It was an early start on what is the first day of the week. On Sunday 14 August, I arrived at St George's Anglican Church in Beenleigh for their Sunday service. As their Bishop, I have joined the congregation in worship before. However, what made this visit different is that it was the first Sunday after their priest left to form the first church under the “Diocese of the Southern Cross”.

What struck me, as I stood in the carpark of St George's, was the delight and surprise as people spontaneously gathered upon their arrival – a kind of, “Oh, so good to see you here!”

In their excitement and joy, there was something of the resurrection in their greeting of each other.

Inevitably there were other complex emotions, too, as the morning service progressed. That Sunday, the congregation was about half what it was the week before.

There was bewilderment and sorrow as one parishioner realised that a long-term friend who had sat on the same pew for many years was missing. They had either decided to go elsewhere or perhaps chosen not to attend church that day.
The pain was not just because some long-term friends were not there, but because they had chosen to walk away – to not share the Eucharist around the same table.

This is about as painful as church life gets. This kind of pain is especially raw when it is experienced in pews with missing faces on a Sunday morning.

The grief experienced by Beenleigh parishioners is now being experienced by the Wishart community, with the more recent resignation of their long-term priest.

When a church experiences such grief, it is important for all to show compassion and sensitivity – in both our online and offline conversations – because what has happened can be likened to a bereavement. We need to tread gently, listening with deep care.

As we do so, let us listen first and then respond with gentleness and understanding.

Whatever way we see this period of time, it is first and foremost a pressing pastoral issue for the Beenleigh and Wishart communities – parishioners, lay leaders and remaining clergy. They are grieving.

I am also deeply concerned for the gender and sexually diverse people and their loved ones in our parishes who have been impacted. As a parent of a non-binary young adult, I can identify with the pain felt.

The Christian Gospel speaks into this whole situation. Where there is hurt and bereavement, there is always hope. Where there is death, there is the sure and certain hope of the resurrection. It is not just at 7.30am in a cold church carpark that we might glimpse something new.

“I therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.” (Ephesians 4.1-6)
Peace Bells of Christ Church, Bundaberg muffled for Queen’s passing

Bells in the Christ Church, Bundaberg tower were rung fully muffled for 25 minutes before the Wednesday 14 September 2022 service of commemoration for Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II

The Peace Bells of Christ Church, Bundaberg rang in rare full muffles before a special service commemorating Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II last week, as hundreds of locals stood in silence.

Bells are half muffled for Remembrance Day, but are only ever fully muffled if a king or queen dies.

More than 300 people paid their respects at the service on Wednesday, including parishioners, other Bundaberg locals and visitors from the United Kingdom.

Acting Priest-in-Charge Kate Ross said that it was moving to see the whole community gather to honour the life of the long-serving monarch.

“Following the death of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, many wish to remember her and express their condolences to the Royal Family,” Mother Kate said.

“Indeed it is important for all those who mourn to come together to share in both grief and celebration.”
The service also marked the ascension of King Charles III to the throne.

The Federal Member for Hinkler the Hon Keith Pitt MP delivered the reading.

He was joined by Bundaberg Mayor Jack Dempsey and fellow Bundaberg Regional Councillors.

The service commenced at 5.30pm, with the Peace Bells ringing fully muffled from 5pm to 5.25pm.

Leather patches known as “muffles” are used to dull the sound of each bell.

Muffles are attached to the clapper to produce a muted sound.

The full protocol is provided by the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers in the United Kingdom.

Wide Bay ITV livestreamed the Christ Church, Bundaberg service for members of the community who were unable to attend in person.

The muffled bells and service may be viewed on the Wide Bay ITW website.
I met with Fr Nicholas on Saturday at the Cathedral to pray with him at his “Hunger for Hope” vigil. After I prayed with him, I immediately called the anglican focus editor, Michelle, because I really wanted to write about how moved I am by his willingness to pray and fast for nine days straight – for people like me.

I came here 20 years ago after fleeing a civil war, in what is now South Sudan, by foot as a young child. I spent 15 years in a refugee camp where I was granted refugee status.

What I want to say is that any person who risks their life to seek safety is the same. Whether people come here via a United Nations refugee camp or arrive by either boat or plane to apply for asylum, we all have one thing in common – that is the need to find a safe place to live in freedom.

It seems apparent to me, that people seeking asylum are more likely to experience racism when arriving by boat, compared to those coming by plane or from refugee camps (like I did). I don’t understand why.

We are all the same. We all seek the same thing – safety, freedom and peace. And, we all want to contribute – absolutely. For us to be able to contribute, however, we need to feel safe here and this includes living our lives free of racism.

Editor’s note: The theme for this year’s International Day Of Peace is “End Racism. Build Peace”. Professor Megan Davis will deliver this year’s lecture in St John’s Cathedral on Wednesday 21 September 2022. Register online via EventBrite.
Q&A with new Priest-in-Charge of St Andrew’s, South Brisbane, seasoned traveller and former newspaper man, Karl Przywala

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I am now living in the rectory at Highgate Hill. I moved there when I returned from my European trip in August. At the time of writing, I am awaiting my container from Vancouver, which needs customs clearance at the docks here, as well as a suitcase, last seen at Munich Airport.

I worship at St Andrew’s, South Brisbane, where I was commissioned Priest-in-Charge in May.

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

I became a lay reader at the age of 28 in England, enabling me to preach and take services. When I moved to Australia in 1996, I was involved in a church in Sydney (St Philip’s, Church Hill) and my rector encouraged me to put myself forward for ordination. I was ordained in 2004, and since then I have served in the Church of England, the Anglican Church of Canada and now in Australia.

What is your current role, and what does your role involve?

My current role is Priest-in-Charge of St Andrew’s, South Brisbane. During the week, I do preparation work for Sunday services. There are various groups that I take part in. I also meet people for pastoral care and to organise baptisms, weddings and funerals. There is also the big picture strategic vision
stuff – thinking about where we are going in the short-, medium- and long-terms in consultation with folk, including the wardens and Parish Council.

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

I am launching my first two Adult Christian Education endeavours at St Andrew’s, which are a three-Saturday course called “Being the Bad Guys” (based on a book of the same name), and a 10-session course on Christian worship.

I am also going to start holding film and faith evenings at St Andrew’s, probably quarterly.

**What has been one of the highlights of your time in your role so far?**

It has been great to be part of a men's Bible study on Tuesday mornings that meets in a room under the church. I go along as a member of the group and am fed by participating. The members know a lot about the Bible and following Jesus and it’s a gift as a minister to see parishioners taking responsibility for the group.

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

My predecessor Alan was at St Andrew's for 28 years of faithful ministry. After he retired, there was a period of locum ministers. In this situation, a new minister needs to appreciate what has been before, while also working out what needs to happen next, all in consultation. This is still a work in progress.

**What are the primary strengths of the Church and what is the best way to make the most of these for the benefit of our communities?**

Because of my background, I appreciate the many opportunities of being part of an international church. I have now landed in South Brisbane, which is a great central location. The parish is gifted in so many ways and so we have a solid basis for doing ministry.

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

We want to grow and the way we grow is by being the very best that we can. The number one recipe for growth in my book is being faithful – staying close to God, as revealed in Jesus.

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

My mum was an Evangelical Anglican and my dad was a Polish Roman Catholic. I was baptised and confirmed Roman Catholic. However, when I was 18 and moving out of home for the first time to go to university, I decided to become an Anglican. This shift happened as part of a stocktake I did, deciding to take God seriously for the first time. My involvement with the Christian Union at Durham University in the early 1980s was also very formative.

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

My faith has led me from place to place. I have moved because of ministry calls. The Church and my belief in Jesus have been constants, as I have moved from continent to continent.
What is your favourite Bible scripture and why?

When I was at theological college we were asked for a Bible verse that summed up the Gospel for us. I chose John 8.32: “...and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.”

Alongside that, I’d also like to place Mark 8.36: “For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?” This puts everything into perspective for me – as it is said, “You can’t take it with you.”

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

I toured Germany in 2017 as part the 500th anniversary celebration of the Reformation. I find Martin Luther inspiring. He was willing to stand up and be counted, and his action has impacted on the world.

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?

Whatever our differences are, they are surmountable by our belief in God, as revealed in Jesus. This binds us together and gives us joy. This starts with us as individuals – in individual relationship with God. We need to build on our personal relationships with God first – this is the source of our unity when we gather.

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

It’s powerful when random strangers are kind. When I arrived at the international airport in Melbourne in 1994, there was no “welcome” from any of the immigration staff as a new permanent resident. Before boarding my connecting flight to Perth, I went to the airport chapel. In the chapel was a group of Melbourne residents who ministered to travellers and other people there. They gave me the welcome I had been hoping for.

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

I used to be a triathlete, so it used to be running, cycling and swimming. I have now reached a stage in life where it’s more reading and listening to orchestral music.

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

Assuming that the Bible is already on the island, then I will settle for a really good commentary and a holy communion set.

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

“We are all sinners here – come and join us” because there is room for all.
Where do you do your best thinking?
When travelling – it broadens the mind.

What is your best childhood memory?
Seeing the sea for the first time. I was probably about five.

What is your earliest memory?
I remember being in the pram in the back garden in Birmingham.

If you are having a bad day, what do you do to cheer yourself up?
Remind myself that there is always tomorrow. I also think of good times from the past.

What makes you nostalgic and why?
I worked in the commercial side of newspapers – I hanker for the days when the newspaper was king.

What day would you like to re-live and why?
My 21st birthday. I was at university and I remember it being a good day from beginning to end.

What item should you throw out, but can’t bear to part with?
I keep too many books that I will probably never read again. To my credit, I shared a lot of things before leaving Vancouver, including 1,200 LP records.
Good afternoon,

My name is Aunty Dr Rose Elu. My people are from the beautiful island of Saibai in the Torres Strait Islands, which are located between the north of Australia and Papua New Guinea.

I acknowledge and thank the people of Canterbury for welcoming me to their land. I bring with me the blessings of my ancestors from the Torres Strait. I am proud to represent the First Nations peoples of Australia here today.

As is customary, I would like to greet you all in my language.

*Mina kapu borthaynga mura ngithamulpa.*

Good morning to you all.

*Ina ngalpa garwoeudhamin nabi maygi boeradhanu.*

For us to gather here at this holy place.

*Ngalpa lake eso manin Awghadhapa nabi goeygipa*
We give thanks to God for this day.

_Ubilnga matha kedha ngitha ngurpemin ngoeymun igililmaynu a._

I would like you to learn our cultural way of life.

_Pudhamin mura ngalpalpa ngulaygoepa yananab_

So that each and every one of you understand.

Today I would like to share with you about four interrelated key things that are important to my people. These are Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians; the Coming of The Light, of the holy Bible, to my people in 1871; damage to the climate; and, a forthcoming referendum about an Indigenous Voice to Parliament enshrined in the Australian Constitution.

Very broadly speaking, there are two main ethnic groups of Indigenous peoples from Australia. These are the Aboriginal peoples who comprise hundreds of discrete Nations from the mainland and surrounding islands, such as Tasmania in the south. And, Torres Strait Islanders, like myself, who are ethnically Melanesian and from islands in the Torres Strait in Australia's north. People from each Aboriginal Nation and across the Torres Strait Islands speak different languages and celebrate diverse cultures.

We do, however, have many things in common, including a history of colonial oppression; respect for others’ protocols, traditions and lands; cultures of caring for one another; respect for God’s good creation; and, strong oral traditions.

Children love to hear their parents and grandparents tell them stories. When I was young my father, who was a Saibai chief, would gather his children around him and tell us stories. One of the stories my father told his children was about the migration of my people from Saibai in the far western group of the Torres Strait Islands to the Aboriginal Nations of the Gudang and Yadaykhenu on the Northern Peninsula Area of the state of Queensland.

In the late-1940s, my people needed to migrate to seek safety from the threat of tsunami and malaria. We believe that God spoke into the hearts of our Elders and led them to the First Peoples of the peninsula, including to the Gudang and Yadakhenu peoples.

My father and other Saibai Elders understood that in order to move to another people’s territory that they had to seek their consent and negotiate the way with them. So, my father, along with other Elders, went to the peninsula in Far North Queensland one night to do this, bravely breaching a police-enforced curfew.

He was met on the beach by the peninsula’s First Peoples who were waiting to welcome an unknown arrival. Somehow the Holy Spirit had spoken into their hearts and directed them to the beach to wait for and welcome our Elders who arrived by lugger.

Even though the Queensland Government drew up boundaries ahead of my people’s arrival without the consent of the peninsula’s Traditional Custodians, we knew that we had to seek permission from the Custodians and respect their protocols before we migrated. They welcomed my people graciously and we live together harmoniously to this day.
Before my mother, my siblings and I joined him, my father lived in an old army hut in Seisia on the peninsula. Ahead of building what was to become our new home, he went to the peninsula’s First Peoples to seek their counsel about what particular trees would be best for building and he sought their permission to cut some down. They then showed him some trees between two hills. My father then set about building a house by hand for my family – Dad, Mum and 10 young folk. This involved moving a lot of very heavy timber.

So my father and his brothers built a raft out of recycled 44-gallon fuel drums to move the timber because it was easier to move it from one end of the coast to another rather than by land. The makeshift rafts were pulled by ropes attached to dinghies, which were powered by oars. They then used a wagon that they had built to take the timber the rest of the way over land. The wagon was pulled by my father and his brothers using ropes. By the time Mum and we siblings came, my father and his brothers had built a seven bedroom home with a wraparound verandah.

I have vivid memories being welcomed by the Gudang and Yadaykhenu peoples. They became like adopted family to me. As an Elder, I now gather my grandchildren and grandnieces and grandnephews around me and tell them stories. This is one I like to tell them.

When I was about six or seven, my father and uncles set sail in a small dinghy from Seisia to Thursday Island. We were not far from Seisia when our boat capsized in the waves. As I couldn’t swim yet, my father and uncles passed me from one to another to get me safely to shore. They then carried me to the village in Seisia where my adopted Aboriginal grandma and grandpa rubbed my legs with goanna lizard oil to strengthen my exhausted limbs. It was common for my adopted Aboriginal family to lovingly care for us all with bush medicine when we were sick or injured.

God calls us to respect one another. This, in part at least, involves respecting people’s territories, traditions and protocols; seeking counsel and consent; and, caring for one another. Respect is also about being welcoming and inclusive. When respect is fostered, harmony presides. When respect is denied, harm is caused.

However, harm can be healed through reconciliation. The dictionary tells us that the etymology of the term “reconciliation” stems from the Latin “re”, which means “back”, and “conciliare” which means “bring together”.

2 Corinthians 5.18-20 tells us that:

“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ…”

The Bible thus tells us what it means to be reconciled to God as ambassadors for Jesus. And, we are also told that God has given us the ministry of reconciliation – of bringing back together. So reconciliation is sacred ground indeed.

In Australia, churches, especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander clergy and Elders, are leaders when it comes to Reconciliation between First Nations peoples and non-Indigenous Australians. For example, the annual National Reconciliation Week started as the Week of Prayer for Reconciliation in 1993 during the International Year of the World’s Indigenous Peoples. Today National Reconciliation Week is celebrated in workplaces, schools and childcare centres, community organisations, and by individuals Australia-wide.
For meaningful Reconciliation with First Peoples to happen in our churches, as part of this “bringing back together”, Australians from all walks of life are gathering to share stories about our histories and spiritualities. This is another story I like to share.

I was not the best with sailing growing up, especially given that I am from the sea. I suffered terrible seasickness as a child. Whenever we sailed, I would always stay on deck, close to my father so I felt safe. Once when my family was out sailing in a lugger, I saw a huge rainbow at the back of Thursday Island, about 40km from the Queensland mainland. I pointed at the rainbow and remarked about the beautiful colours to my father. He asked me to go and gather my brothers and sisters who were below deck. As we sat around my father while he steered the rudder, he told us that, “The rainbow is God’s creation and God made this world in beautiful colours, including his people.” He then told us not to be judgmental and to always respect, honour and listen to one another. He said that loving others is always the most important thing.

As well as National Reconciliation Week, another key date in the Anglican Church of Australia’s calendar is the Coming of The Light. I’d like to share with you some of what this very special date means for Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Last year we celebrated the historic 150th anniversary of “The Coming of The Light”, commemorating the date that the London Missionary Society and Melanesian Christian leaders landed on the Torres Strait Island of Erub, introducing the Bible there. Following this, we ceased tribal warfare and other cultural practices after learning and understanding what it means not to take someone’s life.

It is important for all Anglicans to appreciate that Jesus was present in my people before the Bible – before the Light of the Gospel – came to the Torres Strait Islands on that special day in 1871. Our spirituality lies in the land, sea and sky and since time immemorial our people have believed in a Creator – we just did not know yet that the Creator was the Christian God. As the custodians of the land, sea and sky, my people had already conceived that there was a Creator God before the Bible came to us.

While the Coming of The Light – the coming of the holy Bible – made this connection for us, we had already received God before the arrival of the English and Melanesian missionaries because Jesus was already with us. So the Coming of The Light commemorates the Gospel coming to us and giving us a name for our Creator, whose image and likeness we are made in.

However, this is not the message that children’s Bibles published in the English language told me when I was growing up. When I was at Sunday School at age 10 or 11, I remember looking at an illustration of Jesus in a children’s Bible. Jesus was pictured as a man with very fair skin and sitting on his knees were very fair skinned children whom he was engaged in happy conversation with. At his feet sat a dark skinned girl who reminded me of me. “Why was Jesus not smiling at and talking with her also?” I wondered. I felt alienated, set apart, distanced by this illustration, rather than welcomed and included. Sharing a story like this takes a spirit of openness and courage. Reconciliation – being willing to “bring back together” – takes a spirit of openness and courage.

We have come a long way in the “bringing back together” process since this children’s Bible was published.

When I was a teenager living in Seisia on the peninsula, I often asked my older brother who was an Anglican priest and my parents about the Coming of The Light. I did not understand why it was called
this – I thought that our people had always been in the light. Their response was, “Yes. That is true. We were always in the light. When the missionaries brought us the light of scripture, the light of the Gospel unified with ours.”

Because our spirituality lies in the sea, sky and land, which are part of God’s good creation, we have an intrinsic connection to the sea, sky and land. We see ourselves as belonging to creation. It is central to our wellbeing. Torres Strait Islanders are seafaring people, so we live off the land and the sea. Our traditional foods, such as taro, yams, cassava, sweet potato, fish and shellfish have always nourished us. These foods are also important culturally because they feature in our ceremonies and celebrations.

There are 17 inhabited islands in the Torres Strait and seven of these are inundated with water due to rising sea levels. My island of Saibai is one of these. Because of damage to the climate, we are finding it increasingly difficult to obtain clean fresh drinking water, natural materials for shelter and land that is safe to live on. Coastline erosion has destroyed gardens of traditional foods and tribal ceremonial sites.

However, it is not just Melanesian people from low-lying islands like myself who are experiencing the daily impacts of a damaged climate. Other Melanesian peoples are impacted. In Papua New Guinea climate-induced droughts since 2015 and early frosts since the 1990s have caused severe food shortages.

I am also told that in the highlands of West Papua groundwater is being contaminated by salt water because of rising sea levels. Frosts and blizzards in the West Papuan highlands have taken the lives of villagers. Weather extremes are impacting food production, including resilient traditional crops, such as sago and taro. Coastline erosion has caused churches and whole cemeteries to disappear into the sea.

As Anglicans we are called “to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and sustain and renew the life of the earth.” So as part of my role as an Elder, I lobby the Queensland and Australian Governments for meaningful policy change so damage to the climate can be reversed. I stand in solidarity with other Australians at protests, calling for this meaningful policy change. I also gather with Australian Anglicans in public prayer vigils for an ongoing heart’s conversion towards care for Creation.

Australia recently had a change of Federal Government, with another political party now in leadership. One of the key drivers of this shift is that Australians want meaningful policy change at a national level so that damage to the climate can be reversed. We want our elected representatives to represent us and to safeguard the future of our children and grandchildren.

If we all work together, we can create safe and healthy communities. We see this in the popularity of home solar energy, which has made Australia the most solar country per capita in the world. The state of Queensland, where I live and where my island of Saibai is located in the north, is affectionately known as the “Sunshine State”. In Queensland’s capital of Brisbane where I am based, the streets are lined with solar-roofed houses.

Australia’s First Peoples are well aware of the link between a damaged climate and poor health outcomes. A damaged climate is a key driver of flooding, severe cyclones, heatwaves and bushfires. Such events have serious health related effects, with infectious diseases like rheumatic heart disease
and mosquito-borne diseases increasing. The supply-chain of life-saving medications, including for the disproportionate number of First Peoples living with diabetes, is being interrupted. And, socio-cultural, psychological and spiritual distress is also occurring.

However, there is hope. There is hope if the voices of Australia's First Peoples are heard and acted upon. History tells us this.

On 3 June 1992, the High Court of Australia found that a group of five plaintiffs from Mer, in the east of the Torres Strait, were the island's Traditional Owners. This decision was momentous – and not just for these five. The case has had a profound impact on the lives of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples since and has helped to foster reconciliation between First Nations and non-Indigenous Australians.

Through this Mabo Case, which was named after the first listed plaintiff, the late Uncle Eddie Koiki Mabo, the myth that at the time of colonisation the lands now known as Australia were *terra nullius* (or “land belonging to no one”) was overturned.

Twelve months after the High Court judgement, the Commonwealth *Native Title Act 1993* was passed through Australian Parliament. This Act has enabled other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to make claims based on their ongoing traditional rights to their lands and waters.

Fast forward 25 years and a National Constitutional Convention of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leaders was held in Australia's centre. At this seminal 2017 gathering, the Uluru Statement From the Heart was signed. The Uluru Statement From the Heart is an invitation to the Australian people to walk with us as a movement for a better future. An Indigenous Voice to Parliament included in the Constitution is the first stage of the Uluru Statement's reforms. Inspired by the Statement, last year my Diocese of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland made a formal submission in support of the call for this Voice.

In order for the Australian Constitution to be changed, a successful referendum must be undertaken. So 'From the Heart', the campaign stemming from the National Constitutional Convention, is calling for a referendum to be held in 2023 on this Voice. Australia's new Prime Minister has promised to hold a referendum on constitutional recognition in his first term of Parliament.

Importantly, a Voice to Parliament that is included in the Australian Constitution will give all Australians the best chance of finally closing the significant health and life expectancy gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

This is because a Voice to Parliament, included in the Constitution, would enable Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to advise Federal Parliament about laws and policies that impact them in a more direct, streamlined and effective way. This means that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders would be included in the law-making process, rather than having politicians and policy makers merely deciding what is best for us.

When Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples have a meaningful say on issues that affect them, we get better results on the ground in key areas such as health and education. Ensuring this Constitutional guarantee of a Voice will help provide our Indigenous leaders and their communities with stability and longevity, particularly across election cycles and changes of Government.
Whatever model the Voice takes, it is my hope that the First Peoples who form this Voice speak compellingly about the connection between damage to the climate and the health outcomes of First Peoples. The Uluru Statement From the Heart is a gift to all Australians – a roadmap to fairness and meaningful change. So by supporting the Voice, Australians will also take another meaningful step forward towards Reconciliation.

Let us Pray.

This “Prayer of The Light” was made by one of the former Bishops of the Diocese of North Queensland, the late Bishop Eric Hawkey.

O’ Christ the light of the world
We thank you that your light shines among us
Draw us ever closer to you
So that free from sin
We may show forth the light of you glory in the world.

Amen.

Editor’s note: The Season of Creation starts on 1 September on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and ends on 4 October, which is the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi. To find out about local Season of Creation events, please keep an eye on the anglican focus Events page.

Reflections • Tuesday 20 September 2022 • By The Rev’d Cameron Freese

Lessons in collaboration from a vintage cartoon

"What is most inspiring about the Justice League is that these heroes continuously left their egos and self-interest at the door, trusting and work alongside one another " (The Rev’d Cameron Freese)
One of the interesting things I have observed over the last 20 years is the resurging interest in superhero pop culture. The constant stream of movies and remakes and TV series has been extraordinary. In some cases this has given us access to characters we otherwise would not have encountered. With this in mind, I must admit that I am a big fan of the superhero narrative. And, while I am a *Batman* enthusiast (particularly the TV version from the 1960s) and the DC Universe, my favourite will always be Marvel Comics' *Spider-Man*.

However, I have been reflecting on DC's *Justice League* a little bit of late – probably because I recently watched the "Snyder cut" again. Of course, this always takes me back to my favourite *Justice League* version – the 1970s-1980s cartoon TV series, *Super Friends*. And, trust me on this, when that happens YouTube cops a hammering.

Regardless of the version, there are some fundamentals that are shared across all *Justice League* iterations.

After undertaking some essential Internet research, I discovered that the individual members of the *Justice League* (first appearing in DC Comics' *The Brave and the Bold* #28 in March 1960) originally operated solely within their own respective territories. There certainly were times when battling their super-powered adversaries required a bit of extra assistance, but they rarely interacted with other heroes.

However, as the story goes, aliens from the planet Appellax came to Earth seeking to conquer it. This naturally gains the attention of Earth's most well-known heroes – The Flash, Green Lantern, Aquaman, Wonder Woman, the Martian Manhunter and later, Superman and Batman (this group is certainly a gender-imbalanced reflection of the 1960s).

An important thing to note here is that individually they all fell to the Appellaxian Wood-King, but by combining their strengths and gifts, the heroes overcome their foe. Lots of interesting stuff going on here, but what can we learn?

Looking at the *Justice League* crew, I am aware that each hero has their own unique skillset that can accomplish many wonders, but when trying to save the world from destruction from the likes of Lex Luthor, Darkseid, Steppenwolf or whomever, it seems that not one superhero can do everything, no matter how gifted they are.

Ultimately, the *Justice League* is a story about finding collective strength through helping others and receiving help from others. The specific, often curious, vulnerabilities of the *Super Friends* characters show that we all need help sometimes.

For instance, Batman is the brains of the group, but has no superpowers. Let us be honest, Batman's "super power" is that he is rich, which is why he can afford to buy and build the equipment he needs to be effective.

Superman is invulnerable to every kind of threat, except Kryptonite and, if memory serves, magic – this is evident in Superman's interactions with Mister Mxyzptlk.

Supergirl was a later member and she shared the same strengths and weaknesses as Superman – clearly a larger Kryptonian problem is at play.
Aquaman can talk to aquatic creatures, but can get dehydrated like a normal human. And, to be fair, Aquaman has the added problem so eloquently expressed by The Big Bang Theory’s Rajesh Koothrappali when he had to dress up as Aquaman: “I don’t want to be Aquaman. He sucks.” However, I think Jason Momoa’s version has gone a long way to fixing that perception since.

Wonder Woman is part Greek God. She has superhuman strength and speed and can fly, but her main weakness is her vulnerability to bullets and projectiles, which can pierce her skin.

The Flash has super speed and can travel through time, but his weakness is cold temperature because his molecules cannot vibrate at their normal speed if the cold slows them down.

Stargirl – a member of the Justice Society of America before joining the Justice League – had no inherent powers. Her abilities come from her cosmic converter belt and cosmic staff, which give her super strength, speed, stamina, flight and cosmic energy manipulation.

So the Justice League team reminds us that nobody is perfect, and yet each individual brings something special to the table that the other heroes can benefit from.

What is most inspiring about the Justice League is that these heroes continuously left their egos and self-interest at the door, trusting and working alongside one another to save the world from a threat that was much bigger than each hero alone.

It is important to remember that we each have unique abilities much like superheroes, but when we unite with others, we are much stronger. Working together can lead to so many positive outcomes – learning new skills, self-discovery and improvement, working through church changes, parish growth, and so on.

Indeed, it is heart-warming to think that we can find strength through helping one another and receiving help from others.

It is worth remembering at this time when we contemplate these things, what Queen Elizabeth II once said, “Whatever life throws at us, our individual responses will be all the stronger for working together and sharing the load.”

Editor’s note: If you have a parish collaboration story that you would like to share, please email the anglican focus editor, Michelle McDonald. She would love to hear from you!
How to lobby politicians: community organising tips for effectively mobilising volunteers

“When seeking to identify the reforms your congregation or ministry will advocate for, first identify “what issue is widely and deeply felt” among your faith community” (Michelle McDonald)

Over a period of six months in 2018, I worked as a community organiser in the refugee rights space. Community organising is the practice of listening to, mobilising and equipping volunteers with shared concerns and goals to create effective social change. Part of my role involved facilitating workshops for Queenslanders who wanted to see refugees being given a fairer go by teaching participants advocacy communication skills. From these workshops, I recruited 15 delegations of Queenslanders to meet with Federal elected representatives in calling for three specific policy reforms.

Organising constituents, such as members of a congregation or ministry, to lobby their elected representative can be a highly effective advocacy strategy. In order for community organising endeavours to be successful, a strategic, persistent, flexible and patient approach is needed.

The 15 delegations I organised were groups of inter-faith people, groups of medical professionals and groups of educators, with a former refugee also invited to join each delegation. I organised the groups in this way, rather than forming ad hoc delegations, because these people are trusted in the community and offer particular expertise and relevance in refugee rights conversations.

A number of local Anglicans joined these various delegations, who met with Labor representatives for strategic reasons. Some of these Anglicans included people who felt compelled to help, but preferred the option of speaking with their Member of Parliament or a Queensland Senator in a coordinated group, rather than attending protests or marches.
After using power mapping to decide which elected representatives the delegations would meet with, I set about forming and preparing the delegations. This included facilitating introductions between group members, answering questions and helping them with:

- messaging
- clarifying and communicating policy reform “asks” (i.e. the specific things they were going to ask the elected representative to advocate for – these “asks” were aligned with those of the wider refugee rights movement)
- tactical advice regarding how to secure a 30-60 minute meeting with their elected representative
- conversation strategy
- appointing a group leader
- delegating tasks (e.g. note taker, post-meeting photographer / social media poster, time-keeper, responsibility for bringing the conversation back on track if required, letter writer, etc)
- research I had carried out on the given elected representative
- troubleshooting potential pushback by coaching them in “objection handling” skills
- a post-meeting strategy, so they could determine how to best follow up the “asks” and any commitment the elected representative made.

One of the three key policy reform “asks” of the delegations was about securing permanent protection for refugees on temporary visas.

At the time the delegations were formed, Labor’s National Platform stated that people on three-year Temporary Protection Visas (TPVs) would be granted Permanent Protection Visas if/when the Labor Party formed government. The TPV is one of two types of temporary protection visas available to those who arrive by boat to claim asylum and are given refugee status.

The five-year Safe Haven Enterprise Visa (SHEV) is the other temporary visa type for those given refugee status. Unlike people on TPVs, people on SHEVs are required to seek work or study in a regional area – this is the main difference between the two visa types.

Both visas were introduced as deterrents – by deliberately keeping vulnerable people in a state of perpetual limbo. This lack of stability is having severe mental health impacts, impedes people’s ability to secure employment (including in regional areas) and further their education, and is preventing people from rebuilding their lives.

Unlike TPV holders, the Labor National Platform in early 2018 did not state that those holding SHEVs would be granted the stability and assurance of safety that a Permanent Protection Visa provides. With 13,000 people granted SHEVs since 2014, this left many people at risk.

So one of the “asks” of the delegations I organised was for Labor’s National Platform to be amended so that those on SHEVs would also be granted Permanent Protection Visas in the case Labor formed government.

These 15 Queensland delegations, along with approximately 10 others organised in other parts of the country, played a significant role in shifting Labor’s National Platform regarding SHEV holders.

And, in an exciting development, earlier this month the Minister for Immigration Andrew Giles committed to transitioning those holding both TPVs and SHEVs to permanent protection.
So thank you to all those who joined these highly effective delegations, including a number of local Anglicans – your willingness to speak up for vulnerable people and against racism has made all the difference for 13,000 people.

Many people who participated in the workshops and/or joined the delegations often named racism as the underlying problem of successive governments’ punitive policies. Participants often commented that if people coming here seeking safety were “white” they would not face the same barriers that successive governments had legislated.

Committed to ending racism and fostering peace, these good folk put their moral courage, generous hearts and newly acquired advocacy and lobbying skills to effective use. Their efforts have contributed to a number of significant government decisions, including all refugee children being evacuated from Nauru to Australia by late 2018 and, more recently, Andrew Giles’ welcome announcement for SHEV holders.

**Top 15 tips for organising a delegation to lobby an elected representative for policy reform**

1. When seeking to identify the reforms your congregation or ministry will advocate for, first identify “what issue is *widely and deeply* felt” among your faith community.
2. If you are organising a number of delegations across different electorates, use [power mapping](#) to identify which elected representatives your delegations will meet with. Power mapping is a very simple visual tool that helps identify the best individuals to “target” to bring about social change.
3. Be strategic. For example, instead of organising groups of ad hoc people, I chose to organise groups of faith people, educators and medical professionals.
4. Embrace a best practice “not about us without us” approach by engaging people with lived experience. These people are experts in advocacy spaces – they can provide personal stories and unique expertise and insights. This is why I asked a former refugee to join each delegation.
5. Ensure that you only recruit people who can stay respectful and calm under pressure. Equip delegation members with objection handling strategies (such as bringing the conversation back to shared values).
6. Seek to have a mix of differently skilled people in your group – people who are variously good with policy, leading a conversation, handling objections, taking notes, photography and posting on social media, etc).
7. Think about group numbers. I recommend recruiting more people for a given group than you will need, as some will invariably drop out on the day of the meeting (e.g. due to sickness or caring responsibilities) – I recommend that you recruit at least eight to 10 per group.
8. Encourage the group to be persistent when seeking to secure a meeting. For example, as some of the delegations needed to contact the office of the MP or Senator several times to secure a meeting, I ensured that each delegation had a community leader (e.g. a priest) whose name could be “dropped” to help secure a meeting.
9. Support your groups. For example, I assisted each group with the initial email text requesting the meeting; trained each delegation; and, debriefed with them after each MP/Senator meeting.
10. Arrange meeting with the group at least twice prior to their meeting with the elected representative, so you can answer questions and confidently prepare them. This is especially important if you are not joining the delegation (e.g. in the case you are not a constituent). If possible meet in person the first time and then in person or online for subsequent meetings.
11. Ensure that the “asks” are kept to a manageable number (three maximum), and are clear, achievable, positively framed and solutions focused, and (if possible) aligned with those of a respected peak body or leading charity. Well-intentioned elected representatives whom I have spoken to in casual conversations sometimes say, “Michelle, constituents who visit me need to tell me what they want me to action – I can't action whinges.” Well framed and clear “asks” are absolutely essential.

12. Encourage the group to foster genuine dialogue with the elected representative, while ensuring that the conversation stays on track. I know other politicians who are skilled at “hijacking” a group’s willingness to dialogue by intentionally turning the discussion into a rapport-building, feel-good exercise and away from action items / asks.

13. If the group has a number of “asks”, consider leaving the ask that is expected to get the most push back until last, even if this ask is important to the group – otherwise you could get stuck on this ask and spend the whole meeting discussing it with no eventual meeting outcomes.

14. Ensure group members follow up after the meeting, such as with a collectively signed (emailed) letter outlining the “asks” and summarising what the elected representative committed to. In the letter, I recommend that you ask the elected representative to get back to you by a specific (reasonable) date, factoring in the Parliamentary Sitting calendar.

15. Ensure that a persistent individual with good email/phone skills is willing to continue the post-meeting follow-up regarding “asks”, especially those the elected representative commits to.

First published on the faithful + effective website on 16 September 2022.

Editor’s note: The theme for this year’s International Day Of Peace is “End Racism. Build Peace”. Professor Megan Davis will deliver this year’s lecture in St John’s Cathedral on Wednesday 21 September 2022. Register online via EventBrite.
My memories of Queen Elizabeth II

“The closest I got to the Queen was when I saw her first Trooping of the Colour in 1952, which is a ceremony held every year by British army regiments to mark her birthday. I saw her riding her horse dressed in uniform” (Pam Wood)

After Queen Elizabeth passed away, I heard Former High Commissioner to the UK, Alexander Downer, on the radio say that anyone who can remember her father, King George VI, must be very old. Later I was talking to my daughter-in-law Leanne, who works for Anglicare Southern Queensland, and I told her that I remember the abdication of Edward VIII in 1936, so I must be very, very old.

I was in the heart of London, in Moorgate, at the time that King George VI passed away. I left Sydney for London in 1951 after I was married. I did clerical work for an insurance company while my husband studied at the University of London.

Because I was the only Australian in the office when the King died in February 1952, the company decided to give my friend and me extra time off, so I could experience the ceremony. We walked around London following the crowds from Buckingham Palace back to Westminster. And, we also followed the procession for the reading of the accession proclamation – ending at the Royal Exchange, a centre of commerce, where we stood on the steps.

There were still big chains around fences and empty spaces where buildings used to sit. Much still needed to be rebuilt even five years after the war ended. The war had flattened much of London.

My mother was alive when Queen Victoria died in 1901. She told me that the whole of England went into deep mourning for a year. This meant that men and women wore black coats for an entire year, while children wore purple coats. Purple was the other mourning colour.
Because the next in line accedes the British throne immediately after the death of a monarch, I was there when the Queen acceded. She was in Kenya at the time of her father’s death and had to be brought home.

She was a beautiful person and a staunch worker. From the time she returned from Kenya to her passing, she was determined to work incredibly hard.

I remember the royal yacht docking in Sydney Harbour during the 1954 Royal Tour of Queen Elizabeth. This was her first trip to Australia, and the first of any reigning British monarch. It must have taken a toll on her because she had to leave her children behind. She was 27 years old during this trip.

Last time I was in the UK in 2017, I went with my daughter to Scotland where we saw Balmoral Castle from the end of the road. We stayed in Braemar, where the famous Braemar Gathering of Highland games are held.

When the Queen died last week, it took six hours for the hearse carrying her coffin to make it from Balmoral Castle to Edinburgh, which is usually only a three-hour drive. I think she would have liked that so many Scottish people lined the streets to pay their respects.

I saw her many times in England in 1952 from a distance. If we heard that she would be departing from Windsor Castle or Buckingham Palace, we would go and stand waiting so we could wave.

I was back in Australia by the time of her 1953 coronation, which was broadcast live in black and white from Westminster Abbey. This certainly brought the monarchy into the modern age. The BBC coverage of the event included cameras installed inside Westminster Abbey for the first time. The Queen allowed this against formal advice because Prince Philip wanted it – he felt it would bring the monarchy closer to the people.

The closest I got to the Queen was when I saw her first Trooping of the Colour in 1952, which is a ceremony held every year by British army regiments to mark her birthday. I saw her riding her horse dressed in uniform.

On one of the Queen’s visits in the 1970s, I was a pre-school teacher. The little ones made Union Jack flags in class time for waving when their parents took them to see the Queen passing by. During this trip, I saw the Queen passing by somewhere around the East Brisbane area with friends. Maps were provided showing the routes.

The Queen was obviously very devout in her faith. She was a true Christian. She would have needed her faith in tough times to carry her through.

I will remember the Queen as a beautiful person – a very human and very lovely lady.
I have a good friend who was raised in a “white” middle-class family that openly expresses what she describes as “racist” sentiments.

Her father has written Letters to The Editor, which have been published in a national broadsheet, calling for a ban on “Muslim immigration”. And, she recalls a conversation in early 2018 during a gathering when a family member in her early 30s said, “If it keeps us safe to keep the refugee kids on Nauru, they should stay there.”

My friend shakes her head at her family’s racist comments, especially because her family members do not know any Muslims or refugees.

It is hard for me to believe it knowing her now, but she says she once used to say and think similar “racist” sentiments herself because of how she was “formed” growing up.

She told me about a time on a Brisbane bus many years ago, when she heard some international students from China speaking in their own language and her immediate thought was, “You should be speaking English here.”

She says that when she used to see a Muslim woman wearing a hijab walking down a local street or in a shopping mall with her husband, she wrongly assumed that she was oppressed by him.

Her shift, she says, came from encountering people of different backgrounds at university around the same time she gave her life to Jesus. For her, getting to know people of diverse religious, cultural and
linguistic backgrounds and hearing the stories of former refugees, while being immersed in Jesus’ “Love your neighbour” teachings, opened both her mind and her heart.

Many years later, this friend helped me advocate for the release of another good friend of mine, Amin.

Amin is a genius who fled Iran more than a decade ago because he is a persecuted ethnic minority that accuses the Iranian authorities of oppression. He was incarcerated in an offshore camp on Manus in Papua New Guinea for many years.

While incarcerated, his claim for safety was processed and he was given refugee status.

After being effectively “warehoused” in Papua New Guinea for seven years, Amin’s mental and physical health became so bad that he was “medevacked” to Brisbane for treatment. While awaiting medical attention, he was detained in the so-called Brisbane Immigration Transit Accommodation (BITA) centre and then the Kangaroo Point Central Hotel APOD (Alternative Place of Detention) for more than three years before he was released into our local community in April this year.

While detained in Brisbane in BITA and the APOD, Amin lost a total of 24 kilos. In all, successive Australian Governments denied his freedom for nearly 10 years. He is only 32 years old.

With the help of friends, he is slowly getting his health back, although his ability to rebuild his life is severely impacted by the ongoing limbo of recurring Bridging Visas. He needs a compassionate and permanent solution.

While these two friends are yet to meet, I look forward to introducing them to each other soon.

**Here are three things you can do to support people like Amin:**

1. Find out more about people like Amin by following the Brisbane Refugee and Asylum Seeker Support (BRASS) Network Facebook page and/or emailing contact@doingjustice.org.au to receive the BRASS Network newsletter.
2. Get to know people who have been released from BITA and the APOD who are now living in our community. Please contact contact@doingjustice.org.au for more information.
3. Contact the Minister for Immigration the Hon. Andrew Giles calling for a compassionate and permanent solution for people like Amin so they can build their lives in certainty and freedom.

**Editor’s note:** The theme for this year’s International Day Of Peace is “End Racism. Build Peace”. Professor Megan Davis will deliver this year’s lecture in St John’s Cathedral on Wednesday 21 September 2022. Register online via EventBrite.
To Moldova with love

Early last month, I shared with *anglican focus* readers about my recent humanitarian trip to Ukraine. I have been a nurse-paramedic since the late 1990s. For the last 20 years I have volunteered internationally and locally during disasters and in conflict zones with hands-on clinical work and on-the-ground logistics and advice.

On my way to Ukraine, I was on a flight with the Prime Minister of Moldova, Natalia Gavrilița. We chatted for a few minutes on the airport tarmac. She asked me why I was travelling to Moldova. I explained that I was on my way to Ukraine to assist with a medical team and that I would be returning via Moldova to volunteer in a mobile medical clinic as a nurse. I showed her my empty hands saying that I did not have money to offer, but I had my hands and my skills. As she looked at me in response, she encouraged me by thanking me for being brave.

We hugged. I gave her a small koala toy as a gift, later getting word that she showed it to her parents that night. I was impressed to learn that Moldova has both a woman prime minister and a woman president.

After four weeks in Ukraine, where I volunteered near the frontlines, I returned to Moldova, staying for one week.

I was met at the border by a Moldovan medical team coordinator from the local Adventist church. She accompanied me to Cahul, a city in the country’s south. The Republic of Moldova is the poorest country in Europe with its GDP per capita of just $3,300, compared to Australia's GDP per capita of $58,000.
I have seen poverty in different parts of the world, particularly in Majority World (developing) countries like Nepal, the Philippines and in Kenya. Because Moldova is on the path to being a European Union member, the level of hardship there shocked me.

The Moldovan roads are nearly undriveable for the potholes. There were widespread uncontrolled chronic health problems, especially diabetes and heart disease. There were also lot of long-term incomplete construction projects, which meant a housing crisis. You know you are in a poor country when the ATMs routinely run out of money.

Given the hardship there, it was incredibly heartwarming seeing Moldovans welcome Ukrainian refugees when they were struggling to provide for their own communities.

A local Christian woman spent hours daily cooking for our medical team. There is something special about breaking bread with people who have come from all over the world to help others. While Moldova may be a relatively poor country, it is very rich with the warmth and hospitality of its people.

Soon after my arrival, I was introduced to the rest of my team, including a doctor and a nurse – both volunteers from Australia who were doing incredible work.

We cared for both local and refugee patients at a mobile clinic, getting medical histories and observations, such as temperature, blood pressure and blood sugar. Patients then had a consultation with the doctor and given medication. We set up clinics in various locations daily.

On our day off when the clinic was closed, the Australian doctor, nurse and I visited 15 refugee families who were being housed in dormitory-style accommodation. The Australian volunteers had fundraised ahead of the trip and took the families to the shops where they could buy what they needed.

The families fled Ukraine without their fathers and adult brothers because men were unable to leave the country – they were expected to fight on the frontlines. The children were clearly traumatised. Their mums were trying to live as normal a life as possible – keeping a routine of daily chores and duties.

Initially it was expected that I would be solely assisting at the clinics; however, the medical team coordinator kept seeking me out to take me to city hall, so I could meet with the mayor and the deputy mayor.

During these meetings, we chatted about what I had witnessed in Ukraine, including what worked and did not work in the bomb shelters. One of the major medical problems experienced in Ukrainian bomb shelters were outbreaks of hepatitis and cholera due to a lack of clean drinking water, as people sheltered there for months.

I prepared lists for the Cahul authorities, so they knew what to stock their planned city-wide bomb shelters with. This list included water, warm bedding, hygiene packs, nappies, dry food, powdered milk, generators, satellite phones, and so on.

Once compiled, I emailed the list to the deputy mayor. I knew that many of the items on the list would be unaffordable for Moldova – so I pray that a benefactor is able to offer help with funding and purchasing the items needed.
We also discussed disaster planning. At the time, a Russian invasion of Moldova was considered imminent. We looked at the town plans, so make-shift hospitals could be set up in case the main hospital was bombed.

There were some incredibly frank conversations with the city authorities about their safety. They had the option of leaving and seeking safety, but they chose to stay to care for the local people and the refugees even though they knew that a hostile takeover could happen at any time. The situation has remained the same, with invasion still a strong possibility.

I was having dinner at the home of a Moldovan family one night. Over a glass of homemade wine, the husband showed me his ID, which indicated that he had fought in a conflict against Russia. He said to me, “If Russia comes, they will come for me. They will also come for my wife because she is helping Ukrainian refugees. But we won’t leave. We will stay.”

Being Greek Orthodox, I joined Orthodox locals in their Sunday services. It was comforting being able to follow what was said, even though the services were given in Romanian. There was something really special about their hymns – the choir was flawless and the congregation’s singing was next level. Their unity came through in their singing.

The local Moldovans were Christians from different denominations. Their willingness to risk their lives for fellow Moldovans and Ukrainian refugees set a new bar for servant leadership. I was also inspired by how they banded together despite their theological or liturgical differences to focus on what was important – caring for others.

I remain in contact with my new Moldovan friends. I worry about what the future holds for them with the conflict so close. I ask you to join me in prayer for them and for the Russian invasion of Ukraine to be over soon.
Tough Questions: What does it mean to grieve the Holy Spirit?

Paul urges the Ephesians not to grieve the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4.30), but what does he mean by that?

To answer this question, we need to understand that the Holy Spirit is God's personal presence and the third person of the Trinity. The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are all, in a very real sense, God. The Holy Spirit is therefore a person whose identity is God.

God is not aloof and impassionate, rather he is emotionally involved with his creation, and with human beings especially. Indeed, the scriptures describe God displaying a wide range of emotions. We are emotional beings because we are made in the image of God and our emotions come from God. However, whilst human emotions are tainted by sin, God's emotions are pure, perfect and come from a place of love.

Grief is a powerful emotion that is usually associated with death; however, it can mean intense sorrow of any kind. When we express sorrow (grief) for another human being, it is closely connected with love. We grieve when we love and the depth of our grief is proportional to the depth of our love.

All three persons of the Trinity are said to grieve in scripture: the Father (Genesis 6.6), the Son (John 11.35) and the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4.30). When God grieves for us, it is an expression of his love.

The Holy Spirit dwells within all those who know and love Jesus, thus animating the body of Christ (the Church). In Ephesians 4, just before the part about “not grieving the Holy Spirit”, Paul writes the following:
“...When you heard about Christ and were taught in him in accordance with the truth that is in Jesus. You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.”

Entering into a relationship with Jesus changes us for the better; as Paul says, we are to, “put on the new self”. However, becoming “like God in true righteousness and holiness” is a process that will not be completed this side of the grave. It is our cooperation with God’s Spirit living within us that speeds this process along, leading to our spiritual improvement.

When we, deliberately or inadvertently, behave in a way that is inimical to our spiritual improvement it grieves the Holy Spirit; in the same way that a loving parent is grieved when his or her child behaves in a self-destructive manner.

In Ephesians 4.31-32, Paul lists a number of behaviours that are destructive within the Church, including bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander and every form of malice. On this occasion, Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit, who seeks to bring unity within the Church, is grieved by all such behaviour.

There is no doubt that we all grieve the Holy Spirit in various ways because we are all sinful. The good news is that we can repent (turn away) from our sin and towards Christ, in the knowledge that God will always forgive those who truly repent.

Author’s note: If you have a question that you would like me to attempt to answer, please email me at charlie@standrewsspringfield.org.au. To sign up to receive our newsletter, please email us at office@standrewsspringfield.org.au

First published on The Parish of Springfield website in July 2022.
The book I have given away the most and why: Canon Gary Harch

"Sometimes we study passages in scripture like a single tree. I believe, that we need the 'forest' view of scripture, so we can then best understand a 'single tree' passage" (Canon Gary Harch)

I was ordained by Bishop George Hearn in St Paul's Cathedral, Rockhampton on St Matthias’ Day in 1985. Twenty years later, my wife Marie-Claire bought a copy of Tree: A Biography. She gave the book to our Archbishop, asking him and Diocesan Council who met that night, to sign it and present it to me as a surprise 20-year anniversary gift.

I write this, hearing that Bishop George died a week ago. Hearing of his passing, I have been reflecting on the concepts of environment, tree, life, death and spirituality.

What impressed me most about the book is the wide-ranging research that went into the narrative, which lovingly profiles the life of a Douglas-fir tree over its 700 years. It is not a dry scientific account, but a rich biography that interweaves history, theology, botany and zoology seamlessly across the pages. When I re-read the book, it reaffirms my commitment to protecting nature.

The chapters in the book are ‘Birth’, ‘Taking root’, ‘Growth’, ‘Maturity’ and ‘Death’. Each chapter can be used for deeper theological reflection on our relationship with faith and what it means to be a Christian:

“Trees are communal...they grow together in large groups, as though for comfort and protection...Trees communicate with other trees within their stands.”

“To understand a single tree, we must understand the forest.”
In logging old-growth forests, we destroy an incredible biodiversity that protects the tree and everything that depends upon it. Trees flourish because of a whole community. This is salient to the Christian message.

I have often recommended the use of this book for spiritual retreats – the discrete chapters make space for this. I once used the book at a retreat I led connecting spirituality with living in Queensland, from the desert to the coast.

Sometimes we study passages in scripture like a single tree. I believe, that we need the “forest” view of scripture, so we can then best understand a “single tree” passage.


*Titled Tree: A Life Story by some other publishers.

Editor’s note: For Season of Creation events between 1 September and 4 October, please keep an eye on the anglican focus Events page.

Editor’s note: If you would like to share with other readers what faith-related book, including those with theological, spiritual, ministry, Church history or justice themes, you have given away (or referred) the most and why, please email the Editor, Michelle McDonald, and she will let you know what is needed.

Features • Monday 19 September 2022 • By Marilyn Wright

“The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it”

"Even in my suburban courtyard, I am enthralled by the song of the grey butcherbird, the antics of a pair of magpie-larks in my birdbath and, if very lucky, the visit of a tawny frogmouth to spend the day in my tree" (Marilyn Wright)
Even among committed Christians, it is sometimes awkward speaking openly of spiritual experiences. However, when I discovered that the burning bush is the symbol for this year’s Season of Creation, I felt impelled to break my silence.

For many years, I have believed that the Holy Spirit has “spoken” to me through nature, and especially through birds.

Birds often give me solace, including a wedge-tailed eagle after the violent death of a cousin; encouragement from black cockatoos at the closing of a Kairos Outside prison ministry weekend; affirmation from bulbuls outside my house in Dodoma after my arrival and upon my departure; and, countless other times to give joy in beholding the wonder of their colours and behaviour.

Even in my suburban courtyard, I am enthralled by the song of the grey butcherbird, the antics of a pair of magpie-larks in my birdbath and, if very lucky, the visit of a tawny frogmouth to spend the day in my tree.

This connection to nature compels me to care for God’s Creation – through tree-planting, education, letter writing, speaking and keeping vigil through prayer and marching. This year’s Season of Creation theme, “Listen to the Voice of Creation”, is so very timely.

I believe we are called to listen to the rustling of the leaves at the passing of mammals, such as the Atherton antechinus, mahogany glider, Daintree River ringtail possum, Lemurroid ringtail possum and the Herbert River ringtail possum, which are threatened by a warming climate.

And, to listen to the chatter of the spectacled flying fox as it spreads the pollen and seeds of the rainforest. To listen anxiously to the crackling of the fallen leaves on the rainforest floor as the endangered cassowary seeks food. Without these animals the rainforest will change inexorably.

To listen to the dying, falling and crashing of the trees as temperatures rise and rainfall changes.

To listen to the subtle sounds of the Great Barrier Reef, which provides a home for one of the most complex eco-systems in the world, including 400 types of coral, 1,500 species of fish and 4,000 types of mollusc, as well as for the dugong and large green turtle, which are threatened by extinction.

To listen to the roar of wildfires and to the silence of dry stream beds, heeding their message.

I believe we are called to listen to the scientists who have recorded the changes and alerted us for decades.

We need to listen to the Archbishop of Canterbury being the voice for vulnerable plants, trees, animals and millions of people living in poverty on the margins, as he calls for strong action on climate care.

God cares about His world: “The earth is the Lord’s and all that is in it” (Psalm 24.1).

We need to listen to His voice.

As Anglicans, how will we listen and respond to the sound of God’s voice in His scripture and in His Creation, including through His scientists and faith leaders and the rest of the natural world?
Editor’s note: The Season of Creation starts on 1 September on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation and ends on 4 October, which is the Feast Day of St Francis of Assisi. To find out about local Season of Creation events, please keep an eye on the anglican focus Events page.

Editor’s note 21/09/2022: Continue to listen to diverse voices speaking about Creation care, and much more, at On Earth festival on Saturday 8 October between 12 noon and 7pm on the beautiful grounds of St Francis College, Milton. Find out more and book online.

News • Tuesday 20 September 2022

**TSAC students raise nearly $7,000 for Cancer Council**

For the second year, a group of Year 12 students from The Springfield Anglican College has taken part in the Cancer Council's Ponytail Project.

The six senior students cut off their locks in front of fellow students at the College's Senior Campus Assembly.

Principal Steven Morris said that compassion and community are two of the pillars that create an inclusive and supportive culture at The Springfield Anglican College.

“I am proud of our seniors’ dedication to this very worthwhile cause,” Morris said.

“They have raised $6,884 for The Cancer Council, which is an impressive amount.
“More than the amount raised, I am proud that our students have given of themselves – cutting and donating their hair – which shows great empathy for those whose lives have been impacted by cancer.”

The chopped ponytails will be made into wigs for patients suffering hair loss and will make a difference in the lives of people affected by cancer.

All funds raised will go towards essential cancer support services, prevention programs and lifesaving research.

Many of the students who participated have known someone affected by cancer and were moved to participate.

Year 12 student Alexis Crouch said, “One of my friends is supporting two family members who’ve received a cancer diagnosis. I wanted to raise awareness, raise money for a good cause, and get rid of my hair at the same time!”

Isabelle Syme added, “This is a great cause. Two of my grandparents died of cancer and I felt this was a good opportunity to give back and make a change. I was nervous, but I’m happy that I did it.”

School leader Jillian Taylor said, “I felt the community support with every donation we received and it felt like we were making an impact as got we moved closer to our goal. We raised so much more than we thought we would. It was great that the whole community came together to support us.”

School leader Hayden Nelson shaved his head in support of the project, and added, “Though I don't have the length needed to donate my hair, I still wanted to do my part and show my support. I hope this becomes a tradition at TSAC and Year 12 students continue to cut their hair and shave their heads in support of the Cancer Council.”

Editor’s note 20/09/2022: Since the writing of this story, the amount that TSAC students raised reached $7,000.
Girls’ Friendly Society: 140 years of ministry in our Diocese

The Rev’d Kaye Pitman OAM with Lesley Briggs and Iris Dean, who was presented with an 80-year GFS membership certificate and flowers on 29 September 2021 on the GFS World Day of Prayer

GFS – An Anglican Ministry, formerly known as Girls Friendly Society or GFS, is a worldwide not-for-profit fellowship organisation in the Anglican Communion. It was founded in England in 1875 by Mary Elizabeth Townsend, an Irish clergyperson’s daughter.

Mary started GFS out of concern for the welfare of young women and girls from the country who moved to the cities for work. These young women and girls were vulnerable to exploitation because they usually lacked family and other networks in the cities to support them. GFS helped connect them to women “associates” who offered spiritual, practical and housing support.

The first Australian branch was launched in 1879 in Adelaide, with other branches established throughout the country by 1901. Brisbane held their inaugural meeting on 6 November 1882, so we are currently planning our 140th anniversary.

GFS has been a strong foundation of faith for many women in our Diocese, some of whom have been ordained. These inspirational women include The Rev’d Kaye Pitman OAM, who is chaplain emeritus, and The Rev’d Canon Cheryl Selvage, who is our current chaplain.

When speaking to past members, many comment that they enjoyed belonging to GFS immensely, made life-long friends, continue to meet with GFS friends, and are “thrilled that GFS is still going”. This is a testament to the value that the GFS journey has had on faith formation and the wellbeing of girls and women over the years.

In our Diocese, we give thanks to the women whose resourcefulness and foresight enabled the purchasing of a New Farm property, so young women from regional areas had accommodation while
they studied or worked. For a number of years committed local Anglicans, Aunty Flo Granville, Betty Riley and Ailsa Skippen, cared for these young women.

Later the building became a women's refuge under the auspices of Anglicare until it was sold in 2009. A book was published in 2005 about GFS House, written by Dr John Mackenzie-Smith titled, *Caring for young women in war and peace: a history of GFS House, New Farm 1942-76.*

Some of the funds from the sale went towards Anglicare's Home Away From Homelessness project, which provides crisis accommodation for single women in Toowong. Proceeds also allow GFS – An Anglican Ministry in our Diocese to fund children and youth projects. All this can only happen with God's spirit and grace.

There are two children's branches in our Diocese – KidsPlus+ in The Parish of Bundaberg and KidsPlus+ in The Parish of Clayfield. In the 1990s GFS commenced KidsPlus+ to accommodate both boys and girls attending branches.

Clayfield also has a GFS group of young women, who provide spiritual development; arts and crafts, games, drama and cooking initiatives; and, parent evenings.

Two Townsend adult fellowship groups also meet regularly, with the Headquarter Fellowship Branch meeting monthly and the South Side Townsend group, consisting of women and men, meeting every two months in different members' homes. A new adult Townsend branch is starting in Kenmore shortly.

There are other members who do not belong to a specific branch, but remain affiliated nonetheless – some have been members for over 80 years.

GFS Brisbane also supports a children's branch in another Diocese.

We also have two outreach groups of past and present members who meet twice annually. One of these is a social event and the other is the GFS World Day of Prayer, which is a service celebrated at a local parish.

GFS – An Anglican Ministry in our Diocese supports a range of initiatives locally and internationally.

We provide grants for parishes; bursaries for St Francis College students; financial support for Ichthus camps; and, funding for a chaplain one day a week at Queensland Children's Hospital.

We assist GFS Papua New Guinea with leader training support (when travel permits) and toiletry and face mask donations.

We also support First Nation communities by sending goods to op shops in remote areas.

So our members certainly live up to the GFS motto, “Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ” (Galatians 6.2). And, we give thanks to the past and present leaders, and their teams, for bringing the Gospel and life skills to the many children who have been part of the GFS journey.

We also give thanks to our Diocese's GFS – An Anglican Ministry Chair, Lesley Briggs, and to the Executive members.
GFS current members, past members and friends are warmly invited to celebrate the 140th anniversary of GFS – An Anglican Ministry (formerly known as Girls' Friendly Society or GFS) in our Diocese on 29 September at St Bartholomew's, Mt Gravatt. The event will also mark the GFS World Day of Prayer (St Michael and All Angels Day) service, and will include a catered lunch in the parish hall.

Editor's note: If you would like to attend the 140th anniversary celebration, or join GFS – An Anglican Ministry, please contact the office administrator Margaret Humphries via gfsbrisbane@hotmail.com by 26 September.

Editor's note 20/09/2022: Text updated to correct chaplain references.

News • Tuesday 20 September 2022 • By Philippe Coquerand

When "Reenie met the Queenie": two women with extraordinary lives

Last week the world learned of the passing of Queen Elizabeth II. In the United Kingdom and around the world, people have been paying tributes to her and her extraordinary life, from mourners gathering outside Buckingham Palace to sing ‘God Save the Queen’, to online condolence portals here in Australia.

A patron to over 500 charities in Britain and having fundraised over £1.4 billion, Queen Elizabeth II is well-known for her philanthropic work. During her life, she also celebrated those who shared her passion, taking the time to meet and personally thank people doing incredible things for their communities. One of those people was Anglicare St Martin's Residential Aged Care resident Catherine, affectionately known as “Reenie”.

St Martin’s Residential Aged Care resident Catherine meeting Queen Elizabeth II in London in the 1980s
Born in 1937 as Catherine Lamont Campbell Anderson of the Campbell clan in Scotland, she was invited to meet the Queen in her early 50s as a result of her fundraising work.

At 50, Catherine began running marathons, raising thousands of pounds to support local charities. She ran marathons all over the world, including in England, Spain, Portugal, the United States and Scotland.

Her favourite charity was St Luke's Hospice, an organisation providing support to people approaching the end of their lives, and their families. To recognise the impact Catherine had, St Luke's named one of the wards after her. She also raised a lot of money for her church, Our Lady and St Thomas of Canterbury, Harrow-on-the-Hill.

Catherine's daughter, Lorraine, who ran the New York Marathon with her, says her mother was a local celebrity in their area.

"Everyone knew who she was and what she did," Lorraine said.

“She only started running at 50, and that's the most amazing thing. She just took it up. That was one thing with mum. She was very determined when she wanted to do something. She'd do it until she couldn't do it any better or anymore. She's a very, very determined lady. She has always been driven by helping people. She's a very giving lady.”

Catherine not only raised thousands of pounds for those in need through running, she was also a very talented swimmer, representing Glasgow in a number of tournaments. She also made use of this sport to make a difference. From her late 30s and into her 60s, she taught disabled children to swim in London.

A much-loved member of her community, Catherine was acknowledged in small ways by those around her, receiving little gifts of chocolates, perfumes, flowers and more. An advocate for minorities, she was also often invited to cultural centres, mosques, churches, community dinners, and various cultural celebrations.

“Mom loved looking after everyone”, says Lorraine.

“It didn't matter what their background was. She'd just do anything for anybody.”

Catherine also contributed in a big away to her long-time employer, The First National Bank in Harrow, Middlesex, where she worked for 22 years. She was a dedicated employee and was often featured in their newsletters, both for her day-to-day work and her fundraising activities.

Beyond her philanthropic activities and her working career, Catherine loved her family very much and was also quite the social butterfly. Her running groups were a big part of her network and they often went out together. To treat herself, she used to love going to London on shopping trips.

“Mum was always immaculately dressed,” Lorraine said.

“She'd have a stunning outfit with matching shoes and a matching handbag. Her hair and nails were always done, never one hair out of place. She also loved wearing kilts – it was a way for her to celebrate her Scottish heritage.”
“I just have so much respect for her and who she is as a person. She has a fantastic sense of humour and was always singing. She was always a happy and bubbly person, always laughing.”

When Catherine was invited to meet the Queen in London, she was beside herself. The pair spoke for a few minutes, with the Queen thanking Catherine for all the work she’d done for local charities and the impact she’d had in her communities.

“At the time, Mum told me that the Queen was simply the most amazing and gracious lady. She was delighted to meet my mother and I think both ladies had a lot of respect for each other.”

The meeting was a profound event in Catherine’s life and inspired her to continue her work with those in need. As she did so, people used to affectionately say, “Reenie met the Queenie.”

“When I found out that the Queen had died, I thought of mum straight away,” Lorraine said.

“Given that Mum now has dementia, she is completely unaware. But if she knew, she would definitely shed tears.”

“She has given so much in her life and I am just so proud of everything she has achieved. She has helped so many and been rewarded again and again for her compassion. Meeting the Queen was just the icing on the cake, really.”

Queen Elizabeth II will be mourned by millions of people around the world, but her life and philanthropic activities will be celebrated, too. Catherine was one of the people who was able to meet her in person and be inspired by her work in this field. Considering the extraordinary things Catherine achieved throughout her 85 years, we’re certain the Queen was inspired, too.

First published on the Anglicare Southern Queensland website on 12 September 2022.
St Francis College joins the University of Divinity

The University of Divinity is delighted to welcome St Francis College as its newest college – its first ever in Queensland.

Students will commence studying at the University of Divinity directly through St Francis College from Semester 1, 2023.

University of Divinity Vice-Chancellor Peter Sherlock said that he looks forward to seeing the fruit that will be borne from the new partnership.

“The University of Divinity is Australia's premier provider of theological education and research,” Professor Sherlock said.

“We look forward to the significant contribution St Francis College will make to our shared mission of forming graduates for Christian ministry and service.

“It’s a particular joy to welcome a third Anglican college to the university, with emerging opportunities for national collaboration in Anglican theology and ministry.”

The University of Divinity and St Francis College share a long history of working collaboratively and ecumenically in theological scholarship and research.

With the partnership announcement, there will be new opportunities for collaborative events and symposia between St Francis College and other colleges of the university.
St Francis College Principal Ruth Mathieson said that partnering with the University of Divinity represents a renewed commitment to preparing clergy and lay leaders to serve the church and wider community.

“The St Francis College community is energised by becoming a member college of the University of Divinity, and we welcome the opportunity this new development offers to strengthen our contribution to the ongoing work of theological education at many levels,” The Rev’d Dr Mathieson said.

“Through a refreshed curriculum, attuned to our local context and needs, St Francis will continue to offer quality theological education, especially for those preparing for Christian ministry, and for the churches and communities they serve.”

The admission of a new college to the university follows a process of rigorous assessment, during which candidate colleges must demonstrate the capacity to meet the academic, governance and financial obligations required to deliver education and research at a tertiary level.

Archbishop of Brisbane Phillip Aspinall said that the new partnership will help foster the Church’s mission.

“At their best, Anglicans prize freedom of intellectual inquiry as we correlate the revelation of the scriptures with advancing knowledge and new discoveries in a rapidly changing world,” The Most Rev’d Dr Aspinall said.

“The University of Divinity provides fertile space for St Francis College to pursue this vocation, together with other Anglican colleges, in a rich, broad ecumenical context.

“It is an exciting development.”

The University of Divinity was established in 1910 as an ecumenical provider of theological education.

It is the oldest collection of theological colleges in Australia.

The University of Divinity currently comprises 10 theological colleges, eight of which are in Victoria, that span the ecumenical spectrum.

St Francis College will be the first Queensland-based theological college to join the University of Divinity, marking a significant northern expansion for the university.

St Francis College will continue to be based at the Milton campus, where students can access the Roscoe Library.

Founded in 1897, St Francis College is the provider of theological education and ordination formation for diverse Anglican Church Southern Queensland students.

Called affectionately by locals as “an oasis in the city”, St Francis College is located on a sprawling 3.8 hectare bushland site in Milton, just 3km from Brisbane’s CBD.

The Roscoe Library is one of the best theological libraries in Queensland, with a substantial collection of theological books, journals and electronic resources.
The college is part of the Anglican Church Southern Queensland’s wider Ministry Education Commission (MEC).

MEC hosts a number of important ministries, including FormedFaith, which educates lay people; Anglican Youth Children and Families, which organises Ichthus camps; Community of The Way, which is an intentional community of young people; a spiritual direction formation program; and urban farm project, Baroona Farm.

Editor’s note: You are invited you to join in the following celebrations of the Signing of the Collegiate Agreement on Friday 30 September at St Francis College.

3 pm – 4:30 pm: Celebration Eucharist
4:15 pm – 5:30 pm: Wine & cheese reception
5:30 pm – 7 pm: Public lecture on “Learn to Live: The Future of Theology in Australia” by Professor Peter Sherlock, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Divinity

Please register via Eventbrite.

News • Tuesday 20 September 2022

St Hilda’s Day centenary celebrated with unveiling of innovative precinct

St Hilda’s School Head of Junior School Amanda Shuttlewood said she was excited to showcase the new Junior School building on what was a momentous occasion for the school and community.

St Hilda’s School unveiled its new state-of-the-art environmentally sustainable Junior School building recently while celebrating St Hilda’s Day and the 100th anniversary of the school’s Old Girls’ Association.
The new $8 million building breathes new life into the Junior School, offering a vibrant, modern learning centre for 217 students in Years 4 to 6 before they progress into senior school.

As part of annual St Hilda’s Day celebrations, members of the Old Girls’ Association were invited back to the school to meet students, other alumni and faculty, and to see how the facilities have transformed.

St Hilda’s School Head of Junior School Amanda Shuttlewood said she was excited to showcase the new Junior School building on what was a momentous occasion for the school and community.

“Our new Junior School building will offer an elevated, state-of-the-art learning centre that students will be able to enjoy for decades to come,” Mrs Shuttlewood said.

“St Hilda’s is continually seeking ways to innovate with the evolving needs of our students. We recognised the need for classrooms that catered to our modern learning environment, and the previous buildings that this project replaced were at the end of their lifespan.

“Giving old and new girls a first-look of the new Junior School building on St Hilda’s Day, the same day that we’re celebrating a century of our Old Girls’ Association, was very fitting.”

The architecturally designed Junior School building, built by Gold Coast-based construction company Altran, offers natural light-filled spaces with glass walls, providing an optimal learning environment for students.

The building has been designed with environmental sustainability at the forefront, featuring solar panels, recycled materials for carpet and flooring, and pre-conditioning and heat exchange for optimal air-conditioning efficiency.

Junior School Student Representative Council Captain Hannah Baird said that she is thrilled by the building’s environmental benefits.

“Caring for the environment is important because we need to conserve our ecosystem for future generations,” Hannah said.

“The Earth is warming and becoming more polluted.

“Earth is unique – there is no other planet like it and it is our home.

“If we care for nature then nature will care for us.

“If we pollute our water sources, we will be the ones who lack clean water.

“If we cut down too many trees for short-term goals, we will endure global warming.

“So I was excited to hear about the eco-friendly aspects of the new building; for example, the classrooms have sensor lights, which conserves energy because the lights are not turned on when people are not in the room.

The Junior School building has recently opened to students, with an official opening in the first half of 2023.
Hannah said that she especially enjoys using the flexible learning areas and connecting with other Year 6 classes.

“Every level of the new building has a large flexible learning area in the centre, so the three classrooms can collaborate more often because of the spacious area that accommodates the whole grade,” she said.

“Once a week our cohort has enrichment time when we work with the other classes on a project.

“We recently finished in Enrichment our Wakakirri festival production.

“We created a story dance that complied with the theme “Rise”.

Many lessons were spent creating sets and learning our dance leading up to the Wakakirri Showcase.

Features • Friday 16 September 2022 • By Nell Potter

“Our task is to safeguard the Word of God as a source of life”

Atop a hill on the outskirts of Bethlehem in the occupied Palestinian territory, sits the Tent of Nations.

Legally owned by the Nassar family for over 100 years, this farm is a beacon, drawing people to learn from this Palestinian Christian family how to live faithfully in the face of adversity. On stones at the entrance are written “We refuse to be Enemies — People Building Bridges” which is a mantra the Nassar family live by.

On the surrounding hills, illegal Israeli settlements have been built on confiscated Palestinian land. Despite the relentless attempts by the Israeli military and the settlers to evict the Nassar family
through legal means, as well as by uprooting and burning olive groves and blocking their only access road, this family have shown remarkable resilience and commitment to non-violence.

The conflict in Israel/Palestine is largely couched in a perceived tension between Muslims and Jews, with little attention given to the Palestinian Christian community who are equally suffering with their Muslim neighbours, under the yoke of Israeli military rule. The Church's presence in Jerusalem is constantly under threat and sadly Palestinian Christians are leaving the Holy Land in large numbers, with those remaining fearing that the Christian presence in the land of its birth will one day cease.

Pilgrims visiting the Holy Land have more freedom of movement and access to holy sites than do the local Palestinian inhabitants. The Israeli built Separation Wall isolates Palestinian communities, with the checkpoints and permit system adding further frustration and limitation on how far and for how long Palestinians can freely move around in their own country.

During religious festivals for Christians and Muslims, the Israeli authority has in recent years stymied Palestinians' freedom to worship by limiting permits, placing quotas on attendees of sacred sites and blockading entrances. Aggressive actions by radical Israeli settlers vandalising church property have been on the increase.

**Palestinian Christians** are crying out for the global church to turn its gaze upon their lived reality:

“We suffer from the occupation of our land because we are Palestinians. And as Christian Palestinians we suffer from the wrong interpretation of some theologians. Faced with this, our task is to safeguard the Word of God as a source of life and not of death, so that ‘the good news’ remains what it is, ‘good news’ for us and for all. In face of those who use the Bible to threaten our existence as Christian and Muslim Palestinians, we renew our faith in God because we know that the word of God cannot be the source of our destruction.”

**Editor’s note:** First published on the [UCA website](https://www.uca.org) on 26 August 2022 as part of a series of reflections for the [World Week for Peace in Palestine and Israel](https://www.alternatives.org.uk/world-week-for-peace-in-palestine-and-israel), which will be observed between 15-22 September 2022. Reflection amended for **anglican focus** with additional links.
A long line of faith: Chaplains minister to the thousands waiting to say a final farewell

They came to the queue in their dog-collars – both those waiting in line, and those ministering to the people waiting to see the Queen lying in state.

On Thursday morning, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York joined the 300-strong multifaith chaplaincy team that had been put together in the days following the Queen’s death.

Dressed in black clerical shirts and fluorescent tabards emblazoned “Faith Team”, Archbishops Welby and Cottrell were among the Anglican priests to join faith leaders from other denominations and religions in a chaplaincy team serving the queue.

In recent days, the queue has seemed to take on a personality of its own – being described as a “river of humanity”. When I first wandered along it on Thursday afternoon, it snaked down to Blackfriars Bridge; by Friday morning, it had filled Southwark Park, and officials announced that entry to the queue would be paused for at least six hours.

The chaplaincy team was set up by Lambeth Palace in collaboration with the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS). The head of chaplaincy at Guy’s and St Thomas’ NHS Trust, Mia Kyte Hilborn, who is leading the team, described it as a “privilege” to be involved.

The chaplains’ duty was to be present not only for those in the queue, but also for those marshalling and policing the event, she said on Thursday. Archbishop Cottrell, who had been out and about with a
Sikh chaplain that morning, had been particularly delighted to discover that some of the police on duty were from South Yorkshire, Ms Kyte Hilborn said.

“People beam when they see a chaplain,” she told me – a description that was born out in the testimony of some of the chaplains I met later in the evening, while they enjoyed a cup of tea and a biscuit at the end of their shift.

St Matthew’s, Westminster, on Great Peter Street, is one of several “hubs” that has been set up for the chaplaincy team. When I visited, it was being manned by the pastoral assistant at St Matthew’s, Daniel Binder, and 13-month old Bunter, the vicar’s spaniel (though not of the breed which shares a name with the new monarch).

Soon, the chaplains arrived, legs aching after their shift but full of enthusiasm.

“There is a special ministry in hanging around, and just being present with people,” said the Revd Dr Charlie Bell, a self-supporting minister at St John the Divine, Kennington.

“The Church of England is, to some extent, still chaplain to the nation,” he said.

He observed that, in this period of national mourning, there seemed to be an instinctive turn towards the Church, and its clerics.

“Wearing a collar on public transport, people have spoken to me more often than before. It was amazing how many people said ‘thank you for being here.’”

Those in the queue greeted the chaplains with open arms, sometimes quite literally: the Revd Joyce Forbes, an assistant priest at St Stephen’s, Norbury and Thornton Heath, in Southwark diocese, described meeting a woman in the queue who gave her a hug as soon as she saw that she was a chaplain.

“I felt quite honoured to offer myself for this role – I felt it was something practical I could do,” Ms Forbes said, in what was a common refrain among the chaplains.

Like most, the Revd Obi Chike, chaplain of University College London Hospital, had not yet been able to go into Westminster Hall to see the Queen’s coffin lying in state; but she felt able to honour the Queen “by supporting those who were coming to see her”.

Unlike journalists (and MPs and their guests, according to a BBC report on Thursday), chaplains do not get to skip the queue (unless they also happen to be members of the House of Lords). One who had just finished his shift had a quick cup of tea before heading off back down the river to join the end of the queue. Dr Bell intended to do the same, having been inspired by the conversations he had had during his shift.

They would not be the only people wearing dog collars in the queue. There were, the chaplains observed, a fair number on show.

“I even bumped into my vicar!” Ms Forbes exclaimed, and it turned out I had met him, too, several hours earlier.
WCC expresses solidarity, urges advocacy for the human rights and self-determination of Indigenous Peoples across the world

The Indigenous Pre-Assembly "Reconciliation: Restoring Wholeness in Creation" took place as people from around the world gathered for the WCC 11th Assembly. Pictured are Dr Hrangthan Chhungi from Mizoram, India with Mrs Diana Jenbise Gerenja Kristen Injili Di Tanah Papua (GKITP) (Photo: Sean Hawkey/WCC)

In a public statement released by the leadership of the WCC central committee, the WCC encourages continued advocacy, “with Indigenous Peoples and on their behalf in defence of their human rights, to protect the use of human rights language, to promote Indigenous Peoples’ right to self-determination and the right to participate in the decision making process within churches and in society.”

The statement was prepared by the Public Issues Committee at the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany.

The WCC recognizes, “ever since their first contact with colonizers, Indigenous Peoples have experienced a series of harms,” and that the “mental and physical well-being of the children, grandchildren, and generations to come are at stake.”

Well-being that is “directly tied to the healing and well-being of the lands, waters, and the air.”

The statement urges the WCC and member churches “to initiate processes to address Indigenous Peoples’ need for healing from historical and intergenerational trauma by the establishment of Truth
and Reconciliation processes that are based on restoring justice and healing relationships wherever crimes against humanity and genocides have occurred.”

The WCC also calls upon the member churches “to ensure that the Indigenous Peoples programme has its own fully financed desk with adequate resources, and that the WCC Climate Justice work with the Indigenous Peoples programme be strengthened.”

Finally, the statement recognizes the “complicity of the Church in these genocides against Indigenous Peoples as well as the spiritual violence perpetrated by churches since first contacts,” prompting us to “decolonize our faith traditions in order to rediscover the life-nurturing potential of the gospel.”

Read the full statement

First published on the World Council of Churches website on 16 September 2022.