is we come together in. To be able to tell that story, which is common to all Christians, we have to first come together as a people. That is, we have to be reconciled with each other. Then and only then can we be reconciled in and through Jesus Christ. Anglicans in the past have played a big part in both the sad parts of the story and the joyful encounters with each other. All parts of our story as Anglicans in this land need to be told. We do need to recognise our past, respect those who journey with us in our present and grow into a future as children of God through Jesus Christ.

**Reconciliation**

By Bishop Arthur Malcolm

Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled with you and reconciled with each other.
You made us in your likeness,
you gave us your Son, Jesus Christ.
He has given us forgiveness from sin.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
different in culture, but given new life in Jesus Christ,
together as your body, your Church, your people.
Lord God, bring us together as one,
reconciled, healed, forgiven,
sharing you with others as you have called us to do.
In Jesus Christ, let us be together as one. Amen.

*(A Prayer Book for Australia p.203)*

The Seasonal Additions for Australia written by the Koori Commission of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulbourn can be found on p.161 of *A Prayer Book for Australia*, which includes ‘A Prayer For Australia’, especially written for Eucharist Services with the theme of Reconciliation.

**National Reconciliation Week – Olivene Yasso, Yiman woman and Indigenous Cultural Capability Facilitator (Anglicare SQ)**

Who would have thought the National Reconciliation Week (NRW) 2020 theme ‘In This Together’ would echo across the world for totally different reasons? Yet the parallels of our community’s collective response to COVID-19 with the Reconciliation movement is intriguing. The NRW theme conveys the message that “Reconciliation is a journey for all Australians – as individuals, families, communities, organisations and importantly as a nation” and “everyone has a role to play when it comes to Reconciliation.”

We can choose to ignore, cover up or dismiss the atrocities of our history that have impacted Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, both in the past and the injustices continuing today. Or as a nation, we can stand together united and take the necessary proactive and preventative measures needed to heal. The collective action we have been taking since March to keep our communities safe in the wake of COVID-19 shows what we can achieve when we stand united.
When the World Health Organisation first used the word ‘pandemic’, I was curious about its meaning. It comes from the Greek words *pan* (all) and *demos* (people) and the dictionary describes it as something “occurring over a wide geographic area and affecting an exceptionally high proportion of the population.” Our First Nations populations decreased at an estimate of 90% in the first 10 years of colonisation. An epidemic, you might say, but when you count the reduction of populations of First Nations peoples across the world by colonisers, for me it leans more to a pandemic.

The statistics continue to demonstrate the residual impacts today, as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples retain higher proportionate death rates to non-Indigenous Australians in areas such as suicide (4 times higher among 15 to 24 year olds), diabetes rates (5.2 times higher) and child mortality rates (2 times higher), however this has now widened. Over 50% of our children continue to be taken into out-of-home care, which is 10 times the rate of non-Indigenous Australia. The list goes on.

So, for me National Reconciliation Week is about acknowledging the history (National Sorry Day), righting the wrongs and recognising the First Peoples’ continued connection to land (Mabo Day).

At its heart, National Reconciliation Week is about establishing respectful relationships that create healing for the nation to move forward in Reconciliation.

This involves all Australians as it impacts all of us, as we are all *In This Together*.

**National Reconciliation Week – Aunty Sandra King OAM, Quandamooka and Bundjalung woman and ACSQ Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator**

The first time I heard the word ‘Reconciliation’, I thought, “How can we reconcile when we are not united as one?” This initially baffled me, but I still loved what it stood for as it resonated with who I am, my beliefs and my ‘business’. I see Reconciliation as two identities connecting from a complicated and troubled past.

This makes this year’s theme for National Reconciliation Week #InThisTogether2020 quite appropriate. We are all in this together – to help build a country of mutual tolerance, respect, acknowledgement and understanding, which are all qualities underpinning our Christian faith.

National Reconciliation Week (NRW) is held between 27 May and 3 June annually. These dates mark two significant milestones in the Reconciliation journey – the successful 1967 referendum and the High Court Mabo decision respectively.

This year Reconciliation Australia commemorates 20 years of shaping our country’s journey towards a more just, equitable and reconciled Australia. This year, we also mark the 20th anniversary of the Reconciliation walks of 2000, when people came together to walk on bridges and roads across Australia to demonstrate their support for a more reconciled nation.

I hope you join in the many online events and activities that are happening during this special week. Given the limitations of the COVID-19 environment, Reconciliation Australia is encouraging Australians to think differently and creatively about our plans, as we take our events online, and join in social and digital media conversations.

**National Reconciliation Week (NRW)** is a time for all Australians to learn about our shared histories, cultures, and achievements, and to explore how each of us can contribute to achieving Reconciliation.
in Australia. Reconciliation ties in with the Fourth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion, as explained in our Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which states that:

“Reconciliation is specifically identified as a key imperative within the Fourth Mark of Mission of the Anglican Communion, as part of God’s Transformation of our lives and all of Creation. Indeed, within Australian contexts, it is hard to see how justice can be done to any of the five international Marks of Mission without adequate attention and will being brought to Indigenous reconciliation issues (p. 3).”

Our Diocese’s commitment to Reconciliation makes me feel honoured to be the Reconciliation Action Plan Coordinator for the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.

My experience as a Quandamooka (Stradbroke Island) and Bundjalung (Tweed Heads) woman has shown me firsthand why Reconciliation is so critical for all Australians. While I have been identified as ‘Aboriginal’ since I was born, I have not always been identified as a human being. In the past, I have been classed as ‘Aboriginal’ in an often derogatory manner, and even told what I can and cannot do due to being Aboriginal, including in previous workplaces. I have also been watched suspiciously when walking into shops just for being Aboriginal. And, I have also had to endure innuendo and racist remarks.

This prejudice has been compounded by not knowing until relatively recently about my family’s connection to the Stolen Generations because of the fear and shame my grandmother and father subsequently experienced.

Being Aboriginal is who God wants me to be and despite all the trials and tribulations, I thank Him because I am so privileged and proud to be Aboriginal – to be part of the world’s oldest continuously living culture.

With the strength and support of our cross-Commission Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, we will continue to help break down the barriers and change people’s perceptions, including through our National Reconciliation Week initiatives.

We are all #InThisTogether2020 to make this country great by living an active faith.

This is how I see Reconciliation and what actions can help in healing and uniting us under God’s grace and guidance:

Respect our Truth, our Being, our Worth and each other

Engage with each other in your workplaces, parishes, schools and ministries

Christian faith and beliefs help heal us and move us forward together in harmony as one

Open-mindedness...Be open-minded when learning or listening about First Nations peoples

Network with community, businesses, organisations and corporations

Consider each other’s history, upbringing and feelings and learn and grow from this

Inform family, friends and colleagues of Australia’s spiritual ancient history, culture and peoples
Look, Listen and Learn from each other

Involve yourself in activities, programs and events during National Reconciliation Week

Acknowledge and action the Anglican Communion’s Marks of Mission

Tolerance... We all need to be tolerant of each other’s views, religions and practices

Imagine what the world will look like if it didn't include ignorance, racism, intolerance and prejudice

Organise an online event or activity to celebrate National Reconciliation Week

Never too late to change perceptions for a united future as we are all #InThisTogether2020

Reconciliation starts with me... I hope there are many non-Indigenous people who feel confident and strong enough to say that, too.

On Sunday 31 May, after the Cathedral Evensong service, I will be reflecting on my own life experience in the context of National Reconciliation Week, including discussing what a culturally safe work environment looks like. I will also discuss my shock of learning that my father and several other family members were forcibly removed from their families and homelands as children. I hope that sharing my story will help people across our Diocesan community understand why Reconciliation is so important.

The Sunday 31 May Evensong service can be watched online via the Cathedral YouTube’s channel from 6 pm. From 7 pm, I will be speaking and answering questions via a Q&A on Zoom. For more information on the Q&A, please visit the St John’s Cathedral Facebook event page.

For a full program of ACSQ events and a list of resources, visit the Reconciliation Action Plan page on the ACSQ website.

There are also a number of National Reconciliation Week and Reconciliation-themed resources available online, including the following:

- National Reconciliation Week
- Reconciliation Australia
- A Voice in the Wilderness: Listening to the Statement from the Heart
- National Museum of Australia
- Australian Human Rights Commission: Bringing them home
Recent lessons for a long-term legacy

“My wife, Alison, and I enjoy walking together in the late afternoon along Blunder Creek on Brisbane’s southside. We watch the wildlife on our local pond, listen to the different birds calling and greet others.”

My wife, Alison, and I enjoy walking together in the late afternoon along Blunder Creek on Brisbane’s southside. We watch the wildlife on our local pond, listen to the different birds calling and greet others walking alone or with dogs, or riding bikes or scooters. Due to the limitations around how far people can travel from their homes in order to keep our communities well and safe, more people seem to be enjoying our local creek of late.

COVID-19 has touched us all, with more people working and studying from home and exercising and recreating closer to where they live.

One of the things we have noticed on our daily walks is that there is much less litter in and around the creek. There have been some environmental improvements on a global scale, too. Air and water quality have dramatically improved in many areas that have implemented shutdowns. Emissions have dropped, and worldwide, the demand for coal and oil is lower than it has been in a long time – due in large part to the decline in the transport sector and the slowdown of the manufacturing sector.

Reports of animals coming out to breed and play while humans are sheltering in their homes are being celebrated, and the issue of the illegal wildlife trade has been highlighted.

However, we need to be careful about extrapolating these benefits or claiming a long-term environmental win. The current situation is not sustainable and a balance needs to be sought. Industries which have temporarily closed need to start again, while we also harness opportunities to reset our environmental future.
One of the many things the COVID-19 situation has taught us is to believe in science and follow the advice of scientific experts. The effects of climate change have demonstrated the consequences of ignoring such advice or acting too slowly.

We have also witnessed the willingness of many people to collectively change their habits for the greater good of a shared humanity.

Many are meeting their neighbours for the first time by reaching out to people in high-risk demographics to ensure they are able to access groceries and pharmaceutical items. This is helping to build stronger communities.

Business practices have changed on a large scale to allow people to connect remotely with colleagues, clients and other stakeholders. Conferences and large-scale meetings are being held online. The resulting reduced traffic on our roads saves workers time and mitigates environmental impacts.

As we are seeing the short-term environmental benefits of current COVID-19 limitations, the situation also presents an opportunity to plan Australia's low or zero net emissions future, as discussed by the University of Melbourne's Dr Laura Schuijers.

How can we rebuild our society and our economy in a more sustainable way 'to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth', as the Anglican Communion's Marks of Mission call us to do? How can we get reliable information to guide the choices we make and the choices we want our leaders to make? Climate Feedback and Skeptical Science are useful sites to assess the accuracy of Climate Change information.

We are all in this together and each person's environmental contribution is important. Our personal choices alone may not seem important, but added to the collective impact of others they have significant influence – the response of individuals globally to COVID-19 has clearly demonstrated this.

We can also influence others by talk with them and sharing stories. We can influence leaders through engaging them, such as by phoning and emailing their offices and meeting with them, and through the way we vote in elections.

Together we can build a better future. We just need to apply the same collective approach based on what is best for the common good, as we have done in response to flatten the COVID-19 curve, albeit in a long-term manner.

By doing so, we can leave a legacy to our children, grandchildren and great grandchildren that we can be proud of.

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Creating short videos that gather, grow and give

When the challenges of COVID-19 started to unfold in March, affecting our ability to physically gather in our church building, our ministry team sat down to chat strategically about how we could best express our life together as a church community. As a church, we recognised that our life together was shaped as we gather, grow, give and serve – switching to online just meant expressing those same rhythms in a new way. With this in mind, we set three key goals to:

1. Connect people in the most normal way possible, ensuring that we maintain our regular rhythm of **gathering**.
2. Continue to reach as many people as possible with the Gospel and support the discipling of our congregation in order to **grow**.
3. Being generous and resourcing people, **giving** as much as possible.

From there we discussed the best ways to consistently communicate with people across our available channels and have subsequently found short three-minute videos to be especially effective.

Each week we create and distribute three short engaging and effective videos, which reflect existing branding and approaches to give a sense of continuity while we are unable to gather face to face in church, with each video fulfilling a distinct purpose.

These three videos are the ‘Hello video’ (which is released on a Tuesday), the ‘This Sunday video’ (which is released on a Thursday) and the ‘St Bart’s Kids This Sunday video’ (which is also released on a Thursday).
The ‘Hello video’ is used as an informal way of touching base to connect with people and give people a sense of community. It is also used to follow up from the previous Sunday, making a ‘Sunday to Monday’ connection. The video is also used to communicate what is happening in the forthcoming week, such as scheduled online events and suggested at-home activities.

Importantly, the ‘Hello’ theme is an existing part of our branding and specifically how we communicate welcome and continuity.

The ‘St Bart’s Kids This Sunday video’ is created to resource families so they are encouraged to proactively disciple their kids. We have built a special St Bart's Studio to film these videos, which is also useful in the case of wet weather. This video is distributed on the St Bart's Facebook page, via the St Bart's Kids Facebook Group (which we use to resource families) and St Bart's Kids Instagram. This video helps maintain regular rhythms, assists with discipling and is also helpful for proclaiming the Gospel as videos are highly sharable – our community’s members invite their friends to come to online church by sharing the videos on social media.

In addition to these videos, we are also producing in-service videos, with an additional ‘pre-roll’ before the 9.30 am streamed service, which includes photos from our people showing them engaged with the previous Sunday's online service at home; a live ‘pop in’ to say that the service is starting and a St Bart's Kids video (as a reminder of the kids’ resources and activities).

For these videos to connect and communicate effectively, they don't need to be slick. The most important thing is that they help foster the usual community rhythms, providing both familiarity and continuity.

As leaders, parish clergy and other church leaders need to deal with the complexity to make it simple for people to engage, and we have found short targeted videos to be a great tool to do this.

Top 10 Tips for creating, editing and distributing short church videos that gather, grow and give

1. From the start, consider the purpose of the video and what you want to communicate, identifying a maximum of three key messages. You don't need to script the video but think about what you are going to say ahead of time and be ‘on message’. Keep the video message simple and short, so people are more likely to share the video on social media.

2. You can use a fancy digital SLR camera or a simple good-quality phone for filming, depending on what equipment you have. There are a range of free and subscription video editing suites that you can use. For example, iMovie comes free with Macs and Anitomica – Movie Maker is available for free for Windows users.

3. Good audio is essential, so it's important to use an external microphone. A great cheap resource is a RODE Microphone for smartphones which is a lapel microphone that plugs into your phone (but ensure you check with the retailer for the best microphone to get for your particular phone). The RODE Microphone for smartphones costs approximately $99 and is well worth it because it improves the audio quality of video significantly. It only has a short cable so a RODE extension cable would be handy.

4. Good lighting is also very important. If you are filming on a phone, either shoot outside (during the day) or, if filming inside, position a lamp towards the person's face (being mindful of creating head shadows).

5. ‘Framing’ is also a crucial aspect to consider. To help make the video engaging, it is best to shoot up close to a person’s face, with the eyes in the top third of the frame. If you need to
prop your phone to a certain height, use stacked books, rather than a music stand (otherwise the camera lens will be positioned to look up at the person’s nose).

6. Remember to smile in your video, by greeting people with a smile at the start and smiling throughout. It may be helpful to stick a reminder post-it note on the top of the phone, saying ‘Smile’.

7. Keep transitions simple (such as at the beginning and end of the video, between speakers or when shifting to/from a slide). Using the ‘fade in and out’ function is ok, but save the flips, whirls and circles for kids’ videos.

8. Do a few test runs first to check for audio, lighting and framing, etc. Explore and enjoy the process, and even consider creating a blooper reel.

9. Know the limits of your phone and data. Modern-day phones are great; however, they take up a lot of bandwidth and use a lot of data. This is another reason to keep videos brief, at three minutes maximum.

10. Distribute the video wherever people are, including via your website and social media channels.

Reflections • Thursday 14 May 2020 • By Charlie, Jacob, Harri

Churchie students creating paths to prayer and gratitude

"I used the labyrinth by saying one thing that I'm thankful for which is a good way to show appreciation. And then when I get into the middle I pray. It's a good way to calm down and relax if you're stressed or angry," (Jacob, Year 6, Churchie)

In the lead up to World Labyrinth Day recently, Churchie Chaplain Stephanie Cotroneo asked Religious Education students in the Preparatory School to create their own labyrinths in their homes and yards, as the boys study at home to help keep their communities safe. When Anglican Focus heard about this wonderful initiative from the dedicated Vanessa Gamack, the Mission and Education Advisor at the Anglican Schools Commission, we knew the boys would write some inspiring reflections.
Jacob – Year 6 Student, Churchie

I found out about labyrinths when I saw a calming picture on Schoolbox about them. I then thought about creating one myself because it looked fun and peaceful and a good way to appreciate items that you’re thankful for. So, I gathered some items and started to create it.

My favourite thing about labyrinths is that it is so calm and peaceful to pray in. I also love how it is like a maze, but there is only one way in and out. Labyrinths are a way to show peace and appreciation, which is a good thing and a good way to show thankfulness.

I needed to make something quite big, but not too big, so I started to think about what materials I should use. I finally came to using towels, as they’re easy to bend and shape. So, I looked at good labyrinths and decided on a hook shape. Then I got to building.

I used the labyrinth by saying one thing that I’m thankful for which is a good way to show appreciation. And then when I get into the middle I pray. It's a good way to calm down and relax if you’re stressed or angry.

I would recommend labyrinths to most people as it is really calming and a good way to show appreciation. It’s a good way to meditate because it's relaxing and peaceful and there are lots of different ways to use it. So, I would recommend it to most people and schools.

Charlie – Year 6 Student, Churchie

A labyrinth is a certain walk that you can do to remember God. Labyrinths are different to normal walking because they are usually built with a winding path that's within the shape of a circle. This path leads you the middle of the labyrinth, which is usually in the very centre of the circle. With every step you take towards the circle you think and pray to God. In this way, labyrinths are a very spiritual experience.

I first learnt about labyrinths last year when we were in school chapel, and Chaplain Stephanie was talking about them. We each had a set of finger labyrinths (labyrinths you trace with your finger instead of walking) and, as we were tracing, Chaplain Stephanie told us about labyrinths all around the world. They are all around the place; some in cathedrals, some are in people's back gardens and some are in public places. You can find them on the internet.

My family and I went for a holiday to Europe around Christmas. Chaplain Stephanie told us that Europe was the region most popular for labyrinths. We tried to go to some of those labyrinths, but because of the weather, it was too cold and rainy, such as -20 degrees Celsius!

I love labyrinths because they are a clear path towards God. So, Chaplain Stephanie asked the class to create a labyrinth for the World Labyrinth Day. So, against my mum's will, I gathered up all of the socks in the house and laid them out on the lawn so that I had a homemade labyrinth! Why socks? Well I had to use socks because we were in lockdown! However, if we were not in lockdown, I would have gone to the park and collected some big rocks and laid them down.

Because of this our family had a magnificent World Labyrinth Day!
Harri – Year 5 Student, Churchie

I first learnt about labyrinths in Religious Education Week 2 and I got inspired to create my own. I think the best thing about labyrinth meditation is having someone to thank for all the good things in life.

When I watched the PowerPoint in class, I was inspired to make one that I could walk through, so I stripped my bed and my brother’s, too, got a couple blankets and started making it.

I used my labyrinth by walking through it and encouraging my family to walk through it, too. I would recommend this for other schools because it feels so good having someone to thank for everything we have.

News • Friday 15 May 2020

Student colours of home shine bright

First prize was awarded to Amity Warner from Thargomindah for a photograph, titled ‘My Uncle and his Dog’, captured of her uncle visiting the family property in April 2020

In its third year, The Glennie School Boarder Photography Competition delivers yet another display of stunning images with the theme ‘Colours of Home’.

Boarders returned home in the recent Easter holidays to gain inspiration and capture the colourful action on their properties.

Over 140 entries were judged by Glennie Principal Peter Crawley, Chronicle photographer Bev Lacey and Head of Boarding Donna Grant, all of who took great delight in reviewing the images.

First prize was awarded to Amity Warner from Thargomindah for a photograph, titled ‘My Uncle and his Dog’, captured of her uncle visiting the family property.
Amity Warner said that photography is one of her passions, and that she especially enjoys taking photographs of her family property.

“I have always had a love for taking photos; it is one of my favourite hobbies to do while at home,” Amity said.

Georgette Emmerton from Mundubbera was awarded second prize for her photograph, titled ‘Shades of Brown’, showcasing her equine friends catching up with each other in the yards.

Georgette Emmerton from Mundubbera was awarded the second prize for a photograph, titled ‘Shades of Brown’, showcasing her equine friends catching up with each other in the yards.

Third prize went to Ruby Dye, a boarder from Aramac, who photographed horses casually catching a refreshing drink at the end of a busy day, in her image, ‘Horses at the Dam’.

Winners received a gift voucher and their photographs will be printed on to large canvases to be hung in the boarding houses for all to enjoy.

Mr Crawley described the judging process as “an impossible task!” due to the high quality of entries.

Ms Lacey said that she was “impressed with the conceptualising, framing, posing and experimenting with angles.”
Third prize went to Ruby Dyer, a boarder from Aramac who photographed horses casually catching a refreshing drink at the end of a busy day, in her image, ‘Horses at the Dam’

Reflections • Thursday 14 May 2020 • By The Rev’d Deborah Bird

Supporting clergy and lay leaders through practical assistance

Churchwarden Rod Brightman has been assisting The Rev’d Deb Bird since March by coordinating the St Anne’s, Highfields phone tree

On the last Sunday before shifting to online ministry, it felt like we didn’t know much. We had no idea how long it would be before we could gather in person again, how the next service would be delivered, or how many of us would struggle with isolation or fall ill. What we did know was that with
an unknown stretch of physical distancing ahead of us, the need to maintain community as a place of solidarity, belonging and practical support would be more important than ever.

Communities are built on common mission, mutuality and participation. In a parish these qualities are often apparent in the sense of ownership and the unique contributions of its members. But with face-to-face gatherings temporarily suspended, it might have been easy to feel that our place in community was also on hiatus.

Many parishes have now transitioned to online services and a mixed mode of pastoral care, but clergy and lay parish leaders still face the challenge of maintaining community that fosters belonging and offers expression to the unique charisms and callings among us.

Building such community takes all of us, and there are plenty of practical ways parishioners may continue to offer their gifts and practically assist in building up a shared life across online and offline spaces.

Here are just a few ideas.

**The ministry of noticing**

On a typical Sunday morning, ‘welcomers’ are usually the first to notice who is new, who appears to be struggling, and whom we haven’t seen in a while. While some technologies may allow clergy to track who has ‘attended’ our new online gatherings, chances are it will still be friends in the congregation who first notice and let us know who’s missing. Likewise, when we encounter a visitor in online mediums, it may be appropriate for the ‘welcomers’ among us to offer a warm greeting and perhaps conversation in whatever manner the platform allows.

**Patterns of prayer**

Liturgical assistants are generally licensed to help clergy in the delivery of Sunday liturgy, as well as lead the Offices of Morning and Evening Prayer. Where a daily prayer is being offered, it may be useful for liturgical assistants to help fill out the online roster, or to offer ‘phone church’ to offline parishioners. (The Church of England has published [prayers and a simple order of service](https://www.anglican.org.uk/prayers) that could be mailed out and said together over the phone.)

**Sharing news and gifts**

As a church family, we share far more than liturgy and coffee. We celebrate, mourn and face adversity together, and comfort and support each other. Sharing news of our households via phone trees, Facebook groups or the church bulletin helps us stay involved in each other’s lives and may help keep our online and offline community connected. Similarly, groups such as the gardening or craft guilds may not be able to gather for now, but could perhaps share their passions via tips and challenges, photos and videos for the parish community.

**Love in action**

Even as the presence of COVID-19 decreases, people will still need assistance navigating online technology, getting to appointments, recovering from operations, or doing the shopping. If you can help with these tasks, let your clergy know or better yet, offer to gather a group whose practical assistance complements the parish’s pastoral response team.
Community connections

If your parish has a relationship with local organisations or grassroots community groups, stay in touch. Share the challenges and good work of our neighbours and look for practical ways to continue supporting their efforts amid distancing.

Keep us informed

Above all, keep talking to us! Right now, my favourite type of email to receive is the “I thought you might like to know…” message. While we are certainly navigating unfamiliar territory, we are never too busy to delight in your family news, puzzle together over the odd detail in the Gospel, or pray with you in concern.

One of the best pieces of feedback I’ve heard since we shifted to an alternative church model was, “We’re still showing up for each other. Everyone is here!” Between phone trees, online church and all the practical ways people are reaching out, the bond of community weaves a familiar and comforting presence among us.

Ideally, the initiatives and practices we engage in now will not only practically assist clergy and lay parish leaders, but build the resilience and spirit of our parishes, preparing us for the time when we transition toward new life as community beyond COVID-19.

Features • Wednesday 13 May 2020 • By Bishop Doug Stevens

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity: history, origins and resources

Bishop Doug Stevens with the Conventual Sisters of St Dominic at an ecumenical gathering at Ganmain (Anglican Diocese of Riverina) in May 2011
“I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” (John 17.20-21)

This annual get-together of local churches in obedience to the prayer of Christ and to celebrate what we have in common, has faded somewhat in the past few decades. What used to be a vibrant gathering in the 1960s and 70s has become a shadow of what it used to be since I was ordained 40 years ago. What then is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity and why do we pray for Christian unity?

Churches, for a variety of reasons over the past 1000 years, erected very high fences separating themselves from others whom they believed had turned away from the truth or seemed too different from themselves. The one Church became a plethora of churches, and most of this division happened while Asia and Africa were being colonised by European countries from the 16th century onwards. The various large churches of Europe went with the traders and settlers and transported their divided Christian faith to new locations. Towards the end of the 19th century young church leaders in Asia saw that the multitude of different churches were confusing the local people and proving a stumbling block to evangelisation. They challenged the heads of their churches in Europe and America to take seriously the command and prayer of Jesus for his disciples to stay united. In 1910 a conference was held in Edinburgh in response to their plea and 38 years later their visionary work saw the World Council Churches formed.

The decade following the 1910 conference saw Europe transformed. World War I and the rise of communism in Russia caused hundreds of thousands of people to flee from their home countries to seek refuge in safer places. Many of these folk found their way to France, and in Paris a young Roman Catholic priest named Paul Couturier came face to face with Russian Orthodox people. He was fascinated to find a Christian tradition that was very culturally different to his own and yet so similar. These two great churches had fallen out of fellowship nearly 1000 years earlier but now he was making friends with those who had been regarded almost as enemies.

Couturier, who became known as the ‘Apostle of Unity’, closely examined the scriptures and theology that highlighted the importance of Christian unity and met regularly with like-minded priests to discuss such topics. They formed a dialogue group in Les Dombe that met regularly with the group of Protestant theologians who had carried on the 1910 energy for reconciliation. He also maintained close contact with another visionary Catholic priest, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a scientist who saw that all humanity shared its unity in and through Christ, the eternal creative Word of God (John 1). Couturier and de Chardin believed that the more we seek reconciliation and unity in Christ, the more we are able to understand the being and mind of God.

During this time, Couturier believed fervently that any move to overcome hundreds of years of separated Church life, could only succeed through prayer and personal action. Thus in 1934 he established a three-day prayer commitment for Christian unity and in 1939 that developed into a Week of Prayer for “unity as Christ wills it”.

Continued dialogue between these keen proponents for unity in The Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches, saw the creation of the present Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 1968. The time set for the week in Australia was the seven days between Ascension and Pentecost. This is the time of the year when the Church maintained a focus upon the dynamic life of God and God’s activity in the world through the Holy Spirit.
When local churches came together in Australia in 1968 it was a new experience, especially for older members of our churches. They had grown up in a culture of ignorance and at times, antagonism, between the Catholic and Protestant churches. In many ways the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has helped to achieve one important thing – the breakdown of fear and suspicion that churches and Christians had lived with in Australia through the 19th and much of the 20th centuries. Consequently, younger members of our churches today have grown up in a healthier atmosphere and, thus, do not understand why Christians of alternative denominations once did not fellowship with one another.

Because much of the old fear and suspicion has been removed from church life, the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity has declined in its observance in recent decades. The unity of God's Church, however, is more than merely overcoming fear and suspicion of difference. Relations between the separated parts of the body of Christ have certainly improved but we cannot be content with this. Acceptance of ongoing separation within the Body of Christ is disobedience to the will of Christ. Continuing separation means that our ministry in the Kingdom of God is far less effective than it should be. We must never ask why there is a need for prayer and action for reconciliation; we must ask how continued separation can be justified.

The theme and material for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity each year is produced by the local churches of a particular country. This enables local churches throughout the world to learn something more of the rich human diversity worked by the Holy Spirit. The international material is disseminated in Australia by the National Council of Churches in Australia (NCCA). We in Queensland have a personal involvement in this because the NCCA engages closely with Queensland Churches Together so the latter can help ‘Australianise’ the former.

The theme for 2020 calls us to move from shared prayer to shared action. The international resources have been prepared by the churches in Malta. The 2020 theme, ‘They showed us unusual kindness’ (Acts 28.2), remembers the historic shipwreck of Paul on the island of Malta and calls us to a greater generosity to those in need.

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity in 2020 extends from Sunday 24 May to Sunday 31 May. Please encourage your church to celebrate this with your fellow local churches as much as possible given some of the limitations of COVID-19. Please remember that the unity of his followers is where Jesus’ heart and mind were focussed on the night he was betrayed.

The National Council of Churches in Australia website has a range of resources available for use during the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

Editor’s note: Join the leaders of Christian churches in Brisbane to pray for Christian unity through a live-streamed Ecumenical Service at St Stephen’s Catholic Cathedral on Wednesday 27 May at 7 pm or watch later on demand.
Poll shows we must raise the rate of JobSeeker for good

Australians want to raise the rate of JobSeeker (formerly Newstart) and related payments for good, according to today’s Essential Poll. Anglicare Australia says the Government must listen.

“For years, Australians have known that the rate of JobSeeker (previously Newstart) was too low. Just last year, an Essential Poll found that 72% of Australians wanted the rate to go up.

“Now the Government has raised the rate in the wake of the coronavirus...but only for six months. Australians know that’s not good enough.

“In today's poll, almost 2 in 3 people said they want to stick with the newly doubled rate.

“This shouldn’t be a surprise. With record numbers of Australians losing their jobs, hundreds of thousands more people will be relying on JobSeeker. Without action, they will be pushed into poverty in mere months.”

Ms Chambers said Anglicare Australia’s research shows that the old rate was not liveable – and that the increase should be expanded to age and disability pensioners.

“Anglicare Australia’s Rental Affordability Snapshot, released just last week, found that even with the payments doubled almost 99% of rental listings are not affordable for someone on JobSeeker.

“If the payments are halved in six months, 0% will be affordable. That will push hundreds of thousands of Australians into rental stress or homelessness in the midst of a downturn.

“Age pensioners and people with disability have been left out of the increase altogether. They are at the very bottom of the market, and can afford just 1% of rentals. Instead of looking after for them in the midst of a health crisis, we are leaving them to the mercy of the market.

“We must raise the rate of these payments for good. If they are halved in six months – and if pensioners and people with disability are left out – even more people will be pushed even deeper into poverty and homelessness.”
‘Out of the Shadow’: the love of a former Archbishop for his son

Image of the altar at the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, St Francis College, with the triptych behind (Image courtesy of the Parish of Auchenflower-Milton)

On 5 September 1934, John ‘William’ Charles Wand became the third Archbishop of Brisbane in a lavish enthronement ceremony at St John’s Cathedral. Only 15 days later on 20 September, this same man received a cable telling him, his wife Amy and daughter Kathleen, that their son and brother Paul had ‘undoubtedly perished’ in a climbing accident in the Swiss Alps – a fact that was confirmed shortly thereafter. Archbishop Wand’s grief and his desire to memorialise the son he adored remain evident in our Diocese today – all one has to do is visit the Chapel of the Holy Spirit, next to Old Bishopsbourne, on the grounds of St Francis Theological College.

Paul Wand and his friend John Hoyland were friends from Oxford University. At this time British mountaineers were considered among the best in the West, and both students revelled in the mountaineering club at their prestigious university. The two friends were slowly building up a reputation in this field. John Hoyland, the nephew of famous Everest veteran and missionary surgeon Howard Somervell, was becoming increasingly renowned for his mountaineering skills. While it seems Paul Wand harboured ambitions to summit the largest mountains in the world. It was their joint ambition to reach the top of Mont Blanc, 4810 metres in height, on the Swiss/Italian border that led to their tragic and premature deaths.

Mont Blanc is not an easy mountain to summit. Indeed, in 2017 alone 14 people died attempting the ascent. In 1934, with a lack of safety equipment that is available today, the prospect was even more fraught with danger. Perhaps that is what appealed to the young climbers. Paul Wand was 23 and John Hoyland was 19 when they set off to the Swiss/Italian border to attempt to scale the highest of the Alps. They made it to the Gamba Hut, on the Italian side of the great range, a refuge that many stayed in to rest before moving on to tackle the great southern wall of Mont Blanc. There they stayed
overnight. The guardian of the hut recalled them being exhausted and having far too much equipment and supplies than he would have recommended. Yet, on 23 August 1934, at 9 am according to the guardian, they set out, overly burdened, in bad weather, inexperienced in the local conditions, and still tired from their previous day’s climbing. That was the last time they were seen alive.

It was a month before their bodies were found. In late September four Italian guides and British mountaineer Frank Smythe, who would later write about the search, set off and caught sight of an abandoned ice axe. They discovered a deep crevasse, and after climbing down at great personal risk, found the bodies of the two young Englishmen. On one of the bodies was a watch that had stopped at 3.52 pm. So, after almost seven hours of climbing, they had fallen to their deaths, a drop that was estimated at being some 600 feet. Their bodies were brought down the mountain and, around the 26 September 1934, Hoyland’s father, a family friend of the Wands, and others attended a burial service for them at Courmayeur, in northwest Italy at the foot of Mont Blanc. It was reported that the whole village attended the moving funeral, with children placing flowers and a local clergyman conducting the service.

Before the bodies were found, Archbishop Wand was holding on to whatever hope he had that somehow his son had survived. On 19 September, before any final word had come in, the Brisbane branch of the Royal Society of St George was to have held a welcome address to the new Metropolitan. Upon hearing of the disappearance of Paul Wand, they contacted the Diocesan offices and offered to cancel the event. Archbishop Wand said he would still make it if the branch members wished it. However, the Royal Society of St George event organisers decided to postpone the event and moved a motion expressing sympathy to Archbishop Wand, his wife Amy, and their daughter, Kathleen, and the hope that somehow Paul would be found. Sadly, it wasn't to be, and only a few days later they received official word that Paul and his young companion had perished and were being buried nearby.

Upon arriving in Brisbane, The Courier Mail asked Archbishop Wand if he would be willing to contribute a weekly article on religious subjects to the newspaper. On 6 October 1934, he penned an article called ‘Out of the Shadow’, where he unburdened himself of some of the grief he was obviously struggling with. It is a poignant, inspiring, and heart-breaking reflection by a man who obviously and devotedly loved his son. He spoke of his son being his best friend, of their dream of writing together, of his admiration for his son’s compassion and understanding, and, finally, of how his faith was helping him through his pain:

“And then there is always the certainty of meeting him again. He was very proud of us – it is our proudest recollection now, and we must do our best to live up to it. We cannot let him down. When we see him again we must be the kind of people he thought he knew, and we must have done the work he expected us to. This is our ray of light in the present darkness. When the full brightness comes we shall see him in it. God grant that we may be worthy of him then.”
Four years later, Archbishop Wand and his family decided they wanted a more permanent memorial to their son’s memory in the Diocese that they had made their home, albeit temporarily. A year earlier, in 1937, St Francis Theological College had moved from Nundah to the grounds of the Archbishop’s residence of Bishopsbourne, Milton. The chapel on the grounds then became the College chapel, as well as the Archbishop’s. The Wand family asked famed Queensland artist William Bustard to create a triptych, a painting on three panels, to be placed above the altar of the chapel. The centre panel is the nativity scene, comprising Mary, Joseph, the baby Jesus, and adoring shepherds. At the rear of the panel, to the left, is a shepherd with no headwear, and the face of Paul Wand.
After leaving Brisbane to return to the UK in 1943, Archbishop Wand eventually became the Bishop of London in 1945, serving there for a decade during post-war reconstruction. One of the things that needed attention was the damage done to the chapel at Fulham Palace, the historical home of the Bishops of London. It is not surprising that here, too, in 1952, Bishop Wand commissioned a stained-glass window for the eastern side of the chapel that depicted, at its apex, this time as an angel, another image of Paul Wand.

The images of Paul Wand at Fulham Palace and in the Chapel of the Holy Spirit at St Francis College, serve two distinct and profound purposes. Firstly, they serve as a tangible connection to one of our Archbishops, a thread through history, from now to 1934, and to a new Metropolitan finding his feet in the midst of tragedy. Secondly, and most poignantly, Paul Wand’s image serves as a signpost beyond titles and palaces. It is a signpost that clearly communicates the love of a father for his son.
Multi-faith leaders' statement on COVID-19

Joint statement of Australian faith community representatives: Australia's response to COVID-19 so far, looking ahead now (released on 15 May 2020)

Compassion is at the heart of our faiths. It is our unifying ethic.

So it is with compassion that we make this Joint Statement as Multifaith Leaders.

We were initially drawn together in Video Conference on April 15 at the invitation of the Hon. Alan Tudge, Acting Minister for Immigration, Citizenship, Migrant Services and Multicultural Affairs. We were asked then to support the government's efforts to manage the COVID19 pandemic.

This Statement conveys our continuing readiness to assist.

We appreciate Minister Tudge's acknowledgement of the work being done by Australia's religious communities at this time to provide spiritual guidance, reach out to those less fortunate, and provide care to those who need it. While observing physical distancing, all traditions seek to provide individual and community connection and the qualities of hope and faith in the face of this global health crisis.

Both nationally and internationally, we are painfully aware of the suffering caused by this lethal virus.

Accordingly, we are aware of how COVID19 has rendered the vulnerable even more vulnerable, both in Australia and overseas.

Overseas, there are millions stranded in their own country or in another country, without work, food, shelter or access to our quality of Health Service.

Many lack even sanitisers and face-masks, and are in crowded circumstances with limited testing facilities to help prevent the spread of COVID19.

We cannot think of our circumstances without compassion for those so vulnerable in places where there continue to be wave after wave of COVID19 deaths.

Many of us have links with these places through our faith, family and friends.

Both as global citizens and as Australian citizens, we are united in wanting to work to help prevent further suffering.

We also know our shared ethic of compassion, shown in practical service, is our best way to counter how fears and anxieties might otherwise be exploited by those seeking to sow division.

In places infected by ignorance and prejudice, minorities are especially vulnerable.

In Australia, sadly, we know this as racism, whether it is directed against people of Asian, Muslim, Jewish or Sikh background or other minorities.
Thankfully, as a result of careful work together over many years, including as we have responded to other crises, there are relationships of warmth and trust which bond us together.

The cruel folly of these divisive forces is best countered, we know, by the knowledge that the current COVID-19 pandemic, affects us all, regardless of nationality, skin colour, religion, ideology, gender, sexual orientation or social class. Hatred can only divide and distract us, and thereby make us weaker and less well placed to overcome our common challenges. Co-operation and compassion strengthen us by giving us the sense of common purpose we need to survive, care for one another and flourish. Our leaders must act accordingly.

Looking ahead, we know there will be more demanding days.

We will cooperate together and with our Governments so as to look after those most vulnerable, attentive to prevent anyone ‘falling through the cracks’.

We will cooperate to encourage our communities to follow the Health Guidelines which keep us all safer.

We will keep offering our spiritual practice, including our prayer and meditation, mindful of those anxious and distressed.

We recognise that this crisis has changed and will continue to change the way we work and live.

We know, therefore, the importance of our continuing collaboration as our decision-makers try to balance health and economic needs, with a staged approach to lifting restrictions.

We note, in closing, the stressful effect of cumulative emergencies over these last months: The devastating bush fires which have been followed by COVID19.

Gratefully and compassionately, we recognise the cost to the many Australians who have worked, and are working long hours to prevent further suffering and to assist those in need.

Given the reality of stress and weariness, we urge patience and forbearance with each other now, gentle care with our words and gestures.

Our unified leadership has brought us to a better place than might have been imagined.

With a little more giving and forgiving this can be an attractive part of what some are calling “the new normal”!

We will try our best to model this ourselves! Our bruised and wounded world needs the example of a multifaith place where compassionate, humble service is the national practice.

We think our Australia can be that place, which gives hope to others.

Bawa Ji – President, National Sikh Council of Australia
Dr Rateb Jneid – President, Muslims Australia-AFIC
Prakash Mehta – National President, Hindu Council of Australia
Natalie Mobini – Spokesperson, Australian Baha’i Community
Michael Wells, Chairperson, Federation of Australian Buddhist Councils
Peter Wertheim AM, co-CEO, Executive Council of Australian Jewry
Imam Shadi Alsuleiman, President, Australia National Imams Council
Fr Daniel Ghabrial, Vicar General, Coptic Orthodox Church, Diocese of Melbourne
Bishop Philip Huggins – President, National Council of Churches in Australia

The full statement can also be read on the National Council of Churches in Australia website.

Hymns • Thursday 14 May 2020 • By The Rev’d Canon Dr David Cole

‘Come, Spirit God’

"In ‘Come, Spirit God’ Brian Hill (pictured) draws on his background as a teacher and Scripture Union youth worker prior to his university career, his life-long love of music, poetry and the piano, and his literary talent as a journal editor and the author of 14 books"

“Come, Spirit God, sweep through our cultures, reveal yourself in love and power.”

This is a wonderfully appropriate prayer as we grapple with the many challenges of COVID-19 in our families and communities and will likely continue to do so in the forthcoming Pentecost Season.

As the world struggles with the effects and challenges of the coronavirus, we are reminded that the Holy Spirit empowers us ordinary Christians “to speak the truth, to care for victims, to live by faith in deed and word” as we reach out to support frontline workers and those in the high-risk demographics, care for those who contract COVID-19, and minister to families and friends of those who do not survive the virus.

This prayer forms verse three of one of the Holy Spirit songs (# 835) in Songs of Grace, supplement to Together in Song (Aust Hymn Book II)*. With a theologically thoughtful text and a perfectly matched, very singable tune (which seems to lodge in the memory quickly!) by the same Australian, this modern-style hymn is one which will be appreciated by congregations across the denominations, both here and overseas.
The author and composer is Brian Hill, emeritus professor of education at Murdoch University in Western Australia. In ‘Come, Spirit God’ Brian draws on his background as a teacher and Scripture Union youth worker prior to his university career, his life-long love of music, poetry and the piano, and his literary talent as a journal editor and the author of 14 books. Brian’s experience and expertise come together in his song, which gained an honourable mention in the international competition run by the company, Australian Hymn Book (AHB).

In its work of resourcing works of high theological and music quality for Australian congregations, AHB’s competition was generously supported by a sponsor who was inspired by the great hymn writer Charles Wesley’s ability to communicate the theological insights of St Paul for congregations of his own time. As a result, the guidelines for the AHB competition were designed to challenge writers and composers to elucidate Paul’s mystic streak in a contemporary way. There were two entry levels: (a) for texts that re-imagined Paul’s theological emphases, allusions, metaphors or images; and (b) for texts dealing with Paul’s notion that believers must experience a ‘crucifixion’ or ‘death’ of their old selves in order to be reconciled with God.

‘Come, Spirit God’ is an inspirational work which cleverly draws on particular verses from Acts, Romans, 2 Thessalonians, Hebrews, 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Titus, and more. The text integrates Pauline teachings into the world of modern Australia.

The hymn opens with the first of three profound requests: “Come, Spirit God, sweep through my being, expel the dust of sin and death.” The second verse moves from the individual to our corporate life: “Come, Spirit God, sweep through our churches, our ego-driven cliques subdue. Expose our faults and calculations, and with the truth our minds renew.” And the third verse – as we have seen – has a global focus: “Come, Spirit God, sweep through our cultures...

The powerful tune has an energetic pulse and an irrepressible melody which reflects the sweeping quality of the text, invigorating and interpreting it with a sense of reflection and exciting reality.

By the end we find ourselves praying that we will indeed be empowered so that “the way we live makes clear our witness to Jesus Christ our living Lord.” This is a fine Australian song and one that congregations will be able to pick up quickly and enjoy singing.

* Songs of Grace: Supplement to Together in Song, Australian Hymn Book II is published by Australian Church Resources and is available on the Australian Church Resources website in a paperback book and CD.
St Andrew’s students getting creative with co-curricular activities

St Andrew's Year 12 student Thomas re-imagining 'The Son of Man', a 1964 painting by the Belgian surrealist painter René Magritte

Where there is a will, there is a way, and staff and students at St Andrew's Anglican College certainly have plenty of will.

Despite the many challenges COVID-19 has brought for schools, the Peregian Springs based school has chosen to use this unprecedented period to get creative and try new ideas in the co-curricular space.

Team sports, music groups, interest groups, training, competing, volunteering and all the additional things that usually make up the schooling experience are currently on hold.

However, recognising that not all lessons are necessarily learnt in a classroom and the important role co-curricular activities play in self-development and connectedness, staff at St Andrew's have developed a range of additional opportunities for students to engage in online.

Although impossible to replicate the College's extensive regular co-curricular programs – almost all students participate in at least one co-curricular opportunity at a time – students at St Andrew's Anglican College are continuing to engage in a range of co-curricular activities, albeit in a slightly different format.

College Principal Chris Ivey said that introducing a range of co-curricular activities will help students develop resilience and keep them connected.
“Co-curricular opportunities are where students learn more about themselves, about working in teams, about achieving a goal outside of the classroom,” Mr Ivey said.

“It’s where they learn persistence, how to deal with failure, how to push themselves, how to serve others and so many other qualities we want each of our students to develop.

“Our students thrive on opportunities and experiences because they value the connections, both with each other and with our staff.

“If we believe this, then we need to find ways for these opportunities to continue in an online environment...many of our students are quite alone at the moment and we want them to stay connected both within and outside the classroom. The classroom is just one facet of learning.”

Beginning with a virtual cross country, the first range of activities has been released to students from Prep to Year 12, with more planned as the term continues.

So far more than 400 students have taken up the Virtual Cross Country Challenge, logging more than 2300km using the Nike Run Club app or other apps, and earning House points similarly to the annual gathered school event.

Other opportunities include:

- an online Open Mic using ‘Flipgrid’
- an art recreation challenge
- a Saints Soapbox challenge
- Service opportunities
- 100 Club with Brett Holman
- a drive-through library book collection service.

Arts Leader and Year 12 student Virgo particularly enjoyed the art recreation challenged, which involved students recreating famous artworks at home and taking photos of their recreations.

“I loved the art recreation challenge because I got to re-create the Creation of Adam with my dog. It not only was hilarious trying to get the photo together, but I felt a sense of community, as I knew others were doing the same activity,” Virgo said.

“It’s so easy to get distracted and be unmotivated, but with little activities your brain remains switched on and you get to have some fun.

“By staying engaged, it’s easier to transfer back into normal learning.”

College Principal Chris Ivey reflected positively on the past weeks as a learning opportunity and a chance to think outside the box, rather than just doing what has always been done historically.

“We are an agile school. We have a culture of always ensuring we stay on top of what is happening, one that looks to improve where appropriate and to reflect carefully. We are adapting all the time – this is just on a bigger scale,” he said.

“I have challenged members of the Executive Team and Senior Leaders to ask the questions...what have we learned from this experience that we want to retain? Are there some aspects of what we’ve
done in the past that we don’t want to go back to? Let’s consider everything, staff, students, learning, pastoral care...everything.”

Features • Wednesday 13 May 2020 • By The Ven. Keith Dean-Jones OGS

Ascension Day

Stained-glass window of The Ascension

Thinking about the Ascension of Jesus into heaven can present us with difficulties. It may imply a crude cosmology, and the teachings of 17th century English ‘Muggletonians’, that heaven is six miles above the earth and that 40 days after his resurrection from the dead, Jesus stepped onto a cloud that elevated him to his final destination, are naive.

The more serious problem is that the Ascension may suggest Jesus’ absence. But Jesus is not “that dreaming, dark, dumb Thing; That turns the handle of this idle show”, the cynical remark of the English 19th century poet and novelist Thomas Hardy in the poem ‘The Oxen’. He is the one who is with us to the close of the age (Matthew 28.20), the one whom we desire and experience as Emmanuel, God with us. Throughout history, men and women have recognised the presence of the Good Shepherd who ‘lays down his life for the sheep’ (John 10.11) as he leads his flock to the heavenly Jerusalem (Psalm 23), the place of life, love and joy.

The Ascension points to the purpose of Jesus’ life, death and resurrection. Peter affirmed that God’s gift is that we will be partakers of the divine nature (2 Peter 1.4), and Paul boasted in the hope of sharing the glory of God (Romans 5.2). The Greek Fathers used the word ‘divinisation’, and Egyptian
theologian Athanasius of Alexandria (c.296-373) asserted that “Jesus Christ was made human so that he might make us gods” (*De Incarnatione* 54.3). In ascending into heaven, Jesus completes creation, and through him all things are returning to him from whom they have taken their origin.

In Jesus humanity is united to God. For western Christians, this language may seem unusual. It does not mean that the division between the Creator and creatures is breached; God is still God and humans are still humans. Rather, divinisation affirms that, by God's grace, we are being transformed into the likeness of him who is both God and human, our Lord Jesus Christ. As Paul writes:

“And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit” ([2 Corinthians 3.18](#)).

I think that our divinisation is also our humanisation. We live in a culture that exults in youthfulness, and it seems that people are regarded as being ‘over the hill’ when they have reached 40 years of age. Old age is rarely regarded as a good experience. But I think that it is good to grow old and that, by God's grace and our willingness to respond to his love by dying to selfishness, we can become more and more the person that God has created us to be. Like an old pair of slippers, we may appear a bit shabby, but the slippers are comfortable – for the inner person has been and will continue to be transformed.

God's creation is dynamic, not static. We are born human and we are becoming human. Jesus' humanity is a template for what it means to be a man or a woman, and his capacity to love, forgive, understand, reconcile and act with justice reveals that he is “the way, the truth and the life” ([John 14.6](#)). Many of the congregations that constitute the Anglican Church Southern Queensland consist of mature-aged people. This is good and it reminds us about Jesus’ claim when he said, “I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly” ([John 10.10](#)).
Q&A with retired bush priest, great-grandmother and eternal optimist, The Rev’d Mary Roberts

“I like to find a good book to read. As you settle down and get comfortable, you merge into their story, losing any of your worries or cares, and come back to your own life relaxed and recharged” (The Rev’d Mary Roberts)

The Rev’d Mary Roberts was ordained in 2001. She has four children, 10 grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. She was born in Quilpie and served in the Western Region as a priest for seven years.

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live in a retirement village in Clayfield, Brisbane. I used to worship at both the Cathedral and at St Mark’s Clayfield. I have a bit of trouble physically getting around these days, but now I am completely spoilt for choice with all the services on Facebook, YouTube and Zoom. I can say my prayers with someone else every day now – someone from St Francis College or the Cathedral, our Bishops and even with Bishop Charlie Murry in Newcastle and many others. It all completely blows me away and fills me with such joy and gratitude. This has all come quickly, in haste, as a response to COVID-19. What will come as our churches assess the results and consult and examine what worked and what didn't? I'm sure it will only get better and find its place in regular use.

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

Most of my life I have been involved – teaching Sunday School and RE and various adult Bible Studies as well as arranging flowers, cleaning, whatever was needed. It was not a possibility to be a priest until the 1990s and so it was never anything to which I aspired; but, with all the changes, somehow it happened, and it has been a wonder and a blessing which I could never have anticipated. I was ordained to serve in the bush, particularly in the Charleville Parish. When I could no longer drive the long distances required, I moved to Brisbane and my PTO (Permission to Officiate) was with the Cathedral.
What is the name of your current role, including any voluntary roles, and what does your role involve?

The title of my current role is ‘Retired’. I’m no longer actively involved. I try not to push my faith, because nothing puts people off more. However, it’s surprising how many people are pleased to find someone with whom to have a quiet time – to talk about their problems and discuss questions of meaning and purpose. This gives me a chance to share my faith with others and try to help them find this rock of stability, this firm foundation for their lives – Jesus Christ, our friend, as well as our God and King.

What have been the highlights or best memories of your roles so far?

Some of my best memories would be from being involved with the baptisms of my two youngest, and marriages of my four oldest, granddaughters. Different stories for each one, nearly all in the bush, although one at the beach, which always has special holiday associations for bush people, but each one, incredibly meaningful and special in its own way.

What have been the key challenges of your roles so far and how have you worked through these?

I thought my main challenge would be being accepted by the bush community in my new role as their priest. I thought people would think, “What's she doing preaching to us? She's just one of us, a grazier's wife, not a priest?” But while I was in training, the local clergy were also praying for me with their congregations. This was presented clearly when Fr Gary Harch, who was then the priest in Roma, was going away. He was asking his liturgical assistants to organise Morning Prayer when one of them said, “What about Mary Roberts? We've been praying for her for long enough, why can't she come? Let's see her in action.”

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

I was a cradle Anglican with a firm belief in God. This was shattered by the death of my mother in my early teens, when I decided that, “There can't be a God if this could happen.” My father had died when I was a baby, so I felt alone, frightened. But when I looked at the wondrous world around me, I thought, “This just couldn't all be here by some strange accident. There has to be a creator – a God – but I'm not sure what he is like.” I devoted my teenage years to trying to find out the nature of that God. Although I was angry, and hurt, and trying to lash out and blame some sort of nasty and vindictive God, it didn't take long to find Jesus again, a personal, loving, caring God in my life. And I've spent the rest of my life trying to follow Him as best I can.

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

I have no idea. Faith has always been such a big part of my life, I'm sure that whatever I am, my life choices and character, have been largely influenced and shaped by that. I can't imagine what it might have been without it. We can never know God fully and I am still trying to know, love, understand and serve him better.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

I think John 3.16 is the very heart of the gospel. It sums it all up.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”
It explains the whole bit – Christmas, Easter, everything. Salvation comes from this wonderful God who sent his Son because He loves the world, not for some favourites, not for someone special, but for each and every one in the world.

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

Retired ACSQ priest Bruce Henzell inspires me. He demonstrates a Christ-like love in his actions – in his priestly duties and in his everyday life. I often heard Bruce say as he approached a problem, “How can we approach this in the most loving way?”

**How have you seen the Church adapt to help keep parishioners engaged and connected, as we shelter in our homes and maintain physical distancing to keep our communities safe?**

The innovative and thoughtful ways our clergy have adapted and are approaching worship and communication in these extraordinary times have been remarkable. I was happily expecting something adequate, makeshift perhaps, and infinitely better than nothing to emerge. But now that I have seen what has been done, I am blown over with admiration. There are so many wonderful, meaningful and touching services and so many effective ways have emerged to communicate with and to help and involve others.

**How have you seen the Church contribute to the broader community in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 environment?**

The Church is trying to introduce the love of Christ to people in our community, letting them know by our actions, not just our talk, that we have this gift of loving acceptance and hope that Jesus has given us and that it has the potential to restore lives and cope with whatever problems we face. We need ministry within the Church to build up the body of Christ; this strengthens us and equips each of us to reach out, from wherever we are, to use our gifts whatever they might be, to be Christ to those who are in need of comfort, support and reassurance.

**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 strengths of our church are the love of Christ and the strength of the Spirit. We have work to do, we are his hands in the world, but when we think we know all the answers and forget to be guided by the Spirit, that’s when we go astray, waste so much time and make so many mistakes. The world is hungry for what the Church has to offer, and we have to find a way to let people know about the love of God and the help and strength he gives. We need to use these strengths to help people find love and companionship, a sense of belonging with good news of help for people struggling financially, healing for the sick and inclusion for the marginalised.

**What are the primary challenges currently encountered by the Church and what is the best way to overcome these for the benefit of our communities?**

The Church can’t help but be challenged by the huge changes in the way society interacts in recent years and the current COVID-19 situation has highlighted our need to change to meet the needs of our time. We must live by the Spirit and encourage others in good will and openness, seeking out what is important and giving thanks for all the signs of grace. People don’t understand the Church. We need to present it more clearly. We have to find ways to reach people, to help everyone know Jesus – not just know about him.
What is the kindest gesture you have ever received or witnessed?

When my husband was dying, Sally Gorman, the ‘Matron’ of the First Aid Hospital in our small town Morven, which is seven hours’ drive west of Brisbane and home to less than 200 people, went way beyond any call of duty and was extremely kind to my family. On what proved to be his last evening, he was in great distress. Even though it was way out of hours, we rang Sally for advice. She didn’t just advise us – she immediately came out to the property, examined him and rang the doctor, who lived 100km away, to discuss treatment. Even after that, Sally stayed with us until he died, well into the early hours of the morning. It was a wonderful help to us and such an act of kindness.

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

My mother told me that there is something good in everyone and if I couldn’t find it there was something wrong with me, not them; so I’d better get my mind right. Of course, this fits with Christ’s instruction to love everyone as we love ourselves. I do try to see the best in everyone, and I firmly believe that God loves us all equally, so if I have a problem with anyone, I do try to get my mind right and see them through the love of Christ.

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

I like to find a good book to read. As you settle down and get comfortable, you merge into their story, losing any of your worries or cares, and come back to your own life relaxed and recharged.

What is the funniest thing that has happened to you recently?

Prior to a burial, which was to be held in the old part of the cemetery in Charleville, I was trying to work out where the mourners could stand, to avoid anyone standing on other graves in that very crowded area. I was still casually dressed and, probably, it looked rather odd. A council worker came across to me and said rather sternly, “What are you doing?” Trying to explain I said, “I am the priest who is going to take the funeral here later on.” He looked at me sceptically and said doubtfully, “You don’t look like any priest I’ve ever seen.”

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

I love to share C.S. Lewis’ books and what he has to say; but the one I have given most is Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in Between by Bryan Mellonie and Robert Ingpen. It is a wonderful book for families – the adults, as well as children. It’s a celebration of living, as well as sensitive discussion about death.

Where do you do your best thinking?

Anywhere quiet. I can’t think in crowds. Somewhere with greenery and nature around – on the veranda in the shade in the summer or in the sun in the winter, with a good cup of tea sounds good.

What’s your best childhood memory?

It’s hard to choose because I was blessed with a happy childhood. But I will nominate that, possibly, watching my mother ride her horse, Paddy, in the main ring at the Ekka was a standout time and, probably, the anticipation that we would go around sideshow alley later as well.
What makes you nostalgic and why?

Photos my son sends from his iPhone. He always has it out in the paddock, more for contact than anything else, but when he sees something of interest he clicks away and texts it to us – all the family. I love the photos. I miss being out there in all that space with the big skies.

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

Any day when all my family were gathered together.

Reflections • Friday 15 May 2020 • By Peter Branjerdporn

From DC Talk to Live on Mars

Peter Branjerdporn, with St Andrew’s, South Brisbane parishioner Dave Andrews, at a multi-faith evening at the Lady Cilento Children’s Hospital vigil for Baby Asha in 2016

I have a confession to make. I am a DC Talk fan. If you don’t get that reference, then you probably weren’t a young Christian in the 90s clumsily navigating the musical landscape between mainstream grunge band Nirvana and Christian singer-songwriter Michael W Smith. Chances are you also didn’t donate all your ‘secular rock’ CDs to Vinnie’s and vow to buy all your music from Koorong for the rest of your life.

That was me. I was told that to be a good Christian I should only listen to ‘Christian music’, or at least nothing ‘heavy’. I led the worship team every second Sunday at church. We formed a band at Youth Group called Mustard Seed and even got interviewed on Christian station Rhema FM! Like every other young Christian musician at the time, my aim in life was to become a famous worship leader so I could serve God with my talent and bring people to Him.

The problem with that thinking, I eventually found, was that the imaginary line I drew between what’s sacred and secular is just that – it’s imagined. It’s not based on reality. Jesus was always ‘in the world’,
not separate from it. If I was going to truly follow the God who came to live among us then I needed to get used to the idea that it’s okay for my faith, music (such as my new album), and my whole life, to be ‘out there’.

I was blessed to meet many other Christian musicians who helped me to see that music is a gift to be shared with all people and has the power to transform people’s lives. And, that this doesn’t have to happen at church or a Christian event.

My teenage self would have been immensely disappointed at how un-famous I am today. But even though I’m not a rock star, over the years I’ve played some pretty funky gigs. I mean how many celebrities have sung in a Thai prison (I was invited by a wonderful prison chaplain in Bangkok) or a makeshift community centre in small-town Italy?

I’ve lead prayerful songs at many nonviolent protests asking politicians for the release of children from indefinite offshore detention with Love Makes A Way (a movement of Christians seeking justice for people seeking asylum). I will never forget all those candles outside the then Lady Cilento Hospital flickering in early 2016, during a 10-day vigil in support of hospital staff who refused to release a baby girl named Asha to the authorities knowing she would be sent back to Nauru. On one of the vigil evenings, when Anglican clergy and other local multi-faith leaders pledged their support for the hospital staff and Baby Asha, we sang ‘Let Them Stay. Sanctuary.’

I’ve had my fair share of pub gigs, too. One of the highest compliments I’ve ever received was when a yoga teacher came up to me after a gig to say that he felt my songs had a healing quality about them. In recent years I’ve performed for Theology on Tap where discussions about faith and life get done in a suburban pub.

Last year I was involved in leading Carols for Creation just before Christmas. The aim was to bring attention to the destructive ways in which corporations continue to needlessly pollute God’s wonderful Creation through their involvement in fossil fuel projects in Australia, often aided by short-sighted Government policies. I’ve been to a few demonstrations in my life, but I’ve never seen security guards smiling so much at protesters before. It was such a wonderfully creative way to ask a company to divest in destroying our children’s future.

Connecting with people through music is my favourite way of living out my faith in Jesus who told us to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. When the COVID-19 restrictions were about to begin in Australia, my long-time musical co-conspirer Frank Kneebone and I were pondering how music could help us get through the months ahead. Live On Mars was created as an online space where people can perform live music to a network of people as a way to bring creativity, hope and joy into people’s lounge rooms while they are stuck at home with very few interactions with others.

Since mid-March we’ve hosted 30 performers from Brisbane, Melbourne, Armidale, Wellington (NZ), Madrid (Spain), London (UK) and Los Angeles (USA), who have had over 50,000 combined minutes of live music watched by people around the world. I love being able to support artists and help them connect with friends, family and new listeners through their music.

I also enjoy nurturing the human connections we are all missing at this time of separation. And even though we could not make up for lost income from cancelled gigs, many of our artists have received viewers’ donations in appreciation of their performance on Live On Mars.
Sharing my music outside my comfort zone has given me countless opportunities to connect with others and also live out my faith in God. It is my hope that young Christian artists today are encouraged to practise and share their gifts not only inside the walls of the Church, but out in schools, markets, community festivals, music venues and even online.

May the God who created all things continue to bring forth the creative Spirit in all of us to share with others, whomever they may be. Amen.

News • Monday 18 May 2020 • By Michelle McDonald

Canterbury Cathedral’s historic ‘Harry’ bell tolling daily

For the first time in history, Canterbury Cathedral’s famous ‘Harry’ bell has been tolling daily since Maundy Thursday to thank frontline workers and in remembrance of those who pass away each day around the world due to COVID-19.

The Dean of Canterbury Cathedral The Very Rev’d Dr Robert Wells said that the bell is being tolled as part of a wider global solidarity movement, as well as in remembrance for those who have passed away.

“Communities around the world have embraced the idea of clapping hands to thank publicly healthcare staff and other frontline workers at this time,” Dr Wells said.

“We all know that their vital work is undertaken at great personal risk to themselves.

“The bell of Canterbury Cathedral will lend its voice to this display of gratitude and also mark a moment to pause and remember those who have died.”
Canterbury Cathedral's central tower where the Harry bell is rung daily at 8 pm (Image courtesy of Canterbury Cathedral)

A cathedral spokesperson added: “It is hoped that the familiar sound of this bell of the 1,400-year-old Cathedral will be a comfort and source of strength for all who hear it; a symbol of continuity, solidarity and reassurance that we will, as a global community, get through this dark time together.

“To this end, the Cathedral is encouraging everyone within earshot to record the tolling of the bell from inside their homes each evening and post it online to share with their friends and families wherever they are.”

Harry will continue to toll daily for two minutes at 8 pm until COVID-19 recedes.

It is the first time that the Harry bell has been rung daily in the way.

The bell is being tolled remotely using a timer so that no staff are present within the 1,400-year-old building.

Canterbury Cathedral has over 20 bells. These bells are found at the top of Bell Harry Tower; with five bells in the North West tower for striking the quarters; Great Dunstan, the Cathedral’s largest bell at over 3,000 kg, striking the hour; and, 14 bells used for change ringing in the South West tower.

The current Harry bell was cast in 1635 by the Joseph Hatch bell foundry in Ulcombe, Kent, and is named after Prior Henry of Eastry (1285-1333), who donated the original 343 kg bell.

When the central tower was completed at the end of the 15th century, the original smaller bell, previously rung in the North West tower and called ‘Bell Harry’ after its donor Prior Henry of Eastry was hung on the roof of the central tower, which was thereafter known as ‘Bell Harry Tower’.

The tolling of the Harry bell can be heard on Canterbury Cathedral’s YouTube channel.
Sunday Devotion: 24 May 2020, Seventh Sunday of Easter

Priorities in times of trial

Main Readings: Acts 1.6–14; Psalm 68.1-10, 32–35; 1 Peter 5; John 17.1-11

Supplementary Readings: Psalm 133; John 17.20-26; Acts 1.15-26; Psalm 68.11-20; Revelation 14.1-7; 15.2-4

‘Father, the hour has come...’ (John 17.1)

I sat once in a Bible Study and listened while a woman described how, as a child in Prussia in January 1945, her family loaded a baby pram with their most precious things and then set out to walk three hundred miles west over winter roads. They were fleeing oncoming Russian troops, hoping to reach the relative safety of British or American soldiers. “You have to think in moments like that what is really important,” she said.

Just before his arrest, Jesus spoke these words to his disciples: “Father, the hour has come.” In the drama that follows, Jesus shows us what is really important in times of trouble: the love of friends, courage in the face of suffering and faithfulness to the call of God. Few of us will be confronted with decisions such as those that the German girl and her family were called to make, but in the struggle this year with COVID-19’s challenges, all of us have had to rethink our priorities.

In our parish communities, we have been blessed to encounter the comfort of friends, a great deal of courage and a determination to negotiate the current challenges with faithfulness to God. Many of us have found unexpected blessings in these essential qualities.

May God continue to nurture that faithfulness when the hour of trial has passed.