I recently reviewed a survey that helps congregations think about how to welcome people when they come to church. It is tempting to think that a good handshake and a smile are all that are needed, but, the survey helpfully identified additional things to be mindful of even before we enter the church building! ‘Do we have a website or Facebook page, and does the information on these explain clearly who we are, what we believe, and what time we’re open?’ – is the first question. ‘Are the Website and Facebook photos of church buildings, or of people happy to be together?’ is the second question! Clearly, there’s more to welcome than a smile and the word ‘G’day!’

The survey goes on to ask if it’s easy to park your car near the church? Is there disability access? And…are the toilets clearly signed?! Are there welcome cards for new people, and is there a system that ensures they will be contacted after their visit? Before, are there people at the door who will make visitors feel welcome – whether they’ve been previously attending church for years, or if they’ve never been to church?

However, the survey does not talk about the significance of community culture, which is interesting. I think a church could have the most engaging person at the door, and an award-winning website, but if the gathered community does not love each other, and are not interested in visitors then, it is unlikely a new person will want to come back.

Today’s reading from Ephesians speaks strongly about church culture, and I wonder what behaviours were being addressed. Even though the words were written to a church community two thousand years ago, I think they can still speak uncomfortable truth. In that time people could relate well or
relate poorly – which is surely true to the lived experience of community in our time. There were some behaviours and attitudes which were creating division, and these were addressed directly: ‘...put away falsehood and speak the truth!...’ the writer said. ‘...don’t let the sun go down on your anger!’ ‘Let no evil talk come out of your mouths...’ and ‘...put away bitterness and wrath and anger and wrangling and slander... and all malice...’ ‘Which, in summary, could read: Don’t lie! Don’t gossip! Don’t harden your hearts! And, don’t be forever angry!’

The author of Ephesians does not leave the community wondering what behaviours they should practise as he exhorted them to: ‘...speak the truth...’ ‘...share with the needy...’ ‘...speak words of grace...’ ‘...and be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ has forgiven...’ ‘be imitators of God.’ ‘...and live in love...’ ‘Surely there is wisdom for each of us in this – because we each have a part to play in creating, maintaining, and transforming community culture. No matter how small our Bible study group, or Morning Prayer congregation might be; and no matter how large our Sunday gathering...is there evidence of a culture that is shaped and enabled by Christian faith? Do we speak the truth, and share with the needy? Do we forgive each other? Do we practice kindness...and live together in love?

We know the wisdom of these things, but we’re human beings with personalities that bump into each other, so inevitably there will be conflict along the way. Conflict is normal in human relationships, so it’s what we do with it that’s important. Do we pretend it’s not happening and allow things to fester? Do we run away, and hope that in time things will cool down? Are we frightened that in naming bad behaviour there will be rejection and ridicule?

Dealing with, and managing, conflict is tough...but is a necessary part of community life.

The Roman Catholic Parish in Springfield has a large and growing congregation and the ministry team who serve there have an annual practice that I think is worth considering. At the beginning of each year they collectively identify behaviours that are healthy and behaviours that are toxic. Having agreed to these they then give permission for toxic behaviours to be called out if they are observed or perceived during the year so that the culture of the Parish, created by the leaders, is as healthy as it can be.

Teachers will often do something similar with their classes at the beginning of each year...so, maybe Parish Councils could do the same after being elected at the Annual General Meeting next year. The guide-book called ‘Being Together’ produced by the National Anglican Church is a great resource to help with this and our Diocese has developed resources that draw from this.

You may be thinking that this is idealistic and impractical and that it is simply in our DNA to fight, or withdraw, or just stew on things! But, the writer to the Ephesians suggests that Christ calls us to do things differently. It was Christ who suggested that we, ‘Love our enemies, and pray for those who persecute us...’ (Matthew 5.44). Who commanded that we love one another (John 15.12), and who prayed, ‘Forgive them Father for they do not know what they are doing...’ (Luke 23.34).

Somehow in Christ we are called to a new way of relating that is deeply grounded in the relationship we have with God. It’s not the transactional: you do something to me or for me, and – in response – I do something to you, or for you. Instead, I think we are called to proactive generosity and grace...well-seasoned by wisdom.

Let me offer some questions for further reflection:
• How would you describe the community, or congregational, culture you are part of?
• What are the good things, and what are the things that are less good?
• What is one thing that would be helpful to improve the culture?
• And, how could you make that happen?

Would you please join me in prayer:

Gracious God, we give thanks for the many ways that you nourish and nurture us in life and in faith. We give thanks for the opportunity to think about the impact our behaviour has on the lives of others and ask for insight about this. We pray in the name of the one who shows us the way, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Features • Monday 23 August 2021 • By Thomas 'John' Lee Hammer

Tips when talking to people with Asperger’s Syndrome

“I'm currently working in an internship for neurodiversity and access in our Diocese as part of the Equitable Participation Working Group, along with The Rev'd Ann Edwards from St Mark’s, The Gap and Peter Branjerdporn from the Justice Unit” (Tom Hammer pictured with The Rev'd Ann Edwards on 22 August 2021)

Upon returning home from a large barbeque gathering one evening, my mum asked, “Hey, Tom! Who was at the barbeque?”

“Sam,” I replied, telling her the name of the person who turned the sausages and steaks at the grill.

It's easy for people like me to misunderstand what is being asked.

At a young age I was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome; what's recognised as a form of Autism that is low in support needs.
I'm currently working in an internship for neurodiversity and access in our Diocese as part of the Equitable Participation Working Group, along with The Rev'd Ann Edwards from St Mark's, The Gap and Peter Branjerdporn from the Justice Unit.

We are aiming to create educational resources on neurodivergent conditions, including, but not limited to, Autism Spectrum Disorder and Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). The resources will be accessible to people in our Church community who live with neurodivergent conditions, have loved ones who are neurodivergent or who minister to people who are neurodivergent.

While growing up with Asperger’s, I've reflected on my lived experience, so this brief article is an informal piece offering a few practical suggestions and tips.

**Tips and advice when talking to people with Autism Spectrum Disorder Level 1 or ASD 1 (Asperger’s Syndrome)**

1. **Understanding that eye contact is different**

   Conversation between neurotypical people usually involves eye contact (observation of the century, I know). This signals to neurotypical people interest, confidence, honesty and that there's a mutual respect between each party.

   For people with ASD, eye contact can be a difficult thing to maintain, so when we're not giving eye contact, please understand that it's not a sign that we're disinterested, lacking in respect or dishonest.

2. **Asking what name the person wants to be called**

   Sometimes we find it hard to maintain our own individual identity and being called ‘Mate’, ‘Boss’ and ‘Deary’ or a nickname (even by friends) that we dislike makes things hard. These names, while intending to be friendly, can imply a closeness in a relationships that doesn't mirror our reality. And, in the case of ‘Deary’, it can be outright confusing.

   Asking neurodivergent people what name they prefer and if they're comfortable with being called ‘Mate’ or ‘Boss’ or a given nickname can go a long way to ensuring meaningful interactions.

3. **Understanding that non-verbal cues can often be missed**

   Similar to eye contact, non-verbal cues are an integral part of neurotypical communication and general social interaction. These cues often communicate an implicit meaning through subtle facial expressions or bodily gestures, such as when people are sad (e.g. corners of the mouth being drawn down or eyes being lowered) or running short of time (e.g. looking at a watch). These can be very hard to read for people with ASD1 (Autism Spectrum Disorder Level 1).

   Using exaggerated expressions or being outright explicit in what you mean can be very helpful in communication.

4. **Being explicit and specific with your invitations and requests**

   Imagine four people sitting together at a table. One of them lives with ASD1 and the other three are neurotypical. Two of the neurotypical people are discussing a board games night that they have decided in that conversation to plan. The remaining neurotypical person recognises that due to the
pair talking about the event in such an open matter that there is an implied invitation for that person to join in the forthcoming event. However, the neurodivergent person may not pick up on this implicit invitation and may even feel that it's inappropriate to intrude on their business.

Giving people with ASD an explicit invitation might help a lot. I guess I wanted to bring this point up because while a lot of ASD people hate the feeling of loneliness, it's something we end up feeling at home with.

5. Asking follow-up questions

The barbeque anecdote given above shows how important it is to phrase your questions when talking to neurodivergent people. It's also important to ask follow-up questions, such as when clarifying responses to your initial question.

For example, asking questions like ‘What do you mean by that?’ or ‘Can you expand upon that more, please?’ can go a long way to better understanding what neurodivergent people mean when they respond to you.

Now, I want to just reiterate that I don't claim to be a medical expert on Autism Spectrum Disorder or the neurodivergent spectrum. I am also learning. However, like all people with lived experience of ASD, I have insights that can assist neurotypical people seeking to understand how we see the world and how we can be better engaged. This is important so we can participate more equitably, which is what being part of a Church is all about.

Features • Monday 23 August 2021 • By Sandra King OAM

A surprising letter discovery

Newspaper article photograph featuring model Sandra King for NAIDOC Week, circa.1977
While starting to think about writing this article, the most wonderful thing happened. I was packing up my paperwork as I am moving house, and to my surprise, I found a letter from the Secretary of the Queensland NAIDOC Week committee asking me to be a judge for the 1976 Miss NAIDOC competition. To me, this was not a coincidence given that I am currently planning this year’s postponed NAIDOC Week events...thank you Lord!

Looking back to 1976, I remember being so surprised by this request that I ran to the phone to call my modelling agency to get their input. Now this may seem an odd thing to do but as those who know me will confirm, seeking other people’s views is very much me. Even though I was very present and vocal at our Aboriginal rights protests in Brisbane and at the 1972 Tent Embassy in Canberra and also a fashion model, I was not a confident person due to my identity and stuttering.

I was very much a part of my community and I so loved the fact that I was not judged by my people for being a fashion model. Achieving my dream and breaking the many barriers was so important, although the last thing I wanted was my people thinking that I was ‘uppity’ or full of myself. I just wanted to be accepted as one of them, as I, too, had struggled with the racism that remains part of the Australian culture.

Receiving this request nine years after the Referendum to include First Nations peoples in the Census, we were still struggling for acceptance of our identity, to have our voices heard, to have our histories acknowledged and taught and for the beauty of our cultures and the strength of our communities to be seen.

Despite my anxieties and insecurities, I agreed to be a judge for the 1976 Miss NAIDOC competition. To me, this was not just about beauty this was also about projecting a positive attitude towards our women.

Throughout the years back then in Australia, the media took wonderful photos and wrote positive news stories about us celebrating NAIDOC Week. After the celebrations, I always wondered, “Where’s the media now, where are the positive stories and wonderful photographs?”

Fast forward to present day...times have changed. We have our own national television channel NITV, radio programs and hundreds of podcasts. Every week now, our cultures and achievements are celebrated and our histories told.

This year, NAIDOC Week’s theme is Heal Country and given the state Australia is currently in, we need to heal, starting from the inside. Due to the COVID-19 many NAIDOC Week celebrations were postponed. While some parishes, schools and ministries in our Diocese marked NAIDOC Week in early July, the Anglican Church Southern Queensland Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group is continuing NAIDOC Week celebrations in early September.

With the shifting Covid-19 environment, we have arranged some NAIDOC Week events to be held via Zoom. From the comfort of home or work, you can join in these online conversations.

Please register for the following events through Eventbrite to receive your Zoom Link.

- **NAIDOC Week 2021 Information Session with Supply Nation**: Wednesday 1 September at 2 pm
- **NAIDOC Week Information Session with Dr Noritta Morseu-Diop**: Friday 3 September at 11 am
- **A Conversation with The Rev’d ‘Aunty’ Lenore Parker**: Tuesday 7 September at 6.30 pm
- **A Conversation with Members of NATSIAC**: Thursday 9 September at 11 am
Reflecting back allows me to be grateful for the resilience and persistence of our Elders in teaching us ‘young ones’ to always remember who we are, to continue the fight and achieve our dreams …our past, our present and our future.

That’s why NAIDOC Week means so much to me as a First Nations person.

Features • Monday 23 August 2021 • By Stephen Pickard

Who’s In? Who’s Out?

"A comprehensive Church is a uniquely and inherently messy and challenging church. It is never the soft option; it is the road less travelled. This is the vocation and mission of those who travel the Anglican Way,“ (The Right Rev’d Professor Stephen Pickard, pictured at the Southern Region Clergy Retreat on the Sunshine Coast in August 2021)

The alternative title for this short piece could be: ‘Let’s get real about being comprehensive!’ The trouble is the word ‘comprehensive’ doesn’t seem to cut it anymore. But, what it is really about certainly does. How so? Perhaps the best way to explain is to take a step back in time to Post-Reformation England.

In the early 17th century the first great ecumenical theologian of the Church of England, Richard Field, wrote a three-volume treatise (as one does) with the title: Of The Church. Not the most exciting of titles and would be difficult to market today, I’m sure. Field was a colleague of Richard Hooker, the architect of what might be described as Classical Anglicanism.

Field was a deeply learned scholar of a more Calvinist flavour. He was acutely aware of the divisions of Post-Reformation Europe. On English soil, he was concerned about the division between a broad-church Tudor Christianity, espoused by the likes of Hooker, and a resurgent Puritanism. Beyond this internal tension within the English Church, Field recognised the reality of Roman Catholic influence and was aware of the other great traditions of Eastern Christianity. The bitterness and pain of the 16th century reform had left scars and there remained deep unhappiness among the Puritans (or
‘Precisions’ as they were also known) that the Reformation had not gone far enough. In particular, they wanted to replace episcopacy with a Presbyterian form of governance.

So, who’s in and who’s out? Words like ‘inclusive’ and ‘comprehensive’ were not then part of the stock in trade language. Field argued that it was premature to pronounce judgement on who was to be included and who was to be jettisoned in the Church of God. For Field it was not a matter of being in or out of the Church of Jesus Christ. In this sense he was following Richard Hooker who argued, for example, that the Roman Church remained part of the visible Church of God, albeit with serious errors that nonetheless did not overturn the foundation of faith. Field agreed. Indeed, he went further, and this gave his work a truly ecumenical edge in a time of rancour and ill will amongst Christians.

Field argued that it was not a question of being in or out, but rather being of the Church. The prepositions were critical. To be of the Church was a more open and humble way of regarding Christians who differed over significant issues of scripture, doctrine, morals and ethics. The visible Church of God was constituted by a variety of different and divided Churches. It included schismatics and even heretics, although Field gave pre-eminence to those of a ‘right believing’ Church. He took a harder line on this than Hooker who spoke of a ‘sound’ Church according to the Rule of Faith (for example, regarding the Apostles’ Creed). However, more importantly, Field was unwilling, for theological and moral reasons, to prematurely unchurch other Christians. He developed what in time became known as the via media of the Anglican Church. In doing so, Field rejected the narrower ecclesial boundaries of Rome and radical Protestantism.

Field’s approach to the Church may not seem particularly earth shattering to us 400 years on. However, at the time his focus on being of the Church not only offered a far more inclusive, generous approach, it also retained a genuine openness to the future Church. It was simply not possible to say finally who was in or out, either in the present or in the time to come. At this point Field was following in the footsteps of the early Church theologian, Augustine of Hippo.

Field’s vision offered a reality check. Church division was real, and Christians had to learn to live with one another for the sake of witnessing the Gospel. His approach set the gold standard for the shape and character of the Church of England for its future. I say ‘gold standard’ because most certainly subsequent history shows how fragile his vision was and how difficult it was to resist the temptation to close the doors to those who were deemed not acceptable. It is a messy and sad story and, alas, remains so in some parts of the Church. Though from time to time there are those who have kept the flame of an open and generous Church alive. We desperately need more of them today!

To cherish and strive for a Church that welcomes all shades of faith and keeps the sacramental table open for all – the proud, the foolish, the misguided and the over-zealous – takes courage, tenacity and perseverance. In a fractious and divided world; in a time of great uncertainty beset by a pandemic and ‘alternative facts’, the Church of God needs to return to the Jesus of the Gospels.

They bear witness to a saviour who relentlessly kept the doors of the Kingdom open to so many, much to the chagrin and offence of the self-appointed good and righteous in his day. A comprehensive Church is a uniquely and inherently messy and challenging church. It is never the soft option; it is the road less travelled. This is the vocation and mission of those who travel the Anglican Way.
Bunyan’s progress: a dissenter in our midst

John Bunyan (1628-1688)

A man was arrested for attending a religious gathering with more than five people outside his immediate family. No, this didn't happen during this COVID-19 period. It happened in the 17th century to John Bunyan, the author of *The Pilgrim's Progress: From this World to That Which is to Come* (or just *The Pilgrim's Progress*).

Bunyan was born in November 1628 in Elstow, Bedfordshire, England. He lived through the English Civil War (1642-1651), fighting on the side of the Parliamentarians against the Royalists. Quick history for those who need it: supporters of the king fought supporters of the Parliament with the Parliamentarians winning. Charles I was tried for treason (with questionable legality) and executed. Ultimately, after a time as a republic, the heir, Charles II, returned as a constitutional monarch (king subject to Parliament) and life went on. Tied up in all this were questions of religion and the place, if any, of those who didn't find a home in the Church of England of the day.

Following the war, with England a republic, there was a degree of religious freedom. And so Bunyan found himself drawn to a group called the Bedford Meeting, becoming in time a preacher and pastor in that Church. When the monarchy was restored, however, the tolerance of non-Church of England Churches ended and Bunyan was arrested. His original sentence was for three months, but a condition of release was that he vow never again to worship outside a non-Church of England Church and so, unwilling to make that vow, his sentence drew out to 12 years.

It was in prison in 1678 that he wrote his famous allegorical novel, *The Pilgrim's Progress*. It is written as the story of a dream and tells the tale of ‘Christian’ who is troubled by the burden of his sin and begins a journey toward Paradise. He encounters perils and distractions, such as the delightfully named ‘Slough of Despond’ (a quagmire that drags you down) and ‘Vanity Fair’ (yes, this is where that famous phrase comes from).
At one point he comes upon the hill called ‘Salvation’ atop which was a cross:

“In my dream, just as Christian came up to the cross his burden loosened from his shoulders and fell off his back. It tumbled and continued to do so down the hill until it came to the mouth of the tomb where it fell inside and was seen no more.

Small wonder this was used by missionaries as a way of introducing the Gospel.

But it isn’t just the joyful images that have inspired readers for so long. The other characters with their not-even-slightly-subtle names like ‘Pliable’, ‘Sloth and ‘Presumption’ show an insight in the things that would make us balk at continuing as Christians. In the Aneko Press edition of this book, the publisher’s description captures Bunyan’s genius here:

“Each character represented in this allegory is intentionally and profoundly accurate in its depiction of what we see all around us, and unfortunately, what we too often see in ourselves.”

I find Bunyan to be a fascinating character, full of zeal for the work of ministry – couldn’t we all do with more of that – willing to suffer years in prison rather than take the easy way out. His writing is, in some ways, what we might expect of the 17th century Puritans, yet its impact cannot be denied.

Unlike other writers of his day, such as John Milton and Richard Baxter, John Bunyan was not wealthy – he was a travelling salesperson, as his father was. His first wife, whose name appears to be unknown, was pious and also poor. Her dowry was two books, which became central to Bunyan’s conversion, these being Arthur Dent’s The Plain Man’s Pathway to Heaven and Lewis Bayly’s The Practice of Piety. He became England’s most famous author. Bunyan wrote:

“We came together as poor as poor might be, not having so much household-stuff as a dish or spoon betwixt us both.”

The Pilgrim’s Progress was first published in 1678, sold 100,000 copies within four years and has never been out of print since. His book inspired authors such as CS Lewis, Louisa May Alcott (who wrote Little Women) and Charles Dickens. Samuel Johnson (a literary scholar in the 18th century) said:

“this is the great merit of [The Pilgrim’s Progress], that the most cultivated man cannot find anything to praise more highly, and the child knows nothing more amusing.”

Confession time: when I was asked to write this anglican focus feature about John Bunyan, I had never read The Pilgrim’s Progress. This has, therefore, been an opportunity to treasure, as Bunyan captures his characters so well that we can easily think of people like them in our own lives and sometimes we see them in the mirror.

The anniversary of John Bunyan’s death, 31 August, is the day he is remembered in our lectionary. If you haven’t given The Pilgrim’s Progress a read, maybe the coming week is a good occasion to change that and see why this dissenter is commemorated in our Anglican calendar.
Journeying with people during the ongoing COVID-tide

“It is now been 18 months since Archbishop Phillip Aspinall called us to care for each other and stay connected during this challenging time. Those involved in pastoral care in our Diocesan community have certainly heeded this call.

Over the last 18 months, workers and volunteers, both ordained and lay, have dedicated themselves to helping people journey through COVID-tide, just as health workers have committed themselves to providing medical care to those who contract the virus.” (The Rev’d Dr Imelda O’Loughlin)

It has now been 18 months since Archbishop Phillip Aspinall called us to care for each other and stay connected during this challenging time. Those involved in pastoral care in our Diocesan community have certainly heeded this call.

Over the last 18 months, workers and volunteers, both ordained and lay, have dedicated themselves to helping people journey through COVID-tide, just as health workers have committed themselves to providing medical care to those who contract the virus.

COVID-19 has necessitated unprecedented demands on all members of our community. The constantly shifting nature of the COVID-19 environment has brought unique challenges, including for clergy as we keep updated on Queensland Government restrictions regarding check-ins, mask wearing, hand hygiene, occupant density and so on.

We do this while simultaneously caring for people’s pastoral and spiritual needs.

We especially worry about those in nursing homes, young families, and people who are unemployed, in at-risk demographics or doing it tough living on our streets.

In the ongoing COVID-19 environment, it would be easy to push ourselves beyond our limits and dismiss our own wellbeing, overcommitting without realising that we are using our personal survival resources at a rapid rate. So how do we effectively pastorally care for others while ensuring our own self-care, for the sake of our families and ourselves?

These are some of my tips for flourishing in this ongoing and shifting environment.
Tips for flourishing in the ongoing and shifting COVID-19 environment

1. **Remember that we can get through this together**

As pastoral carers, lay or ordained, we belong to community, which is essential for our well-being. Social researcher Hugh Mackay, in his recent book *The Kindness Revolution*, notes that Australians are experiencing a re-birth of community, as often happens in times of crisis.

We have an opportunity to rediscover the power of community. Perhaps this sounds antithetical given physical distancing and repeated lockdowns, although to allow oneself to perceive this truth helps us to recognise the next point.

2. **Each day brings its own infection-status statistics, with restrictions regularly updated – the rapidity of change calls us to remain informed**

Within our Diocese, we are fortunate to have regular updates concerning COVID-19 restrictions and developments published by the Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission (PMC) on the ACSQ website and communicated via email. As the PMC team receives the information, they distil the information that is relevant for our community and distributes it promptly. Not all denominations have this level of support.

Make sure you keep up to date by visiting this webpage often and letting your Wardens and Parish Councillors know of updates as soon as possible. ‘Not knowing’ is often a source of anxiety, and while we need to abide by government restrictions, ensuring our community is kept informed goes a long way to curbing this source of anxiety.

3. **Commit to knowing the very latest in personal health directives for your own wellbeing**

Queensland Health maintains a comprehensive website and your general practitioner can also answer questions. For example, have you checked your eligibility for a COVID-19 vaccine?

4. **Remember that all people must take up their own responsibilities in order to serve others**

This is the basis of an address given by Pope Francis to those gathering in Rimini for the ‘Meeting for Friendship amongst Peoples’. Pope Francis reminds us that: “What is needed above all else is someone who has the courage to say ‘I’ with responsibility...communicating with his or her own life that the day can begin with reliable hope.”

Vaccination is as much, maybe even more, for the good of society at large as it is for the individual.

5. **Listen – really listen!**

It takes courage to really listen to others, particularly when our own minds are full of concerns, plans and commitments. Listen to parishioners, family members, colleagues and your own self. Listen in compassion and humility.

Emphatic and attentive listening is a two-fold gift. It benefits the listener and the one who is being heard.
6. **Remain humble**

We stand humbly before our God, remembering our collective vulnerability and the fact that we cannot control what is happening.

7. **Pray and, if necessary, use words**

A number of people have remarked about how difficult it can sometimes be to find words for prayer, especially when every day brings a new tragedy.

Sometimes there are no words – just gentle togetherness. When words are necessary, offer to pray with others – in person or over the phone. Consider using the Psalms with their themes of lament, struggle, love and trust. Centre thoughts and prayer on faith, courage, gratitude and others.

8. **Lead by example – be a calm, hopeful, loving person**

Be a hopeful presence in your community, balancing your language with lament for our losses and hope for our future.

Remember to meet regularly with your spiritual director and/or professional supervisor. These are challenging times and protecting your own physical, mental, spiritual and professional health is very important. And, dedicate time out for yourself, including for exercise.

9. **Stay in touch**

As tempting as it may be to revel in your introversion (if you are so blessed), remember that others need you and even introverts need others at times.

Within your own limits, be available and actively reach out, especially in times of lockdown. Make it your business to know of families in your parish who may be in lockdown, and touch base with them. Importantly, ask others in the parish to join you in making phone calls and home visits (restriction permitting).

10. **Celebrate the Eucharist with great joy**

Here we bring people together to thank, worship and praise, seeking the strength of the Holy Spirit to generate great hope. Here we welcome God’s peace and succour, understanding and mercy.

Here we feed on Christ’s gift – his body and blood in remembrance of all he has done for us.
Q&A with Wiradjuri man and St John’s College student, Eden Monypenny

Eden Monypenny is studying at QUT and lives at St John’s College within the University of Queensland. He is a proud Wiradjuri man, whose Christian faith connects with Country, including his ancestors.

Where do you currently live and where is your Country?

I currently live at St John’s College within the University of Queensland. My Country is Wiradjuri, in NSW.

What is your current Anglican Church Southern Queensland role?

I am a university student living at St John’s College.

What projects and activities are you currently engaged in at St John’s College?

Currently, I am using my sound and lighting skills and experience towards the ‘One Act’ performance evening at St John’s. I am studying a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Technical Production) at QUT.

What has been a highlight of your involvement at St John’s College so far?

My favourite memory of St John’s was at the beginning of the year when the college invited local Elders and dancers to come perform a traditional smoking ceremony and Welcome to Country to
mark the beginning of the study year. It was amazing to start the year off this way with the college community and to see everyone's involvement.

**What does Reconciliation mean to you?**

To me, Reconciliation is bringing all peoples together as one in Australia, to acknowledge the important place of first Australians in our national story.

**Why is it important for Christians to engage in Reconciliation?**

One of the most important things God did for us was to forgive us for our sins, and there is a lot we can learn from this forgiveness that can help First Nations peoples move forward in Reconciliation with non-Indigenous Australians.

**This year’s Diocesan theme is ‘Being Together: Nurturing Relationships’. What are some practical ways that we can communicate with each other when we are not in conflict and build trust so we have strong foundations when inevitable differences arise?**

Relationships are core to who we are as Aboriginal peoples. Learning how to build relationships with us as First Nations peoples, and with our local communities, is the heart of how we can learn to build strong and equal relationships in order to uplift our communities and eradicate racism in Australia.

**Why is NAIDOC Week important for our First Nations peoples?**

NAIDOC Week is about celebrating Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, cultures and histories. It is our week to celebrate.

"First Nations boarder boys and I after dancing for graduating Grade 12s in 2019 at St Peter's Lutheran College (Eden Monypenny)"
How does your faith inspire you and shape your outlook, life choices and character?

Being raised as a Christian, God and spirituality have always played an important role in my life. My understanding of God, and spirituality, is influenced by our relationship with ancestors and Country.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

Jeremiah 29.11 – “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

This is my favourite Bible quote as it gives hope and trust in the Lord, and of his plans that will arise in the future.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

Mother Teresa was a loving, kind person who cared for people on the very margins. I think she is an inspirational person of faith we can all learn from.

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

I see gestures of kindness every day between my family and friends and strangers, too. The small gestures sometimes have the greatest impact. The kindest gesture I witnessed recently was a group of St John’s College students giving presents and letters to a fellow student whose grandparent passed away.

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

My great-grandfather (my Mum’s Pop) said, “Always do what is right”, which was one of the last things he said to me before he passed away a few years ago. He was a wonderful person and what he said always sticks with me.

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

I enjoy working on my car, filming and photographing and enjoying time with my friends and family. I love occasionally going to the beach to relax and reflect.

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

A lighter so that I can create a source of heat to cook and keep warm, a swag to sleep in and keep unwanted insects out, and a filtration device to drink water.

Where do you do your best thinking?

Where there is water, such as the beach, as I can zone out to what’s happening around me and focus on the water, which gives me thoughts and ideas.

What’s your best childhood memory?

Hanging out with my neighbourhood group and making tracks for mountain biking.
If you are having a bad day, what do you do to cheer yourself up?

Catch up with friends or go for a drive listening to my favourite music.

What makes you nostalgic and why?

When I meet up with my friends from boarding school, I remember all the fun memories we made and the culture of boarding.

Features • Friday 20 August 2021 • By Maria Thompson, Alice, Charlize

Anglican prayer beads: history and resources

One of the ancient spiritual practices Year 11 CHAC students have enjoyed learning about is the use of prayer beads, including the history of how different faith traditions have used beads for meditation over the centuries.

Cannon Hill Anglican College Year 11 students have been exploring how they can embrace spirituality in the modern world. One of the ancient spiritual practices they have enjoyed learning about is prayer beads, including the history of how different faith traditions have used beads for meditation. They have subsequently enjoyed making Anglican prayer beads and writing their own prayers to pray on the beads.

Maria Thompson – Head of Faculty, Life and Faith

“We’re all stressed, Miss!” said some of my students one day.

“Well, I think I have something you can try,” I replied.

Year 11 Life and Faith students at Cannon Hill Anglican College have recently been focussing on spirituality. They have investigated various spiritual traditions, including First Nation’s Dadirri practice and Franciscan spirituality – St Francis of Assisi and St Clare of Assisi are the patron saints of the
College – and how we can embrace spirituality in our modern world. It is fine to know the theory, but it is in the doing that spirituality rests. Therefore we have been doing, and one of our initiatives involved students making their own set of Anglican prayer beads and then composing their own individual prayers for them.

Anglican prayer beads arose within the contemplative tradition of our Church as a tool or device to support prayer life. Many Protestant denominations have objected to the strong Marian nature of the Catholic Rosary; however, the practice of counting prayers by using beads, stones or simply knots in a cord is embraced by many faith traditions and pre-dates Christianity. The Buddhist or Hindu *Mala* (Hindi for ‘garland’) string is traditionally formed by 108 beads, with 108 being a sacred number. The Islamic *Subha* (which comes from the word meaning ‘to glorify God’) contains 99 plus one beads, upon which the ‘names’ of God are said. Catholic tradition teaches that St Dominic, in the 13th Century, was the first to teach and preach the Catholic *rosary* (from the Latin for ‘rose garden’) as a form of prayer. For an illiterate population it was a way for them to imitate the devotions of the monastic practices of the Psalter and the Liturgy of the Hours.

Anglican prayer beads are shorter than their Catholic cousin, which contain 59 beads. The Anglican beads total 33 – the life of Christ. They commence with a cross, not a crucifix as in the Catholic tradition, to remind us of the Grace of God. The first bead is a little larger than the rest and is the Invitatory bead and functions to call us to prayer. Following on from this is the first Cruciform bead; there are four of these and they symbolise the cross of the Christian faith, and are also reminiscent of the four cardinal virtues (prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance). They are there to remind us of our connection to God and God’s creation, representing the four seasons (spring, summer, autumn and winter). Between the cruciform beads are four sets of seven ‘weeks’ beads. You can see the symbolism here: seven days of creation, seven seasons of the liturgical year, the seven sacraments.

With Anglican prayer beads, there are no prescribed prayers. There are many available examples and pre-written prayers for Anglican prayer beads, but in the classroom we composed our own. It is not the easiest thing in the world to do nor can you do it quickly (which is the point), but draws you into reflecting deeply about what to pray about. It is a rich experience and well worth the time. And, as life changes happen, prayers can be changed to follow suit.

When you have made your own set and composed your prayers, you have a uniquely-you prayer support device that gives deeper resonance to focussed time with God.

**Alice – Year 11 student, Cannon Hill Anglican College**

Making these prayer beads with my peers was an eye-opening experience, which I thoroughly enjoyed. Being able to personalise a set of prayers that were customised for each of us was valuable, as each of us could keep those we love and care for in mind.

The beads have become a symbol of togetherness in our grade, as every one of us had the opportunity to create them. We truly enjoyed the activity, and many of us discovered spiritual insights within ourselves.
Charlize – Year 11 student, Cannon Hill Anglican College

Although I am not an overly religious person, making the prayer beads was a meditative and reflective experience which allowed me to sit with my thoughts and dive deeper into what I want to achieve and into my true desires.

Writing the personal prayers and making the prayer beads was a mindful, calming and eye-opening experience which allowed me to understand myself on a deeper level.

Thank you to all of Year 11 at CHAC, Brother Nathan James (CHAC Chaplain), Mrs Desiree Duvenage and Mrs Marion Rutter for assisting.

Tips and resources for making and using Anglican prayer beads

1. This YouTube video is a helpful resource for knowing what to source and how to make Anglican prayer beads.
2. Tip: to source affordable beads, check out op shops and Grandma's drawers.
3. This is a helpful resource to download, print and distribute, outlining the steps for using Anglican prayer beads.

Features • Tuesday 24 August 2021 • By Adrian Gibb

The Chapel of The Holy Spirit: manifestations and mystery

The timber chapel that Bishop Tufnell, first Bishop of Brisbane, had erected c.1870 (Image courtesy of the Records and Archives Centre, Anglican Church Southern Queensland)

The Chapel of The Holy Spirit stands proudly next to Old Bishopsbourne on the campus of St Francis College – a sacred refuge for weary locals. It is true to say that as long as Bishopsbourne has stood,
there has been a chapel beside it, but there have been some changes in its location, and indeed its fabric, over the course of its long history.

It was Bishop Tufnell, Brisbane’s first Bishop, that built the first chapel. After gaining access to 15 acres of land in the Milton area, Tufnell asked Architect Benjamin Backhouse to build ‘Bishopsbourne’ a seat for himself and, later, future Bishops and Archbishops of our Diocese. This was completed around 1866. Tufnell also requested that a simple timber chapel be erected, adjacent to Bishopsbourne, overlooking Milton Road. This was designed by Diocesan Architect Richard George Suter. By 1870 the first Bishopsbourne Chapel, not yet known as The Chapel of The Holy Spirit, was created.

It was this wooden chapel that first Tufnell, and then Bishop Hale, Bishop Webber, and Brisbane’s first Archbishop, St Clair Donaldson, used for their private worship. It was moved from its initial location, however, during the episcopate of Bishop Webber, who would lead the Diocese from 1885 to 1903. He decided to add a wing to Bishopsbourne which necessitated a move of the chapel to the rear of the house.

By the time Archbishop Donaldson moved into Bishopsbourne, the timber structure had fallen into disrepair, and it was decided that a new building should be erected. Archbishop Donaldson called on famed architect Robin Dods to design the new place of worship. He sought stones from the same quarry as those used in the first and second stages of the St John’s Cathedral construction. Thus, the walls of the chapel are built of Brisbane tuff (sandstone). The walls have simple buttresses supporting a roof structure of six exposed timber trusses, with the roof clad in slate. The chapel is built to a simple rectangular plan of 21 metres by 6 metres.

The chapel is lit by long, narrow Gothic-style windows in the bays between the buttresses. Unusually, the lower sections of the window openings are not glazed. To assist with air flow in our hot climate and light, they are fitted with tongue and groove timber shutters. Above the entrance is a small porch, leading to a small vestry. The floor, which is covered in red concrete, is approximately 15cm above ground level. The sanctuary is panelled in native silky oak, and the timber altar is adorned with gilded motifs of Australian flora.

On 1 June 1912, the new chapel was consecrated by Archbishop Donaldson, and dedicated with the name ‘The Chapel of The Holy Spirit’.

The chapel would take on its third manifestation in 1938. Archbishop William Wand, who was enthroned in 1934, had a keen interest in the education and formation of clergy. Up until then this training had been done at the Theological College in Nundah, named ‘St Francis Theological College’ as the Parish of Nundah is dedicated to St Francis of Assisi. Archbishop Wand requested that the College be moved to Bishopsbourne, so that he might be on site and the students have better facilities. This included The Chapel of The Holy Spirit, which the Archbishop agreed to share with the formation students who all stayed on campus during their studies. As a token of delightful synchronicity, the chapel that the College had been using up until then at Nundah was donated to the parish as a parting gift. The parish moved it to Wavell Heights and created a daughter church, dedicated on 7 February 1937 by Archbishop Wand. Almost certainly in homage to the new student chapel at Bishopsbourne, it was called The Church of The Holy Spirit.
Within the chapel, and its surrounds, the social and spiritual fabric of our Diocese can be felt. Perhaps this is no more the case than in the triptych that can be seen above the altar in the sanctuary. It is a scene of the nativity, yet one of the shepherds, often in shadow and at the back, is more than meets the eye. Just after he became Archbishop in 1934, William Wand’s son Paul died in a mountaineering accident in Europe. In 1938, along with the arrival of the theological students, Wand asked William Bustard to create a work of art that would include an image of his son within it, commemorating him and forging an unbreakable link between the Wand family and our Diocese. Paul Wand’s image is there to this day in The Chapel of The Holy Spirit.

Image of the altar area at The Chapel of The Holy Spirit, St Francis College, showing the full triptych (Image courtesy of the Parish of Auchenflower-Milton)

Next to the chapel opposite the Administration building sits a small memorial cross dedicated to an Ethel Mary Light. anglican focus asked the Archives and Records Centre to research what we could about this memorial, which transpired to have, within the cross’ foundation stone, the ashes of Miss Light herself. Word had spread that Ethel Mary Light had died following a fall on a stairwell and so anglican focus asked us to find out whether this was fact or urban myth. We found no evidence to support this story, and the cause of her death remains a mystery to us. What we do know is that she died approximately one week after being admitted to a local private hospital.

Ethel Mary Light died in September 1943, during a transition period of our Diocese. Archbishop Wand had just resigned and returned to England, and our Diocese was being led by the Bishop Administrator, The Right Rev’d H.H. Dixon. Miss Light, as she was known, was originally from England.
and had come to Brisbane for the specific purpose of being the Private Secretary to Archbishop St Clair Donaldson. When Archbishop Donaldson left to return to England, Miss Light stayed and maintained her role as Private Secretary to subsequent Archbishops The Most Rev’d Gerald Sharp and The Most Rev’d William Wand.

The funeral for Miss Light was held at St John’s Cathedral on Friday 17 September 1943, before moving on to Mt Thompson Crematorium. The Diocese was keen to get into contact with Miss Light’s parents, who were in Devon, to see how best to commemorate her. Her mother sent a letter to Registrar Gordon Gall requesting that a small stone cross be erected with the following words engraved upon it:

“In Cherished memory
of Ethel Mary Light
Born in London
31 May 1887
Died 16th September 1943
‘Thy Will be Done’.”

This request was made in 1945, but due to the war and lack of stonemasons, it was only in June 1946 that the cross was completed. At first this cross was going to be just a memorial stone, but the Archbishop gave consent for it to be placed next to the chapel at Bishopsbourne, where Miss Light had worked for so many years, and that her ashes be placed in the foundation stone of the cross. According to the monumental stonemason Andrew Petrie, this was indeed done, though sadly, no record of the service for the interment can be found.

Memorial cross dedicated to Ethel Mary Light
As the years have progressed, the chapel has, quite understandably, suffered a little from the ravages of age. Earlier this year work began on some restoration projects, funded by the Community Sustainability Action (CSA) grants program, as reported in *anglican focus*.

There are many more conservation and restoration tasks to complete. The Chapel of The Holy Spirit, in some form, has stood on the grounds of Bishopsbourne, Milton, since 1870. Next year, 2022, will be the 110th anniversary of the construction of the existing chapel. When taking into account the services, baptisms, weddings, funerals, confirmation classes and retreat days, as well as the spiritual significance of those commemorated within it, The Chapel of The Holy Spirit stands as a jewel within our Diocese.

Editor’s note: If you would like to make a donation to help St Francis College maintain their beautiful heritage listed buildings, you can do so easily online. Donations of $2 or more are tax deductible. If you require a tax deductible donation receipt, please email your name and address details to admin@ministryeducation.org.au.

News • Tuesday 24 August 2021 • By Philippe Coquerand

Local Gympie artist focuses on keeping kids safe

Recognising carers: Gympie Anglicare Children and Families Practitioner and Walpiri woman Jane Nungarrayi Blunden has recently finished this beautiful artwork featuring thumbprints of carers, handprints of staff and Child Safety members and some special little people.

During Foster and Kinship Carer Week, our Gympie Anglicare Children and Families team commissioned a lovely piece of artwork featuring thumbprints of carers, handprints of staff and Child Safety members (some of our little people got in on the act), on canvas.

The artwork is called ‘Our Village for Our Children’ and is about everyone playing a part in keeping children safe.
Foster and Kinship Carer Week was held in May, but the painting has been recently completed by Warlpiri artist Jane Nungarrayi Blunden who is also a practitioner with Anglicare Southern Queensland.

Jane said she had to do the painting in small portions then walk away for clarity, before coming back for connection and that is how the piece came together.

The painting will be hung in the coming weeks on the wall of the Gympie Anglicare office.

The Gympie Anglicare Children and Families team celebrated Foster and Kinship Carer Week with a delicious morning tea at the Gympie RSL.

News • Monday 23 August 2021

Space to reflect and pray

In July 2021, St Margaret's Year 7 students Beatrice Tritton and Sofia Gearing enjoyed making paper flowers at their favourite prayer station, 'Hope'

As the world continues to be impacted by COVID-19, there is a need, now more than ever, to provide our youth with opportunities to express and explore their concerns as hopes, reflections or prayers.

One of the ways students at St Margaret's Anglican Girls School are supported to express their thoughts and feelings is through Prayer Spaces, which provide opportunities to think, reflect and pray about different aspects of their lives.

St Margaret's holds four week-long Prayer Spaces each year: two designed for primary students and two for secondary students. The most recent, held last month, was themed around the Beatitudes found in Matthew 5.1-12.
The Beatitudes are powerful messages of being blessed, which Jesus imparted during his Sermon on the Mount. These messages guide us to recognise we are blessed, even in hard times, and challenges us to think about how we bless others.

St Margaret’s Chaplain Susan Crothers-Robertson said students in Years 7 to 10 were invited to explore the Beatitudes through eight stations: Wisdom, Resilience, Peace, Justice, Joy, Humility, Hope and Forgiveness.

“Each station was designed to be interactive, inviting the students to pray, reflect and/or think about different areas of their life, the world, others, and if they chose, to think about their relationship with God,” The Rev’d Susan said.

“For instance, at the station with the theme ‘Humility’, the students were encouraged to be aware of people who work behind the scenes to make a difference in their lives and to take the time to show their gratitude.

“It was particularly special to watch the students engage and interact with the ‘Hope’ station where the students were invited to create flowers as they reflected about what hope meant to them.

“In the quiet and stillness, you could hear only the gentle rustle of the tissue paper as the students worked on their creations which were then attached to netting to create a sea of flowers, representative of a sea of hope.

“One staff member commented that the mindfulness shown by the students during this activity was transformative.”

The Hope station was a favourite of Year 7 students Beatrice Tritton and Sofia Gearing.

“Prayer spaces nurture my faith and spirituality, as I have many opportunities to connect with God,” Beatrice said.

“It gave me the chance to sit quietly and reflect on the impact that the sisters have had on St Margaret’s,” Sofia said.

Taking the time to slow down, sit quietly to think, reflect and pray and to be present is a key facet of the Prayer Space experience which The Rev’d Susan says is also the aspect students appreciate the most.

“The students are aware that this quiet time in the Prayer Space is a precious gift amid the busyness of school life,” she said.

“They look forward to the opportunity to explore, create, reflect and just be, so it was lovely to hear the ‘wow’ comments as the students entered the space.”

Given the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it was no surprise to see this global issue still at the forefront of students’ minds. At the ‘Peace’ station, where students were guided to consider circumstances of conflict, such as war or arguments, and to write messages of peace and reconciliation on brightly coloured paper hands, they wrote:
“I pray for people affected by COVID-19 and people struggling to survive” and “COVID, the people who have it and their families who are suffering.”

Other students wrote:

“I pray for happiness”

“Treat people with kindness”

“Everyone should love and respect each other no matter who they are.”

At the ‘Joy’ station, students shared prayers of gratitude and joy on flag bunting. One student shared all the things that brought her joy: movie nights, friends, laughter, chocolate, the beach, sunny days, rainy days, ice-cream, family and holidays. Another wrote “just being alive and knowing I am so loved.”

The Beatitudes Prayer Spaces provided a unique opportunity for students to express and explore their thoughts and feelings and to consider kindness in a way that was visual, hands-on, practical and relevant.

It also highlighted to students that there are different ways to talk or pray with God: that God is there to share their day and to listen to their dreams, big and small, and to hear concerns for themselves and for others.

Features • Monday 23 August 2021 • By Dr Julianne Stewart

2021 New Guinea Martyrs Appeal

Anglicare PNG Adult Literacy graduate Anosa's dream is to become a teacher (© Anglicare Papua New Guinea, used with permission)
“My goal is to become a teacher.” Anosa Imase was talking about his big dream which each year is getting closer to being achieved, thanks to his own tenacity and Anglicare Papua New Guinea's Adult Literacy program. Anosa, in his late 30s, did some primary school education, but never went to secondary school because of the remoteness of his village in Papua New Guinea's Eastern Highlands.

Anosa attended Anglicare's Adult Literacy School in Port Moresby while also working as a security guard and providing for his family. However, through a flexible learning program, he has almost completed his final year of secondary school. His dream of attending Teachers’ College is within reach.

But in future, the Church hopes there will be fewer adults like Anosa who will need to wait until adulthood to complete their school education.

Each year the Anglican Church of Papua New Guinea provides literacy and numeracy education to more than 3,000 women and men in 66 Literacy Schools around the country. Now, in an exciting new move, the Church also wants to establish early childhood schools, catering to children aged from three to five years.

The plan is for these early childhood schools to be located in rural and remote areas, often attached to Anglican parishes. It is hoped that providing many more young children with access to these schools, the number of rural children enrolling in and completing their primary education will increase, eventually reducing the need for adult literacy schools.

But, more funds are needed to achieve this goal.

Although funds raised from this year’s ABM Martyrs Appeal will continue to support teachers in the Adult Literacy program, they will also go towards the Church's planning for the establishment of new early childhood schools in rural communities.

Your donation to our 2021 Martyrs Appeal can help more women and men, like Anosa, achieve their dreams. It will also help children in rural areas to get a better educational start in life.

Some of these will eventually become teachers themselves, continuing in the spirit of service of the teaching missionaries and Martyrs.

“Once I receive my Grade 12 Certificate I will then apply to a Teacher’s College where I can pursue my dream,” Anosa said.

ABM hopes its Martyrs Appeal will help ABM to strengthen Papua New Guinean communities through education.

Please show your support by donating to this appeal.

To donate or find out more about the 2021 Martyrs Appeal, please visit the [ABM website](https://www.abmission.org.au).
Over 300 organisations, businesses and community groups call on all Parliamentarians to respond to the crisis in Afghanistan

Over 300 organisations, businesses and community groups have signed a joint letter to all Federal MPs and Senators calling on them to take urgent action on the devastating situation in Afghanistan. The joint letter was sent to all Parliamentarians on 18 August and urges seven practical steps that the Australian Government can take to provide safety for people from Afghanistan and to show leadership on the global stage.

“We welcome the announcement yesterday by Immigration Minister Alex Hawke confirming the extension of temporary visas for people from Afghanistan in Australia, but there is a lot more that needs to be done for people at grave risk. Members of the Afghan diaspora in Australia are desperately worried about their family, colleagues, and friends who remain in Afghanistan. Many of the people here in Australia also need certainty and safety, and the Australian Government has the power to offer protection and additional support in many ways,” Refugee Council of Australia CEO Paul Power said.

The seven actions include:

1. Do everything possible in coming days to **evacuate people who are at grave risk** within Afghanistan, including those who have worked for or assisted the Australian Government and Australian organisations (including the embassy, armed forces, NGOs and media), human rights defenders and women and girls whose lives and security are under great threat.

2. **Urge governments in the region to keep borders open** for people trying to flee persecution in Afghanistan, including and particularly Pakistan and Iran.

3. Offer **additional refugee resettlement places** for Afghan refugees immediately, as the Australian Government did in 2015 with 12,000 additional places for Syrian and Iraqi refugees. Canada has already announced its commitment of 20,000 additional places for Afghan refugees. Australia could match this offer and urge other resettlement states to do the same, sending a strong and positive message to states receiving Afghan refugees that the world is ready to share responsibility in the protection of lives at risk.

4. As many people are now at risk from hunger and lack of shelter due to their forced displacement, immediately **increase Australian aid to the region** to support programs to assist people who have been displaced across borders and, wherever possible, support organisations still offering assistance within Afghanistan.

5. **We welcome the extension of temporary visas of all Afghan citizens in Australia announced by Immigration Minister Alex Hawke on 17 August.** A vital next step of this is to ensure that people whose asylum claims have been previously rejected be **supported to submit new claims in the light of the changed circumstances in Afghanistan**.

6. **Extend permanent protection to 4300 Afghans on temporary protection visas**, recognising that members of this group are unlikely to be able to return in safety for many years to come and need the assurance that they can continue to live in Australia without the constant fear of forced return.
7. Assist Afghan Australians, including people with temporary and permanent protection visas, with **urgent family reunion applications** for relatives who are at particular risk, as members of minorities targeted by the Taliban or people likely to be targeted because of their connections to western nations. This should include giving priority to finalising family reunion applications which have previously been lodged but are waiting on a decision from the Department of Home Affairs.


**Features • Tuesday 24 August 2021 • By The Rev’d Prof Rodney Wolff**

**Season of Creation: a season of hope, prayer and fostering a healthy legacy**

During the **Season of Creation** between 1 September (the first day of Spring) and 4 October (St Francis of Assisi’s Feast Day), thousands of Christians on six continents will get together for a time of restoration and hope to pray for and implement changes to safeguard our common home.

The Season of Creation is connected with rogation days in the Church's Calendar. ‘Rogation’ stems from the Latin *rogare* meaning ‘to ask’, with rogation days marked as days of prayer when farming communities asked God for a bountiful harvest. Rogation days emerged in the fifth century, with the Christianising of pagan rituals which sought to protect crops from disease. In time, these days came to be observed on the three days before the Ascension of our Lord.

Welsh-born priest and poet George Herbert (1593-1633) articulated the purposes of rogation days and related practices, these being: seeking God's blessing of the land; using land justly; living with neighbours charitably; and, distributing bounty mercifully to people living on the margins.
In Australia, Rogation Day prayers are encouraged around the feast of St Francis of Assisi on 4 October, rather than at Ascensiontide, to reflect better the cycle of nature in the southern hemisphere (see A Prayer Book for Australia, p.451).

Why should there be a month-long Season of Creation in addition to rogation days?

Our response to God the Creator needs to be generous. We acknowledge this in our sacred songs and prayers. We are embraced by the same God who continues God’s creative work across aeons, and so our spiritual and physical wellbeing is connected to the wider created order:

“Lord, you have been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever you had formed the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God” (Psalm 90.1-2).

Our existence and hope stem from God’s creative power:

“By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth” (Psalm 33.6).

We can look to God’s good creation to see God at work, and the hope of help and redemption offered to us:

“I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121.1-2).

Creation responds to God thus:

“The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 19.1).

As part of creation, human beings are called to respond.

God is wholly involved in creation, of which we are part through the same creative acts of God.

For Christians, a focus on ‘creation’, rather than the ‘environment’ or ‘ecology’, underscores the interconnectedness of all life, affirming the deep connection we have with the broader created order and encouraging a genuine love and concern for all that God has created.

Switching lights off for an hour is a good start at raising awareness of, and upholding hope for, creating a healthy legacy for future generations. But, more is needed.

You can help transform hope into action by participating in Season of Creation events, including the following:

- A Quiet Morning for the Season of Creation at Holy Trinity Church, Fortitude Valley, 9.30 am to 1 pm on 28 August 2021.
- Launch of Season of Creation by the Queensland Churches Environmental Network, 7 pm to 8.30 pm on 1 September 2021, at St Stephen’s Catholic Cathedral, Brisbane.
- The Queensland Churches Environmental Network photo, art, music, poetry and short story exhibition at St John’s Cathedral.
• An ‘On Earth’ festival exploring faith, the arts and justice, 12 noon to 9 pm on 16 October 2021, hosted by the Justice Unit, in partnership with St Francis’ College, Milton.

Striving to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustaining and renewing the life of the earth, invite prayer and action.

“O sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth” (Psalm 96.1).

May the Lord hear our song of praise this Season of Creation, and strengthen us to care for God’s good creation.

Editors’ note: Please keep an eye on the anglican focus Events page for more Season of Creation events in our Diocese. For Season of Creation resources, please visit the Season of Creation website.

Sunday Devotions • Monday 23 August 2021 • By Peter Dutton

**Sunday Devotion: 29 August 2021, Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

Being slow in a fast-paced world

**Main Readings:** Song of Songs 2.8-13; Psalm 45.1-2, 6-9; James 1.17-27; Mark 7.1-8, 14-23 [Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9, Psalm 15]

**Supplementary Readings:** Psalm 150; Mark 11.12-14, 20-26; Song of Songs 4.7-15; Psalm 15; James 1.1-13

“You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.” (James 1.19)
Growing up in regional Queensland, I played various sports from Under 8s all the way through to current times. As I have grown up, I have always been competitive and my passion is evident for all to see. This can easily lead to being angry with the opposition or a teammate. One of the key challenges for me as a Christian, is to follow Jesus’ teachings in all aspects of my life, and this includes on the sporting field.

Many people say that “What happens on the field stays on the field” or “Once I cross that white line, I am a different person”. James' words in this verse, call us to a higher counter-cultural standard of being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. Those who trust and obey God learn to adjust the speed of their listening and speaking.

One of the key challenges of James is to not just adopt a works-based mentality, but to follow his words as a response to the incredible grace God has shown us through Jesus. Being quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger is a task for every generation in every area of life. For some this can be on the sporting field, in the workplace, at home with family, or even at church.

Our God is so immeasurably gracious towards us; we are called to demonstrate that grace to others, and be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger.