“Gambling took over for me when...it was all I could think about”

A new campaign launched in time for this year’s Responsible Gambling Action Week involves different people telling the story of when gambling took over their lives. Allen, David and Louise all talk about how it was not until gambling completely took over their lives that they realised they needed help.

Responsible Gambling Action Week is an annual event that encourages gamblers to stay within their limits and also highlights the support available to people who feel gambling may have become a problem for them or someone they know.

This year’s theme is ‘When gambling took over...’, to remind people that gambling problems can affect anyone, from all walks of life, and there is help available.

Per capita, Australian adults are the largest spenders on gambling in the world, at around double the average of other Western countries (The Economist) and we know from research that 70 per cent of Queenslanders gamble.

While only a small proportion of these people will develop a problem with gambling, 60 per cent of clients of gambling help services say that gaming machines are their biggest challenge.

In Queensland there is one poker machine for every 112 people and in the three-month period from October to December 2020, players spent over $740 million on poker machines – that’s over $8 million every day.
In Queensland, the odds of winning the top prize on a poker machine is around 1 in 7 million and the machines are cleverly designed to make you think you’re getting close to a bigger win so keep you playing for longer. Machines might also offer the option of playing ‘multiple lines’ which imply an increase in odds. But no matter what, the odds are the same and the more you play the more you lose.

A major Government-funded study in 2017 showed that across Australia, electronic gaming machine (EGM) players were over-represented among people for whom welfare payments formed their main source of income and overall, gamblers living in low-income households spent, on average, a much greater proportion of their household's total disposable income on gambling than high-income households (10% vs 1%).

EGM players are substantially overrepresented among vulnerable groups, including those aged 50 and older, people who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander, who had 10 years or less of schooling or had completed a certificate or diploma, were retired, lived alone or with only their partner, lived in an inner regional area, those who had lowest incomes, and those who drew their main source of income from welfare payments. There is plenty of evidence to suggest that there are often higher concentrations of poker machines in suburbs where there are higher percentages of people on welfare or on the lowest incomes.

Gambling is often portrayed as an essential part of Aussie identity and it can be fun to have the occasional flutter, but it is important to be mindful of when ‘gambling takes over’ and what help and support is available if that happens for you or for someone you care about.

If you, or someone you know, needs help with a gambling problem, the following organisations and resources can assist:

Gambling Helpline: 1800 858 858

Gamblinghelp

GamblingHelpOnline

Lifeline: Problem Gambling Fact Sheet

Bishop Jeremy Greaves is the Heads of Churches Representative on the Queensland Responsible Gambling Advisory Committee (RGAC). The Queensland RGAC is a partnership between community, industry and Government. Its membership includes gambling support providers, industry peak bodies, community groups and Government. The RGAC is recognised in the Queensland Responsible Gambling Strategy as being the cornerstone of the Queensland Government’s approach to responsible gambling and a primary source of advice on emerging social concerns associated with gambling in Queensland.

Author’s note 06/07/2021: Following publication of the above, I received the latest figures for Queensland electronic gaming machine (EGM) expenditure, with total EGM club and hotel player expenditure in Queensland for the first quarter of 2021 being $647,199,835.
From living on Christchurch’s streets to helping those living on Toowoomba’s

I grew up in a dysfunctional family and ended up on the streets at 15 years of age in Christchurch for six months in the late 1980s, leading me to leave school early. Being so young, I was incredibly naïve and inexperienced and had no idea what I would be in for. I slept behind dumpsters in various alleyways to keep myself safe.

My mum threw me out of home under the influence of her boyfriend at the time. She had undiagnosed mental health issues caused by severe trauma in her teen years which was dismissed by her family and consequently never dealt with. This led to multiple addictions, her propensity to jump from boyfriend to boyfriend who were largely violent, an inability to care for her children’s most basic needs and compulsive behaviours.

I grew up in an unchurched family, but found administrative work in an Anglican church in Nerang in my late 20s after moving to Australia. The parish priest of St Margaret’s, Nerang at the time, The Rev’d David Cox, recognised that I was frightened and traumatised. His gentle and caring pastoral care over a number of years helped to heal me and led me to seek professional help. After several years, I started going to Sunday services with my children, and was ordained in my early 40s. Since 2019 I have been serving as Priest-in-Charge of the Parish of Toowoomba West.

My own experience being homeless, hungry and cold for six months in my mid-teens has helped me to empathise with those doing it tough on the streets.

We opened our Winter Shelter in the parish hall in early June to provide a safe haven at night for people sleeping rough. The shelter is more than a warm bed, as it provides connection and...
community because the guests get to enjoy dinner by sitting down with others as families do, as well as engage in non-judgemental conversation and activities and games. Those who have trouble sleeping due to trauma, can get up at night to chat to someone who will listen and care.

I am told by guests in our parish Winter Shelter that passers-by often assume that they are “meth heads or alcoholics” or “lazy”, and are sometimes rebuked by those walking by with, “Go and get a job!”

Homelessness is complex and difficult for people, who have led relatively stable and privileged lives or have had little to do with people sleeping rough, to understand. I also sometimes find that ‘misconceptions’ are conveniently created by Christians who want to be ‘let off the hook’ – by rewriting the narrative that people sleeping on the streets are “lazy meth heads who should just go and get a job,” passers-by absolve themselves from having to do anything. I get frustrated when I hear well-off Christians say things like, “We don't have homelessness on our side of town”, and using this as an excuse not to help those who are vulnerable.

We recently had a woman who is 36-weeks pregnant sleep in the shelter. She was worried that her baby, once born, would be taken from her because she was experiencing homelessness, so alternative accommodation has been arranged for her.

Another person who stayed in our shelter recently was an elderly man who had rented the same house for over 20 years. After the house was unexpectedly sold, he was unable to find affordable accommodation. Following a month living on the streets, he was able to find a new place to rent.

Affordable housing is a key contributor to homelessness, along with domestic and family violence, lack of employment and marriage breakdown. While the fastest growing demographic of people experiencing homelessness is single women over the age of 55, women are often reluctant to come to a shelter, in part due to the shame associated with not having a home.

Forty Toowoomba West parishioners have completed one-day training with Lifeline in order to volunteer at the shelter. They have taken on a variety of roles, including cooking, welcoming and chatting with guests, making beds, staying overnight to be a listening ear, cooking breakfast, preparing packed lunches and packing up beds.

There are around 10-12 other parishioners who volunteer offsite by washing the linen and towels, cooking desserts and baking biscuits, collecting toiletries for guests’ packs and lovingly sewing fabric bags for care packages.

By serving in this way, parishioners are living the Gospel call to love their neighbour and welcome the stranger. They were inspired after engaging in a parish Bible study in Lent this year, which was prepared by Bishop Jeremy. The Bible study was called Head, Heart and Hands: Practising Faith Today, and over 70 parishioners met in small groups to do this Lenten study. Coming out of the Bible study, parishioners were keen to use their hands and do something practical for their neighbour as an expression of their faith. The Bible study explored taking risks for one's faith and acknowledging that a lived faith has a cost for the individual and their respective faith community.

The ‘Winter Shelter Toowoomba’ operates under the auspices of Lifeline Darling Downs in South West Queensland Ltd, alongside seven other churches of different denominations. Our shelter is open on Saturday nights, with other churches each providing a given night during the winter months.
Toowoomba West parishioners not only volunteer at their own shelter, but also at the shelters in the halls of other denominations.

The model we use is the Christian ‘Stable One Winter Shelter Network’ model. The mission of Stable One is to:

“...support the Church as it works together to share the love of God by providing accommodation to those in need. To journey with each person towards stability, offering physical and spiritual care.”

A number of our priests have reached out to me to find out how they can possibly set up a similar Winter Shelter in other parts of our Diocese. People are welcome to contact me for an initial chat, as well as to contact Stable One, which is based in Victoria. Feel free to email me if you would like to find out more.

**Top 10 tips for setting up your own Winter Shelter:**

1. Educate your faith community through Bible studies, homilies, social media posts and newsletters about the causes of homelessness and how people can help.
2. Select a proven model to base your shelter on, such as the Stable One model.
3. Connect with an organisation like Lifeline, who can assist with administration, volunteer training and logistics.
4. In the enquiring stages, ensure you check in with staff based in St Martin's House on Ann St, such as regarding insurance and workplace health and safety to seek any required advice and guidance; your Regional Bishop; and, partnering organisations (we had to have a building assessment done by an independent builder for Lifeline).
5. To make your shelter sustainable, connect with other churches in your area, so each church offers a place for people to stay on a given night per week during the winter months.
6. Ensure that your volunteers are trained in the necessary areas, including regarding Diocesan volunteer requirements, COVID-19 training and any training required by partnering organisations.
7. Ensure your volunteers are given the pastoral care and prayer support they need to serve.
8. Offer opportunities for people in your faith community to volunteer both onsite at the shelter and offsite behind the scenes.
9. Get word out about your shelter through social media channels and the media.
10. Talk to other priests in our Diocese to find out what works and what doesn't work and to share ideas.
Meet Ben, a Ngandawal Minjungbal man of the Bundjalung Nation and a Cultural Support Worker at Anglicare Southern Queensland, who supports young people in out-of-home care.

Our Cultural Support Workers play a vital role and are committed in ensuring Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are in our out-of-home care keep connected to their family, kin, community and culture.

“I feel that I make a difference by supporting our young people and giving a cultural lens to situations, and helping staff understand different situations,” Ben said.

“I also feel that I’m able to share my cultural knowledge with the young people so that they can grow up with some sense of identity in who they are and being able to carry that through their life.”

Ben has been working in community services and with young people for 11 years across different areas, including Youth Mentoring, Homeless Youth, Youth Detention, as a Cultural Advisor and now in his current role with Anglicare.

“I have a passion for working with young people and also for sharing my culture and knowledge. I believe that sharing knowledge is key to breaking down barriers as it helps us to develop an understanding about each other,” Ben said.
“The feedback that we get from staff about how excited the young people are to learn about their culture makes me feel proud. It's usually after we have met with them or participated in an activity with them it's something that really stands out for me.”

A day in the life of Ben can look very different depending on the day, some of the work he does with the young people will be yarning in the home, taking them into nature or connecting with them through cultural activities, such as art.

Another part is connecting the young people to culture through bush walks and showing them things in nature and engaging them in local community events for significant dates, such as NAIDOC Week and Reconciliation Week, held throughout the year. It's all about immersing them in their culture and teaching them more about each aspect.

Ben finishes off by recognising the hard work done by the young people he works with, and the support from other teams.

“I would like to acknowledge the staff that work with our young people day to day as they have been doing an amazing job. I would also like to acknowledge how open the staff have been to the cultural support program and how supportive they have been as well.

It's a new program that is starting to find it's rhythm and our staff and young people have really made that possible by engaging and supporting us in what we are working to achieve.

First published on the Anglicare Southern Queensland website on 5 July 2021.

Features • Monday 12 July 2021 • By The Rev'd Canon Sarah Plowman

New ‘On Call’ podcast shares vocation stories

The Rev'd Canon Sarah Plowman recording her new podcast 'On Call' in the lead up to Vocations Month in 2021
Jesus was the best storyteller. Ever. Big claim? You bet. But let’s be honest, Jesus had a way of telling a story that cut to people’s deepest needs and dreams and heartaches. That’s why his stories have become for Christians touchstones to know and be in relationship with the living Word of God, Christ himself.

For this reason, storytelling has become an amazing tool for Christians to share their faith and their understanding of God and God’s place in their lives. This is particularly true of vocation. If you have even a hint of a suspicion that God might be calling you into ministry, hearing someone else’s story of call and purpose can inspire you to explore that further – and then, with God’s Holy Spirit to guide you – who knows where you might end up!

One of the best things about my role as Director of Ordinands and Vocations is that I get to hear many stories of call and vocation – they are all so different. But they do have one thing in common – these are people who genuinely want to partner with God in the mission of the Church. They have a big vision for what God is able to do in people’s lives and in the world, and they want to be in the front row, working on that mission!

The ACSQ Vocations Task Group has made it their mission to encourage everyone in our community to talk about vocation, purpose and ministry – especially between 15 July and 15 August, when Vocations Month is celebrated. This year’s theme is ‘What’s your vocation story?’

To help us share the amazing and inspirational stories of vocation, call and ministry, I have created a Vocations podcast, On Call. The podcast is a work in progress, and I am grateful for people’s generosity in contributing. I have received emails from people I have interviewed saying, “Don’t forget to include this” or “Make sure someone is saying that”. Anglican clergy really do love their ministry and want to encourage others to consider it.

The first two storytellers featured in the On Call podcast are The Rev'd Jamee-Lee Callard and The Rev'd Richard Browning. While their ministries are worlds apart in practice, at the heart of each is the desire to draw people into community and to enable them to grow in understanding of their place in God’s world. This desire is not limited to clergy, of course. The podcast will include stories of lay people who are living out their vocation, whether it is in faith formation like Fiona Hammond from St Francis College or an examining chaplain like Janet Dyke. There will also be stories of people who have come to faith via a circuitous path or one with potholes and roadblocks.

I really hope that a simple podcast like this will allow people searching for their vocation to tap into the experiences of others. Storytelling can inspire and instruct, and give people a real insight into how they might serve God in their own life.

You can listen to the podcast through the ACSQ Vocations website, where you will also find a discussion guide for each episode.

The aim of the podcast is simple. We need to be talking about vocations, listening to each other’s stories and encouraging one another. I hope the podcast and the other resources available for Vocations Month help people do that.

Editor’s note: The Rev’d Canon Sarah Plowman, Diocesan Director Ordinands and Vocations, will be leading a pilgrimage walk for those wishing to discern a call to ordained ministry on Wednesday 11 August from 9 am to 4 pm. For more information or to register, visit the walkLIFE Vocations Pilgrimage registration page. If you have questions about the
pilgrimage, please contact The Rev’d Canon Sarah Plowman via Sarah.Plowman@anglicanchurchsq.org.au. Church and ministries can visit the Vocations page of the ACSQ website for Vocations Month resources.

Features • Monday 12 July 2021 • By Allana Wales, Susan Gill, Sharon Butson, Shubhra Srivastava

Thread Together: transforming lives, one piece of clothing and conversation at a time

"My key learning in that the dignity in being able to have access to new clothes at a time when little else in life is working is critical. Without access to critical life needs, people lose hope. They feel different from their peers, isolated and sometimes even ostracised" (Allana Wales, right, pictured in 2021 with Anglicare’s Leanne Wood and Kate Littmann-Kelly)

Four big-hearted women from the St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly community share about what drew them to volunteer for the innovative Thread Together initiative and the highlights and learnings from their volunteer journey so far.

Thread Together is a global first, dedicated to taking excess new clothing from manufacturers and designers and redistributing it to vulnerable people within the community at no cost to the recipient. The mobile wardrobe van, sponsored by Bendon Lingerie, is facilitated and run by Anglicare Southern Queensland and St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly.

Allana Wales – St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly Thread Together volunteer

It is impossible to delineate where the ‘Church’ ends and our human, daily and communal lives begin, and vice versa. Upon my enthusiastic retelling of the sorts of tasks Thread Together volunteers undertake (such as sorting, packing, folding, crate-stacking, box-crunching, recycling, hanging, stocking and driving), a friend remarked to me, “Oh, so you are helping people in need?” It struck me, suddenly, that of course we were. Of course we are because the person in need is me. I am the one who has
come away with the gift of listening to a young guest who visited the Thread Together van at one of our return meets. He had met someone nice and shared in conversation, with his new clothes giving his own dignity a boost. Often our privilege is born of having been present for, and listening to, an unexpected narrative.

There are concentric circles of community inherent in a venture such as this. When volunteers are in the church undercroft or the garage sorting or packing clothes, we have the benefit of truly invaluable time with friends who are either connected to or who attend the parish. When we drive the van out for a Thread Together site visit, we meet volunteers from other organisations (both secular and ecumenical) and we enjoy showing how the van is fitted out. Often this is a springboard for more conversation and recommendations for other potential sites to visit. The flow of enrichment across our communities is manifold.

The remarkable partnering of Thread Together, Anglicare Southern Queensland and St Andrew's Anglican Church, Indooroopilly, together with The Rev'd Sue Grimmett's vision, has given ground for the gentle transformation of lives for the better. I look forward to seeing how this partnership will continue to nurture ourselves and others – volunteers, guests and patrons alike – in this active movement of dignity where everybody wins.

**Susan Gill – St Andrew’s Church, Indooroopilly Thread Together volunteer**

I was drawn to volunteer with Thread Together for the following two reasons. The first, caring for people in our communities, and the second, caring for our planet. Supporting people who are experiencing hardship in their lives by utilising clothes that would otherwise go to landfill achieves both goals. In my time in the program I have observed the impact that receiving new clothes has made in people's lives.

An example of this from one of our sites is a young woman who had only the clothes she wore, as she had recently fled a domestic violence situation. The look of joy on her face as she looked through the van and chose a range of clothes that were new and suited her style was deeply rewarding. Her gratitude was enormous and it was both a joy and delight to watch her move from sadness as she told me her story of fleeing to feelings of hope that there were people who could help her reclaim her life.

The part that Thread Together plays in providing this hope is significant. My key learning in that the dignity in being able to have access to new clothes at a time when little else in life is working is critical. Without access to critical life needs, people lose hope. They feel different from their peers, isolated and sometimes even ostracised.

Christian organisations working together in partnership bring this hope and, with it, the possibility of a new and different life to those in need. Christian beliefs are demonstrated in a kind, supportive and practical way. I love that Thread Together is a vital part of providing hope in the community. The additional bonus is the friendship and camaraderie I have gained from my fellow volunteers.

**Sharon Butson – St Andrew’s Church, Indooroopilly Thread Together volunteer**

When I first heard that St Andrew's Church wanted to partner with Anglicare in bringing the Thread Together project to Queensland, I just knew I had to become involved. The twin aims of providing support to those whose circumstances require some practical assistance, together with the environmental benefit of preventing tonnes of perfectly good clothing being sent to landfill, pressed both my 'social justice' and 'care for the planet buttons. What a win-win!
There is also the reward of working with other volunteers, and the opportunity to hear the stories of those who, for whatever reason, find themselves in circumstances of need. To share with them the joy of trying on something new and feeling good about themselves is precious. As one person said to me, “I don’t look as if I live on the streets now.” What a privilege for me to share that moment with them.

The stories of people who appreciate the new clothes, which the Thread Together project provides, highlight the truth of the saying, “There but for the Grace of God, go I.” Through my conversations with Thread Together patrons, I have learnt that sometimes just one major tragedy or loss in an otherwise functional person’s life leads them to a situation of homelessness or serious disadvantage. Relationship breakups, family violence, business failures and serious illnesses are a few of the themes which run through the stories of the people I have met. For many, the opportunities for choice in their lives have been taken away by circumstance, and for them to have the opportunity to choose some new clothing for themselves is a small moment of control in their situation.

Projects like Thread Together represent Christianity in action. The partnership between Anglicare, an organisation which has the networks to identify those in need of assistance, and the Parish community which represents the ‘grassroots’ of the Christian Church, is a natural fit. Organisations can provide the resources to assist these projects, but ultimately people working together to support each other are what builds a better and more caring community.

**Shubhra Srivastava – St Andrew’s Church, Indooroopilly Thread Together volunteer**

Everyone has a right to live with self-respect and dignity in the world.

Far from my hometown in Lucknow, India, I came to Brisbane, Australia to live. I have seen people here with the same emotions and feelings as in India. We can see on the ground why Australia is called a multicultural country, and that we are all fundamentally the same.

I have always wanted to serve people who are in real need. Fortunately, I met Tim (the Parish Administrator at St Andrew’s, Indooroopilly) on one occasion at the church, where he explained to me about this wonderful Anglicare project, ‘Thread Together’, which assists vulnerable people in the community. One of the best things about volunteering for this project is seeing the smiles on the faces of people who are receiving new clothing. This gives me an inner happiness which I can't buy. Being there to listen to someone telling their life story about so many hurdles and pains teaches me about dealing with difficult situations. Also, I believe that what we are doing with Thread Together is a moral reflection of what it means to be a true Australian.

Through volunteering for this project, I have learned so many things. One of the things I value most is being able to serve people from different communities, cultures and backgrounds. Through Thread Together, clothing is diverted from landfill and people are respectfully clothed, and this is making a meaningful contribution to society.

Special thanks to Kate Littmann-Kelly, Anglicare’s Thread Together Volunteer Coordinator, for her continuous support and assistance.

Editor’s note: Would you like to volunteer with Thread Together Qld? The Thread Together team welcomes volunteers from all locations, backgrounds and beliefs. For more information, please contact Kate Littmann-Kelly (Thread Together Qld volunteer coordinator) by email or phone: klittmann-kelly@anglicaresq.org.au or 0408 569 164.
"Animals in the sky, animals on the land and animals in the ocean”

St Hilda's School Pre-Prep children sharing their arms painted with ochre – lines for animals in the sky, on the land and in the ocean during a visit by Kombumerri Traditional Owner Justine Dillon in 2021

Relationship building between the wider Australian community and First Nations peoples is an integral part of our whole nation’s Reconciliation journey.

The 2021 St Hilda’s School Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) was recently approved by Reconciliation Australia, and an important part of our RAP is developing cultural competence in children and educators and building relationships with our local Traditional Owners and Yugambeh Elders.

This term, Yugambeh Elder Uncle Allan and Kombumerri Traditional Owner Justine and her cousin Madeline visited our Pre-Prep to lead girls in cultural education activities. The girls learnt Yugambeh Language, including this Acknowledgement of Country which we now say each day with the girls:

*Jingeri Nyunga* (Hello sun)
*Jingeri Chagun* (Hello earth)
*Jingeri Tullei* (Hello trees)
*Jingeri Jimbelung* (Hello friends)
*Numulla Jara* (Embrace Country)

This Acknowledgement highlights the connection the Traditional Owners have with Country and the respect we all should foster.

Uncle Allan played the didgeridoo for the girls and brought along native animal furs for the girls to feel. He also talked about the native tickle bees which the girls found fascinating. We have our own native beehive, so it was interesting and important for the girls to learn more about them.
The girls also made ochre paint and learnt the meaning of symbols when it is used to paint their bodies. The ochre was then used to create their own artworks.

Eden from Pre-Prep 1 said – “She put ochre on me. We used water and rocks to make it. There were 1, 2, 3 lines for animals in the sky, animals on the land and animals in the ocean.”

Grace from Pre-Prep 2 said – “We were making ochre. We started with rocks and added water and mixed it. I drew with it and I made a turtle.”

Wynter from Pre-Prep 3 said – “We used ochre and dotted with it and drew pictures. We put it on our arms.”

Ada from Pre-Prep 2 said – “They burnt the inside of the didgeridoo to see if there were any bugs in it. They can then put their mouths on the didgeridoo to play it.”

We are grateful for regular visits by Kombumerri Traditional Owners and Yugambeh Elders, which help to build our relationships with and knowledge of our local First Nations peoples and their cultures, thus contributing to the vision of Reconciliation.

Features • Monday 12 July 2021 • By The Rev'd Michael Stalley

Creating a grace zone

Later this month, I am leading a workshop on inclusion at a conference about intergenerational ministry. The problem is, I am not entirely comfortable with either of the terms ‘inclusion’ or ‘intergenerational’ as expressing what I understand we are seeking as a Church. Furthermore, I think my discomfort in these terms has a common root: the pursuit of either as a primary value for a congregation could result in a diminished expression of who God is calling us to be. Let me set out my concerns first and then look again at the way forward.
There are few congregations who, if you ask whether they would like to be more inclusive, would say, “No, thank you!” We desire to see our communities grow, and yet what has previously worked seems no longer adequate. Generally, we want to think of ourselves as friendly and welcoming. We can even be a little confused why more people don't seem to value what we value. I wonder if, in these circumstances, we might be expressing a diminished view of ‘inclusion’: we want to welcome more people just like us or make them just like us.

In his book *A Future Bigger than the Past: Towards the Renewal of the Church*, Sam Wells describes the word inclusion as “problematic”. Wells says, “The mindset of inclusion is inadequate, because inclusion suggests an established and righteous middle that benevolently and magnanimously draws in a vulnerable or unfortunate fringe (Page 55).”

‘Intergenerational Ministry’ has had its turn lately as an approach that meets the challenges of inclusion for a contemporary Church. Some have embraced this approach wholeheartedly, including via expressions of Messy Church. Some others will describe themselves as ‘intergenerational’ purely because they have more than one generation present.

Intergenerational ministry recognises the worth of the multi-sided encounter between people of different generations in God's presence, which leads all those involved to be more truly human, more like Christ. But why focus only on generational differences at the expense of ethnic, political, social or economic differences? My concern is that a label like ‘intergenerational’ can narrow the potential for a full expression of community that is more in line with what God is calling us to be.

In his recent book *Australia Reimagined: Towards a more compassionate, less anxious society*, social researcher Hugh Mackay writes, “Moral muscle is formed by developing the art of compassion, respect and tolerance towards those who are quite unlike us, including those we don't like much. And that's the kind of muscle we need if we are to build communities that are both diverse and cohesive (Loc 1541).”

Surely our churches being diverse and cohesive communities is at the heart of the gift we can offer to God's world around us.

Despite seemingly arguing to the contrary, I think reflection on the significance of the intergenerational divide in our faith communities is vital in our local context. It is a critical fault line in our churches. We have preferred to gather, learn, worship and socialise in like-minded groups that have ended up acting against building diverse and cohesive communities. Mackay reminds us of our particular challenge regarding intergenerational difference because “we don't always appreciate that they are just like any other cultural collision. Perhaps they are more mystifying than other dimensions of diversity precisely because they occur between us and people – such as our own offspring – whom we expect to be just like us (Loc 1528).”

Eric H.F. Law's book *Inclusion: Making Room for Grace* is a practical guide to an intentional process we can use when the comfort of who we are is challenged by the presence of others. He says, “Inclusion is a discipline of extending our boundary to take into consideration another's needs, interests, experience, and perspective, which will lead to clearer understanding of ourselves and others, fuller description of the issue at hand, and possibly a newly negotiated boundary of the community to which we belong (Page 42)."
If we desire to be more inclusive then we will need to be aware of our motivation for seeking to be so. Law describes how we can create a grace zone in our community's life in which this vital work of inclusion can occur, built on God's abundant grace. A place where there is time and space “to consider other points of view, assumptions, and values (Page 42).”

Inclusion is a value that we should desire in order to lead us towards diverse and cohesive communities. More than this, it is a process by which our churches can strive to be their fullest expression of God's Kingdom—pointing others to the hope found through Jesus Christ. It starts with the simple recognition that inclusion is part of a culture that welcomes and nurtures who people are and not who we want to make them.

**Editor’s note:** Intergenerate Australia is holding its conference on 27 and 28 July 2021 at three hubs (Sydney, Brisbane and Christchurch) and online. St Bartholomew’s Anglican Church, Mt Gravatt is hosting the Brisbane Hub of this conference. The hybrid program includes international speakers and hands-on local content and seeks to provide practical learning for those seeking to engage across the generations. Visit the [Intergenerate website](#) for more information and to register.

**Hymns • Monday 12 July 2021 • By The Rev'd Canon Dr David Cole**

‘Glorious the day when Christ was born’

At first glimpse ‘Glorious the day when Christ was born’ looks more like it was written more for Christmas than Easter. However, while this song is relevant for Sunday services generally, as you cast your eyes past the first line and over the full text, it becomes clear why it has a special place at Easter. In just four verses (with lots of ‘Alleluias!’) the late distinguished poet, pastor, playwright and hymn text author, The Rev’d Fred Pratt Green CBE, takes us on a theological journey which charts the course of Christ’s redeeming work, while at the same time encouraging and challenging us all on our faith journey.
This particular text is immediately accessible to us because we can sing it to a well-known Easter tune, *Lasst uns Erfreuen*, which you might recognise as the great 7th century Easter hymn, ‘Light’s reddening dawn gleams through the sky’. Fred Pratt Green’s text has been published in many congregational song collections around the world, and has been included as no. 826 in *Songs of Grace*, supplement to *Together in Song (Aust Hymn Book II)*.

The first verse points us to Christ, “whose life and death that love reveal which mortals need and need to feel”. We are reminded that this great theological truth of God’s love for us in Christ is not just academic, but one which we “feel” and recognise in our inner selves.

Verse 2 begins with, “Glorious the day when Christ arose, the surest friend of all his foes”. Christ’s example is one of loving those who actively opposed him, including those responsible for his death on a cross. Fred Pratt Green implies the question as to how we as Christians respond to the challenge to befriend rather than criticise those with different religious views and fight those who would oppose us and our Christian beliefs.

In the third verse, we sing “Glorious the days of gospel grace when Christ restores the fallen race,” to which we all may respond from the bottom of our hearts, with a resounding Easter “Alleluia!” And finally Green points us in verse 4 to the fulfilment of all things in Christ, “when that strong Light puts out the sun and all is ended, all begun”.

This wonderful song encapsulates the story of the purpose of Christ’s life, death and resurrection through exceptional theological poetry, taking up themes of Acts 1.9-11, Romans 6.15-19, and Ephesians 1 (useful knowledge for the service planners among us). The comprehensive indexes in *Songs of Grace* indicate that this song works well also in other great thematic schemes: adoration and praise, the glory of God, Jesus’ earthly life, Christ's kingship, and the sovereignty and majesty of God. Liturgically, this wonderful hymn is especially fitting for Epiphany, Ascension, and Christ the King, as well as the Easter season (of course), and makes a wonderful processional hymn or a gathering-for-worship song.

We can be thankful that, after a long and varied ordained ministry, Fred Pratt Green turned seriously to the ministry of hymn texts on the eve of his retirement. In the *Companion to Together in Song (AHB, Sydney, 2006)*, Wesley Milgate and D’Arcy Wood tell us that Fred’s co-option to the committee preparing *Hymns and Songs* in 1969 was the catalyst:

“He was encouraged to write words for tunes which the committee wished to include, to fill gaps on such themes as the world mission of the church, Christian unity and social responsibility...Few [recent] hymnals in English have failed to include hymns by F. Pratt Green. His ‘Hymn for the Nation’ was the only modern hymn sung at the Silver Jubilee service for Queen Elizabeth II in 1977’ (p.631).”

It is little wonder, then, that Fred Pratt Green was awarded an honorary doctorate from Emory University (USA), served as Vice President of the Hymn Society of Great Britain and Ireland, was an Associate of the Royal School of Church Music and was made a Fellow of the Hymn Society of the USA and Canada.

‘Glorious the day when Christ was born’ is an important item in *Songs of Grace*, and will make a wonderful addition to your repertoire of congregational songs if you don't already know it. It will enhance your services, especially at Easter, in a new and refreshing way.
Around the year 55 CE Paul wrote the following words near the start of his letter to the rather ‘high maintenance’ Christian community in the port city of Corinth:

Now I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you be in agreement and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same purpose. For it has been reported to me by Chloe’s people that there are quarrels among you, my brothers and sisters. What I mean is that each of you says, “I belong to Paul,” or “I belong to Apollos,” or “I belong to Cephas,” or “I belong to Christ.” Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? (1 Corinthians 1.10-13 NRSV)

Back then Peter and Paul were leaders of different factions in the early Church and at least once they went head to head in a very public argument, as Paul himself describes:

But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood self-condemned; for until certain people came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But after they came, he drew back and kept himself separate for fear of the circumcision faction. And the other Jews joined him in this hypocrisy, so that even Barnabas was led astray by their hypocrisy. But when I saw that they were not acting consistently with the truth of the gospel, I said to Cephas before them all, “If you, though a Jew, live like a Gentile and not like a Jew, how can you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?” (Galatians 2.11-14 NRSV)

According to tradition, they both ended up in Rome and both died there as martyrs. For decades after their deaths the early Christian community was divided over their respective legacies, with Paul being
'on the nose' in many circles, although his side eventually carried the day as we get to around the middle of the second century.

Our task is not to trace their personal stories or reconcile the differences between them, but rather to seek spiritual wisdom about the power of authentic collaboration in our own lives today.

They were very different characters, and that may actually be the major piece of wisdom we take away from this reflection. As we collaborate, we each have to be our own selves, rather than seeking to fit in with how other people expect us to think, act or worship.

Their life experiences were about as different as two Jewish men could be during the time of the Roman Empire.

**Peter**

Peter was a Galilean Jew from the village of Bethsaida, but may have already relocated to Capernaum when he encountered Jesus.

Like many others in the area, he was a fisher. It was a major economic activity in the north-west corner of the Sea of Galilee at the time. And, Jesus seems to have targeted the fishing workers.

In short, Peter was uneducated and of low social status.

Yet, Jesus identified him as a leader, and he is always named first in the list of the apostles.

We tend to call him ‘Peter’, but that was a nickname given to him by Jesus. His original name was Simeon. His nickname means ‘rocky’ and it seems to have stuck, as even Paul refers to himself by an Aramaic form of that name: ‘Cephas’.

Peter, of course, is among the first witnesses of the resurrection; one of those to whom Jesus first appears in the Easter tradition.

He had never been to school, but he knew more about Jesus than we shall ever understand.

Peter was there. He was the leader of the pack in Jesus’ eyes.

**Paul**

Paul was a very different kind of person.

He was not a Galilean, but a Jew from the diaspora with a highly developed religious identity:

*If anyone else has reason to be confident in the flesh, I have more: circumcised on the eighth day, a member of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew born of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. (Philippians 3.4-6 NRSV)*

Paul had a first-class Jewish pedigree and may even have enjoyed Roman citizenship.

He was also an outsider, and seems never to have seen, heard or met Jesus.
He became an insider—and in many ways the greatest Christian leader of all time—because of a religious experience in which he believed that he encountered the risen Jesus. This turned his life around.

Paul considered himself just as much an apostle as Peter, James and John.

The faith we have is greatly indebted to Paul and bears hardly a trace of Peter.

**Peter and Paul**

Peter’s great asset was that he knew Jesus from before Easter. He could say things like, “When Jesus and I discussed this...” or “That time when Jesus and I went to...”

Paul, on the other hand, appealed to Scripture and to his own religious experience of Jesus as a spiritual presence after Easter.

Peter was more likely to stay within the ancient Jewish traditions, while Paul was prepared to throw away the traditions even though he was deeply trained in them as a Pharisee.

Peter tells us what Jesus was like, where Paul tells us what difference Jesus made.

We need both these voices, and we especially need the voice of Peter to keep Paul a little more grounded in history.

One of the fault lines in contemporary Christianity is between those who prefer to shape their lives around Jesus in the Gospels and those who say that it is the voice of Paul which we most need to hear.

Perhaps what we need most is to stay engaged with both these conversations.

Collaboration trumps competition.

We need to be exploring the meaning of God in Christ, actively reconciling the world (*kosmos*) to himself (2 Corinthians 5.19). Without that edge, our faith becomes a historical society devoted to an interesting person who lived 2,000 years ago.

But, as we go deep into the mystery of what Jesus means, we must never lose sight of the real human being who proclaimed the presence of God’s rule in everyday life, and did so in ways that made sense to fishers, homemakers, farmers and people who begged on the streets.

We need a bit of Peter and a bit of Paul in each of us.

Collaboration opens new possibilities.

**First published in the North Coast Anglican in July 2021.**
News from an Anglican Missionary in Africa

The Mission Dispensary at Mzumba, Nyasaland (now Malawi) in 1928, with The Rev’d Aldwyn on the right (photo courtesy of The Bodleian Library, Oxford)

The Mission Hospital,
Kota Kota,
Lake Nyasa,
British Central Africa,

March 1907

Dear Budgeteers,

It is always a great excitement when the mail arrives on the SS Chauncy Maples; a crowd gathers at the lake each time she arrives. I was delighted to receive the latest edition of the Family Budget and read it in bed with a fever and a temperature of 103 degrees. I was so saturated with home news that I quite forgot where I was, and it was with a regular start that I turned over and found that I was lying in a hospital bed in Central Africa. Whether this was due to the fever or the excellence of the letters in our Budget, I leave it to the vanity of its respective writers to decide. I felt quite overwhelmed with the excellence of the letters and was thus inspired to at once begin writing my reply.

I am presently awaiting a hot bath, as my manservant is ‘cooking’ water for me outside; he has this moment poured it into the bath, so I bid you adieu for the moment.

Half an hour later – I have finished, and I feel much refreshed. I expect you have all heard from Mother that I have been indulging in an attack of Typhoid Fever. I wrote her an exclusively fever letter, so I need not repeat it all here. I have now recovered my appetite and Edward often remarks “mukuta”
after a meal, which means “I am comfortably stuffed”. It is most realistically visible in the case of little children. Their expansion, notably in Father’s favourite region, is remarkable.

I keep having to stop and start writing my letter. Edward has been arranging chair and sheet for a glorious dislocation of my locks after many weeks in the hospital. So, I have at last had a haircut, and the transformation is startling.

As to my hospital feeding, I would regularly drink a little glassful of the concentrated essence of two chickens. The nurse would chuckle over the large pile of empty tins of Brand’s Essence of Meat, not to mention gallons of milk. The doctor sat with me from 7pm to midnight and was regularly summoned with cries of “Milk, please” from the bed. I then moved to the soup and milk pudding stage and now I am on regular grub. I believe that is enough chatter on a forbidden subject of table-talk at home.

I am now pretty fit in myself and am spending a few days slacking, on Doctor’s orders, except for writing sermons for Holy Week and Easter and then translating them into Chinyanja. Learning the local language has been a trial for me, but I am aware of the immense privilege I have in ministering to the folk here.

Edward, my new manservant, is an old hand. He is a fine big strapping chap and quite capable. He was a servant at Bulawayo before he came to our Mission. He knows his work about one’s room (housemaid’s work), but we will see what he is like on ulendo (journeys). I hear he is a good hand at making bread and can cook, which was the reason I gave Crispin the chuck and took Edward on.

I am looking forward to travelling again after our Easter celebrations. On ulendo one’s servant has plenty to do. When we arrive at a village, he sees that all one’s things are stowed away. He gets firewood (buying it with salt as currency) and he makes a fire, because I am generally longing for a cup of tea. One cannot drink the water in these villages without boiling it first, so I drink a great deal of tea.

Then he goes into the village and buys mkuku (hens – three for eight pence) and eggs. Both are a good deal smaller than they are in England. I generally have a fowl hot for dinner and eat it cold at lunch next day. Edward cooks vegetables, hens, eggs and either bread or scones. He undoes and erects my folding table and deck chair. He undoes my bedding, erects my mosquito net and gets me water for washing.

After celebrating Holy Communion and preaching a sermon in Chinyanja, I travel next day to another village. My manservant packs all my things, ready for the carriers. He himself carries nothing except my hurricane lamp, a most valued possession. For all this one’s manservant gets four shillings a month if he is a raw hand. Edward is going to have six shillings as he is an old hand.

By the bye, the Literary Supplements are terribly yet inevitably tantalising (I am sure the other Colonial Contributors will agree with me). There are no new books out here. Books as Christmas presents would be gratefully received and much appreciated.

I should like to point out to all Budgeteers that the postage hither is only one pence, and that we are favoured here at Kota Kota by a weekly mail, so that one can usually receive a letter from England in about six weeks.

The papers most acceptable here are illustrated ones. I get Punch regularly from my friend, The Rev’d Curwen at Workington. A little while ago it arrived very irregularly; I wrote, suggesting to Curwen that it had probably been extracted en-route by envious post office officials. It now arrives regularly,
encased in the outer covers of The Church Times! At first, I was most disgusted, thinking it was an additional copy of The Church Times previously sent (many thanks for your regular copy Edmund!), but my sorrow speedily turned into joy.

I enclose a copy of a snapshot of myself, taken just after I was allowed to dress for the first time. Note how I am weighted down by a seven-week growth of hair, which, I am pleased to say, has now been removed. This photo is to be circulated once, not abstracted, and then destroyed.

I am grateful for my health, full of hope for the future, and I look forward to more letters from home.

Your well-beloved brother, Aldwyn

Author's note: The Rev'd Harold Aldwyn Machell Cox (known to the family as ‘HAM’) is my great-granduncle, brother to The Rev'd Edmund, who wrote about Zeppelin bombs landing on his church in 1916. I have combined content from two of Aldwyn's 1907 letters in the writing of this feature. He was frequently in the Mission Hospital with malaria (all historical details about hospitals and going traveling 'on ulendo' are historically accurate). Aldwyn worked for the UMCA (Universities Mission to Central Africa) from 1906 until his death in 1960. He was awarded CBE, Commander of the British Empire, in the 1940s for his work in Malawi.

Features • Monday 5 July 2021 • By Lalania Tusa Fa‘aaefili

NAIDOC Week: what ‘Heal Country’ means to me
This year’s NAIDOC Week theme is ‘Heal Country!’

‘Country’ has so many meanings to many different people. For myself, Country is not just a place, it is a connection and calling that keeps me connected to my roots, culture and family.

My traditional ‘Country’ is nestled in the tropical rainforest of Far North Queensland on Kuku Yalanji land that will always be a part of me. When we speak of ‘Country’, this not only includes the land, but the sea, reef beds, riverways, sky, mountain ranges, animals, plants and people, and so on.

My ‘Country’ is my life force and the centre of my upbringing and holds a special place in my heart. I have been brought up on Country and know that I will return to my homelands once I have given my four sons and myself better schooling and work opportunities in South East Queensland.

Through reflection on the NAIDOC Week theme ‘Heal Country!’, we have the opportunity to take a moment to reflect on the importance of our great nation and the state of the respective First Nation’s Country that we live on.

We can all play a part in working together to heal this great land. We can also reflect on healing together as members of a Diocesan community and of a broader nation through a whole range of ways that include:

- Prayer, which is the ultimate way that I feel we can help heal our nation. God has created every part of each Country within our shared nation and only He can make it whole and new again. In our quiet time we can take a minute to say a prayer for the Country we live on and the people who are here to look after it.
- Implementing First Nations land management principles and practices in consultation with local Elders and Traditional Owners. For example, First Nations groups have been conducting burn-offs throughout the land we now call Australia for thousands of years, giving the land the opportunity to renew itself naturally.
- Coming together as Australians and respecting each other for our customs and beliefs, which our land will feel and benefit physically from. In turn, we will benefit spiritually.

Editor’s note 1/07/2021: For NAIDOC Week liturgical resources, please visit PMC’s faithful + effective website.
Earth Overshoot Day: 29 July 2021

Balancing the household budget can be difficult. Do you have a debt? The Earth does.

Humans have driven the Earth into debt because our consumption of the planet’s resources exceeds the capacity of the Earth to reproduce those resources. We can calculate both the human consumption rate and the Earth’s regeneration rate.

Earth Overshoot Day is the date each year when we have used what the Earth takes a year to produce. This was first calculated in 1970 when the date determined was 30 December, so the planet was then in balance. Since then, it has moved progressively forward.

Earth Overshoot Day in 2020 improved by 26 days to 22 August. This initial drop in resource use in the first half of that year was due to coronavirus-induced lockdowns. All other years show a constant rate of resource use throughout the year. We moved the date in the right direction last year, but as industry recovered it leaped forward again to 29 July this year.

The above considers the global figures; however, The Global Footprint Network also calculates the date for individual countries. That is, what would the date be if the whole world had the same level of consumption as that country? The recent dates for Australia are 22 March 2021, 30 March 2020 and 31 March 2019, so even when the world improved during 2020’s COVID-19 lockdowns, Australia continued getting worse without a break.

How do we #MoveTheDate back without being forced to by a pandemic? There are effective and affordable solutions. We can accelerate their implementation by sharing knowledge of what works and bringing people together.
Let us consider the following five main areas:

- Planet – How we help nature thrive.
- Cities – How we design and manage cities.
- Energy – How we power ourselves.
- Food – How we feed ourselves.
- Population – How many of us there are.

**Planet**

Fertile soil, clean water, and clean air are necessary to provide humanity with the food and physical health we require to thrive. Healthy ecosystems, such as oceans and forests, are indispensa-ble to keep our planet liveable by regulating the climate. They also help keep humans psychologically and spiritually grounded.

**Cities**

Between 70 per cent and 80 per cent of all people are expected to live in urban areas by 2050. Consequently, smart city planning and urban development strategies can reduce the human demand for resources. Examples include energy-efficient buildings, integrated zoning, compact cities, and effective options for people-powered and public transportation.

**Energy**

The carbon footprint is 57 per cent of humanity's ecological impact. Not only is investing in clean energy our best possible chance to address damage to the climate, but it would also vastly improve the balance between our ecological impact and the planet's renewable resources. Reducing the carbon component of humanity's impact by 50 per cent would move Earth Overshoot Day by 93 days. According to an analysis by researchers from Global Footprint Network and Schneider Electric, existing off-the-shelf, commercial technologies for buildings, industrial processes, and electricity production could move Earth Overshoot Day at least 21 days, without any loss in productivity or comfort.

**Food**

Choosing locally produced and in-season food can reduce your personal impact on the environment. If food waste was halved worldwide, we would move Earth Overshoot Day 13 days.

**Population**

If half the families had one less child and motherhood was postponed by two years, by 2050 we would move Earth Overshoot Day 49 days.

**Moving forward**

We need to think about what changes we can make and talk with family members and friends. If we all considered what personal choices we can make in the above areas, we can make a positive difference and help bring the Earth back into balance.
Subscribe to the Angligreen e-newsletter for news and tips. Angligreen endorses Australian Religious Response to Climate Change (ARRCC), which offers a range of workshops through the Living the Change project. Workshops are available online or can be arranged in your community.

For more information, email AngligreenACSQ@gmail.com

Let us #MoveTheDate together.

News • Tuesday 6 July 2021 • By World Council of Churches

WCC mourns passing of The Most Rev'd Fereimi Cama, bishop of Polynesia and primate of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand

The World Council of Churches is mourning the death of The Most Rev'd Fereimi Cama, Bishop of Polynesia and Primate of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. Cama was also a trustee of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

Cama was instrumental in opening the Holy Trinity Anglican Cathedral—of which he was dean—as a venue to pray for the hostages in a 2000 Fiji coup. Despite the dangers associated with his actions, he offered to take communion to the hostages in an act of selflessness.

In a letter of condolence, WCC acting general secretary The Rev'd Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca gave thanks to God for Cama's contribution and service to the life of the church within the Pacific, and the wider Oceania region.
“In particular, we give thanks for his commitment and advocacy on issues of climate change, youth, women and his selfless acts of hospitality to the hostages and their families of the Fiji coup in 2000,” wrote Sauca.

“We join with you, the churches and people of the Diocese of Polynesia, the Pacific Conference of Churches, Archbishop Cama’s family and the wider ecumenical family with whom he served in expressing our deep gratitude and thanksgiving to God for a life fully and faithfully lived in God’s service.”

Sauca added: “We pray that the legacy and ministry of Archbishop Cama will continue to bear fruit in and by those who will follow in his stead.”

“His wise counsel from years of working with and for the people will be missed,” wrote The Rev’d James Bhagwan, general secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches.

“Archbishop Cama stood for justice and equity in the areas of climate change, women and youth.”

Known for encouraging unity and a teacher by profession, he also worked to ensure that the young people of the Pacific took a leadership role in the fight against climate change.

“We pray that the Lord will comfort the Diocese of Polynesia at this time of sorrow,” wrote Bhagwan. “And we give thanks for a life spent in service to God’s Pacific people.”

WCC’s letter of condolences at the passing of The Most Rev’d Feremei Cama

First published on the World Council of Churches website on 5 July 2021.
East Jerusalem Initiative: accompanying families facing eviction and displacement

In Silwan, East Jerusalem, 100 homes are under threat of demolition and 1,500 Palestinians face displacement (Photo by WCC EAPPI)

The World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI) is beginning an East Jerusalem Initiative, through which the WCC-EAPPI is accompanying—even without a physical presence—families facing eviction and displacement, as well as people facing other violations of their rights. Below, WCC director of the Commission for the Churches on International Affairs Peter Prove explains the goals and history behind the East Jerusalem Initiative.

How is the WCC-EAPPI supporting the people in East Jerusalem?

Prove: WCC-EAPPI has been accompanying the communities of East Jerusalem for over a decade. Though currently unable to be physically present with members of the communities threatened with forced eviction and displacement – in Sheikh Jarrah, Silwan and elsewhere in East Jerusalem – WCC-EAPPI is looking to providing accompaniment in different ways, especially through advocacy initiatives such as the East Jerusalem Initiative that we are launching today.

Does WCC-EAPPI have a history of supporting communities in East Jerusalem?

Prove: For many years, WCC-EAPPI has been present with people in Sheikh Jarrah and other communities, meeting with families threatened with eviction and displacement, observing their nonviolent protest actions, and attending court hearings at their request and for their support. And as soon as circumstances permit, we will be back with them again in person.
In the meantime, when further court hearings and evictions take place, how can WCC-EAPPI accompany the affected people?

Prove: Firstly, through awareness-raising. In order to fully understand the injustice of this situation, one must know the context and history that brings the affected Palestinian families and communities into jeopardy of displacement for what for many is at least the second time.

It’s also important to make people aware of the inherently discriminatory nature of the relevant Israeli laws. After Israel annexed East Jerusalem in 1967, it passed a law allowing Jewish claimants to seek recovery of properties in East Jerusalem from Palestinian families. However, Palestinians are legally precluded from recovering properties from which they were displaced in West Jerusalem and elsewhere in Israel. Unfortunately, these discriminatory laws are being used by settler organizations that have the explicit goal of driving out Palestinians and replacing them with settlers.

Secondly, through advocacy for justice. We are inviting all WCC member churches and all people of conscience and good will to join with us in appealing to the Government of Israel to halt the evictions in Sheikh Jarrah and other similarly affected communities in East Jerusalem immediately, and to ensure that Israel’s obligations under international law – prohibiting it from changing laws and customs in occupied territory, from transferring populations in to and out of such territory, from destroying private property and forcible displacement, and from discriminating on national, racial or ethnic grounds – are fully respected and observed.

You mentioned the importance of knowing the context and history of the situation. Can you explain in brief?

Prove: The families and communities now threatened with displacement already lost their homes at least once. Many people were displaced during the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. Jewish families who fled from Sheikh Jarrah at that time received alternative property for their housing – homes formerly owned by Palestinians – from the government of the newly-established State of Israel. As for the displaced Palestinians, Jordan and the UN provided for their relocation. Among these, 28 Palestinian refugee families were resettled in Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, in 1956. And now these people and their descendants face displacement again. But while Jewish claimants are legally enabled under Israel’s laws – even if they had no historical connection to the properties concerned – Palestinians are excluded from pursuing any similar claims to their former properties in Israel.

Israel has already expropriated 35% of East Jerusalem for Israeli settlements, while the 330,000 Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem face a lack of infrastructure and a severe housing shortage due to the constraints of Israeli planning and zoning policies and practices. Only 13% of East Jerusalem is covered by an approved planning scheme for Palestinians, a precondition for issuing building permits, and most of these areas are already built up. Consequently, many Palestinian homes in East Jerusalem lack an Israeli-issued building permit, potentially placing over 100,000 residents at risk of displacement.

Palestinian people have a right to be treated equally with others. And that is what we are calling for.
What can we as concerned members of the international community – churches, civil society organizations, and individuals – do to support the affected communities?

Prove: Everyone can join in raising awareness about the situation and the injustice it represents. Whether on social media, or in your community, organization, church or family, talk about it and spread the word.

Visit the WCC-EAPPI website and social media channels for information and for ideas for advocacy.

In particular, contact your elected local and national representatives, ask them about their response to this injustice, and try to get them to take action to address it.

And those who pray, please pray for the families living under this threat, and for the responsible authorities to be moved to recognize their equal human dignity and rights, and to ensure equal justice for all.

WCC’s East Jerusalem Initiative: photos and social media cards

WCC’s Ecumenical Accompaniment Programme in Palestine and Israel (EAPPI)

WCC’s work on peace-building, conflict transformation & reconciliation

First published on the World Council of Churches website on 7 July 2021.

Sunday Devotions • Monday 12 July 2021 • By Ann Joseph

Sunday Devotion: 18 July 2021, Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Dominus regit me – The Lord is my shepherd
Main Readings: 2 Samuel 7.1-14a; Psalm 89.21-38; Ephesians 2.11-22; Mark 6.30-34, 53-56; [Jeremiah 23.1-16; Psalm 23]

Supplementary Readings: Psalm 145.13-21; Acts 14.8-18; 2 Samuel 7.18-29; Psalm 23; Ephesians 2.1-10

“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.” (Psalm 23.1)

Early in 2003 I lost four important men in my life: Uncle John Joseph (my husband’s namesake, his godfather and wise old mentor); my father-in-law Frank; my maternal grandfather Joe; and, then my darling Johnny, my husband of 20 years. Later that year our beautiful dog Shilo (who was a part of our family for 12 years) succumbed to cancer.

By the time Johnny died in April, I had mastered the art of writing eulogies and planning funerals and built some pretty good connections with clergy and funeral homes. Psalm 23 was always the scripture of choice: “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil, for you are with me.” Every single day someone’s loved one is lost and Psalm 23 gets a good old workout.

In these times of uncertainty and sadness when the news of people dying and suffering around the world is a constant (especially since the outbreak of COVID-19), we are reminded that we all have in our hearts and minds some form of pain hidden deep and ever present – some people experience some form of grief every single day. We must always remember that our dear Lord restores our soul, our faith and our heart, and with his goodness and mercy he brings healing and comfort and wraps us in his loving arms as, “He leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”

Our Lord is always with me…remember that he is always with you, too.