

The referendum on constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a Voice to Parliament



Bishop Cam Venables

Dear sisters and brothers,

The bishops of the Anglican Church in Australia met two weeks ago in Hobart. One of the key matters we discussed was the forthcoming referendum about the proposed constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a Voice to Parliament.

The Chair of the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Anglican Council (NATSIAC), The Rev'd Canon Glenn Loughrey, explained that the proposal emerged from a very significant consultation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community representatives between 2016 and 2017.

Canon Glenn invited all bishops to support the Voice to Parliament and encourage their clergy and people to be informed about the potential this has to progress and reframe the work of Reconciliation within Australia.

The following is an extract from an agreed statement from the meeting issued by the Primate, Archbishop Geoff Smith:

*"In 2017 the General Synod expressed its support for a "constitutionally-entrenched First Nations' Voice to the Commonwealth Parliament". We are thankful that Bishop Chris McLeod, the National Aboriginal Bishop, has signed an [endorsement](#) of the Statement from the Heart with other faith leaders in 2023. **We are***

prayerfully committed to reconciliation and to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices being heard in the life of our nation. We urge all Australians to engage seriously with the referendum question about constitutional recognition."

Last year's Diocesan Synod affirmed the ongoing work of our Innovate Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which encourages the fostering of positive relationships at a local level.

The work of Reconciliation is not just local, there are inevitable implications for us nationally, which is one reason why our [Diocesan RAP](#) supports the Uluru Statement From the Heart, including the Voice to Parliament.

I think supporting the Voice to Parliament is well grounded in the third element of our Diocesan Mission statement in which we, *"...seek to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind and pursue peace and reconciliation."*

Congruent with this, the Diocesan Council voted to officially partner with From the Heart, the national Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Voice to Parliament referendum campaign organisation. The ACSQ was [the first national church](#) to do this.

Our RAP Working Group Chair, The Rev'd Canon Bruce Boase, has said that, *"...the Uluru Statement from the Heart is a gift for all Australians – a roadmap to fairness."* And, *"...by voting 'yes' Australians will take another meaningful step towards Reconciliation because Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples will then be properly heard on matters that directly concern them."*

I think the Voice will help to engage with complex and systemic issues and will help to "close the gap" that exists in so many ways, particularly in health and life expectancy. Powerfully, this has been suggested and offered to us as a way forward by significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander leadership...and in this there is both grace and gift.

For more information, there are excellent resources available, and I particularly recommend:

- A series of *anglican focus* "[Why I am voting 'yes' in the referendum](#)" reflections.
- Yes 23 campaign [messaging guide](#).
- Yes 23 campaign [resources](#), including flyers, posters and social media banners
- Anglican Board of Mission [resources page](#).

There will be a [free online workshop](#) on Friday 21 April for clergy and lay people in leadership roles, who are engaged in written and verbal communications, that will explore how to effectively communicate the ACSQ's position on the Voice in homilies, newsletters and social media. The workshop is being co-hosted by St John's Cathedral, the Diocesan Justice Unit, and *anglican focus*.

If you have any questions about the April workshop, please [email](#) RAP Working Group member Michelle McDonald.

God's blessing to each of you in the coming journey of Holy Week.

Yours in Christ,

The Right Reverend Cam Venables
Bishop Administrator

Resurrection eggs: Biblical, reusable, educational, eco-friendly and healthy



Resurrection Eggs are a great play-based alternative to giving chocolate at Easter

Resurrection Eggs are a great play-based alternative to giving chocolate at Easter.

What are Resurrection Eggs?

Resurrection Eggs are a way to engage with the Easter narrative using plastic eggs containing a symbol from one of the stories between Palm Sunday and Easter Day.

They are designed as a tool to help people recall the events of the Easter story in a fun visual way. Resurrection Eggs are appropriate for both children and adults and can be used within home, church or school settings.

Children love opening up the eggs to discover what is inside. There is, of course, a twist when you get to the final egg (number 12) and the children realise that it is intentionally empty before finding out how this relates to the empty tomb.

The other wonderful thing about these sets is that they draw upon more than just the cross and crucifixion of Jesus. They recall the betrayal of one of his best friends; they draw on Jesus' loneliness and sadness in the Garden of Gethsemane while praying; they highlight how he was mocked and endured torture; and, they point to the hope and joy we can have in the resurrection.



Children love opening up the eggs to discover what is inside the Resurrection Eggs

Why use Resurrection Eggs?

The eggs are:

- **Biblical**, with each of the items directly linked to Gospel events.
- **Reusable** because they can be used annually.
- **Educational** because they teach the Easter story's main events in a visual and tactile way (plus they help with counting, fine motor skills, sorting, ordering, and more).
- **Eco-friendly** because once created, there is no wastage or things that need to be added or refilled each year.
- **Healthy** because they are sugar-free.

Five top tips for creating your own Resurrection Egg sets:

1. Create a thrifty version using what you already have at home. Recycle a cardboard egg carton and find items in your home and garden to put inside the eggs (such as a pebble, a small feather symbolising the rooster, some five-cent coins, a splinter of wood for the spear, etc).
2. Number the eggs so they easily match the items and Easter story timeline. Permanent markers work well or use more durable vinyl cut-out numbers.
3. If organising for a church or school group, order your cartons and items inside in bulk ahead of time. For things not available locally, check out Amazon or other similar sites. Encourage crafty people in your church to get involved in the production (we enlisted one of our parents who has a 3D printer to make the prayer hands, chalice cups, and spears for us).
4. Print an explanation booklet to go with the Resurrection Egg sets. This helps parents walk through the story with their kids over and over again (we created [this PDF booklet](#) that you can download and print double-sided at full size before guillotining, folding and stapling).

- Use the eggs in a similar way to an Advent calendar – opening up a new one each day and reading the corresponding Bible story that matches. Or just let the kids play with them over and over again!



We created this PDF booklet that you can download and print double-sided at full size before guillotining, folding and stapling

How to write worship music

"I have been writing worship music for nine years. I never planned to be a songwriter, but a trusted friend felt God impress upon her that I had songs within me to release. I nearly laughed when she told me this – the idea seemed so absurd. Yet when I sat down for the first time to write, I found an unexpected joy. I knew I'd discovered a new part of myself," says Penny Howchin from St Andrew's, Springfield



"Finally, it's helpful to remember that worship music is a gift to God. There's no right or wrong instrument or musical style" (Penny Howchin from St Andrew's, Springfield)

I grew up in the Church. And, for as long as I can remember, I have known many wonderful truths about God. Yet it took some time before I deeply experienced His presence. I didn't know what I was missing until as a teenager my family visited a church experiencing a great revival. Through collectively singing worship to God, I encountered Him. For the first time, I didn't feel like I was singing to the ceiling. When I experienced the Holy Spirit's presence, it changed the entire trajectory of my life. That moment became the first of a thousand times I would deeply connect with God through music and learn to engage with His presence in an ongoing way.

As I discovered that day, music provides a wonderful means of worship and connection with God. It helps people engage their whole self. Worship songs allow people to connect with God mentally because they focus on the lyrics and sing truth. Music, by its very nature, also encourages us to feel, giving us the opportunity to go into deeper places within ourselves. In this way, music helps us bring our hearts before God and engage our spirit with His and respond.

Singing together as a congregation also builds unity and faith. It has the power to help us find common ground, uniting us in our amazing diversity. For example, at a sporting match we find diverse groups singing national anthems and team songs together. Fans unite around something they agree is important, and singing together fosters connection and belonging. In much the same way, as we

sing in church, we encourage one another and unite as a body declaring the truths upon which our faith is built.

I have been writing worship music for nine years. I never planned to be a songwriter, but a trusted friend felt God impress upon her that I had songs within me to release. I nearly laughed when she told me this – the idea seemed so absurd. Yet when I sat down for the first time to write, I found an unexpected joy. I knew I'd discovered a new part of myself.

In my experience, writing a song happens in different stages. The first inspiration, when a “hook” pops into my head, is exciting. It's often at an unusual time when I'm doing something mundane. The chorus for my song, “Hold On”, popped into my head while I was pressure cleaning the patio. When this happens, I stop and record a voice note in my phone. When possible I'll write it in my book, along with ideas for the rest of the song.

Once I have a draft or pieces of a song, the work of songwriting begins. Sometimes songs flow quickly and I'll write one in an afternoon. At other times, a song will take months to complete as I reflect on the truth God is revealing. It's important that I take my time with this process and to keep faithfully working. As the ideas develop, I write, edit and practise. Eventually I'll record something I can share with friends using a basic home set-up and adding in different instruments and vocal harmonies.

To write worship music, it's important to allow “space” – to focus on God, reflect on what He's teaching in that season and any response to it. I'm a mother of three and I work part-time, so I understand being busy. However, I have found time and again that I need to make space for God, so I avoid running dry spiritually and so I can write.

Finally, it's helpful to remember that worship music is a gift to God. There's no right or wrong instrument or musical style. We naturally have preferences for songs and styles, and we are blessed that we can tailor our personal playlists to match, helping us connect with God in our preferred way. But God doesn't have a favourite musical genre. He created music and enjoys every style. I think God's priorities are the state of our hearts and whether our worship is genuine.

10 top tips for worship song writing

1. **Decide on the purpose of your song.** Who is the intended audience and what is your key message? The purpose will guide your lyrics and melody.
2. **Include a “hook”.** Every good song has a catchy part that sticks in people's heads.
3. **Tell the story.** Don't rush to the hook or key idea in your first verse. Set the scene and build up to it.
4. **Allow for dynamics.** A good painting includes both light and shade, and a good song does the same. Vary the volume and intensity in different sections.
5. **Record fresh ideas.** New ideas for lyrics and melodies pop up at unusual times. Record or write these into your phone immediately so you remember them.
6. **Separate creating time from editing time.** If you critique your new ideas too heavily as they are forming, you can stifle creativity and this can lead to “writer's block”. Write down everything, then edit your new ideas later.
7. **Share your fledgling song with a trusted friend.** Lyrics can be interpreted differently by people, so share your work with someone who will give you honest feedback.
8. **Set aside time.** It's wonderful to write when inspiration strikes, but you rarely feel “inspired” to edit and finish a song, so dedicate time for this.

9. **Don't give up.** Songwriting is a learned skill and you will improve as you practise.
10. **Be yourself before God.** Be true to your sound, heart and experience. God made you unique and wants your work to be also.

Editor's note: St Andrew's, Springfield music coordinator Penny Howchin recently released a worship music album called *Floodgates*. It is available On Penny's [website](#) or search for it on your favourite music streaming platform.

Spotlight Q&A • Tuesday 28 March 2023 • By The Rev'd Sam Sigamani

Q&A with missionary priest, husband and father, The Rev'd Sam Sigamani



A family picture of The Rev'd Sam Sigamani with parents, parents-in-law and sister's family in January 2023 in Chennai

Where do you currently live and where do you worship?

I live in Wynnum with my wife, Minnie, and daughter, Natanya, and we worship at St Peter's, Wynnum where I am the new Priest-in-Charge. We arrived in Australia in late January and I started ministering in the parish two weeks later.

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

Before I moved to Australia this year, I was a part of the Church of South India, based in Chennai. The Church of South India is part of the Anglican Communion and comprises Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian denominations. I was ordained a priest in 2014 after serving in a number of roles, including Sunday school teacher and youth group leader.

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

I am currently Priest-in-Charge of St Peter's, Wynnum. I undertake Sunday and weekday services and I visit congregation members in their homes. I also assist with St Pete's Pantry, Pandora's parish op shop and SAILS at bayside, which is an outreach ministry focused on youth at risk.

What projects or activities are you currently working on in your?

Our main focus is our parish's ongoing ministries. These also include initiatives that address food crises and the needs of people experiencing homelessness by partnering with [Rosie's Friends on the Street](#) and Mobile Laundry Shower Bus, which drives a mobile shower and laundry service to the church so rough sleepers can shower and wash their clothes.

What has been one of the highlights of your time as a priest so far?

In 2013 in the first parish I was placed in as a deacon, we had a community of tribal people living next to the church. I used to visit these tribal people with two of our young adults who were in their early 20s. While visiting them, I discovered a significant school drop-out rate. The tribal people were considered "outcasts" by the wider community. So over a period of a year, the young adults and I helped 13 children resume their studies at a primary school run by the parish. This generation of young tribal children is the first to access schooling, so literacy rates among this tribal people are very low and there is a high rate of teenage pregnancy, which compromises the health of the teenage girls. This is why schooling is so important.

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

It's too early in my parish ministry yet to make long-term goals. We are in our final year of our Mission Action Plan so we will need to formulate a new one in the next 12 months or so. Some of our short-term goals are to what I call the three L's – to listen, to learn and to live with the people of God. I have scheduled the first three months of my appointment to listen to and get to know my congregation.

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

I look back and see certain milestones in my faith journey. Before starting theological studies, I was a very religious layperson. Theological studies broadened my horizons to see more social realities, such as caste discrimination and the gaps between haves and have-nots. Parish ministry gave me an opportunity to live alongside people.

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

The Good Samaritan story and the teachings of Jesus, which are based on love, show us how to stretch ourselves. My Christian faith has taught me to empathise rather than just sympathise, so I understand how people feel and understand them and take action rather than merely feeling pity.

What is your favourite scripture and why?

[Luke 4.17-20](#), especially this text:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me
to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to let the oppressed go free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'

This text shows me how to translate faith into action.

What person of faith inspires you the most and why?

One of the most in modern times is German theologian and pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He was inspirational because he was committed to pastoral ministry and he risked his life opposing Hitler's oppressive and violent regime.

What does Lent mean to you?

Preparation and renewal.

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?

The primary strength of the Church is its people – the people of God. This is because the people carry out the God's mission.

Why are the Uluru Statement From the Heart reforms, including the Voice to Parliament, so important?

As someone new to Australia I cannot comment much on this. However, as a Christian believer, I strongly feel that the church is called to help amplify the voices of those who are vulnerable, and take up responsibility in establishing justice for all, especially for those whose voice has not been heard for a long time.

Why is it important for Christians to celebrate National Reconciliation Week?

Reconciliation needs to be one of the visible characteristics of the Christian life. To observe a week like this is to participate in the committed process of reconciliation: as our Lord himself has been the centre of reconciling us with the Father.

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

One of the best pieces of advice I have received in relation to parish ministry is when a senior minister said to me, "When you go to the parish, go to the people and sit with them, listen to them and talk with them and then you will know what God wants you to do."

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

I play with my daughter, such as the card game Uno or hide and seek in the garden.

Where do you do your best thinking?

When I wake up in the morning.

What's your best childhood memory?

As a teenage boy sitting on the wall of a well chatting with my friends about life while sharing the contents of our lunch boxes.

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

I sit quietly and close my eyes and contemplate.

What makes you nostalgic and why?

My teenage years, especially being careless and fearless and wanting to explore.

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

Fruit, especially jack fruit, mango and watermelon, and biryani rice. I love my food.

What book do you recommend the most and why?

The Cost of Discipleship by Dietrich Bonhoeffer because it has taught me to understand that discipleship is about living out gospel-centred life and that the mission of God is responsible participation in social realities.

Godly Goondiwindi gazette



The Rev'd Dr John Rolley with parishioners baby Anne and her parents Tien and Ross at The Parish of Goondiwindi on Sunday 26 March 2023

In Goondiwindi, we focus more on the amazing things God is doing in people's lives. Since coming to Goondiwindi in December I have been profoundly moved by what God is doing in people's lives.

During my first week in the parish, a couple and their young child walked into the church. We leave the church open on Tuesdays to Fridays during the day so people can come and pray. The couple came to enquire about their daughter, Anne, being baptised. During the conversation, Tien, Anne's mother, said she is not baptised, commenting that she had been learning a lot about Christianity from reading and talking to others. Tien requested preparation for baptism. Tien and I, together with her husband, Ross, have been conversing weekly since then.

Tien was raised in a different faith in another country. She married Ross three years ago. Her experiences growing up in another country and the different culture and values she encounters in Australia make for wonderful Gospel conversations. Tien amazes me with the depth of her scriptural reflections.

A month ago, I invited her to reflect on [John 1](#). The following week when I asked her if she had any questions, she said, "Well, I read John. Then I read [Genesis 1-5](#). When Cain killed Able, God did not kill Cain. I have been thinking about God as a punishing God and God as a loving God." I sat back in my chair on the verge of tears. She continued, "To me, I can see God was compassionate to Cain, trying to stop any more violence. Jesus did the same."

We then engaged in a deep discussion about Christ's redeeming work and God's profound and life-changing love. Journeying with Tien, Ross and Anne has been a humbling and inspiring experience.

Tien, Ross and Anne are now regular members of our congregation. Tien will be baptised and confirmed at the Easter vigil by Bishop Bill Ray. Tien and Ross are also expecting their second child, who is due soon after Easter.

There are several factors making it possible for me to serve in my new parish – a deeply committed group of parishioners; an engaged lay leadership, including Wardens and Liturgical Assistants; a laity connected to the wider community in leadership and volunteering; and, the Bush Ministry Fund that contributes to my clergy stipend.

The lay leaders worked tirelessly to keep the parish going during the clergy vacancy, with several deeply committed people giving sacrificially of their time. For example, the Liturgical Assistants covered all the services, conducted 18 funerals and provided pastoral care throughout the district.

Other than God's call to serve in Goondiwindi, one other thing especially attracted me to this parish – the parishioners' dedication to wider community life. Everyone counts in rural communities. People engage, make things happen, and see needs and action them. Community involvement is central to the local culture and often critical to its survival.

When I arrived in Goondiwindi, I was struck by the many and complex ways parishioners are deeply connected with leadership in the wider community. As part of the parish's website redevelopment project, I compiled a list of parishioner community engagement and was staggered by the breadth and depth of involvement. For a relatively small group of people, their representation on service organisations, local boards, community projects and key community activities is incredibly high – inspiring, really.

One such person (whom I will use a pseudonym for) is "Mr Jones". In his late 90s, Mr Jones is a long-standing parishioner of Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Goondiwindi. When I mention his name to people around town, they speak in hushed reverential tones recalling some story of their involvement with him or his positive local influence. He is often described as "such a wonderful man!"

Mr Jones is the sole surviving World War II veteran in the area – a status that weighs heavily on him. All of his mates have died. He has been involved in leadership within the parish, several service organisations and local industry. His life is often described as one of "selfless service". As he is now incapable of serving at the intense level for which he is admired and loved, the community is reflecting back to him their admiration and love in caring for him.

Mr Jones is just one example of many others in the parish who demonstrate the pattern of "service above self" that inspires my daily ministry in my new community.

The dynamic relationship of faith and service is essential for all Christians engaged in mission, yet in the bush it is a critical way of life. James' epistle captures the ethic I observe within the parish and the wider community: "Show me your faith without works, and I by my works will show you my faith." ([2.18b, NRSV](#)). In the case of rural communities, this scripture takes on a greater meaning than simply "faith without works is dead" because the community's very function and survival depend on it.

Goondiwindi, like many other regional and rural parishes, survives because of the determination of active and engaged people. While the Church has changed considerably over the last few decades, in some ways it is much stronger. In other ways, it faces considerable challenges. Our rural parishes, in particular, need support to assist with the great challenges they face in bringing and meeting Christ in

the bush. We also need to pray for more people to hear God's call to serve in this rich and rewarding space.

The Bush Ministry Fund (BMF) has provided this parish with an increased opportunity to expand our capacity to minister to people like Tien, Ross and Anne and to honour and care for Mr Jones after his life of service. I am very grateful to those who give to the BMF, as it makes focused, well-resourced ministry possible. We also need to pray for more people to hear God's call to serve in this rich and rewarding space.

Editor's note: The Bush Ministry Fund solely funds rural ministry in our Diocese, and it is the *only* fund that financially supports rural ministry in our Diocese. The Bush Ministry Fund money boxes are a fun and easy way for individuals, families, parishes and schools to donate to bush ministry in our Diocese. Order your BMF money box today by emailing Helen Briffa in the Western Region office via hbriffa@anglicanchurchsq.org.au or by calling 07 4639 1875.

Justice & Advocacy • Tuesday 28 March 2023 • By Phyllis Marsh

Why I am voting "yes" in the referendum: Phyllis Marsh



"Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know their peoples' needs and have ancient wisdom to share. A Voice to Parliament will ensure that this knowledge and wisdom are listened to by policy makers, thereby helping to close the gap" (Phyllis Marsh, Learning Innovator - Indigenous Perspectives, West Moreton Anglican College)

Five years ago in the interview for my current West Moreton Anglican College (WestMAC) role, I asked "Can we be bold and innovate towards closing the gap?" Since commencing in my role, the college has consistently listened to me as a pedagogical expert to design the way we approach the teaching about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures and how we teach our Indigenous students.

Despite reading novels from the age of six, because I am Indigenous I was automatically placed in the “slow reader” class at school. However, here at WestMAC it’s a given that every Indigenous student has skills and knowledge. They speak in hope of their futures just as other students do. They see the same possibilities, the same social opportunities and a pathway that is equitable.

The college has reached this place because they have listened and consulted. They listen to and consult with me. They listen to and consult with local Yugara Elders. They listen to and consult with Indigenous students’ parents. And, they listen to and consult with Indigenous students.

Listening and consultation are core practices of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures. We get the mutual value of listening. We understand the mutual benefits of consultation.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples know their peoples’ needs and have ancient wisdom to share. A Voice to Parliament will ensure that this knowledge and wisdom are listened to by policy makers, thereby helping to close the gap.

Constitutional recognition of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples through a pragmatic Voice to Parliament will elevate the education outcomes of Indigenous young people. Consequently our young people will be able to stand strong in who they are and be given the same opportunities as other Australian students. This is why I am voting “yes” in the referendum.

Editor’s note: The Anglican Church Southern Queensland supports the Anglican Board of Mission’s 2017 call for “a Constitutionally Entrenched First Nations Voice”. The ACSQ also supports the Anglican Church of Australia’s Joint Affirmation of Faith and Justice with First Nations Peoples (carried by affirmation at General Synod, Oct 2007), and seeks practical ways to do so, including our association with Reconciliation Australia and the prescribed process of [Reconciliation Action Plans](#).

Sleeping on the job to serve God



"I volunteer at Sleepbus as an overnight caretaker. This entails sleeping overnight on the bus with our guests and responding to any of their needs during the night" (Michael Chittick)

Matt* arrived one night exhausted, irritable and anxious. He did not want to talk. He simply wanted to sleep. Matt had been sleeping in his car for a week, which he said was uncomfortable. The following morning when he woke at 6 o'clock and requested to be let off the bus, I was greeted with a huge smile as he expressed his huge gratitude for a comfortable night's sleep. Matt was now up for a chat and told me he was able to stretch out to sleep, which he couldn't do in his car, and that he slept soundly because he had no fear of being attacked or moved on. Most importantly he said he felt like a million dollars and fully ready to go off to work for the day. This is one of many humbling conversations I have shared since becoming a Sleepbus volunteer.

Sleepbus provides safe temporary overnight emergency accommodation for people experiencing homelessness, enabling them to have a sound night's sleep. The service began in Maroochydore in early 2022. It currently operates Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights. There is great need for a nightly service; however, Sleepbus is run entirely by volunteers and currently there are insufficient volunteers to provide such a service. This Sleepbus is the only one of its kind in Queensland.

I became involved with Sleepbus in September last year after listening to an interview on the radio with a Sleepbus volunteer. My husband, Chris, and I relocated from Sydney to Buderim in 2022. After arriving I prayed that the Holy Spirit would lead us to a form of ministry where we could serve others. I believe it was God's spirit and my sense of Christian social justice that led us to become involved with Sleepbus.

I volunteer at Sleepbus as an overnight caretaker. This entails sleeping overnight on the bus with our guests and responding to any of their needs during the night. I have a secure cabin. I am responsible for setting up the bus with the support of night service volunteers who are at the bus until it closes at

10pm. I oversee the guests settling in for the night, then in the morning facilitate the guests getting up before closing the bus.

Currently there are two other parishioners from St Mark's, Buderim who regularly volunteer. Chris Cooper, my husband, who is a night service volunteer, serves between 8 and 10pm. Night service volunteers support the overnight caretaker and assist with helping guests and companion animals into their pods for the night. They also chat with our guests. When I am on duty, Chris returns in the morning and assists me with getting the guests up and closing the bus. Judy Clarke is also a St Mark's parishioner. She volunteers behind the scenes of Sleepbus with housekeeping, pod cleaning and changing the bed sheets.

I am a cradle Anglican with an Anglo-Catholic faith that instilled in me a strong sense of Christian social justice. I was raised to see Christ in everyone and so [Matthew 25](#) strongly resonates with me. When Jesus said, "Truly I say to you, as you did it not to one of the least of these, you did not to me." Volunteering with Sleepbus is my faith in action as I serve Christ through serving people who are homeless.

Since volunteering with Sleepbus, my previously stereotypical image of a rough sleeper being an older man dependent on alcohol has been disproved. I was initially astounded that most people I encounter experiencing homelessness are under 40 and a mix of genders. Some are escaping domestic and family violence, whilst others are homeless because of the lack of affordable housing. Some work. Due to being homeless, all sadly face discrimination.

There are more Sleepbuses destined for Queensland – for Redcliffe, Hervey Bay and Bundaberg. In the near future, there will be a pink Sleepbus specifically for women and children commencing in Nambour. All these Sleepbuses will be in the geographical area of our Diocese. I am keen to encourage as many parishioners as possible within our Diocese to reach out to Sleepbus and serve Jesus by serving "the least of these".

If you would like to volunteer with Sleepbus, please visit the [Sleepbus website](#).

* Pseudonym used to protect his identity.

Note from Jennifer Clark, ACSQ Domestic and Family Violence Project Officer: This is another great example of local Anglicans responding to the current housing crisis. We know that there is a strong link between domestic and family violence and homelessness. The Anglican Church Southern Queensland (ACSQ) is committed to the rollout of the [Ten Commitments](#) as our Church's response to Domestic and Family Violence. This includes encouraging links with local support services.

The following 24/7 telephone services have a long track record responding to people experiencing domestic and family violence:

- **DV Connect 1800 811 811 helps Queenslanders wanting to escape domestic violence.**
- **1800RESPECT is a national service providing information, referrals, and counselling.**

If you, or the person you are assisting, are in immediate danger please call the Police on 000.

Standing for love in the face of hate



"Every single one of us is created in the image of God. So to love God we must love one another – showing compassion, courage and generosity of spirit. It's really that simple" (Bishop Jeremy Greaves)

A UK far-right provocateur and anti-transgender activist is currently on a speaking tour of Australia. Much has been written about her – both locally and internationally. In her speaking and writing she cruelly persecutes one of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups of people – the trans- and gender-diverse community.

She has a well-documented history of association with various extremist individuals and groups – neo-Nazis are known to attend her rallies in support of her. On Saturday at her rally on the steps of Victorian parliament, 20 black-clad and mostly-masked members of a local neo-Nazi group gave Nazi salutes in an effort to enrage the peaceful counter-protest and ostensibly “protect” the anti-trans campaigners led by the UK speaker.

That this UK speaker is also known for highly offensive comments about Muslim girls wearing hijabs and appears in a video encouraging US men to “carry” (US slang for “carry a firearm”) into women’s toilets to intimidate trans women tells me that her agenda is more far-right rather than “pro-woman”.

In the face of such bigotry, persecution and extremism, Christians are always called to stand with and protect “the least of these”.

Every single one of us is created in the image of God. So to love God we must love one another – showing compassion, courage and generosity of spirit. It's really that simple.

Parish planning: Visioning days and Mission Action Plan days



Goodna Parish Council members at St Luke's, Collingwood Park feeding back the outcomes of their Mission Action Plan portfolio conversation on 11 March 2023, with "five furry friends" assisting their discussions to be faithful and effective

The Ven. Bronwyn Pagram – Priest-in-Charge, The Parish of Goodna

When I walked into the church for our Mission Action Plan (MAP) planning day, I laughed out loud. Small tables were scattered around the room, topped with flipchart paper, coloured markers and sticky notes. A large centrepiece had been placed on our board table...fluffy animals encircled with bright picture cards. Data and maps were posted on the walls. The space had been carefully planned to show us how far we had come to date, and to help us to clarify the next steps. Ministry Development Officer The Rev'd Tim Booth had listened carefully and prepared the space so we could maximise our time together.

Our gathering of about four hours included prayer, story-telling, hard data analysis, and laying out our MAP for the year. It was very valuable taking time out of the regular Parish Council meeting times to focus exclusively on this important topic. Strategy is not normal day-to-day work, and we needed that focused time to make decisions on how and when we would pull the pieces of the MAP together.

Our meeting's goal was to structure a plan for 2023 that would get us from the many strands of discernment work that have been underway to a cohesive documented three-year plan that we can iteratively consult with the parish and wider Diocese about. This is necessary because we have the next 30-50 years in mind. Our goal is to launch the plan late in 2023. In the meantime we have a number of smaller initiatives underway to explore options and build capacity in the parish.

By the end of the meeting, Council organised into small groups around particular pieces of work. We identified check-in dates and whom we can approach for inputs or approvals. It is a big job, but we have a quiet confidence in God's leading. It is encouraging to know that there are others in the wider Diocese who readily provide insight and support.

The Rev'd Shane Hubner – Priest-in-Charge, The Parish of St Lucia

Being the new Priest-in-Charge of Christ Church, St Lucia I wanted to get a sense of where the parish was situated. The parish had a long interregnum and so I was keen to have a planning session with key leaders to establish some goals for 2023.

I set up a morning visioning session with Tim and the Parish Council members. What became a session highlight for me was the sense of a common vision that emerged quickly. No doubt some of this can be attributed to the amount of pre-planning and information given out before the session; however, there was also a strong sense of the Spirit in the room.

One key insight that we took away from our time together is that less is more. We were able to take our eight goals and agree on a set of three:

1. build our major strength (i.e. music)
2. understand more fully the context in which we exist (i.e. establish an institute of learning)
3. invest in young people (i.e. grow our families and youth ministry).

These goals don't take a rocket scientist to identify, but having time to focus on them was incredibly valuable and gave the Parish Council a sense of hope.

We took these goals to the parish's annual meeting and subsequently set up small groups for each goal. These groups report to Parish Council and the reports are a priority item for our meetings. The next step is establishing mini goals for each area.

We have realised that good communication is key to the success of anything we do, and so we have also begun work as a church on establishing good communications channels.

Editor's note: Because the mission that God is calling every parish to is unique to its specific context, each benefits from its own prayerful and reflective co-designed discernment process. If you would like to find out more about holding a Visioning Day in your parish, please contact Ministry Development Officer The Rev'd Tim Booth via [email](#) or on 0460 030 575.

The book I have given away the most and why: Michelle McDonald



"I have recommended *Small is Beautiful* to many people since I first encountered it in the 1990s...Whenever I visit a second-hand bookshop, I look for a copy to give away" (Michelle McDonald, 2023)

I first encountered *Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered* in the 1990s while studying development economics at uni. A chapter of the book was included in a "brick" – a thick stapled collection of a subject's readings provided to students before the Internet took off. At the time, the book was out of print, so I was delighted to stumble across a copy in a second-hand bookshop within months of reading the sole chapter.

The book is stunning – even prophetic in parts. The author's prediction that excessive consumption would threaten water security was apparently received with much derision in 1973 when the book was first published.

It took me by surprise when a book written by a statistician and economist turned my faith on its head. At the time, my faith was more centred on a personal relationship with Jesus, including personal prayer and personal salvation. This book led me to see that my faith would be richer if I balanced personal and communal relationships with God.

The book's author, Christian economist EF Schumacher, called for a people-centred economics to enable creation's sustainability. The collection of essays introduced me to the ideas that "human life is a dependent part of an ecosystem of many different forms of life" (p. 44) and that "a population basing its economic life on non-renewable fuels is living parasitically – on capital instead of income" (p.45). This got me thinking pragmatically about how all of God's creation is connected, subsequently transforming my ontology towards other humans, trees, water, soil, birds, reefs, shells, air and so on.

As I read more about the author, I discovered that he was influenced by distributism – an economic theory, based on Catholic social teaching, asserting that the means of production (land, labor, equipment and capital that can be used to make products) should be owned widely rather than concentrated (as in the case of both capitalism and communism).

In 2021 when my entire home contents insurance policy was paid out due to mould damage, I watched on as 400 books were deemed unsalvageable by a mould restoration company. One hundred of these books were spiritual classics, which *Small is Beautiful* has come to be for me. I admit that I wept over seeing my copy being thrown into a skip along with Thomas à Kempis' *The Imitation of Christ*, Thérèse of Lisieux's autobiographical *Story of a Soul*, Hildegard of Bingen's *Secrets of God* and Teresa of Avila's *The Way of Perfection*.

I have recommended *Small is Beautiful* to many people since I first encountered it in the 1990s. Quite often I find that the people I offer a copy to or speak to about the book already own an edition. Whenever I visit a second-hand bookshop, I look for a copy to give away. Hopefully next time I'll find two copies – a replacement for me and another to give away.

Small is Beautiful: A Study of Economics as if People Mattered [is now available](#) as a paperback, audiobook and eBook.

Editor's note: The ACSQ's first [Sustainability Roadmap](#) was launched last week. The Sustainability Roadmap lays out a framework for the different parts of our Diocesan community to formalise Sustainability Action Plans in a staged rollout.

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.

Bishop John's third Holy Week parish-to-parish pilgrimage



Bishop John Roundhill will embark on his third "Walking the Walk" pilgrimage on Palm Sunday on 2 April 2023, leaving The Parish of Robina after the morning services

Bishop John Roundhill is embarking on his third biblical-worthy parish-to-parish pilgrimage on Palm Sunday, covering over 120km in seven days across our Diocese's Southern Region with a fitting shepherd's crook in hand.

This will be Bishop John's third "Walking the Walk" Holy Week pilgrimage, following his 2019 and 2021 journeys, after the 2020 and 2022 walks were abandoned because of COVID-19 or injury.

Bishop John said that walking with people on pilgrimage helps build community.

"We are living in an increasingly fractured society and walking together allows for differences to be aired in a less confrontational way," Bishop John said.

"Walking in groups allows for conversations to come and go at ease – because people chatting can always walk more slowly – and so community builds naturally.

"For me, walking and talking are two of the simplest pleasures in life and I love chatting with people as we walk together.

"I believe that great conversations come from a shared activity and who knows what solutions or ideas we might come up with when we're on the road together?"

The [pilgrimage itinerary](#) involves walking up to 20km daily, which Bishop John said has its challenges.

"In 2021, I started walking on Palm Sunday, but an unexpected COVID-19 lockdown was announced the following morning, so it was an intense couple of hours working out how to return to Brisbane without a car," he said.

"We were in lockdown for just a few days, until Good Friday.

"What only a few others knew at the time is that I had a severe blister, so the lockdown enabled my foot to recover.

"By the time Friday came, I was able to walk the final days with joy.

"Walking as we emerged from lockdown was just precious, and the conversations that day were seen as a real blessing by all."

Bishop John said he welcomes people to join him on his walk, for whatever distance they would like to travel.

This year's pilgrimage will start at The Parish of Robina on Palm Sunday on 2 April with morning worship and end at St Gabriel's, Carindale on Holy Saturday on 8 April.

Pilgrimages are an ancient Christian tradition, with early church theologian and ascetic Origen of Alexandria one of the first to comprehend and communicate the concept of the Church as a "pilgrim people".

The first Christian pilgrimages were made in early times to places connected with Jesus' life, especially to the sites of his crucifixion and resurrection.

So Holy Week is an especially fitting period to take time out for this ancient spiritual practice.

In encouraging community members to join him on the walk, or to pray for him and his fellow pilgrims, Bishop John said that he also invites people to reflect on Jesus' walking journeys.

"Holy Week is a time for deep reflection on Jesus' suffering and death on the cross," he said.

"The annual week in the lead up to Easter Day commemorates events from Jesus' life 2,000 years ago, and there is much walking in those stories.

"Some of life's biggest themes – love, betrayal, death – are in front of us in the Holy Week Bible readings.

"I find that I encounter God in a different way when I am truly engaged in a simple physical activity, and I hope that this walk is transformative for me and all those who join me."

To find out more about Bishop John Roundhill's planned route so you know where to be and at what time to join him (or to welcome him and fellow pilgrims upon arrival at your parish), you can read about "[Walking the Walk 2023](#)" on his blog.

Scholarships open for current or emerging not-for-profit directors



"Board members ideally possess relevant sector skills and experience along with a sound understanding of the functions of a Board and its members" says Joanne Stone (Canva image)

Good governance is critical to an organisation's success.

The hallmarks of a really successful relationship between governance and management bodies are trust, respect and independence.

A good board is concerned with organisational health, enterprise structure, strategic relevance, stakeholder accountability and direction. They ask the question, "Where are we going?"

Management is concerned with operational detail, departmental processes and individual outcomes. They ask the question, "How are we going to get there?"

One of the most common tensions I have seen in more than 30 years of governance role experience is the blurring of governance and management lines.

While good boards and effective management work together, boards delegate management to management as management implements the strategic direction set by the Board.

Board members ideally possess relevant sector skills and experience along with a sound understanding of the functions of a Board and its members.

Undertaking courses by director membership organisations is a great way to develop this sound understanding.

The Australian Institute of Company Directors (AICD) is currently offering 200 fully-funded scholarships to current and emerging not-for-profit directors to help strengthen and build their governance knowledge and skills.

In conjunction with their facilitating partner, the [Australian Scholarships Foundation](#), the Australian Institute of Company Directors [is inviting scholarship applications](#) from leaders of not-for-profit organisations across Australia with an annual income of \$2 million or less.

Each scholarship covers 100 per cent of the associated course fees and is valued at up to \$1,749.

The programme modules are:

1. Duties and Responsibilities of the Not-for-Profit Director
2. Strategy and Risk for the Not-for-Profit Director
3. Finance for the Not-for-Profit Director.

The programme is suitable for:

- executives accepting their first directorship
- those who are considering accepting a directorship
- executives who report directly to a board
- directors who are seeking to transition into not-for-profit directorship
- directors of not-for-profit companies and community organisations.

There are no educational prerequisites for this programme.

This course runs over 1.5 days. Multiple course dates are available in each state and territory across Australia between August 2023 and June 2024. Applications close on Sunday 23 April.

Applicants must be an Australian citizen or Australian permanent resident.

For full terms and conditions or to apply, visit the [Australian Institute of Company Directors website](#).

The \$2 million annual income threshold relates to a given organisation's ABN, so many parishes would be eligible. If you would like to find out whether your ACSQ commission, parish, ministry or agency is eligible to apply, please [email](#) Charlotte Barton.

There are many great opportunities to serve in governance in our Diocese, including in our parishes, Commissions, committees, ministries and Diocesan Council.

AICD scholarships are available for current or aspiring members of some of these groups.

The Finance and Diocesan Services Commission (FDSC) and the Ministry Education Commission (MEC) are calling for expressions of interest from those keen to serve on the respective Commission's governing structures.

Both Commissions encourage expressions of interest from diverse peoples.

Editor's note: To find out more about expressing interest for the FDSC, please [email](#) Charlotte Barton. To find out more about expressing interest for the MEC, please [email](#) The Rev'd Dr Ruth Mathieson.

International • Wednesday 29 March 2023

+Sione Polynesia takes the lead



Archbishop Sione, with wife Taina and daughter Fiifita, strikes the right chord as pihopatanga guests sing he aroha (11 March 2023)

Anglicans were out in force in Suva this Saturday 11 March as 1000+ worshippers gathered at Holy Trinity Cathedral to join in Eucharistic celebration and support the Most Rev Sione Uluilakepa's ordination and installation as Bishop of Polynesia.

At the service, which was [livestreamed in full](#), Archbishop Don Tamihere and Archbishop Philip Richardson welcomed Bishop Sione as an Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa New Zealand and Polynesia and newest of the Church's three primates.

Archbishop Philip reflected on the *wairua* he felt at Holy Trinity Cathedral on Saturday,

"I think that amongst all the enthusiasm and variety of the celebration, the spirit of today's event was a sense of settled joy, a contentment to have oversight back within the Diocese itself, to have a son of Polynesia as their shepherd once more."

Since first mourning Archbishop Fereimi Cama's death in mid-2021, the Diocese of Polynesia has remained under the Aotearoa New Zealand Archbishops' care, who were formally thanked for their oversight in a small ceremony on Saturday.

Archbishop Sione's ordination drew major interest in Fiji, with the country's President, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere and his wife Madam Filomena Katonivere attending as guests of honour.

Also at Holy Trinity to support Archbishop Sione were British High Commissioner to Fiji Brian Jones, General Secretary of the Pacific Conference of Churches Rev James Bhagwan, Catholic Archbishop of Fiji Most Rev Peter Loy Chong, Anglican Archbishop of Melanesia Most Rev Leonard Dawea and Archbishop of Adelaide and Primate of Australia Most Rev Geoffrey Smith.

Archbishop Geoffrey Smith was there to honour and affirm his Church's long standing relationships with the Church in these islands,

"I came because this relationship with Polynesia and Aotearoa New Zealand is very important to us."

Archbishop Geoff was struck by the beauty of worship on Archbishop Sione's big day, which he found exceptional.

"It was a great event. The choir was fabulous, they filled the streets and the bay with their sound. Another highlight was the children of St Christopher's singing during communion. The quality of their singing was just beautiful – the harmonies, the strength of their sound, they were a well-oiled machine."

Another high point of the service was when members of Te Pihopatanga o Aotearoa stood to back their gift of a Pacific-patterned guitar to Archbishop Sione with the *waiata* "He Aroha." Archbishop Sione responded in double quick fashion, picking up his new guitar and striking the perfect chord to accompany his brothers and sisters from Aotearoa.

Archbishop Sione's commitment to reflect the diversity of cultures and nations in this Church came through in Saturday's rich array of songs, prayers and readings in English, Fijian, Hindi, Te Reo Māori, Rotuman, Samoan and Tongan.

Over his thirty years in ordained ministry, Fr Sione has served through many languages and cultures of communities across Fiji, Tonga, Samoa and Aotearoa New Zealand.

Preacher on Saturday, Archbishop Don Tamihere set out for Fr Sione the qualities of a shepherd, both those embodied by his sheep farmer uncle and the long lineage of biblical shepherds.

He challenged Fr Sione to emulate Abel in giving his best, Abraham's intercession, Isaac's obedience, Rebecca, Leah and Rachel's hard work, Jacob's tenacity and endurance, Moses' character shaped in toil and David's care and protection for the flock.

"Whenever I hear a story of shepherds and sheep from the Bible it feels to me it is more than a metaphor. There is something literal in it, something practical, something real."

"...There is something about the shepherd's heart that allows us to see and hear God. Jesus said, If you love me, feed my sheep. A good shepherd lays down all for the care of the sheep."

Archbishop Sione also spoke of his call to be a shepherd in the lead up to his ordination this week,

"What drove me into this role was allowing for the Spirit of God to speak – listening to the cries and the joys of our world – listening to the land, to the *moana* and to those who are vulnerable and voiceless."

“There is a lot for the Church to do as we hear, and as we face the issues that arise. Our task is to help transform suffering into victory and hope.”

Archbishop Sione sees that despite the critical challenges people face in a world of increasing hardships, especially due to climate change, hope in Christ can make all things new.

“Our task is to enter into partnership with God and one another to allow something better to grow out of these crises we face: Covid, or Cyclones or volcanic eruptions. Our hope is in our prayer and our liturgy which offer proof of new life emerging out of devastation – and in our practical work that builds resilience through the work of the Church.”

As Archbishop Sione will share his expertise as a liturgist and ministry educator who has mentored and trained many throughout the Diocese, most recently since 2018 as Principal of St John the Baptist Theological College in Suva.

Lecturer at St John’s Suva, Liliani Havili describes Archbishop Sione as a man of vision.

“He draws people in and gets them on board, especially young people. He encourages young people to grow and take leadership by giving them firsthand experience as leaders, which is radical in our culture.”

Liliani warns her new bishop can sometimes be unyielding, and she understands why.

“It’s because he loves what he’s doing for God and he wants to offer God the very best, he wants the best when it comes to serving God.”

Dean of Suva Fr Orisi Vuki was pleased to see the Cathedral brimming with people as a sign of the unity and diversity of the Diocese and wider Church gathered in person in Suva for the first time since Covid barred travel across the region.

Orisi said that at age 57, Archbishop Sione is a young person to take up the reins, but he is ready to lead by engaging with others, both turning to elders for wisdom and uplifting the voices of youth. He is delighted to have a new occupant in the Cathedral sanctuary,

“For so long we have been looking after a seat which was empty, now it has been filled and for us that is hopeful, it is a new start.”

Bernie Moa who belongs to the Episcopal Unit of Polynesia in Auckland played and led music on Saturday and supported Suva Cathedral with logistics this week. From his perspective as an engineer and project manager he believes that Archbishop Sione’s practical side will serve the Church well,

“He encourages people to innovate, to try new things and he wants young people with skills to be vocal and speak their minds.”

“He is also getting things formalised into structures and systems that will help things work well.”

Tilisi Bryce, whose late husband Most Rev Jabez Bryce was Archbishop and Bishop of Polynesia, has known Bishop Sione since she taught English at St John’s in Suva while he was a student.

“One of his gifts is that he is quite firm, which I like. Something I admire about him is he listens, and he considers the different opinions we give, but once he decides...he doesn't waver.”

Rev Amy Chambers, who was Fr Sione's predecessor as St John's Principal, reports that he is a strong advocate for women's leadership in church and ministry.

“He is always uplifting women, he is very much into equality for men and women.”

“One word to describe him is approachable, he will make time for you and support you as he can – you know the word in Māori, “*awhi*” that's his way and he is humble too.”

Preaching the final words of his *kauwhau* on Saturday, Archbishop Don explained that in Anglican parlance Fr Sione now becomes a Bishop by the grace of God and an Archbishop by the providence of God.

“You are here by God's grace, because there is nothing in you, or in any of us, that makes us righteous, worthy or entitled to the role to which you have been called...by providence, because only God provides for such a role.”

Archbishop Don reminded Archbishop Sione that God offers that providence not only to Archbishops but to all who uphold Christian faith and ministry.

“Within that providence of God is every member of the clergy...and every beautiful man, woman and child who is giving in some way to the ongoing work of this Church...”

“Everyone, great and small, rich and poor are a part of the providence of God that will enable you to become a shepherd in the Church of Christ.

“God bless you, Sione, in your call.”

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