

## Bush Ministry Fund news



**Bishop Cameron in his Toowoomba office engaging with a large Facebook community in September 2018. To connect on Facebook, send a request to 'Cam Venables'**

It's hard to capture the impact of ongoing drought with words. Photos of dusty paddocks and dying stock help to tell the story, as do the lined faces of primary producers...most of who have done everything right in managing their land. But when the rains don't come, and the dams and tanks slowly empty...it grinds people down. How to pay the bills; repay the bank loans; pay the school fees; buy the fuel?

Grants made through the [Archbishop's Emergency \(Drought\) Relief Appeal](#) have made a difference to many. Dispersed through local businesses, such as [pharmacies via 'FarmAssist'](#), and community centres, the donations have certainly made a significant difference to the back pockets, health and morale of many in the Western Region. Not only have donations helped pay some bills, they have reminded communities in the west that they are supported by Anglicans in the city and on the coast.

[The Bush Ministry Fund](#) (BMF) is another key way that people partner with communities in the bush because it is through BMF grant subsidies that clergy, like Steffan van Munster, Rick Gummow, Terry Frewin and Daniel Sitaram, have shared life and ministry with rural communities experiencing drought. BMF subsidies also help to support the itinerant ministries of clergy like Geoff Reeder and Di Murphy who have driven from the coast for years to bring encouragement and prayer to communities in the Quilpie District.

When Western Region communities are struggling with drought, debt, and even significant fires, Christian faith and ministry give people hope. When churches are open for worship, people gather for prayer and teaching, and when a priest visits people in their homes there is an opportunity to share the burden of the challenges being faced.

I'm very thankful to God for those parishes, schools, and individuals who partner with communities in the bush via the Bush Ministry Fund. Through their visits, phone calls, fundraising, prayer, and many acts of generosity, in God's grace, they make a world of difference.

People often assume that the BMF and BCA are the same organisation, so I think it's worth noting that the Bush Ministry Fund (BMF) is quite different to the Bush Church Aid Society (BCA). BCA is a national Anglican organisation based in Sydney which supports ministry in many places across Australia. However, the BCA supports no rural ministry or parishes in our Diocese. Though it has more than \$15,000,000 in financial reserves, BCA has significant annual costs (including staff, advertising, and rent) so that only 28 per cent of donations received are dispersed to support rural ministry (BCA, 2015 Annual Report).

In contrast to the BCA, which does not support rural ministry in the Anglican Church Southern Queensland, the BMF only supports rural ministry in parishes of our Diocese and gives at least 98 per cent of all money donated to support rural ministry. This is possible because the Diocese provides administrative and financial support without charge, and it is such a blessing to have this support.

In 2019 the BMF helped resource and enable ministry in eight ACSQ parishes:

- COMPLETED: The Maranoa-Warrego Anglican Mission Area (\$21,000) – thankful to God for the four-year ministry of The Rev'd Steffan van Munster as priest and Police Chaplain. Please pray for Steffan and wife Eliane, as they settle into a new chapter of life and ministry based in Switzerland.
- CONTINUING: 4x4 Vehicle Lease (\$10,000) – thankful to God that ministry in the Maranoa-Warrego Anglican Mission Area is supported by a reliable and appropriate vehicle.
- CONTINUING: The Maranoa-Warrego Anglican Mission Area (\$40,000) – thankful to God for the ministry of The Rev'd Rick Gummow and his wife Tracey as they serve the communities and congregations of the co-operating parishes of Cunnamulla, Charleville, and Mitchell. After an action packed 12 months as Deacon, Rick was Ordained priest at St John's Cathedral in December last year.
- CONTINUING: The Leichhardt-Chinchilla Anglican Mission Area (\$40,000) – thankful to God for the ministry of The Rev'd Terry Frewin and his wife Karen as they serve the communities and congregations of the co-operating parishes of Leichhardt and Chinchilla.
- CONTINUING: Quilpie Parish and Diamantina Shire (\$10,000) – very thankful for the itinerant ministries of The Rev'd Di Murphy and The Rev'd Geoff Reeder to some of the most remote communities of our Diocese. Geoff was licenced 'Missioner to the Quilpie District' in 2018.
- COMPLETED: Dalby Parish (\$5,000) – thankful to God for the fruitful ministry of Annabelle Harth, part-time Children and Family Minister. Annabelle moved away from Dalby in May 2019.
- NEW: Stanthorpe Parish (\$10,000) – subsidy of clergy stipend due to drought-related loss of income.

**Please pray for all rural and remote communities in our Western Region, particularly those who are supported in some way by the BMF. If you, like me, are already supporting the BMF, please keep giving...in the knowledge that this is used by God to bless the lives of others. But, if**

you are not yet supporting and would like to find out more, please call Helen Briffa at the Western Region Office on (07) 4639 1875 or email her via [hbriffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:hbriffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au)

News • Monday 6 July 2020 • By Michelle McDonald

## Stunning Aboriginal dot paintings to travel around our Diocese



**Executive Director of Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission and RAP Working Group member Stephen Harrison and Cathedral Events Manager Gerard Finn with the three interrelated dot paintings, which are currently installed in St John's Cathedral**

Three stunning interrelated Aboriginal dot paintings, representing our Diocesan Regions and commissioned by the Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, are travelling individually around our Diocese and are being displayed as a reminder of our Christian call to Reconciliation.

Each artwork represents a geographical faith Region of our Diocesan community – the Northern, Southern and Western Regions – and join together as one united piece, with the Pacific Ocean bordering the joint work's right-hand-side.

The dot paintings were created by talented emerging artist Stevie O'Chin, who belongs to the Kabi and Koa peoples on her father's side and the Yuin people on her mother's side.

Stevie O'Chin said that the intricate circles in each artwork represent our Diocese's Marks of Mission and share common motifs.

"Each circle has 'U shapes' that surround the symbols – these symbolise people gathering together to worship, and the blue dotted rings around each symbol in the circles mark the spiritual healing power of God," Ms O'Chin said.

“The seven symbols painted within circles in the tri-Regional landscape represent the seven Marks of Mission of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland.”

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s seven Marks of Mission are:

1. To proclaim the Good News of the Kingdom.
2. To teach, baptise and nurture new believers.
3. To respond to human need by loving service.
4. To transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation.
5. To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.
6. To worship and celebrate the grace of God.
7. To live as one holy catholic and apostolic Church.

Dot painting is an ancient and deeply symbolic practice of the world’s oldest continuously living culture, and started with sand, soil and body ‘canvases’.

Now one of the most internationally recognised Aboriginal art forms, First Nations artists commenced dot painting on framed stretched canvases in the 1970s.

Ms O’Chin said that she carries on a family legacy of Aboriginal dot painting.

“My paintings are inspired by my surroundings and stories told to me by my parents and family elders,” she said.

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s [Reconciliation Action Plan](#) (RAP) 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).”

Executive Director of Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission and RAP Working Group member Stephen Harrison said that the three artworks support the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) and symbolise our Diocesan community’s collective commitment to Reconciliation.

“By commissioning dot paintings for the commemoration of our 2020-2022 annual themes, the RAP’s ‘Actions’ to ‘engage diocese, schools and Anglicare staff in understanding and appreciating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, histories and achievements (p.13)’ and to ‘incorporate Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander supplier diversity within the Church (p. 16)’ are formally embedded in our Diocesan-wide strategies and practices,” Dr Harrison said.

“These three artworks tie in directly with the Diocesan Reconciliation Action Plan and will travel around our community as a reminder of our Christian call to Reconciliation.

“At key Diocesan events the three paintings will come together as a symbol of ‘Being Together’ and that we are one Church.”

**If you would like to display a dot painting relevant to your Region in your church, ministry or school, please email [pmc@anglicanchurchsq.org.au](mailto:pmc@anglicanchurchsq.org.au).**

## Synod postponed for 2020 due to COVID-19

Anglican Church Southern Queensland General Manager Tim Reid this week confirmed that the 2020 ordinary session of Synod, which had been tentatively re-scheduled from June to September, has been postponed until next year.

The June monthly meeting of Diocesan Council considered whether Synod should proceed given recent months of COVID-19 related restrictions and the likelihood of ongoing restrictions around numbers for gatherings.

On the advice of Diocesan Council, the Archbishop asked that steps be taken to postpone the 2020 ordinary session of Synod to June 2021.

Mr Reid said the decision was made after considering COVID-19 restrictions and the associated difficulties of holding gatherings of over 400 people in an enclosed space, while meeting social distancing requirements.

“It is difficult to anticipate if or when these restrictions may be eased sufficiently for us to meet,” Mr Reid said in an email sent directly to Synod members.

“We have considered the complexity of usual Synod business and concluded that a full session by way of a virtual meeting is not practical. The Synod Canon mandates that an ordinary session be held in each year.

“In order to postpone the ordinary session, the Archbishop will call a special session of Synod, likely to be during September 2020, with the only item of business being a proposed Canon which will enable the ordinary session to be postponed.

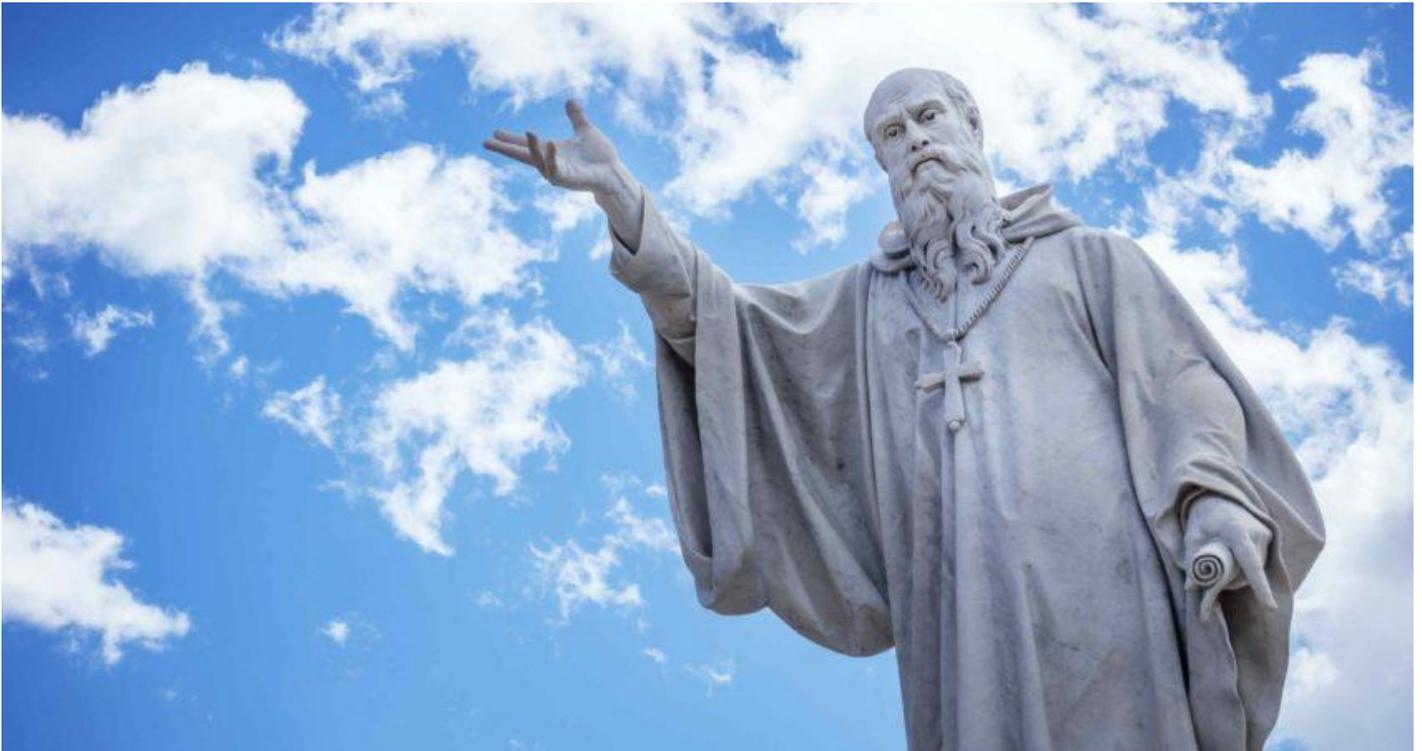
“As there will only be this single item of business, our intention is that the special session can proceed with a bare quorum of members, but we are looking to make provision for any members of Synod who wish to attend to do so by video conference.”

Further information will be sent out to members before the special session of Synod with details regarding how people can attend the meeting if they choose to do so.

Mr Reid said elections for office holders will also be deferred until 2021. Other decisions regarding aspects of Synod business, such as the timing and method of Commission reports, are still being finalised.

“I would like to thank everyone associated with Synod for their understanding and patience while we work through all of the arrangements,” Mr Reid said.

## Benedict of Nursia



**Benedict of Nursia is often pictured with a scroll or book, symbolising his Rule**

Having heard about Benedictine Communities and having visited some of them has been my connection to Benedict of Nursia (480-550). For me Benedict is synonymous with religious life. Communities I have visited radiated peace and calm and were set in beautiful surroundings – Maria Laach in the Rhineland, West Malling in Kent, Camperdown in Victoria (the latter two are Anglican-run). They had spectacular chapels with wonderful liturgical space for gathering. Lake views were stunning at Camperdown and Maria Laach.

Of all the founders of religious communities, Benedict has probably had the greatest following. He is commonly known as the Father of Western Monasticism. Born in 480 at Nursia in the Sabine Hills country north of Rome to well-to-do Christian parents at a time when the Roman Empire was collapsing, and finally Rome itself. We know about Benedict from two sources, [\*The Rule of Saint Benedict\*](#) and [\*The Dialogues of Saint Gregory the Great\*](#).

At an early age Benedict was sent to school in Rome. Being disillusioned by the worldliness of fellow students, Benedict did not finish. He felt called by God to live a solitary life. Benedict made a deliberate choice to become a hermit. He travelled to Subiaco which was a mountainous region south east of Rome and lived in a cave there for three years. This was an intentional time for Benedict who set out to overcome three temptations common to all human beings, these being self-centredness, fleshly desires and the control of anger and revenge. Only after overcoming those temptations did Benedict feel able to lead others.

Being recognised as a holy man, Benedict attracted others. The first offer came from a community of undisciplined monks who, finding Benedict too strict, set out to poison him. As if warned of their treachery, Benedict blessed the poison cup which shattered, and he left soon after. Another miracle involved poison. Benedict used to feed a raven bread from his own meal. Tradition holds that one day

he discerned it was poisoned and asked the raven to remove it – the raven flew off with the loaf in his beak. A raven with bread is symbolic of Benedict.

Later at Monte Cassino, Benedict gathered a larger community and whilst training the monks Benedict wrote *The Rule of Saint Benedict* (c.530) which became foundational to all Benedictine Communities. *The Rule* was Benedict's greatest legacy and what we know of his spiritual values and insights come from *The Rule*. It wasn't completely original, as Benedict saw fit to include helpful aspects of other Rules. Not that there is an unbroken line to the present. At the time of the Reformation many Benedictine Abbeys were destroyed. The remains of great Abbeys can be seen throughout Britain and France. During the 19th and early 20th centuries new Benedictine Communities formed.

Why has Benedict's *Rule* been so popular historically? Because [The Rule of Saint Benedict](#) embodies a unique spirit of balance, moderation and reasonableness. Prayer and relationship with God are the *raison d'être* of a religious community. Today 'prayer' is the most Googled word on the Internet. Insights on prayer are always relevant. The foundational prayer of a Benedictine Community is The Divine Office, based on the psalms and offered seven times a day.

Those unable to attend church during this COVID-19 period are encouraged to say Morning Prayer. We can join the Archbishop in Morning Prayer on Wednesday through [St Francis College's YouTube channel](#).

In Bishop Michael Curry's reflection passed on by the Archbishop, Bishop Curry emphasises how blessed we are in the Anglican Communion to have had Morning Prayer and Evening Prayer in English for 400 years. Also, in the last little while our Regional Bishops have made points on prayer, which are pure Benedict, including the [importance of silence](#) and listening to God in the silence.

**News • Tuesday 30 June 2020**

## Black Voices Matter!



Birrigubba Juru man Pastor Lionel Henaway (right) praying at the Brisbane Black Lives Matter rally on Saturday 6 June 2020, with Yuggera leader Aunty Kerry Charlton (left) also leading those who gathered in prayer

National Aboriginal Bishop Chris McLeod articulates a way forward for the Church, based on attentive listening and genuine action:

“We in the church have a blindness to our own racism in the church. I want to say that if the church is really going to speak with integrity about ‘Black Lives Matter’, and speak with integrity about any issues around social justice, then we actually have to look at ourselves as well.”

Bishop Chris McLeod did not hold back when he released his [statement](#) about the ‘Black Lives Matter’ campaign. Bishop Chris, a man of Gurindji descent, whose own mother and grandmother were part of the Stolen Generations, challenged the Church and the nation to confront systematic racism.

The Anglican Board of Mission – Australia publicised the statement from Bishop Chris and have followed up with an [interview](#) in which he further articulates both the problem and a possible way forward.

Bishop Chris and the members of NATSIAC (National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council) are senior leaders within many Indigenous communities. Theirs are the voices that can lead the Church into a new relationship with the First Peoples of Australia.

**The Baru Beat • Friday 10 July 2020 • By The Rev'd Rick Gummow**

## **If you build it, they will come**



**All Saints', Mitchell parishioner Kerrol Blackett outside her private gallery, The Mary St Gallery, on 10 July 2020**

“So, I said, ‘I’m going to sell all my furniture, paint my walls white, restore my garden to its pre-drought glory and make my home an art gallery.’ ”

“But where will you sleep?” came the flabbergasted reply.

"I'll worry about that later!" the Mitchell parishioner said.

The things you overhear in the time of COVID-19.

With Mitchell's largest and most starred motel and bistro temporarily closing due to a cliff-like drop in commercial travelers and no tourists at all, it is understandable we locals are a bit glum. Thank you, Lord, for the railway workers fixing the line, so we still have the Bowls Club, a single pub, a café, and a bakery. However, the closure of the bistro was a big blow.

But there is a whole industry in the Maranoa Warrego that tends to thrive under the radar and is hard to quantify. Let's call it the 'arts and culture industry'. If 'culture' is defined as 'the way we do things here,' then according to Kerrol Blackett, artist and All Saints', Mitchell parishioner, the way we do things is sell the furniture, worry about where to sleep later, and get painting and gardening.

About two months ago, Kerrol told me about her plans and on one recent Saturday afternoon, The Mary St Gallery, formerly her home, was officially opened by the Mayor of the Maranoa, Cr Tyson Golder. Kerrol's plan is to set up her easel in the mornings outside the Maranoa Art Gallery and Library in the main street and paint emus, and in the afternoon, host visitors in her own gallery. Her home has been utterly transformed into a beautiful, uncluttered and creatively lit space to showcase all the work of local artists. Worryingly, however, there is still no sign of a bed.

Artisans are not just painters, but also other genius people creating wonderful examples of textile and industrial art, with intricate and detailed quilting and remarkably fine steel and metal fabrication also. 'If you build it, they will come,' as the oft quoted movie line goes, and lo, almost to the day of the new Mitchell art gallery's opening, caravans started lumbering back into town like migrating herds. What a sight it was - you could almost hear the town exhale with relief.

Around 25 kilometers east, on the property 'Spring Hill', just outside Amby, St Barnabas parishioner, Gay Burey, has just hosted the first of her bi-annual Spring Hill Fairs. Gay is celebrated throughout southern Queensland for her textile art. Gay runs quilting workshops that people come to from as far afield as Brisbane and twice yearly she displays all her and others' works.

The amount of work hours Gay puts into her quilts would be staggering to know - if they could be calculated. The use of colour and layering, embroidery, and artful cutting and paneling combine to create works of gorgeous depth and texture. She, too, has transformed her whole homestead into a workspace and shop. Gay's homestead is reminiscent of an old-time haberdashery, with bolts of textiles from all over the world which she collects on her travels. Distressingly, there is no bed in her house either.

Travel two hundred kilometres west in late August and you can be part of The Charleville Performing Arts Festival. The festival has transformed itself from the Charleville Eisteddfod into the larger format it now enjoys with entries from all age groups and all sectors of the performing arts. It truly is a festival for everyone, from amateurs to performing artists good enough to be professional. This year the festival will be held between the 27 and 29 August and entries close for the various categories at different times, with all due to be submitted by the middle of this month. If COVID-19 restrictions are still in place in late August, the festival will be held online, which will be pretty compelling viewing. The festival also includes categories for creative writing, backing music, and film-making, which will be fantastic in my opinion.

By supporting the [Bush Ministry Fund \(BMF\)](#), we can ensure the Church's presence and participation at these performances and exhibitions and the Church's support for the various artisan groups. We do the work of the living God who is interested in every aspect of our humanity and who is the great creator. Please bring the BMF to the attention of your clergy and Parish Council and ask them, "Do we support the BMF?"

God bless you, my friends.

**Reflections • Friday 10 July 2020 • By Michael Rogers**

## **The Records and Archives Centre's continuing mission: chronicling our history**



**Former Diocesan Treasurer Ken Addison and volunteer Glenda Murrell in the Records and Archives Centre in 2014**

The onset of COVID-19 has impacted many things that we take for granted and has also meant many of us have had to change the way we work and interact. The Records and Archives Centre is no different. Due to physical distancing requirements, our wonderful team of volunteers (Glenda Murrell, Kay Smith and Judith Matthews) have been sheltering at home, our Reading Room has been closed, and Archives Researcher Adrian Gibb and I have been working offsite with occasional trips into Church House.

Despite this, we have been far from idle. We have been doing some much-needed data clean-up and refiling of electronic documents and mail. We are still able to respond to research enquiries (both internal and external) and we have also initiated some projects to enhance the history of the Diocese and access to our collection.

One of these projects involved developing special presentations on the [history of our Diocese](#) and the [Cathedral Precinct](#). Parish Liaison Officer Kelly Houston encouraged Adrian and I to develop the presentations as a way of bringing together the many sources of information currently available. The

'online tours' are being shared through social media platforms, and we have received positive feedback on the presentations. We hope to utilise other online tools to share stories about the history of the Diocese in the future.

We have also been doing an indexing project for former Diocesan publications, *Brisbane Diocesan Newsletter* and the *ANGLICAN FOCUS* newspaper. Between 1891 and 1971, the news of the Diocese was published in the *Church Chronicle* – an excellent publication, which remains a valuable source of information. The *Church Chronicle* was succeeded by the *Brisbane Diocesan Newsletter*, which was then succeeded by *The Diocesan Newsletter* in 1981, followed by *ANGLICAN FOCUS* (in newspaper format) in 1986, and then by *Focus* in March 1992 and *FOCUS Magazine* in 2012.

The Diocesan publication has experienced a number of name and format changes over the years, with its print form continuing until October 2018 when the news site *anglican focus* was launched. The Archives holds copies of the magazine and the newsletters (as well as the *Church Chronicle* Index) and some editions of [FOCUS Magazine](#) and [Church Chronicle](#) are electronically available through the National Library's web archive, TROVE.

Several years ago, an index of the *Church Chronicle* was created by Ken Addison (former Diocesan Treasurer). At the time, Ken was working at the Archives as a volunteer – but he had a deep connection with and interest in the history of the Diocese well before this, being a past member of the Records and Archives Committee. Ken created many finding and research aids that continue to be of tremendous assistance to our work.

Our goal is to create a similar index for the newsletter and the magazine – to improve and enhance access to these publications and highlight the rich history of our Diocese. It will be a long task – but even what we have indexed so far has highlighted some stories, poems and parish events that have possibly been forgotten.

Our researchers continue to send us many and varied queries – many are requests relating to baptism and marriages. A recent enquiry concerned a marriage at St Luke's Mission Hall. The Charlotte St church (now the Pancake Manor) often gets overlooked in the history of the Diocese – which is sad because it played a vital role in our community for many years.

Constructed in 1904, it served as the Pro-Cathedral between the closure of St John's in William Street and the completion of the first stage of St John's in Ann Street. It also hosted the enthronement of Archbishop Donaldson (up to this point, Donaldson and all the previous leaders of the Brisbane Diocese had been Bishops). From 1910, it was used as the main hub for all mission activities across the city, and there were also school rooms, club rooms, and kitchen facilities.

After the World War I, Canon Garland (the resident Chaplain of St Luke's) directed the Soldiers Church of England Help Society from the church hall, and an Anzac Club was open daily for soldiers. The hall was also used by other religious communities, such as the Greek Orthodox Church. From 1922 to 1977 the hall was used for Diocesan Synod until it was sold, decommissioned and converted for its current use.

We have many church registers for St Luke's in our Archives and were able to provide information to one of our researchers regarding the marriage of William Deem and Sarah Laffan on 20 May 1916. The researcher had obtained the Marriage Certificate from the Registry of Birth, Deaths and Marriages, which notes that one of the witnesses was an 'Elsie Rowell' – an individual with no mention

in her family's history. We were able to confirm that Elsie was from Orange in New South Wales and that she was likely the bridesmaid.

We were also able to confirm that Sarah had stayed at the People's Palace (the Salvation Army Hostel across from Brisbane Central Station) as the marriage entry notes the Hostel as Sarah's usual place of residence – although she had been living in Maryborough. The researcher is looking interstate for any records relating to Elsie as held in New South Wales.

From the middle of June, we have been coming into the Archives at least two days a week. Because of physical distancing requirements, the Reading Room is still closed for general researchers, but we are looking into providing special appointments for individual researchers – and, of course, welcoming our volunteers back!

**News • Friday 10 July 2020 • By World Council of Churches**

## **Amid COVID-19, African church leaders say availing quality seeds to farmers can help beat food insecurity**



**3 March 2017, Thaba Bosiu, Lesotho: Farmer David Moshoeshe is 33 years old. He lives on the hillside of Thaba Bosiu, 'Night Mountain' in Thaba Bosiu, Lesotho, where he grows vegetables, mainly cabbage and spinach. Here, he tends to cabbages that are one-month old. They are ready to be harvested after a total of three months. Thaba Bosiu is a sandstone plateau some 24 kilometres east of Lesotho's capital, Maseru. The name means 'Night Mountain', and surrounding the plateau is a small village and open plains. Thaba Bosiu was once the capital of Lesotho, and the mountain was the stronghold of the Basotho king when the kingdom of Lesotho was formed (Image courtesy WCC)**

As African nations begin opening after months of coronavirus closures, church officials and agricultural experts are stressing an immediate supply of quality seeds to farmers to help tackle a predicted food crisis.

Citizens in some of the continent's countries are facing hunger and serious food shortages after governments implemented stringent anti-COVID-19 measures—including lockdowns, curfews and quarantines. These have also disrupted food chains, including the supply and distribution of seeds to farmers.

According to the officials, delivering seeds to small scale farmers— in the immediate, short and long term—will result in the production of food for the coming days and protect regions from food insecurity.

“This is very important. There is a very clear connection between the food security and the quality of seeds farmers have access to,” said The Rev'd Dr Fidon Mwombeki, the Tanzanian Lutheran pastor who heads the All Africa Conference of Churches as the general secretary. “There is the question of whether it is modern or traditional seeds. I know there are several ongoing research projects to determine which seeds are resilient to climate change and pests. The churches should look into these.”

Researchers indicates that well-bred and selected seeds, which have been treated for drought and disease resistance mature faster and result in high yields, sometimes doubling harvests. The continent consumes mainly legumes and cereals including beans, maize and rice.

But for most rural farmers in the continent, quality seeds have not been available or where shops stock them, the cost is prohibitive. In the absence of quality seeds, the farmers have been planting what they have stored for food.

“We have been calling for effective and better distribution of quality seeds. The seeds planted by farmers here are of low quality, thus most of them record poor harvests. Getting better ones is an urgent matter if we have to improve yields,” said retired Anglican Bishop Julius Kalu of Mombasa who is currently works with farmers in the diocese he led. “They must also deal with the cost, which I think is prohibitive for local farmers, many who are women.”

Rev. Nicta Lubaale, general secretary of the Organization of African Instituted Churches said while quality seeds are needed, it was important to look at what the farmers need to produce, what they have had and what they have access to. For the quality seeds, according to cleric, extension services, resources and the regulation of quality also matter.

“The churches are looking into these. They are facilitating and training farmers to carry out seed selection, helping in the production of quality seeds and monitoring the quality,” said Lubaale.

According to the church leader, some families knew how to get good seeds, select and plant them.

**News story written by Fredrick Nzwili, an independent journalist based in Nairobi, Kenya. First published by the [World Council of Churches](#) on 3 July 2020.**

## Q&A with primary school teacher, musician and mum, Penny Howchin



**St Andrew's, Springfield music team member Penny Howchin with The Rev'd Charlie Lacey before church on Sunday 12 July 2020**

Penny Howchin and her family worship at St Andrew's, Springfield. She lives with her husband, Adrian, and three children aged four, six and eight, on an acre in Greenbank. Penny runs a new children's worship ministry supported by St Andrew's, Springfield. She presents original children's music and makes teaching fun, with the aim of helping kids develop their personal faiths.

### **Where do you currently live and where do you worship?**

I live on a bushy acre in Greenbank with my husband, three children, two cats and five chooks. We had been living in Darra before that, but moved out this way last September to have more space for the kids to run around, and to enjoy more of God's incredible creation. We attend St Andrew's, Springfield.

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

I grew up serving in the Uniting Church until my family moved to Kenmore Baptist Church when I was a teenager. I was involved in both Children's Ministry and Worship Ministry there until God brought us to St Andrew's at the start of this year. So I haven't been involved in the Anglican Church for long, but I have been an active member of God's family all my life.

## **What is your current role, including any voluntary roles, and what does your role involve?**

I am launching a new Children's Worship ministry supported by St Andrew's where I will be presenting original songs combined with fun and interactive teaching designed to help kids explore the 'what' and 'why' of worship. Though I'm based as a parishioner at St Andrew's Springfield, I'm keen to present my children's worship programme anywhere and everywhere. I'm so blessed to have such incredible support from the leadership in my church to enable me to do this.

## **What projects and activities are you currently working on?**

I have been busy writing a variety of different programmes to present in children's ministries so that I can best suit the needs of each church I visit. I have also been recording video clips that have been well received by the children at St Andrew's, Springfield. I'm also working hard learning guitar and writing new songs that I hope to record in the future.

## **What have been the highlights of your St Andrew's, Springfield involvement or other Anglican Church activities so far?**

Although we haven't been there long, I always love to hear The Rev'd Charlie's children's talk. My children give the funniest answers to his questions, which leaves the church in stitches!

## **As a primary school teacher in Christian schools, what have you learnt about the desire and ability of kids to connect with faith?**

When I was a Year 1 teacher, I was always amazed at the depth of questions the children would ask me about God. They have a greater hunger for God and understanding of His ways than I think a lot of people realise. Children can understand absolutely any Christian concept with their pure and simple faith, but it has to be broken down and explained to them at their level.

## **You are currently working in the kids' ministry space: can you tell us a little about your activities?**

I recently recorded my first video clip ['God of the Bible' on YouTube](#) which was used by St Andrew's Kids' Church at home. I have also launched my [website](#) with links to my other resources.

## **Why is it so important to provide kids with faith-based content that is fun and engaging and created specifically for them?**

Children aren't miniature adults; children have an incredible and unique culture of their own. They are inquisitive, kinaesthetic, love technology and want to be involved in their learning. As the mature ones, we need to be the ones to bridge the culture gap, learning their language and making things relevant to them. Otherwise they will miss the life changing message that is the Gospel.

## **As an experienced educator and mother of three, what three bits of practical advice do you have for parents as they raise their children in the Christian faith?**

1. Live your faith. Show them by example that your faith is real and making a difference in your life.
2. Pray. Pray heartfelt and meaningful prayers, both with them and for them.
3. Read Bible stories together, and then teach your child what that story means for them today.

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

I recently joined St Andrew's music team and am using my new guitar skills. I'm really excited to grow in this area, playing and worshipping with other musicians. I'm also looking forward to doing some worship songs with the kids' ministry following church services after being at home for so long.

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

I grew up in the Church, and loved God as best I knew from the time I was little. When I was a teenager, however, I experienced the Holy Spirit's presence in worship for the first time. Up until then I had always felt my prayers and songs were just hitting the ceiling. This experience captured my heart for worship as an avenue to connect with God personally.

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

God is everything to me and there would be no point to my existence without Him. Although I don't always understand His ways, He created me, knows me, loves me as I am, and is always working in me to make me more like Him.

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

I'm not always the most confident person (despite how I may come across), so I've always loved the assurance God gives in Isaiah 46.4. In the New Living Translation it says: "I will be your God throughout your lifetime – until your hair is white with age. I made you, and I will care for you. I will carry you along and save you."

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

In high school I read *The Hiding Place* by Corrie ten Boom. Corrie and her family became leaders in the Dutch Underground during World War II, hiding Jewish people in their home and aiding their escape from the Nazis before she herself was taken to a concentration camp. The way God cared for her through the atrocities she experienced, and how she praised Him through it all really inspired me.

### **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?**

I love how the Anglican Church has an understanding that sometimes life is really hard and complicated! I think it's awesome how we show practical love and offer a listening ear to anyone who needs it regardless of their background. That's Christ's love in action.

### **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 most recent [Australian statistics](#) I heard said that two-thirds of children who grow up in the Church leave it when they are older, and half of those who leave abandon their faith altogether. I believe this is the most important challenge we face. It is my prayer that my ministry helps change these statistics.

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

A few months after my youngest was born, I struggled with some health issues. I was pretty unwell for a while. One of my friends truly cared and understood. She came over, cleaned my house and organised a schedule of all my other friends to take turns practically helping me. That was love in action.

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

I process things verbally, and many times through my teen years I would spend much time telling my mother all my problems. I would get so overwhelmed, especially in the evening. She would always tell me, "Things will look better in the morning." Though I always doubted, time and again she was proved right. Now I say the same thing to my children.

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

I absolutely love to binge-watch sappy chick flicks on Netflix! I've also been working on knitting a scarf as my 'lockdown project'. I'm terrible at knitting, but I want to have a tangible accomplishment when this season is over.

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

'Children can know Jesus NOW!' So often kids ministries are geared only towards teaching Bible stories to develop a good foundation. These foundations are completely necessary, but we also need to help children apply these concepts and foster a personal relationship with Jesus now.

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

I absolutely love the Max Lucado children's series about Punchinello and the other *Wemmicks* series books. I have given away a few of these books! They are such beautiful modern-day parables.

### **Where do you do your best thinking?**

In the shower! That's where I wrote the song 'Unique'. When I came out of the bathroom I called out to my husband, "Please don't talk to me!" as I raced straight to my notebook. I had to pen the lyrics and the melody before I forgot them!

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

Eat chocolate...drink coffee...Seriously, I'm loving playing guitar and taking a moment out to worship Jesus all by myself.

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

I am a recent chook owner, and they are the funniest creatures. Watching a chook have a tantrum with feet stomping, wings flapping and cranky clucking all because I wouldn't let her out of the chook run is one of the funniest things I've ever seen!

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

I would like to ask God just what exactly He has in store for me! But then again, the answer might be too scary!

News • Friday 10 July 2020 • By World Council of Churches

## WCC fellowship invited to celebrate International Youth Day



**21 August 2018, De Glind, Netherlands: Through a pilgrim walk, youth participants explore what it means to be on a Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace (Image courtesy of WCC)**

World Council of Churches (WCC) interim general secretary Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca is inviting the global fellowship to take part in International Youth Day with a virtual celebration on 12 August. A new resource has also been released to help churches engage with young people and enhance their formation as Christian disciples.

The special celebration of youth will include music and song, prayer and Bible study, along with expert presentations. "The special focus this year is the mental health of young people, an arena of particular concern in these stressful and uncertain days, and one in which the churches can be especially helpful," writes Sauca. "Indeed, we are also launching a rich resource for congregational engagement with the mental health of youth, a kind of congregational toolkit with background information, and suggestions for workshops, conversation topics, and prayers."

The WCC is also welcoming further contributions to the 12 August programme, including art, video greetings, photos, songs, dances, and other creative ideas.

"As we have seen from recent events, whether in wrestling with climate change, gender justice, or racial equality, young people are not just our future church or its future leaders. Nor are they simply persons whose needs we must meet," writes Sauca. "They are instead already full partners and

catalysts in our ecclesial communities, in the ecumenical fellowship, and in the active betterment of our world.”

[Invitation Letter for the International Youth Day](#)

[Youth in the ecumenical movement](#)

[Save the date—and check out the mental health toolkit—for Youth Day 2020: WCC News release 11 June 2020](#)

First published by the World Council Churches on 2 July 2020.

News • Friday 3 July 2020 • By Ian Eckersley

## Anglican crisis centre to the rescue for stranded international visitors



**St John's Crisis Centre manager Dianne Kozik says there has been a massive increase in families and students, especially young Brazilian students, needing help**

An unexpected bond has been forged out of the fires of COVID-19 between Brazilian students and the devoted and caring staff at St John's Crisis Centre at Surfer's Paradise.

Although, the ties with the hard-hit South American country aren't exclusive, with Crisis Centre manager Dianne Kozik revealing that they have swung into action in recent months to support students, families and disadvantaged people from several international countries, including India and New Zealand.

The centre is always in demand; however, the need skyrocketed from mid-March as the full consequences of COVID-19 took effect on the Gold Coast when economic ramifications forced

thousands of students and tourism and hospitality workers – who normally wouldn't require welfare assistance – to reach out to St John's for help.

Ms Kozik said the centre had been inundated with new clients, with the combination of job losses as a result of coronavirus and gaps in government funding causing a shift in the demographic of people accessing services.

"We have not been seeing our regular clients because they seem to have enough money to feed themselves and pay their utility bills and all that through the increase in JobSeeker funding," she said.

"What we are seeing is a massive increase in families and students, especially young Brazilian students, who have all lost their jobs in food delivery or in cafés and restaurants, due to the hospitality sector closing down.

"I have had so many of them say to me: 'Our parents have told us not to come home, that it is safer in Australia' [Brazil has recorded over 1.5 million cases of coronavirus and more than 60,000 deaths]. They say, 'We might be a little bit hungry, but at least we are safe.'

"So there are many people in their 20s who were self-sufficient and have never had to access these types of services before. Many people are on the brink of poverty and while the demand seems to have plateaued for the moment, we are very concerned that it will ramp up again when JobKeeper finishes in September and if the increase in JobSeeker payments do not stay in place."

Until two months ago, Brazilian Joao Castro was self-sufficient, earning enough money delivering app-based food orders to support himself through his English language studies.

He now needs food and rental assistance to stay afloat.

"So many people lost their jobs so they're doing delivery now. It is very crowded," Mr Castro said.

"Sometimes I would do it for 12 hours and earn maybe \$30."

Mr Castro is one of hundreds of people who access the soup kitchen, grocery provision and advocacy services offered by St John's Crisis Centre in Surfers Paradise each week.

Brazil is the third largest source of international students in Queensland, behind China and India. International students are not eligible for the Government's JobKeeper or JobSeeker programmes.

Courtney Wright and her family moved to the Gold Coast from Christchurch seven years ago after their house was damaged and rendered unliveable in the 2011 Christchurch earthquake. As if that wasn't challenging enough, her husband Jason, who works in the FIFO fishing sector in New Zealand, had a work accident last year and shattered his ankle. That was quickly followed by Courtney losing her job as a café chef when the ramifications of COVID-19's restrictions struck the 'Glitter Strip'.

Unfortunately due to their trans-Tasman situation, Courtney, Jason and their 12-year-old son fell through the cracks of the workers compensation and welfare systems of both Australia and New Zealand, leaving them with nothing more than a \$250 per fortnight parenting allowance.

“With Jason needing an operation and unable to work and with me losing my job, I really don’t know what we would have done if it wasn’t for the great care and practical support of Dianne and the team at St John’s Crisis Centre,” a humble and grateful Courtney said.

“I was embarrassed to ask for help but you do what you have to do to keep your family afloat. St John’s helped us with food parcels, pre-prepared meals, food vouchers and petrol vouchers.

“But it’s not just the practical help – everyone is so kind and friendly at the centre. They treat you civilly and respectfully and they don’t judge you and your situation. It just lifts your spirits for a short while in between the battle to pay the other bills and the struggle to find a job. But I just keep smiling – you can’t let life get you down.”

Dianne says that since April the St John’s Centre has served between 40 and 60 hot meals, and a similar number of cold takeaway meals, daily, while approximately 1500 people (some members of the same family or group) were provided with welfare assistance and support, mostly over the telephone. A big shout-out to Dianne and Anne, who have skilfully fielded so many calls.

“We have a team that works tirelessly, and they never seem to stop their frenzy of preparation, arranging and sorting of meals, with temperature-testing and serving lunches in between, not to mention the all-important checking in with clients as they arrive each day. And of course we have some who ensure that our policies and procedures remain up to date and in line with current regulations.”

**Reflections • Tuesday 7 July 2020 • By Dale Lennon**

## **How does a church run an effective young adults’ group?**



**Dale Lennon (Director of Youth, Young Adults and Music at The Parish of Robina) with a Young Adults' Small Group**

Seems like a strange question really, doesn't it? Don't you run a young adults' group exactly the same as you do any other group? Well, in some ways yes. But in reality, the way we prepare to minister to given age demographics, regardless if they are children, teenagers, young adults, individuals, families or retired, is crucial. I'm reminded that in order to faithfully serve we need to prepare and be aware of the needs of our parishioners wherever they are in life's journey.

The words of the apostle Paul seem especially prevalent when he says that, "I have become all things to all people, that I might by all means save some" ([1 Corinthians 9.22b](#)). It's important to note that Paul is talking about methodology here, not message. In serving young adults in our parishes with a methodology that is suited to them, we are far more likely to see positive results and engagement.

I am not suggesting that effective ministry relies on some sort of precise formula or that we can make fruitful ministry in our own strength. But, I am saying that faithful preparations and awareness of the needs of young adults are crucial to building a vibrant young adult community. So, what are the needs of young adults? What are they looking for? Do our faith communities offer what they are looking for? If not, what needs to change?

These are potentially confronting questions. That is because if we are honest, we realise that perhaps our practices are not suited to serve the needs of specific groups of people. Once again this is about methodology not message. It should be said that we will never please everyone's preference regarding methodology, but we must endeavour to love and serve all people as faithfully as we can.

Our initial response might be to think of making physical changes like a space for them to meet, topics or music that engage them and experiences or events that will bring them in. While creating engaging spaces and experiences is necessary for running young adults' groups, the trap here is being unaware of the actual needs of young adults, including things like genuine connection, people who care for them and demonstrate authenticity, open conversation and navigating barriers to faith.

With all this in mind I would like to offer 10 tips on what I have found useful in young adults' ministry. By no means are these exhaustive or in any particular order, but I hope they will be of some use.

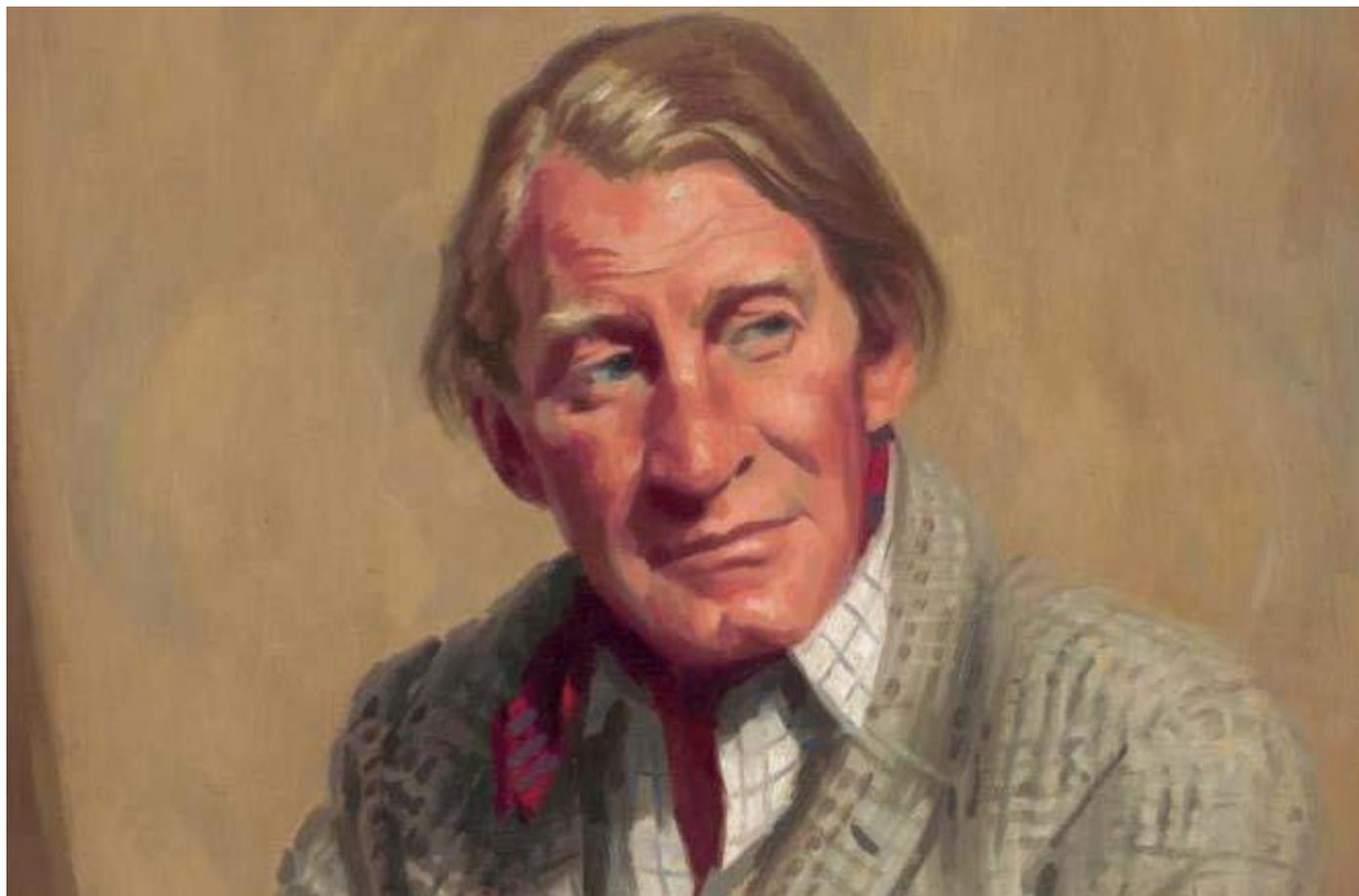
### **Top 10 tips for starting and running a young adults' group**

1. Start with what you have. Don't worry about snazzy names or getting everything perfect. Just start.
2. Be real, be authentic. Don't try to be something you're not. Young adults are not interested in another programme for a programme's sake.
3. Engage in their interests, looking for ways to do social activities together, as well as spiritual activities.
4. Don't work unilaterally, as young adults want to be heard.
5. Identify leadership potential. As soon as you have some young adults coming along regularly, identify the natural leaders. Encourage them to take a role in the group and take on some responsibility.
6. Make it easy to be involved. Any demands on time or preparation will put people off, so make being involved as easy as possible.
7. Be regular. Consistency is the key here. If that is a regular time to meet or do things, then be sure to commit and ensure it happens.
8. Follow up. Check in with your young adults throughout the week. This doesn't have to be in-depth, just something small to keep connected. Small groups help with this.

9. Be passionate about your faith. Young adults aren't looking for a mediocre experience of faith. This doesn't need to be loud or obnoxious, but it must be genuine.
10. Have fun! Enjoy time together, don't take yourself or your plans too seriously. Things will not always go to plan. In my experience when this happens, I have had my most fruitful moments with young adults' groups.

**Reflections • Monday 13 July 2020 • By The Rev'd Canon Dr Ivan Head**

## **A Christian reading of David Campbell's poetry**



**Cropped cover image of Jonathan Persse's book *David Campbell: A Life of the Poet* (David Watt Ian Campbell, by Graeme Inson, circa 1964)**

I recently read Jonathan Persse's excellent book *David Campbell: A Life of the Poet*. Campbell lived between 1915 and 1979 and I leave the personal biography of this distinctive Australian to the reader's further interest in Persse's book. Campbell's poetry itself sharpens the question of an Australian spirituality.

One cannot use the phrase 'Australian spirituality' today without thinking of the more complete dimensions of Australian spirituality that embrace and are immersed in the long tradition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures – and which will remain and endure in the landscape and in the heart so long as one form or other of detonation is resisted and made impossible. While Campbell wrote poems about Aboriginal spiritual practices and rock paintings, this is not the occasion to discuss these, nor what he encountered of the world's longest continuously living culture as an observer.

Born on the land in the Monaro District of the Southern Highlands of New South Wales into a professional and grazier family, the Australian landscape had an increasing effect on him. It became the vehicle for something other than landscape itself. His poetry expanded from a controlled and disciplined bush ballad style to include a mysticism of the intellect that responded deeply to what human life generated in its natural setting. I find Campbell's work increasingly powerful as an expression of not only a spirituality of creation, of this Australian continent, but as a theology of creation that works on the reader at the level of participatory symbol.

In the symbol, at least two somewhat different things are brought together, as the literal meaning of this ultimately Greek term tells us: indeed the **symbolic** is the opposite of the **diabolic** which is literally that which is thrown apart. This pair of terms is redolent of Gospel texts.

That a poet may genuinely bring things together and hold them together in the human heart, or help hold the heart together, is a great thing in an Australia today where our young in particular experience too much of a world in which the drive is to tear or throw apart and to experience the diabolic. As the great Irish poet Yeats put it in his poem 'The Second Coming', "the centre cannot hold".

God reconciles us as Christ indwells us. This is part of what Tyndale meant by 'at-one-ment'. Hitherto, life had been marked by separation and apart-ness, even by hostility and enmity. Now it is marked by a new unity in Christ, an ongoing relational reality.

In their specific attention to detail, Campbell's poems raise the mind and heart to the realm of the Spirit of Christ, who draws close to us, deep within us, abiding in and indeed communicating with each of us who seek to participate more fully in the gift of the God who is for us – as any careful reading of Romans 8 makes clear.

The reader can find Campbell online and browse from the 635 poems that were his life-time contribution in verse. Most of us will not put hours and hours into that so I suggest that one follow the path taken by Kevin Hart (a poet who knew Campbell in the early 1970s in Canberra) in his *The Oxford Book of Australian Religious Verse*. Hart selected these poems written by Campbell for his anthology: 'Far Other Worlds', 'Speak with the Sun', 'The Miracle of Mullion Hill', 'Fisherman's Song', 'Among the Farms', 'Sweet Rain', 'Trawlers', and, 'A Yellow Rose'.

Here are some lines for you to ponder.

From 'The Trawler':

"And the John Dory at this silver hour  
Still bear Christ's thumb-marks  
his blessing at Galilee."

From 'A Yellow Rose':

"Mass  
At the speed of light  
Is a yellow wafer."

And powerfully and thematically from 'Far Other Worlds':

“A white wind turns the daylight moon  
And Time is whittled on that stone...  
And griefs dog – buried into that land  
Shall stand up green between the stone.”

Campbell's mysticism of the precise, and his detailed attention to this world as it is experienced, draws in part on his engagement with modern physics and the pursuit both of the nano and the macro, and the relationship between all the larger constituents of reality and the infinitely small realm where energy and matter seem to oscillate. 'Mass at the speed of light' has a meaning in physics even as the Christian thinks of participation in Christ.

Between the nano and the macro, we ask about the middle and in-between state of being human, of the realm of the Spirit and of resurrection. Thus we attend carefully, when in his 1948 poem 'Speak with the Sun', we read:

“From a wreck of tree in the wash of the night  
Glory, glory, sings the bird...  
Now from deepness of the glade  
Well up the bubbles of delight:  
Of such stuff the stars were made.”

For the Christian? We are reminded powerfully that God is the author of all creation – creation in all its brilliance and diversity, from the tiniest to the largest. And, that new knowledge of reality should inspire and not intimidate. It should also keep us humble. The God who sustains the incomprehensibly powerful plasma furnace of the sun, second by second, and through the mystery of time, must also be the God of Jesus Christ. Knowing both to be true, we reduce neither to doggerel.

**Reflections • Monday 13 July 2020 • By Jonathan Sargeant**

## **Modern Poets: faith meeting music**



**The Modern Poets line up for their first album, 'Politics, Poetry and...', with (from back) Andrew Fox, Ben Thomson, Tim Hills, Jonathan Sargeant and Phil Neil**

If you wanted to get my back up back in 1982 there was an easy way to do it: talk positively about the Christian music scene of the day. Just a few words on that topic from anyone would have me ranting about what I saw as a ghetto-ised form of sheltered expression that only served to further distance Christians from their true task – living lives of faith in the public space by being Christian externally as well as internally. That meant being serious about international justice issues of the day, including threats of nuclear war, Super Power adventurism, apartheid and racism, and local issues like SEQEB strikes and homelessness.

Of course, I was only 16, so what did I know?

Well I *did* know that I had to do something about it. So the idea of forming a band with others who felt the same way seemed the most natural way to move forward.

We did so at an interesting time in the pop culture zeitgeist. Around the world (but most obviously from the UK and surrounds) a number of bands seemed on the same wavelength. U2, a little band from Dublin, had just released their second record, *October*, a collection of songs honest about themes of faith, entwined with punk energy and sorrowful awareness of the struggles of their homeland. Simple Minds suggested that belief was a “beauty thing” on the single, ‘Promised You a Miracle’. The Alarm, The Waterboys and many others were producing music with spiritually searching and gritty intensity on major record labels, miles away from the insular Christian music of the day. This was not worship music. This was life music.

Thus emerged our band, Modern Poets. Expressing our faith was not our sole motivation, though. We loved playing together and making some art, especially in a then pretty oppressive Queensland environment for such endeavours. The nature of being in a band creates a kind of tribal ‘us versus them’ mentality that drew us even closer together. The music spoke about our faith, [sometimes directly](#), [sometimes poetically](#), and sometimes through our concern about those [justice issues](#). [Mostly all three](#) happened at the same time.

We played in pubs, beer barns, clubs and taverns up and down the east coast of the country. We won some Battles of the Bands. We supported some bigger bands we liked (Goanna of ‘Solid Rock’ fame) and some we, um, didn’t. [We made some records](#) and were reviewed in Rolling Stone (one 7” was “sub-Byrds jangle” though “cloyingly memorable”). We played in the city Botanical Gardens Sound Shell (before there was the River Stage!) to quite a crowd in 1985 (while recollections differ, 6000 is the smallest number we remember). We played the River Stage, too, and [Festival Hall a couple of times](#). We had a number one on the Brisbane Independent album charts, though to be honest you didn’t need to sell much to do that. We nearly moved to Sydney to be signed by a larger label, but that’s another story...

And, along the way we tried to maintain our original focus, mostly through intense band meetings and camaraderie. We played at many fund- and awareness-raising gigs for Brisbane Youth Service (BYS) over the years, raising money for their work with rough sleepers in the city. We played at Anti-Apartheid rallies and shows for the Nuclear Disarmament Party. We also played for churches, acoustically at services, loud at events like YAF (Youth Australia Fellowship), Anglican Youth Rallies, Gatherings, and NCYCs (National Christian Youth Convention). When we played in churches, I would give a little homily about our belief in living Christian life in the public space, talking up BYS and other justice causes that were natural for Christians. We would use the words, “We’re not a Christian band, we’re a band of Christians.” Those words are pretty commonly heard on the lips of artists these days.

Like all bands, after a few years we'd exhausted ourselves. We moved on to other things, other bands, marriages and kids. But our focus on trying to live lives being authentic to our faith in the public space stayed. Doing that in ways that were a bit out on the edge led me to studying youth work and taking up a position as a chaplain in a state high school in the first wave back in 1991. These were experiences that have left me with a compass that always tries to think about faith from the perspective of people who are NOT part of the church. How is faith seen? How is the Church seen? These are questions often with sobering answers. My longstanding interest in how faith and the arts intersect led to a Master's thesis, an unfeasibly large music collection and ongoing doctoral research.

These days the original Modern Poets band members have reunited, performing a reunion gig a few years back at the Griffith Film School sound stage. We've formed a new band (called [The Dolby System](#) until the lawyers come calling) and have a new album nearly in the can. We're middle-aged now and sing about depression and artificial intelligence. But those years in the Modern Poets were enormously formative, to both our identities and faith. An unshakeable belief in the positive place of faith and the Church in the public space was born then. An even deeper belief in what can be achieved when faith and the arts unite us against injustice remains.

**News • Tuesday 23 June 2020**

## **St John's Battle of the Bridges 2020**



**The judging panel comprised a parent of the College Mr David Arnold, Old Collegian Mr Jason McGavin (class of 2011), College Physics Teacher Mr Yugeindran Nair and Deputy Principal Mr Andrew Landroth.**

The recent St John's Anglican College annual Battle of the Bridges competition came to a spectacular close, producing some outstanding record-breaking results from the Year 9 students.

The aim of the competition was for the Year 9 Design & Engineering Technology students to build a model bridge with the greatest structural efficiency – that is a measure of the supported weight relative to the weight of the bridge. Students were required to design and build their balsa wood models during the first five weeks of term, notable this year this was done in a remote learning environment. The St John's student designs were prepared to the same rules and guidelines that Aurecon, an Australian engineering, design and advisory company, use for their well-known international competition.

Reuben Reid of Year 9 said “Being a part of this College competition was a fun, exciting and enjoyable experience. I most enjoyed the testing of the bridge – all our hard work pulled together in a single moment where we got to see if the bridge worked or failed.

“Something that challenged me during construction was trying to make sure the glue got to every nook and cranny in the joint and making sure it was dry before moving the bridge.

“Overall I enjoyed the competition very much and I have come out of it with an award and new knowledge of engineering and construction. I am excited for the future of DET at St John’s and can’t wait for our next project.”

Culminating in the St John’s Anglican College annual Battle of the Bridges competition, each bridge was assessed by an expert judging panel before being put to the ultimate test of strength and efficiency on the Bridge Rig testing device. On testing day, the students had the opportunity to take out various categories for prizes and certificates, as well as the prestige of being the overall winner.

Nine prizes were awarded to students for their spectacular efforts and St John’s Principal Mrs McIvor was pleased to announce that Elliana Slebos had excelled during the competition, having set a new College record of 81.8kg before her bridge finally gave way. Elliana’s bridge only weighed 91 grams and held 81.8kg of weight, which is an outstanding achievement, holding 932 times its own weight!

Congratulations to all those who participated in the competition and special mention to the category winners Harry Freeman for taking out the Innovation Award with his impressive curved arch suspension bridge, Aaron Smith for receiving the Engineering Award for a well-made design, Rhys Cleveland who was awarded the Encouragement Award for his creative bridge design, and Elliana Slebos who received the Year 9 DET Award, Efficiency Award and the Strength Award for her outstanding record-breaking design. Having received the overall first place All-Rounder Award, Elliana set a new benchmark for future St John’s DET engineering students to aspire to.

Elliana reflected on her win, “I am grateful that St John’s was willing to put in this much effort for our learning experience. It has given us all insight into what engineering is about and I was able to learn a lot through this opportunity.

“I enjoy constructing the bridge, feeling a sense of achievement watching each stage be completed and then seeing the final result. Calculating the cut list was challenging, but necessary, and it had to be recalculated several times to get an accurate result.

“I learned a lot from this experience like a potential career path into Engineering. I have received a lot of acknowledgments and awards for my design and I am grateful for the opportunities like this here at St John’s.”

Principal Mrs Maria McIvor said “As an International Baccalaureate World School and operating within the Middle Years Program framework, the engineering-based unit required students to explore the design process and investigate the engineering principles and bridge design concepts before developing their own concept and model. This year despite the exceptional circumstances, the standard of student submissions were exceptional.”

You can see more highlights of the competition on the [St John’s Anglican College Facebook Page](#).

## 'Bush Boys' incorporate outdoor activities with learning



**'The 'Bush Boys' have paved a way to incorporate learning and outdoor time at school**

They have been affectionately nicknamed the 'Bush Boys' – they are cheeky, full of personality, adventurous, clever, passionate and well intentioned, mixed together with a slight hint of rebellion.

They are a group of Year 8 boys at St Andrew's Anglican College, who finally found a way to divert their energy during break times.

Using equipment brought in from home, the boys removed broken branches and cleared an area to build a giant secret cubby in an area of bushland surrounding the College.

Their elaborate plan came a to halt, however, when a facilities staff member came across their secret construction, which was in an unsupervised area of the College.

Instead of reprimanding the group of boys, staff at St Andrew's recognised their ingenuity, imagination, and creativity and took the opportunity to problem solve and work with the students to explore new possibilities and ideas.

The students were tasked to come up with a solution to the problem, which they 'pitched' to Principal Chris Ivey and a group of staff with a plan as to why and how they could continue their bush play.

They researched a range of kindergartens, primary schools, and P-12 schools that have unscripted play areas in the bush, as well as the increased benefits of this type of play which includes mental health, self-awareness and an appreciation of the land.

“Our hut was fun, innovative, creative, and was the reason we came to school – outside of learning,” Year 8 student Jarvis said.

“We were only working on the treehouse for just under a week and we felt like that improved our approach towards school.

“We felt like we had changed as people from a couple of weeks ago, getting kicked out of the Hub (library) to now doing something that a lot of teachers think is amazing and is keeping us out of trouble.

“We love our space to just have fun and we would like you to dream with us.”

As a result, Mr Ivey agreed to ‘dream with the students,’ with a trial run for the last two weeks of term. The boys were assigned an area within supervision boundaries and helped develop a set of expectations around safety and respect for the land.

Head of Year 8 Miss Kerrie Dendle said she was extremely proud of the students and their initiative and passion to achieve something they had worked hard for.

“It was a pretty impressive presentation for a group of 12- to 13-year-old boys,” Miss Dendle said.

“It is amazing what can be achieved when they are truly passionate about something.

“These students had previously been the ones who get restless when cooped up – in our conversations, it was common that they had nothing to do that interested them, and no space that they could claim as their own – but this group came up with a plan.

“When first told about it, I thought it was brilliant! They had finally gone and thought of something they could do. Unfortunately, I didn’t communicate this idea very well. But I had some lunchtime meetings with them and heard their thoughts and tried to coach them into being proactive instead of reactive to the decision of banning them from the bush.

“Activities like this are such wonderful resilience-building opportunities and chances to problem solve creatively on the fly as challenges arise.

“I am passionate about encouraging play, developing friendships, resilience, and some independence. It will be interesting to see how it goes.”

Deputy Principal and Head of Secondary Mr Brad Bowen said this was an excellent example of staff building relationships and developing standards to engender student empowerment, rather than relying on rules as a method to control student behaviour.

“Great schools who are willing to work on developing students and not just controlling them understand that to allow students to achieve their personal best, a positive relationship must exist between students and teachers,” Mr Bowen said.

“Rules are not effective in teaching moral development, and when a student does not follow school rules, the tendency is to think in negative terms and students do not learn to self-regulate or maintain self-discipline.

“At St Andrew’s we aim to focus on mutually agreed expectations and standards. The term ‘standard’ connotes a positive orientation and implies consideration for others and fosters a ‘We are all in this together’ attitude.

“We take the more difficult and time-consuming expectations approach. When a standard is not met, a helping mentality is engendered, rather than an enforcement mentality.

“Ultimately the student who graduates from St Andrew’s has a greater well-developed sense of self and is understanding, empathetic, responsible, and self-assured.

“Our expectations are clearly identified, and we enthusiastically work with both parents and students to ensure that these expectations are met for the betterment of our community.”

**Sunday Devotions • Monday 13 July 2020 • By Sarah Gover**

## **Sunday Devotion: 19 July 2020, Seventh Sunday after Pentecost**

Belonging changes everything

**Main Readings:** [Genesis 28.10-19a](#); [Psalm 139.1-11, 23-24](#); [Romans 8.12-25](#); [Matthew 13.24-30 \(31-33\), 36-43](#) [[Isaiah 44.6-8](#); [Psalm 86.11-17](#)]

**Supplementary Readings:** [Psalm 80](#); [Matthew 12.43-50](#); [Genesis 29.1-14](#); [Psalm 86.4-13](#); [Romans 9.30-10.4](#)

“For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received a spirit of adoption. When we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’” ([Romans 8.15](#))

Years ago, I met a family who were spending large amounts of time and money so their children could compete in state and national level sport. I asked them why. The mum replied, “For belonging. I played sport for Australia for 10 years. I knew I belonged to a team and that knowledge kept me from going off the rails. I want that for my kids.” Belonging is important.

In this passage, we are told those who are led by the Spirit of God are not slaves but are adopted into God’s family. There is a surety that comes from being part of a family that can never be taken away. The passage goes on to remind us that when we suffer, or are glorified, we do so as part of God’s family.

One of the differences between being a child in a family and being a slave is that sense of unconditionally belonging. A child knows they belong to the family. A slave is owned. A slave does things because they are told, with a fear of punishment. A family member is motivated by unconditionally love, to work for the greater good of the family, often without being told.

Belonging changes everything. People make huge sacrifices of money and time so that they can have that sense of belonging, yet we have it for free in Jesus. The gift of belonging to Jesus’ family erases fear. This is a gift worth sharing and a gift our community is looking for.