

An essential Ekka tradition: Blessing of the Plough



At the official opening of the Royal Queensland Show (Ekka) every second year, Archbishop Phillip is asked to bless the plough, which has become a tradition for our Archbishop. Catholic Archbishop Mark Coleridge blesses the plough every other year. Archbishop Phillip is pictured here blessing the plough at the Ekka in August 2019

Local Queenslanders are celebrating the resumption of the annual Royal National Agricultural (RNA) Show Day, or the “Ekka” as it is affectionately known, after two years due to COVID-19.

The Ekka, [which dates back to 1876](#), is run by the [Royal National Agricultural and Industrial Association of Queensland](#). This association is a not-for profit, whose mission is to celebrate and champion the essential role agriculture plays in the everyday lives of Queenslanders.

The Ekka, short for “exhibition”, plays an important role in bringing city and county folk together. The Ekka also brings delight to the many thousands of visitors who come through the gates, as well as to all the exhibitors, staff and volunteers who do an excellent job managing the show. Exhibitors will no doubt be glad to display their produce, livestock and arts and crafts after a two-year absence.

One of the traditions observed each year at the Ekka is the Blessing of the Plough. In maintaining this tradition, we give thanks to God for the goodness of creation and pray for our proper care of natural resources:

“Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation:
for in your abundant care you have given us fertile land,
rich soil, the seasons in their courses.
You provide seed for sowing, water, light and warmth
to bring forth the miracle of growth.
You give us skill to work the land,
to prepare and nourish it, that it may be fruitful.
By your blessing,
let this plough be a sign of all that you promise to us.
Prosper the work of our hands,
and provide abundant crops for your people to share.
Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Blessed be God for ever.

God speed the plough.

God speed the plough.”

It is spiritually important to remind ourselves about where our daily food comes from and about the work of the people who help produce it. With an abundance of produce and other foodstuffs in our supermarkets, as well as fast food, take-aways and home deliveries, we can easily forget the gift of fertile soil, the sowing of seed, the raising of livestock, the seasons and the necessity of rain, the harvest, and the transfer of produce to market, all so that we can eat and drink.

In these stressful economic times, we also do well to remember families who find it increasingly difficult to put food on the table due to the ever-increasing costs of living.

During Ekka Show Week between 6 and 14 August this year, let us pause to give thanks to God for the wonder of creation and for daily food, homes, families and friends:

“The eyes of all wait upon you, O Lord,
and you give them their food in due season.
You open wide your hand
and satisfy the needs of every living creature.
For this food
and for every gift which comes from you, O God,
we bless your holy name
through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen.”

The Most Rev'd Dr Phillip Aspinall AC
Archbishop of Brisbane

30 years on: celebrating the inclusion of women priests



The Rev'd Canon Dr Emma Percy at Trinity College in Oxford on 3 August 2022

November 1992 saw nail-biting voting in the General Synods of the Church of England and the Anglican Church of Australia. The successful motions made it possible for women to be ordained as priests. By the end of 1992, Australia had 92 women priests. In England we had to wait for the legislation to pass through Parliament, so it was not until the spring of 1994 that the first women were ordained. As a young deacon in England, I rejoiced with the crowds outside Church House on November 11 1992 and waited patiently until 23 April 1994 when I was ordained a priest alongside 61 other women in a glorious service in St Albans Abbey.

Over the last 30 years women priests have become part of the everyday life of our churches. We are no longer seen as novel or remarkable. Women bishops are also part of the life of our churches. Yet, a vocal minority of those who maintain that women cannot or should not function as priests and leaders is also part of the reality of our churches. This minority defends their position, and are defended in England through legislation on the grounds that their opposition is theological and is thus somehow unquestionable.

My experience of the campaigning years was of rich and creative theological, liturgical and ecclesiological conversations, writings and events. The appropriateness of including women in the clergy was, and is, deeply theological. Alongside others I studied the Bible, looking for those women who, though present in the scriptures, were rarely foregrounded. I began to learn about women throughout the Church's history who had been called by God into all sorts of leadership and teaching roles. I learnt to explore different language in my prayers and ask new questions about how we talk about God, Christ and salvation. Central to this was the affirmation that women are made in the image and likeness of God, meaning that their lived experience has something to teach us about God. Women are also fully human and thus have things to teach all of us about the human condition.

Because these conversations broaden the way we do theology some find them unsettling. It feels that over the years since the motions went through, that women have been relegated to specific interest groups. That a vocal few remain uneasy about the ordination of women renders many women wary of exploring ideas that might unsettle the status quo. This means that many women clergy do not necessarily share with those they serve some of the enriching and exciting ideas we can learn from feminist theology, liturgy and ecclesiology. Some have never really explored these ideas for themselves. This is both a missed opportunity and a serious concern about how we reach out missionally to women, especially younger women and to the more open-spirited men.

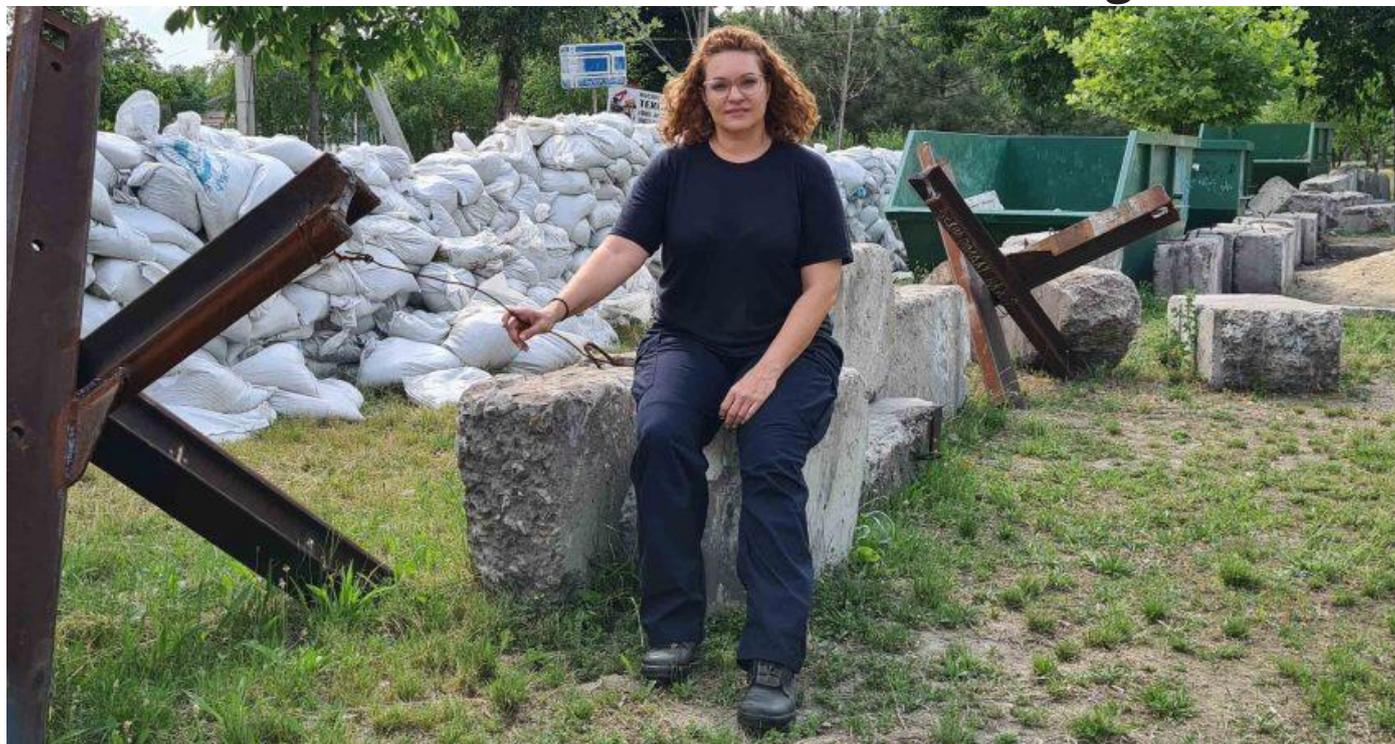
Ideas about men's and women's equality and questions about gender stereotypes and gender binaries are part of the discourse in our wider communities. We need to find the confidence to talk about our faith within this context if the Church is to remain relevant.

We need to find ways of foregrounding women's history and experience to add to the rich stories and images that can help us better understand who we are and who God is. We have good news to share about our creative God who made all of us in the divine image, a God who calls us into a new creation where "there is no longer male or female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus" ([Galatians 3.28](#)).

Editor's note: The Rev'd Canon Emma Percy will be presenting on "There were also women" at St Francis College on Friday 26 August. There will be three sessions held during the course of the day, including addresses and a panel discussion. For more information or to register, please visit the St Francis College [EventBrite page](#).

Features • Thursday 4 August 2022 • By Helen Zahos

Nurse's nerves of steel: to Ukraine and back again



"Throughout Ukraine, anti-tank barriers, featuring what the locals call 'hedgehogs', have been erected to protect towns and villages" (Helen Zahos, 2022)

Please be aware that this content may be distressing for some readers.

At a Gold Coast fundraising ball recently, I was casually chatting with a journalist in a queue. I mentioned that I had just returned from Ukraine. Taken aback – probably because we were all dolled up at a gala where such conversations are unusual – he asked whether I had been there for work. When I explained that I had volunteered in Ukraine as a nurse-paramedic, after a thoughtful pause the reporter asked me...“Are you a believer?” When I replied, “Yes”, his response was, “I figured. Nobody would go into a dangerous warzone as a volunteer unless they had faith.”

I have been a nurse-paramedic since the late 1990s. My job is my vocation. For the last 20 years I have volunteered internationally and locally during disasters with hands-on clinical work and on-the-ground logistics and advice. This unpaid work began with local floods and cyclones, as well as caring for people who were medevacked to Darwin from Bali in the wake of the 2002 bombings.

I then volunteered after Taiphoon Hayan in the Philippines in 2013; following the 2015 earthquake in Nepal; during the “refugee crisis” in Greece in 2015, and again in 2016; in Mosul in Iraq in 2017; in Kenya as a World Youth International ambassador for their Nurses in Action program in 2020; and, more recently in Ukraine.

However, my volunteering did not start with disaster responsiveness in my adult years. I was raised to care about my neighbour. I grew up on the small remote island of Groote Eylandt in the Gulf of Carpentaria, where everyone knew each other and looked out for one another. So I learnt from a young age about the importance of loving your neighbour. For example, I was a Girl Guide and often helped to fundraise, including for a new wheelchair after a local woman had a stroke and for the painting of an old community hall.

My family is Greek Orthodox. Our faith is embedded in all aspects of our culture. When I say, “I belong to the Greek Community”, this means that I am Greek Orthodox – they are the same thing. In our culture, community and faith are intertwined. For example, a priest is always invited to a significant community event even if there is no service or liturgy – they are a prominent part of our community.

Being Greek Orthodox transcends borders. I have experienced this many times in my travels. While I was in Moldova waiting to cross into Ukraine, a border police officer recognised my *komboskini* (a religious string bracelet) because he was Greek. Seeing me as one of his own, he looked out for my companions and me, going out of his way to help us navigate the border complexities.

A Greek journalist in Kyiv found out I was in Ukraine. Even though I did not know him, he unexpectedly Facebooked message me letting me know that he had topped up my phone SIM card remotely so that I could make calls.

I was in Ukraine for four weeks. I served with Adventist Health, a Christian NGO registered with the World Health Organisation. Our primary mission was to undertake a needs assessment with the goal of setting up a field hospital. This involved many meetings, including with the local mayor, Defence Minister, army commanders, disaster coordinators and hospital directors. During this phase I went to all the hospitals in the area, where I witnessed what you expect to see in a warzone, identifying areas of need.

Before I visited the hospitals, a doctor showed photographs to prepare me. In the hospitals I saw the worst injuries I have seen in my entire career. In the children’s hospital I saw kids with burns and missing limbs – injuries caused by explosions. One girl reported that she lost her “arm, cat and mum” in a single explosion after Russia invaded.

Some kids were too scared to look out of the hospital window during the daytime because they were so conditioned to fearing daylight after spending months in dark bomb shelters. These kids drew pictures of houses with blacked-out windows, of soldiers, and of loved ones whom they had “crossed out”. They only drew in dark colours – mostly black and dark purple.

We had four military containers that could be turned into mobile clinics with surgical and X-ray capabilities. Soon into my trip, I met with a combat commander who said that there was a greater need for the equipment on the frontline. He needed to set up mobile clinics as stabilisation points so that wounded soldiers could survive the trip from the frontline to hospital. After a number of meetings with the minister and parliamentarians, we made this happen.

The ability to pivot and be flexible like this in unstable and unpredictable environments is critical in warzones and other disaster situations. So it came as no surprise that our planned mission changed unexpectedly.

While in Ukraine I was chatting to a veteran CNN war correspondent who said, “My entire career has been covering wars and the first thing you learn is whatever you are expecting, what you find is completely different...I have covered Afghanistan and Iraq. In terms of scale, this is the biggest war I have covered. Every war is different.”

I stayed in different Ukrainian towns and villages, in both hotels and homes. For my protection, particularly while sleeping, one household owner offered me a handgun. I refused, explaining that I could never kill someone. That night, the area I was in was bombed 12 times – it sounded like a severe tropical thunderstorm.

Despite the daily bombings, people tried to go about their lives as normally as possible. This particularly included prayer and the rhythms of church life, even if church buildings had been destroyed by bombs or looked like they had been used as target practice. It did not matter what denomination you were from – Orthodox, Catholic, Adventist, Mennonite – all locals prioritised prayer in the nitty-gritty of their days. In my entire life, I have never prayed so much “Grace”!



“It was very sad to see that some church buildings in Ukraine seemed to have been used as target practice by the invading forces. There is nothing sacred in this invasion” (Helen Zahos, 2022)

Being Greek, I, of course, had to cook. It is what we do. So I cooked and served food several times to people in a church refuge that housed internally displaced people. This helped to normalise my day and take my mind off the danger.

I could not travel more than a kilometre without an army or police officer stopping me to check my passport and phone. Phones were particularly inspected for photos and videos to make sure that intelligence was not being gathered. Because I am a “foodie” and take pics of food wherever I go, my phone was filled with meal images. At one particular checkpoint, the soldier took one look at me – I am not exactly waif-like – and one look at my phone album’s contents and smiled knowingly, as if he was thinking, “She is definitely not here to spy.”

Instead of sirens announcing incoming bombing, an “Alarms App” sent alerts on our phones so we knew when to head to bomb shelters. On our first night in Ukraine when we received a phone alert, the two other team members and I went to a shelter only to discover that we were the only ones there. After many months of relentless bombing, locals were so accustomed to the alerts they stopped reacting, instead listening out for the inevitable missiles and reacting then.

There was an enforced blackout from 11pm until 5am wherever I went. During this period, no cars were allowed on the road, traffic and street lights were turned off and windows were blacked out. Windows were also taped with an “X” across them to mitigate the risk of glass injuries during explosions.

There have been many times in my paid and volunteer work when my life has been at risk. I have had an axe thrown at me, my jaw fractured after being intentionally hit with a metal pipe during a riot and

have been threatened with scissors in an ambulance. These are just a few examples. In these dark moments, I have never felt alone. And, I have always felt a deep peace.

Maybe this sense of being companioned and comforted amidst danger is why the journalist in the gala ball queue felt somehow prompted to ask, "Are you a believer?"

Reflections • Sunday 7 August 2022 • By Elizabeth Elliott

Nundah parishioners absolutely wrapped with novel decal



Parishioners John Elliott, Charlie Elliott and Liz Elliott, with Anthony Monaghan from Monaghan Signs (second from left), outside St Francis of Assisi Church in Nundah in July 2022. The team of four collaborated to create the stunning decal of St Francis of Assisi

Early on in 2022, my husband Charles and his brother John Elliott, at The Rev'd Graham Warren's request, removed a dark curtain covering the inside of the east-facing clerestory window.

No one could remember when or why the shade cloth was installed. We think it was likely fitted to stop the morning sun glare shining into the eyes of the clergy. It was large, ill-fitting and unattractive.

To give some context, St Francis of Assisi Anglican Church was built in 1958 in the modernist style. It is a brick and concrete structure and the windows are made with glazed metal. The original frosted glazing varies in hue from pastel pinks to greys, which gives it a vintage look.

John Elliott lives on Cavendish Street, not far from St Francis. He and his brother, Charlie, are members of a local family who have worshipped at St Francis since it was built. The two brothers brought a long ladder and an angle grinder, and half an hour later the old covering was gone. John then reflected on what a marvellous large window it was, but how boring and bare it looked.

Over the years, I have often looked at the window wondering how it could be made beautiful. Other church buildings usually have something gorgeous in stained-glass, so why shouldn't our church? However, stained-glass is expensive.

"How could we afford a stained-glass window?" I thought. It would take a lengthy process of design and fundraising and so I relegated this idea to the too-hard basket.

An alternative solution emerged as many great solutions do – an unexpected chat. John has a neighbour, Anthony Monaghan, whose family has owned [Monaghan Signs](#) since 1932. Alongside regular signage, they do vehicle wraps in vinyl. So upon chatting, John asked Anthony if the large St Francis window could be decorated with this method. "Yes!" was the answer.

John passed this idea on, and I then contacted Anthony so we could discuss a brief and designs. I have a design background and Anthony has a digital design team. I explained that I wanted the church building to have a stunning visual link to the outside and the gardens. We wanted passersby to notice and be interested in our beautiful church building and what happens inside.

St Francis of Assisi seemed the obvious subject. Anthony, an alumnus of Padua College – which was named after Franciscan friar St Anthony of Padua – is familiar with St Francis. We agreed that a digital image in the public domain, hence cost- and licence-free, would be a good place to start. We used Google to search for an image, considering a number before making our final selection. Consulting with the clergy, we chose a simple modern image of the famous Italian saint.

The original digital image was reworked to fit the numerous panes of glass in the large clerestory window. We had a number of things to troubleshoot or consider, including how the bars of the window frames would impact the image, especially St Francis' face; colouring the Franciscan robes to match the exterior brickwork; placing the blue and purple blocks of colour on St Francis' sides to give the illusion of stained-glass; and, the addition of white doves to make it clearer that the saint featured is St Francis of Assisi.

The decal's image was printed in multiple pieces, each fitting one segment of the great window. Prior to installation of the decal, several glass panes were necessarily replaced because they were cracked or broken.

Our new beautiful custom decal wrap of St Francis of Assisi was installed on a sunny morning recently with the aid of a cherry picker, one window pane at a time, in just a few hours and at a fraction of the cost of traditional stained-glass.

At our first Sunday service following this installation, our faith community's overwhelming response was one of joy, with many positive comments shared. Neighbours, friends and family have also commented on how the window looks larger now and what a lovely impression it makes.

We hope to get quite a few years out of our beautiful St Francis decal – time will tell. Although if or when St Francis does need replacing, a new look will also be exciting!

Referendum question on the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice proposed



Members of the Gumatj Clan perform bunggul (ceremonial dancing) at the Garma Festival in Gulkula in north east Arnhem Land (Image: Yothu Yindi Foundation)

At the recent Garma Festival, held annually in Gulkula in the Northern Territory, the movement for a referendum on an Indigenous Voice to Parliament took a huge step forward.

In his Garma address, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese clearly laid out both the proposed change to the Constitution for a Voice, and the proposed referendum question.

“We should consider asking our fellow Australians something as simple, but something as clear as this: ‘Do you support an alteration to the Constitution that establishes an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice?’” Mr Albanese said.

Mr Albanese said he is putting forward the question as a “basis for dialogue”.

He said it is not a final form of words, but rather “something to give the conversation shape and direction.”

“The Voice will endure outside the ups and downs of election cycles...a body with the perspective, the power and the platform to tell the Government and the Parliament the truth about what is working and what is not – to tell the truth with clarity, with conviction,” he said.

“Our starting point is a recommendation to add three sentences to the Constitution in recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as the First Peoples of Australia.

“One, there shall be a body, to be called the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.

“Two, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice may make representations to Parliament and the Executive Government on matters relating to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

“And, three, the Parliament shall, subject to this Constitution, have power to make laws with respect to the composition, functions, powers and procedures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice.”

Inspired by [Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), Archbishop Phillip Aspinall made a formal [submission](#) on behalf of our Diocese in support of the Voice last year.

In response to the Garma announcement, the Archbishop said that the Voice will foster meaningful listening, which will help to close the gap between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.

“In any context, deepening understanding and building bridges leading to Reconciliation begin with listening – deep, careful, sustained listening,” Dr Aspinall said.

“Embedding a commitment to such sustained, deep listening holds great promise as a basis for closing the health and life expectancy gap that still exists between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians.”

Chair of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s Reconciliation Action Plan Working Group, Wakka Wakka man The Rev’d Canon Bruce Boase, said that by voting “yes”, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will be meaningfully heard on matters that impact their communities.

“To support a vote for a First Nations Voice to Parliament means a step towards maturity as a nation,” Canon Boase said.

“By saying ‘yes’ means the first step in a long process.

“This process will see First Nations peoples, all over the land, being able to be heard on issues that directly concern them.”

[From The Heart](#), the campaign stemming from the 2017 National Constitutional Convention that issued the [Uluru Statement From the Heart](#), strongly supports the referendum question as drafted, and the proposed amendment to the Constitution.

From The Heart Director Dean Parkin said that the Garma announcement is a significant development in the ongoing consultation process.

“This is an important and positive step forward from the Government,” Mr Parkin said.

“By delivering the proposed Constitutional amendment and question, the Prime Minister has provided the ‘destination’ for the referendum on a Voice so voters have plenty of time to understand what they will be asked.

“Between now and then, more information will be provided about the Voice, so voters understand what they are supporting.

“The Government has said there will be an ‘exposure document’ that sets out key elements of the Voice by Christmas.

“There is more consultation to be done and plenty of time to be included in the conversation, but this is a meaningful and important progress.

“We are deeply grateful to our supporters, who come from all walks of Australian life.

“Your support and commitment has helped us grow momentum toward our goal over the last five years.”

The Indigenous Voice to Parliament included in the Constitution is the first of the Uluru Statement From the Heart’s two reforms.

Mr Parkin recently spoke on the ABC’s [7.30 Report](#) about the overwhelmingly positive response he has had since the Uluru Statement From the Heart was issued to the Australian people five years ago.

“I’ve had the great privilege of having thousands of conversations with people across the country and there is an enormous amount of goodwill out there to make this happen,” Mr Parkin said.

“People are very interested in the idea of recognising Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in the Constitution, and when you talk to them about a Voice and the idea of giving people on the ground a say over the issues that affect their families and their communities, actually, people just get it.”

[Garma](#) is an annual festival held in Gulkula, a significant Yolngu ceremonial site, about 40km from Nhulunbuy on the Gove Peninsula in the Northern Territory.

Over four days, festival guests are immersed in the rich cultural heritage of Yolngu hosts, experiencing traditional *miny’tji* (art), ancient story-telling, *manikay* (song) and *bunggul* (dance).

The theme of this year’s Garma Festival was *Nhanga Ngathiilyura*, a Yolngu phrase meaning “look ahead towards the future”.

Q&A with father of eight, formation student, Liturgical Assistant and former refugee, Peter Jongkuch



St Francis College formation student Peter Jongkuch wearing his Tau cross at the college in July 2022

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live in Ipswich with my wife, Elizabeth, and eight children. We worship at St Andrew's, Springfield.

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

I worshipped in the Episcopal Church, which is part of the Anglican Communion, before I came to Australia. I came here as a refugee in 2007 after spending 15 years in Kakuma Refugee Camp in Kenya. I grew up in the camp with formation student Mamuor Kunpeter and Bishop Daniel Abot, who are also both former Lost Boys and former refugees.

I am a second year formation student at St Francis College and a Liturgical Assistant at St Andrew's, Springfield.



The Rev'd Charlie Lacey, Tisa Lacey, Elizabeth and Liturgical Assistant Peter Jongkuch at St Andrew's, Springfield in March 2022

What projects and activities are you currently working on?

At the moment I am studying the Reformations with Dr Sheilagh O'Brien and Practical Theology with The Rev'd Dr Wendi Sargeant. As part of my formation, I am observing ministries at St Andrew's, Springfield, including children's ministry, so I can see how parish ministries work.

I just spent a weekend with other formation students, which was led by The Rev'd Canon Sarah Plowman, who is the Director of Discernment and Formation. On the weekend we had leadership training. We gathered with The Parish of Kenmore-Brookfield congregation for the Sunday service.

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

I plan to preach four times at St Andrew's, Springfield. I will also be visiting parishioners in their home to provide pastoral care with The Rev'd Charlie Lacey, who is the priest at St Andrew's, Springfield.

What has been one of the highlights of your time as a St Francis College formation student so far?

When we were commissioned as formation students in the Chapel of The Holy Spirit in 2021. During this service, we were given a St Francis *Tau* cross each. The *Tau* cross represents the Franciscan community and its shared values of devotion to Christ, simplicity and joy.

Why is studying theology important?

It's important because we need knowledge about Church history, humanity and God.

What advice do you have for those considering ordained ministry in our Diocese?

I would encourage people to study theology.

Why and when did you become drawn to ordained ministry?

In 2009 I was blessed to become a Liturgical Assistant. From there I was encouraged to become more involved by the South Sudanese community. So I decided to become a priest so I can administer the sacraments.

What do you enjoy most about studying at St Francis College?

I enjoy meeting different people in my classes. The staff are also very friendly and supportive.

2022's Diocesan theme is "Being Together: Embracing Joy". What are some practical ways that we can celebrate the way differences help to make us whole and the importance of diversity in our unity?

Preach the Word of God. When we preach the Word of God we show the love of Jesus. We can also gather together over food and pray together and sing together before we eat.

Why is Reconciliation with First Nations peoples important?

It's important because it brings the whole nation together. It also recognises the country's history

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

I am a first generation Christian. I was baptised in 1988 at the age of 15 after fleeing to Ethiopia. I went to all the church activities in the refugee camp there. We were there for four years. That was the camp we went to before we walked to Kakuma Refugee Camp in 1992 after the Ethiopian government was overthrown.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

“Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.” ([2 Corinthian 13.11](#))

This is my favourite scripture because when there is peace, there is no suffering.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

The retired Bishop of the Diocese of Bor, Nathaniel Garang Anyieth. He helped bring peace to South Sudan and he brought a lot of people to Jesus.

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

Whenever people gather to pray for those impacted by war, such as for the people of Ukraine.

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

At the moment I am working full-time hours as a cleaner in a meat factory at night. I am also studying part-time. I also have eight children and community responsibilities. So I don't have a lot of free time.

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

When I left Kakuma Refugee Camp in 2007, my uncle advised me to always be a peacemaker.

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

“Be a peacemaker.” Peace is one of the most important things.

Where do you do your best thinking?

On Sunday after the morning service, I go home and reflect on the week before.



Peter Jongkuch with Bishop Rob Nolan, Archbishop Phillip Aspinall, Aluel, Yar, Nyarik, Achieu, Jongkuch, Awuoi and Elizabeth at St Michael and All Angels' Anglican Church, Moggill in 2021

What is your best childhood memory?

When I was with my mum in the village before I fled to Ethiopia. She brought us up because our dad was killed when I was very young. She was the family breadwinner. She worked as a cattle and goat farmer. My mum passed away in 1986.

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would that be?

Milk because it reminds me of home and growing up with my mum.

What is your earliest memory?

In 1981 when I began my schooling. We were under a big tree. That tree was our classroom. We wrote Arabic letters in the sand because we didn't have pencils.

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

I go for a walk around my suburb.

What is your secret skill?

I am a cabinet maker. I learnt carpentry skills in Kakuma Refugee Camp. I can make beds, doors and coffee tables.

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

The day I arrived in Australia. When I came to Australia, I found peace and was able to rebuild my life with my wife and children. Seven of my children were born in Ipswich. My first child was born in the refugee camp.

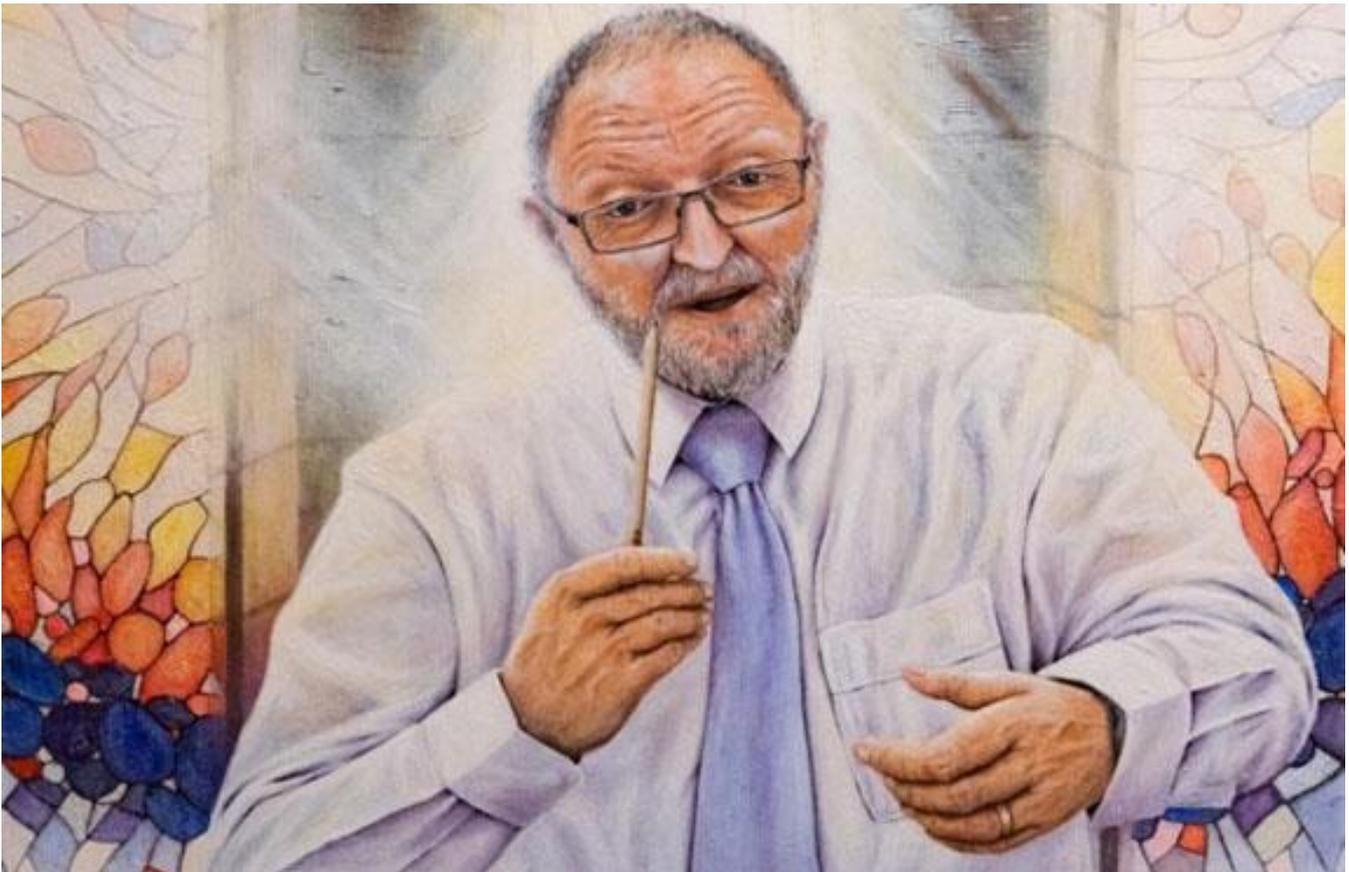
What item should you throw out, but can't bear to part with?

I should throw out some African clothes that I brought with me from the refugee camp. They don't fit me anymore, but I still keep them.

Editor's note: August is Vocations Month. Vocations Month is intended to stimulate discussion about vocations to ministry. Activities this year include the walkLIFE Vocations hike from Mt Coot-tha to the Cathedral on 10 August (Ekka public holiday - please note date correction) and Seekers Day at St Francis College on 3 September. Visit the [Anglican Church Southern Queensland website](https://www.anglican-church-queensland.org.au) for more information or email The Rev'd Canon Sarah Plowman directly at sarah.plowman@anglicanchurchsq.org.au

Features • Thursday 4 August 2022 • By Lily Zhu

Gloria in excelsis Deo: Come, o thousand voices, to me



A portrait of Dr Graeme Morton AM by former student Lily Zhu (cropped portrait)

"A work of art which did not begin in emotion is not art." Paul Cezanne

If you have been at St John's for a while, you may recognise the face in the painting: the Director of Music, Graeme Morton. Graeme is an Australian composer and choral conductor with an impressive history.

During his career he has led many choirs, including the St Peters Chorale, the Brisbane Chamber Choir and The Australian Voices. For his significant contribution to youth music, Graeme has received the 2011 Lord Mayor's Australia Day Cultural Award, the 2003 Prime Minister's Medal and he is a Member of the Order of Australia. He is also the recipient of a Churchill Fellowship.

I am an art hobbyist, and one of Graeme's former students from his time teaching music and conducting choirs at St Peters Lutheran College. I have many cherished memories of rehearsals and performances in the Cathedral from more than a decade ago. More recently, from the end of 2019 into 2020, I began a long-term art project, producing a series of portraits of inspiring people whom I have met – people who have contributed significantly to their local community.

I sought to produce a portrait work that would capture the spirit of someone distinguished in the arts or other aspects of Australian culture, and naturally thought of Graeme and his contribution to youth music. Having been one of his young students once, his teaching has greatly shaped my appreciation of art and culture.

I caught up with Graeme in late 2019 to discuss the project and interview him regarding his own personal musical legacy. He discussed with me his life-long journey through music, from the richness and fervour of church hymns in his childhood to his tertiary musical training and beyond. He talked to me about how we respond to music based on our early experiences, about the synergy of music and language, and about the importance of mystery in art and personality.

His experiences of music teaching in his youth were limited compared to the breadth of teaching that he has now provided to ensuing generations. I gained a sense of the passion and humble perseverance in his musical work, and a sense of the drawing together of people towards the beauty of music and its place in looking towards God's holy presence. I saw the peace that Graeme had found in it. Music, as an art, is multi-dimensional – it has the ability to cross time, language and culture and change how we experience our lives.

After the interview, I reflected on my notes, and planned, and sketched. Graeme kindly allowed me to attend a number of rehearsals of the Cathedral choir with the canvas in tow. I would sit and paint while Graeme conducted the choir, listening so that I could embed the spirit of his musical direction into each brushstroke as the harmonies of the choir rose around me.

Over a number of months, including into the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the work slowly came together – about 90x120cm, oil and acrylic on canvas. In it, you see Graeme steadily conducting, contemplative, pencil in hand as he often had. I chose to depict Graeme not dressed for performance but instead dressed to rehearse, moving with the music, because his background of dedicated, steady day-to-day work is where I see that his contribution truly lies.

Behind him the Millennium Window of the western wall of St John's Cathedral shines. This is a major aspect of my memories of rehearsing in the Cathedral. I would be standing in the choir that was sometimes over a hundred choristers strong. We would be looking up as Graeme directed each piece, and looking beyond him to the Millennium Window. It would glow with the sun, and the last light of

day would shine through it as the rehearsals continued into the evening. I could not help but include this, being such a striking aspect of the Cathedral.

I was told that it represented new life. In this painting, it radiates and centres Graeme's work as a conductor. It represents passion, beauty and a holy power that is not just central to Graeme's work, but represents the glory of God to which the music would often lead. Graeme stands peacefully within it, drawing from it, drawing to it; the depiction of the radiating window, contrasting with Graeme's steadiness and peace, brings much of the dual emotional energy of the painting.

I see that this painting has two artists; not just in the sense that the subject is an artist, but in the sense that Graeme's artistic influence has shaped my own approach to this work.

The result is as you can see. I hope that the viewer can look up, as I did, to feel the intensity, beauty and passion of the music that drove him, the God that oversaw him, the quiet humble diligence and perseverance that marked his every movement as he would draw together tens to hundreds of voices, while always standing alone.

"In music there is transcendence, there are healed and healing souls."

Gloria in excelsis Deo: Come, o thousand voices, to me.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the craftsperson and the designing artist behind the Millennium Window that inspired much of this painting. The real-life window was designed by artist Scott Maxwell. The stained-glass craftsperson was Warwick Blair, who sadly died from AIDS only weeks after the window was unveiled by the Queen in 2002.

First published in the June 2022 edition of *The Eagle*, the magazine of St John's Cathedral. [Read the latest edition of *The Eagle* online.](#)

Dispatch from a Lambeth Conference steward



Community of The Way member Eleanor Reid at the Lambeth Conference seminar 'Environment: Living with the Fifth Mark of Mission' in August 2022

For the last two weeks I have been at the Lambeth Conference in Canterbury, England as a steward, along with fellow Community of The Way members Stacey McCowan and Aaron Vidyasagar. The theme of this year's Lambeth Conference is 'God's Church for God's World'. As stewards, we have been helping with the running of the conference, assisting delegates, and learning from spiritual leaders from around the Anglican Communion. It has been an inspiring and exciting experience, as well as a lot of hard work!

A highlight of the conference for me was attending a seminar titled 'Environment: Living with the Fifth Mark of Mission', and hearing from Christian leaders in environmental activism from around the world. Throughout the presentations and discussion there was a particular focus on the role of young people in environmental activism and restoration. I was particularly inspired by youth activist Mandisa Gumada's call on bishops to "be present at the young people's events, whether it is a clean-up or tree planting," and Archbishop Julio Thompson's call for the Church to "take off the gloves" and listen to young people, because "they will be receiving whatever is left in the next generation."

On the topic of young people, I have been most inspired throughout the conference so far by the grace and commitment shown by my fellow stewards. We Lambeth Conference stewards are a team of 48 young people, aged 18-35, from 22 different countries, with very different cultural and theological backgrounds and life experiences. Despite these differences everyone in the team treats each other with care and dignity, and openly hears others' perspectives on difficult issues, working together to understand each other. As we watch current Church leaders walk, listen, and witness together, it is inspiring to see young future leaders doing the same thing.

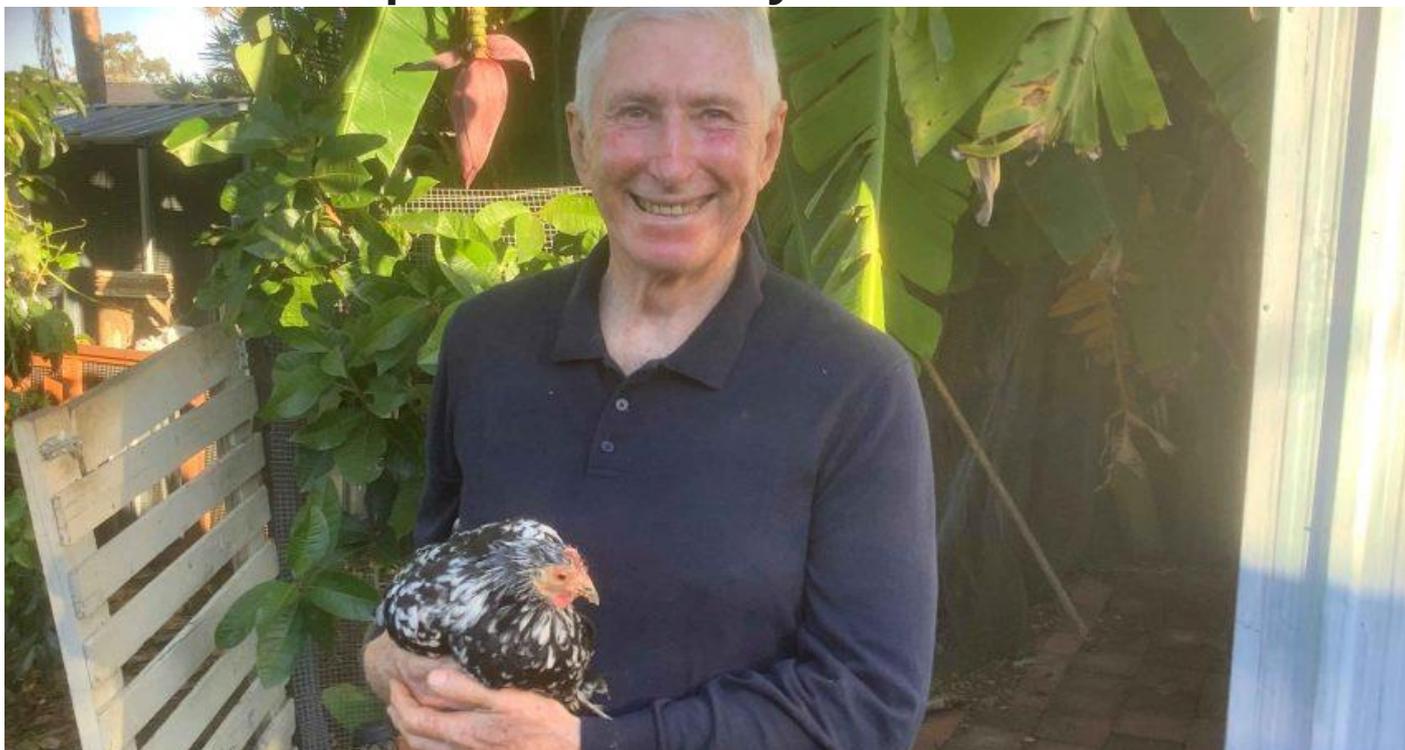
One of the most interesting bishops I have met is the Bishop of Tamale, Ghana, The Right Rev'd Dennis Debukari Tong, who I spoke to at the environment seminar. Bishop Tong explained the ongoing issues related to flooding earlier this year in Accra. He described how the Church is responding to the needs of the community, while also looking to the future, and it was insightful to hear how the Church is responding to the effects of climate change in other countries.

The Lambeth Conference has demonstrated to me that bearing witness to different perspectives in our Church community is instrumental to building a Church that loves and accepts all. If we cannot listen to and sit with an opposing idea, it is nearly impossible to make decisions or progress. In all the topics the bishops have discussed so far, a key part of their deliberations is hearing one another fully, and this has led to wholesome and fruitful discussions.

I hope this practice of listening and bearing witness to one another is a practice we can strengthen as a Church at local, national and global levels, to better work together for God's world.

Reflections • Tuesday 9 August 2022 • By The Rev'd Bruce Sligo

“For I know the plans I have for you”



**"This photos was taken on 7 July 2022 in my backyard in Kallangur. The other chooks wouldn't play ball!"
(The Rev'd Bruce Sligo)**

I was ordained a priest in 1976 and after many decades serving, I retired from Murwillumbah in the Diocese of Grafton at the age of 66.

Upon my retirement, I was given a card with Jeremiah 29.11 written on it: “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.”

Since that time, God's plans have certainly unfolded. I have had the privilege of locum work at Kyogle, Byron Bay, Gold Coast North, Petrie, The Gap and, most recently, at Strathpine. I eagerly await my next locum appointment.

I have found retirement to be a time of change and reassessment, as well as a time of rich blessing. I relish the ministry opportunities in these years as a locum. I especially enjoy preparing people for Confirmation.

God is wonderfully involved in this phase of life, which is much less pressurised. Although, I still have a strong sense of call to ministry. I love what I do. I have served in both full-time and part-time locuming roles since leaving Murwillumbah.

I once had a parishioner say to me, "I'll have to live to 90 to achieve all I want to do!" I concur wholeheartedly! Locuming has enabled me "to keep my hand in", to keep publicly loving God and people.

I also keep busy between locum appointments – it is important to me that I stay physically fit and engaged with community.

The only grandfather I knew was a poultry breeder and a gardener, based in Rosewood near Ipswich, as well as a shoemaker. He influenced me deeply. I loved assisting him with raising poultry when I was a boy. It was incredibly exciting. So I am keeping a small poultry flock – mainly Light Sussex – during my retirement.

Retirement has also given me the space to pursue interests in gardening, as well as regular trips to the gym, bike riding and swimming.

Motivation in retirement is important. If I have one piece of advice for clergy retirees, it is to encourage them to maintain long-term relationships, while making new ones, especially with younger people. I cycle once a month from Sandgate to Redcliffe with a younger Anglican. We then have breakfast together. It is a highlight of my month.

Just as I had a special connection with my grandfather, I want to build a similar relationship with my five grandchildren, who are constant delights. My one grandson, Isaac, who lives in Cairns, enjoys riding his bike with his doting Pa when that is possible. My granddaughters are gorgeous and enjoy being taken to high tea in the Brisbane CBD. We go in on the train, which is a treat for them.

My seven-year-old granddaughter, Sophie, is leading chapel at Prince of Peace Lutheran College at the end of the month. She invited me along, saying "Pa, you have to be there." I am really looking forward to it.

The ongoing restoration of my home in Kallangur is another "project" that keeps me occupied and physically moving. Friends from near and far are assisting with the renovations.

This year has been a big one. I contracted COVID-19 in January; recovered from urological surgery; buried my only brother, Vernon; and, have been involved in the funeral of my brother-in-Christ, Ron, who was a good friend for 40 years.

I maintain the discipline of praying the Office every morning. This roots me in the Word of God, keeping me faithful when life presents such challenges and helps me to stay mindful of praying for people on my prayer list.

Even though I am retired, I am still a priest – my ordination vows have not yet expired!

I met a young musician at church on the weekend. He feels a bit isolated. So parishioners are taking him bushwalking soon and I am taking him to dinner after I complete the writing of this reflection.

Editor's note: The Parishes and other Mission Agencies Commission is continuing to host events for clergy related to retirement, finances and superannuation. The following events are coming up in 2022:

Thursday 25 August 1-2.30 pm via Zoom: Exploring Clergy Retirement ([Register online](#)).

Wednesday 7 September 2-3.30 pm via Zoom: Superannuation ([Register online](#)).

News • Monday 8 August 2022 • By Jo Leveritt

“How do we work together for a healthy parish?”



Parish of Bundaberg talking circle participants continue the conversation over morning tea: (L-R) Rector The Ven. Keith Dean-Jones, Sue Davis, Chris McLoughlin, Kathy Brecknell, Jenny Moreny, Mother Kate Ross, Leonie Boreel and Jo Leveritt on 3 July 2022

Two talking circles were recently facilitated for parish councillors and lay assistants at The Parish of Bundaberg to explore the question, “How do we work together for a healthy parish?”

A talking circle is an intentional space where participants share their insights on a given question or topic with the complete attention of others in the room.

The talking circles were facilitated by parish pastoral care coordinator Dr Howard Kingston and assistant parish priest Mother Kate Ross.

Kate Ross said that participants were given the option to share in the respectful and open gathering format.

“The talking circle process is an intentional way of coming together to talk about what is important to us and to listen to others,” Mother Kate said.

“Through the circle we create a collaborative space in which each of us can share our experiences, wisdom, questions, issues and ideas.

“The process is designed to enable deep and respectful speaking and listening, while also retaining the freedom to not speak.”

The Bundaberg talking circle participants described the experience as a respectful and constructive way to discuss matters important to the leadership team.

During the gatherings, participants said that they appreciated the people of the parish and the connections they had, expressing the need to establish further links within and across their congregations.

Youth ministry was identified as a key area to foster and strengthen.

Participants also identified that working together means listening and respecting each other.

The talking circle participants used a small bowl as the “talking piece”, which was held by the given speaker, with a pause between each person speaking.

The talking bowl was passed around the circle so people could speak in their seating order.

Talking circles are becoming an increasingly popular way for our Diocese’s parishes and ministries to explore salient topics.

Talking circles are valuable for parishes and ministries because they enable exploration of an important topic so that each person’s perspective is heard, without being judged or quickly commented on.

The way of contemplation



Leonie Clancy by the Atlantic Ocean on the first day of her Portuguese Coastal Way Camino in 2019

It is hard to say what first drew me to contemplative practices – it has always been with me, like a gentle tug. Perhaps it comes of growing up in the bush, free ranging through creation, talking to God as I went. What I can say is my spiritual life is ever deepened and my being nourished through contemplative ways. I love all things still and self-emptying. Self-emptying, or the “kenotic way”, is me. Contemplation for me is creating a space for rich conversations with the Divine, silently listening while being held in transformational love.

My experience of contemplative practices is the discipline of returning again and again without expectations – intentionally turning up and paying attention. Above all it is relational. I find that the plethora of contemplative practices all provide ways of sinking into the loving arms of God. However, I am especially drawn to practices of silence. Meditation is at the heart of my practice.

Initially, I experienced meditation in the Buddhist way of chanting, but once I was introduced to Christian meditation it became my way. I first met in person with a beautiful group of people; however, I have discovered that time and space are no barriers to gathering with others for meditation. Meditating together can happen over Zoom, via a phone teleconference and in any other digital spaces where people can gather. Meditation may, for example, begin with music, poetry or prayer, and then at the invitation of the “gong” move into silence for 20 minutes.

Benedictine Monk John Main described meditation as providing “glimpses” of God. Each time is anew, and so we are encouraged to come with a beginner’s mind. Meditation is not a skill to master by getting better and better. It is the fidelity of showing up to the unknowing, as the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* described it in the 14th century, and of opening to the Holy Spirit. The suggestion is to begin and end the day with meditation. I must admit to not always making it, but even a little meditation is beneficial.

Pilgrimage is another favourite contemplative way for me. A pilgrimage is walked one step at a time. This is what faced me several years ago in 2019 when I walked the [Caminho Português da Costa](#) (Portuguese Coastal Way) and the *Variante Espiritual* (Spiritual Way) to Santiago de Compostela in Spain's Galicia region. The final leg of the Spiritual Way is an exhilarating boat ride up an ocean inlet to Padrón. As legend has it, this was the path taken when the relics of Saint James the Apostle were brought in a stone boat to his final resting place in Santiago de Compostela.

However, before making that boat ride I had a long way to go. So facing north, I headed into the late autumn of the Northern Hemisphere. I walked up the west coast of Portugal into Spain, the Atlantic Ocean at my left shoulder, sometimes wild and crashing, other times gentle and inviting. Little did I know it would take much more than one step at a time to complete. It was only with a fortitude of God's grace that I reached my destination.

As usual nothing went to my plan. Self-emptying took on a literal meaning as the traveller's scourge gripped my gut. Yet so many profound moments. The walk became a continual conversation with God. A little like the Russian pilgrim praying the Jesus prayer, I found every breath was a prayer. An especially meaningful experience was receiving a personal blessing at the Blessing of the Peregrinos (pilgrims) during Vespers (Evening Prayer) under the cloisters of Monasterio de Santa Maria de Armenteira, a Cistercian monastery situated high in the mountains. It was built in 1168 and is now run by a small group of nuns dedicated to providing hospitality to the passing pilgrims. I stayed for several days – the ancient stone walls steeped in prayer held me tenderly in loving silence. In humility and faith, I continued.

Always a seeker and a pilgrim, about 18 months ago my curiosity drew me to [Holy Hermits Online](#) (HHO). I knew HHO priest The Rev'd Jamee Callard from when she was an ordinand and had previously enjoyed her deep spiritual wisdom. HHO offers an alternative to in-person Sunday services, including online contemplative service.

Being part of an online Zoom environment is personal and fun. "Fur babies" are an integral part of the Holy Hermits Online family. My kitten often joins in online to greet other HHO pets, such as fun-loving pooch Wiggles and his moggy pals, Jasmine and Angel.

Another special highlight is sharing an Agape meal (communal meal) during different seasons of the liturgical year. Often using the liturgical colour as the food colour theme, we eat together online. HHO's two-year birthday celebration is approaching and so we are looking forward to an online 70s themed [faith-music party](#), featuring food, music and attire. So we will be digging out the psychedelic flares and the fondue sets. Deviled eggs anyone?

Since joining the HHO community, I have experienced beautiful moments and a deepening relationship with God, as well as experiencing the challenges of my "shadow self". Deepening into the Holy Spirit's love brought me face to face with my ego self, with my long-standing tactics of self-protection emerging. I found myself pulling back and withdrawing as a result. Sensing something was amiss, The Rev'd Jamee gently reached out to me. Her gentle pastoral care guided me toward seeing my whole self as being created by God.

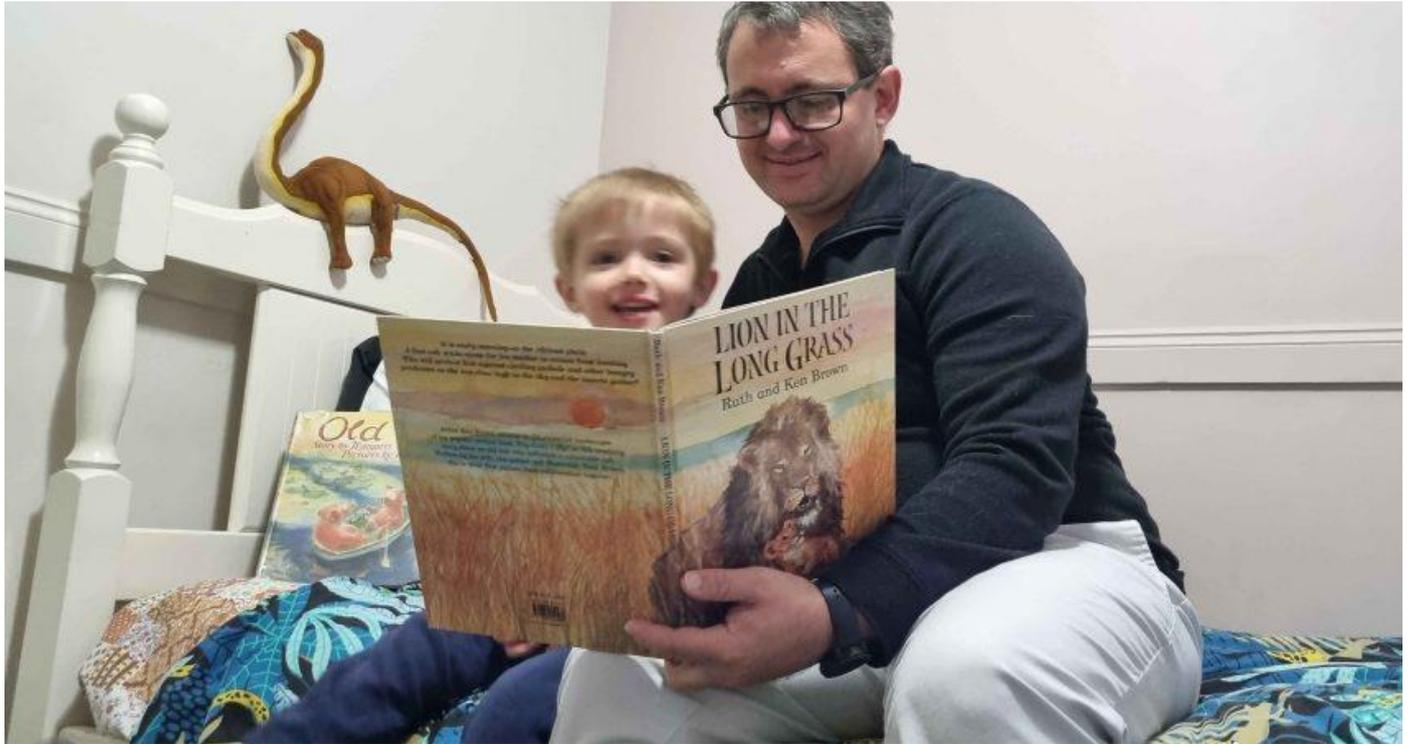
On reflection, the past 18 months with HHO have left me feeling grounded and refreshed in my relationship with God. Spending time with God is at the heart of my being. And with this in mind, I am especially looking forward to our next online retreat, as we listen and reflect on scripture and the

writings of mystic Hildegard of Bingen. Through music, poetry and stillness, the retreat will be a contemplative morning of spending time with God. What's not to like?

Editor's note: Join the Holy Hermits Online community on Saturday 27 August for an online retreat morning, facilitated by spiritual director Dilys, with creative exercises guided by spiritual direction formation student Susan. The retreat will focus on the Season of Creation and the theme "Listen to the Voice of Creation". Register or find out more from the [Holy Hermits Online website](#).

Reflections • Tuesday 9 August 2022 • By The Rev'd Andrew Schmidt

The lion and the pig



The Rev'd Andrew Schmidt and son John reading *Lion in The Long Grass* in August 2022

I have recently been thinking about children's books that I have collected. There are two that I want to share a little about with you. They are both especially suitable for Easter because they introduce the theme of death, and in the best possible way.

The first is [Lion in the Long Grass](#) (2004) by Ruth and Ken Brown. The second is [Old Pig](#) (1999) written by Margaret Wild and illustrated by Ron Brooks.

In *Lion in the Long Grass*, a young cub is left in the eponymous long grass by its mother. The cub believes it is all alone, unaware of jackals creeping closer. Suddenly out of the long grass an old lion emerges, perhaps a bit dodderly, but more than enough to frighten off some jackals. The old lion falls asleep in the shade, providing a safe space for the cub.

After a time, the old lion wakes up, and engages in a battle with a younger male lion to protect the cub – a battle that the old lion both wins and loses. He wins in that he drives off the young male, but loses because when the cub's mother returns the old lion has "fallen asleep" for the last time because of his injuries.

For me this is a story of a life spent to the last in service of others – in service of a future that will never be seen. It is a story of hope that reaches beyond the present life.

Old Pig is different. In this story, the old pig character has lived with her granddaughter for a long time. Eventually age catches up with the old pig, and she can no longer eat the meals she once enjoyed. She can no longer get up and participate in the shared chores together. She has become very tired.

So she puts her affairs in order and embarks on one final feast. Not a feast of food, but rather of memories, of the senses, of imagination and of deep seeing. Most importantly, she shares this final feast with her granddaughter, after which she has one final sleep.

This is a story of a life lived richly in community, sharing the mundane and recognising that family rhythms build a sacred time.

These stories tell me that death is not nearly as much to fear as is a life poorly spent.

News • Monday 8 August 2022

Budding beekeepers build apiary at Flinders Farm



Flinders Secondary School students "suit up" for beekeeping lessons at the Flinders Farm in 2019

More than 20 budding beekeepers are learning the art of apiary keeping in a new workshop series at Matthew Flinders Anglican College's half-hectare Flinders Farm on the Sunshine Coast.

Students, parents, grandparents and friends are learning and sharing knowledge alongside farm manager Jeff MacLennan as he hosts a new free beekeeping workshop series on Monday afternoons.

The workshops cover a range of skills, including handmaking bee frames for the hives, caring for the hives, harvesting and bottling the honey to enjoy as a treat.

The workshops will also explore how to repurpose leftover wax, such as for making beeswax candles and food wraps.

Students Beth Handley in Year 9 and Elizabeth Setchell in Year 10 joined the workshops to learn more about one of their favourite animals and hobbies.

Bethany lives on a farm and has beehives, as well as cows, horses and chickens.

"I enjoy being at the Flinders Farm because it's a chance to be outside and be with the animals such as Erol the emu and the chickens," Bethany said.

"It's amazing to see how the beehives at Flinders are coping and to watch as honey and brood stores increase.

"Bees are important as the planet would not function without them. They pollinate plants, creating life so that food chains and webs are supported through the flourishing plant life.

"I love how intricate the life and function of a hive are, as well as the fact that they dance to communicate!"

Elizabeth has two hives at home that she looks after with her father.

"It's so much fun to compare and share what we do with Farmer Jeff and the other people who attend the workshops," Elizabeth said.

"I always love a visit to the Flinders Farm to see Erol and to collect some delicious produce.

"It's really interesting observing the hive, comparing the honey colours and helping teach others how to check a hive.

"I love how smart bees are. They know that hexagons are the most efficient comb shape and can tell exactly who contributes what to the hive."

Farmer Jeff said he was thrilled to share his passion for beekeeping with people of all ages.

"We are fortunate to have 10 productive beehives here at our Flinders Farm and we want to share with our community the experience, rewards and joys of farm life," Jeff said.

"The workshops are also a chance for people to help, because there is a lot that goes into keeping hives healthy and clean, as well as harvesting the honey," he said.

"Beekeeping is a great hobby for young people and adults as it brings them in touch with one of nature's amazing creatures, and unplugs them from today's flood of digital technology and media.

"Most of the people in our group simply want to try a fun new hobby or are interested in owning hives, but first want to investigate the process before they make a commitment.

"We also have some people who already have their own beehives and want to learn more, share their knowledge and meet like-minded people."

The Flinders Farm is a vibrant hands-on education hub for children at the college, from little learners in the Flinders Early Learning Centre all the way through to Year 12 students, as well as staff.

Students visit the farm for curriculum learning and are also invited at lunchtimes to help out on the property and enjoy the peace of farm life.

Students develop environmental knowledge and passion through real-world projects, such as irrigation, composting, growing food, caring for animals and harvesting beehives.

The Flinders Farm is nurtured as a home to 14 chickens and an emu called Erol.

It has a 900 square metre orchard with a variety of fruit trees, such as avocados, limes, mandarins, oranges, lychees, mangoes and oranges.

The farm also features 600 square metres of vegetable gardens, as well as a compost making facility and commercial worm farm.

College staff and Farmer Jeff also teach in the farm classroom, which was built to a “rustic” design with roller doors on either side that open to let students experience the sights and smells of the farm.

For example, the Year 9 Agricultural Science curriculum is taught at the farm and focuses on how to produce nutrient dense food without pesticides and fungicides.

Students also learn how future generations can mitigate climate change using regenerative farming methods.

The subject is hands-on as students learn how to prepare veggie gardens, care for animals, install irrigation, test soil and interpret soil reports, make compost and compost tea, harvest beehives, and use both plant and soil health monitoring equipment.

To learn more about the Flinders Farm and Matthew Flinders Anglican College, visit the [College website](#).

St Margaret's students and cavoodles raise over \$90,000



St Margaret's school dog, Luna, and the Head of Primary School's dog, Daisy, joined in the Ponytail Project in 2022, with both cavoodles clipped and coiffed by local groomer CC's Pampered Pups, while the students' ponytails were cut

Almost 100 St Margaret's Anglican Girls School students and six teachers had their ponytails cut recently, while the school's two dogs were clipped and coiffed, raising over \$90,000 for cancer research and support.

The \$90,000 raised adds to an eight-year tally that now exceeds half a million dollars in donations to the [Cancer Council Queensland](#) and the Minotti Trust, which was established to support the family of a St Margaret's staff member who lost her life to cancer.

As for the ponytails, they have been made into countless wigs for patients suffering treatment hair loss.

School Co-Captain Holly Marchant said that her highlight was seeing the impact the initiative had on younger students.

"In the weeks leading up to the Ponytail Project, we sold raffle tickets for the chance to cut off a Prefect's ponytail at our Ponytail Project assembly," Holly said.

"A specific highlight for me was watching the excitement amongst the audience during this assembly when the raffle winners were cutting the Prefects' hair.

"I could see the younger girls' eyes light up, as they were inspired and enthused by the sacrifice the Prefects were making.

"I even heard some of the girls talking about what it will be like when they cut their hair in Year 12.

“To me this exemplified the enduring legacy of the Ponytail Project at St Margaret’s and throughout Australia, as it continues to grow in size and impact each year.

“While chopping off my ponytail was nerve-wracking and definitely outside of my comfort zone, knowing that my donation will help others to feel more confident in themselves is an inexplicable feeling.

“It was such a small sacrifice when you think about the positive impact that organisations such as The Cancer Council Queensland and the Minotti Trust have.”

The St Margaret’s school dog, Luna, and the Head of Primary School’s dog, Daisy, joined in for the first time this year, with both cavoodles clipped and coiffed by local groomer CC’s Pampered Pups.

Luna raised over \$700 towards the overall fundraising total.

The students’ ponytails were cut by hairdressers Ink for Hair.

Principal Ros Curtis said that giving is a part of the St Margaret’s culture.

“We encourage our students to develop the practice of lifelong giving through philanthropic activities like the Ponytail Project,” Ms Curtis said.

“These opportunities empower the girls to experience how their actions can make a positive difference in the lives of others and inspire them to continue on a journey of giving into their adult lives.

“The Ponytail Project requires the girls to do much more than fundraise and donate money though. It requires the girls to give something of themselves – to donate their own hair.

“I am immensely proud of their willingness to do this in today’s age of technology and social media, where much emphasis can be placed on a young woman’s appearance.”

The Ponytail Project was first launched in 2015 by four St Margaret’s students after a member of the school community was diagnosed with cancer.

The students were so moved to help, they launched the student-led fundraising initiative called the Ponytail Project, believing that cutting off their ponytails was a small price to pay to support those impacted by cancer.

Sadly, in 2016, St Margaret’s students had even more reason to support the initiative after the loss of one of their beloved teachers, who was also a past student, to cancer.

The groundswell of support in the initiative’s first two years led the Ponytail Project to become an annual campaign for the St Margaret’s community.

In 2019, the movement was encouraged in schools state-wide after being adopted by Cancer Council Queensland.

Cancer Council Queensland General Manager, Fundraising, Marketing and Communication Meaghan Bush congratulated the students on another amazing effort.

“We are so grateful to St Margaret’s for their unparalleled support of the Ponytail Project since bringing it to life in 2015,” Ms Bush said.

“Every ponytail chopped makes an incredible impact, with funds raised going towards lifesaving cancer research and essential support services such as counselling, accommodation and transport services for people living with cancer.”

News • Friday 5 August 2022 • By Philippe Coquerand

Homelessness Week: from sleeping rough to wearing scrubs



Anglicare Southern Queensland’s InSync Service Manager Rees Maddren with Cherice at Mount Gravatt’s Nathanael House (2022)

Homelessness is a sad reality for thousands of young people in Southern Queensland who find themselves living on the streets.

At just 16 years old, Cherice had been kicked out of home, having to move in with her other parent, who was later incarcerated. Despite juggling two jobs and school, she simply couldn’t afford the rent.

Cherice went to Anglicare’s Nathanael House in Mount Gravatt for emergency accommodation where she described the experience as daunting.

“We sat down together to eat meals, something I’d not done before,” Cherice said.

Cherice was able to continue working her two jobs, and focus on finishing her schooling, all while battling mental health challenges, something very common for young people accessing Anglicare services.

“At times, I didn’t know whether I’d get through it. But I’m a pretty task focused person, so with some help from the team at Anglicare, and my school reconnect worker, I just kept putting one foot in front of the other.”

Cherice soon moved to Bart’s Place, Anglicare’s transitional accommodation at Carina Heights where she finished school and began studying community service work, when she suddenly required hospitalisation for mental health support.

It was during this time that she was inspired to work in mental health and help people through their own mental health journey. Cherice returned to Bart’s Place to take up the role of lead tenant, helping other tenants and communicating with staff to ensure the house ran well.

After nine years of volunteering with Anglicare Southern Queensland, Cherice and her dog Sophie left Bart’s Place to live independently.

Qualifying as an enrolled nurse, Cherice went on to work at a mental health hospital. She is now a qualified registered nurse, and is working as a surgical nurse at a major SEQ hospital.

Anglicare Southern Queensland’s InSync Youth Service’s Manager Rees Maddren said he is incredibly proud of what Cherice has accomplished through Anglicare’s support services.

“Shift work as a nurse in the current environment is no easy task. But then, Cherice has proved that she thrives in a challenge,” Mr Maddren said.

“We are so proud of what she has achieved and we’re very grateful to have been part of her journey.

“More than 40% of Queensland’s homeless are under the age of 25. We provide early intervention, crisis accommodation, and housing support to combat youth homelessness and help people build a happier and healthier lives off the streets.

“Many young people can experience tumultuous and uncertain upbringings as well as mental illness, family breakdown, social inequality, and youth unemployment which can all sadly lead to homelessness.

“Queensland’s rental housing prices also have sky-rocketed to record prices which is also affecting housing for young adults. Brisbane’s median rental asking price for houses rose 16.9 per cent in 12 months, while units rose 12.5 per cent.

“Homelessness Week runs from 1 to 7 August and encourages action to resolve homelessness in Australia.

“We believe that with the right support network, every young person can get on the right path to reach their full potential. Early intervention, and support services like Anglicare Southern Queensland are critical,” he said.

Find out more about [Anglicare Southern Queensland’s youth homelessness programs](#).

First published on the [Anglicare Southern Queensland website](#) on 4 August 2022.

Lambeth 2022: 'Perfect love casts out fear' during final service in Canterbury Cathedral



The Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr Thabo Makgoba, at the close of the 2022 Lambeth Conference final service

There was a festival atmosphere as the bishops and their spouses gathered in Canterbury Cathedral for the closing eucharist of the Lambeth Conference on Sunday. Cassocks rather than choir dress were the order of the day, and there was no formal procession: people sat where they chose, and the place was rocking at least half an hour before the 4 p.m. start.

That half-hour set the tone: the big worship-band sound yielded at one point to Celtic influence, as a single, muted electric violin resonated in the cathedral's acoustics. The video of the service captures just the end of this, with singing in Filipino.

The opening hymn, "Christ is made the sure foundation", had been chosen weeks ago in all likelihood, when the unity of the Communion was something hoped for but not assured. The line "binding all the Church in one" was now sung with what appeared to be relief and jubilation.

Fitting, too, were the words of the reply to the opening "charge": "Who are you and whom do you seek?" The answer: "We are servants of Jesus Christ, and we come seeking the grace of God, to travel on in his service together."

In the Gloria, the congregation caught on to the rhythms of the repeated "Alleluia, Amen". A solo trumpet soared above the voices.

The cathedral choir had greater prominence than in the opening service of the Conference, singing the Kyries and Sanctus in a setting by Josef Rheinberger, and, in place of a read epistle, Samuel

Sebastian Wesley's famous Eastertide anthem from 1 Peter 1, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ".

When the Archbishop of Canterbury was virged to the pulpit for his sermon, a trick of the light meant that the virger with the virge resembled a protective angel with a flaming sword. This impression reinforced the Archbishop's theme: courage in the face of fear.

He began by warning against clinging to the familiar: "Our assumptions, our possessions, become a comfort blanket which ultimately smothers us. For they forbid us to engage with each other and with Christ. We make our worlds and our ambitions smaller because it feels safer, and they come to define and to constrain us.

"So the institutions, the power, the status, positions that we hold on to out of fear — personal fear for ourselves, fear for the future of the Church — end up fulfilling our fears."

Meanwhile, there were real reasons to fear. "There are people here who will know the uncertainty of food supplies, the precarious nature of poverty, the insecurity of life in places of conflict and flux and natural disaster. People around the world live with the reality of these fears every day. For so many, it is very real indeed."

There was, however, God's command: "Do not fear."

"We are continually being invited to begin a journey from fear to faith," the Archbishop said. And when we slip from faith to fear, then Christ comes to us as he did to the fearful disciples in the upper room. He appears to us and says: 'Do not fear.'"

During the sermon, Archbishop Welby related how he had discovered in 2016 that his biological father was not the man whom he thought of as his father (News, 8 April 2016). He described how news of his illegitimacy was received in the corridors of Church House, Westminster.

"I am told it was the only point at [which] the head legal adviser of the Church of England at that time was seen to run. The secretary-general had said to him: 'The Archbishop's just rung up to say he's illegitimate,' and he said: 'That's no problem — we changed the canon that said you could not be a bishop if you were illegitimate some years ago. At least, I'm sure we changed the canon. Excuse me, I'm going to check!'

"It had been changed in 1952. But he said to me later on that, as he ran down the corridor, he thought: 'If we haven't changed it, he's not a bishop. And if he's not a bishop, the priests he ordained aren't priests. And if they aren't priests, then the people they've married aren't married.'"

The lesson that the Archbishop drew was that his identity was known to God at a far deeper level than any DNA test.

Having addressed the bishops directly in three keynote addresses during the Lambeth Conference, the Archbishop spoke more generally during his sermon. None the less, it was clear that he was talking about the central purpose of the gathering when he said: "We have met, over the past weeks and days, with people from all the corners of the globe, from contexts and experiences that are totally alien to us. And in these meetings we have found the antidote to fear. We find in John: perfect love casts out fear."

And taking up the theme of his final address, that Christianity was a revolutionary movement, he praised the courage of bishops and their spouses, clergy and laity, who made the Good News known to those who lived in fear; who met to worship after bomb attacks; who walked across mountains to baptise and confirm; who protested against civil-rights abuses, gerrymandering, and “the shooting of unarmed people of colour in a routine traffic stop”.

As God’s people grew in love, their fear shrank, and the Kingdom of God found space and its rule in their hearts and lives, he said. “As you, as I, go home,” he concluded, “do not fear. Take heart, take courage — because it is the Father’s good pleasure to give you his kingdom.”

As in the opening service, the Lord’s Prayer was recited in every language of the 165 countries represented.

The global presence was expanded by the offertory hymn, Athelstan Riley’s “Ye watchers and ye holy ones”. And the music during the distribution reflected the Anglican Communion’s international character, with texts in Spanish, Arabic, and Xhosa.

After the communion, Archbishop Welby paid tribute to the cathedral’s Precentor, Canon Max Kramer, whose last service this was before his departure for Keble College, Oxford. The Archbishop reeled off some of Canon Kramer’s achievements since 2017, not least the opening and closing Lambeth Conference services.

If anyone was in any doubt about whether the Communion could still walk together, the Archbishop of Cape Town, Dr Thabo Makgoba — after he had thanked Archbishop Welby and his wife, Caroline, for their ministry to the bishops and spouses during the Conference — invited the congregation “to walk together, singing and rejoicing, out of this holy and ancient cathedral as a sign of our calling into the world that Jesus Christ came to save”. They not only walked: captivated by a jaunty Zulu song, they danced.

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On World Indigenous Day, WCC report highlights the importance of raising Indigenous Peoples' voices in working against climate change



First Nations people speak at the UN climate negotiations COP24 in Katowice, Poland (Photo: Sean Hawkey/Life on Earth Pictures)

The Joint Report of the Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network Reference Group and the Working Group on Climate Change of the World Council of Churches (WCC) affirmed the integral and pivotal role Indigenous Peoples have in shaping an alternative path of being in the right relationship with the whole of Creation.

“Climate change, biodiversity loss, and ecological degradation are existential threats, raising spiritual, moral, and justice issues that demand our response in faith,” reads the report.

“The World Council of Churches (WCC) Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network Reference Group and the Working Group on Climate Change, at their inaugural joint meeting in Yu-Shan Indigenous Theological College and Seminary, in 2019, affirmed the essential role of Indigenous wisdom and spirituality in addressing the climate crisis, the loss of biodiversity and the threat to human life.”

Commenting on the report, Renemsongla Ozukum, a member of the WCC Working Group on Climate Change, says, “from an Indigenous People’s perspective, two radical changes are required if we want to adopt a bottom-up and genuinely long-term approach to climate crises. First, the leadership of Indigenous Peoples should be placed at the centre of current global debates on climate change. Second, the narrative and policies for combatting climate change should be reframed in Indigenous thought forms and practices. This would require a U-turn in how we organise, live, and see the world around us.”

The report acknowledges and looks to Indigenous Peoples and communities for leadership.

“Although they have suffered and continue to suffer many atrocities, they are not victims, nor are they passive participants whose opinion and wisdom we seek only to justify or validate some of our theological positions,” it says.

The document also mentions how the COVID-19 crisis has revealed what Indigenous Peoples have been telling the world for centuries.

“They have warned that failing to protect our ecosystems and nature’s biodiversity will lead to a significant crisis. But their voices have been ignored.”

For Rev. Dr Solomon Rongpi, member of the Ecumenical Indigenous Peoples Network Reference Group, we are invited to “return to the paths of repentance and seek forgiveness; abandon arrogance, authoritarian, exploitative, oppressive, and discriminatory attitudes and ways of life. Return to mother earth, who nourishes and sustains us with her abundant and bounteous produce daily.

The report finishes with recommendations that will be brought to the Indigenous Peoples Pre-assembly and the WCC 11th Assembly convening in Karlsruhe, Germany, at the end of August 2022.

[Read the report here](#)

[On International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples, WCC reiterates commitment to renewal of creation](#) (news release, 9 August 2022)

First published on the [World Council of Churches website](#) on 9 August 2022.