

The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

NOVEMBER 2019 – JANUARY 2020



Thanks, everyone!

HEY FOLKS...CHRISTMAS IS UPON US! JUST IN CASE YOU missed it, and just in case the TV ads claiming everything from a jar of chutney to a new ute would make an ideal Christmas gift have not yet convinced you, we want to assure you it really is the silly season yet again.

Our senses are assaulted at this time of year with sights (sparkly everything!), sounds (“*Winter Wonderland*” Really?), and smells (brandy or rum in the Christmas pud? How about a bit of both!), and we can so easily lose the real joy that Christmas brings to those of us who know the love and forgiveness of God through the ultimate gift

– his own Son, The Lord Jesus Christ.

So, to celebrate Christmas this year we here at *The Link* want to remind you of two important things – gratitude and forgiveness. Bishop Rick wants to help us to remember to say thanks, and Sharon Kirk has helpfully opened up the whole idea of forgiveness for us to contemplate as we remember the vast forgiving heart of our loving Father.

So, this Christmas, let’s give some priceless gifts. Let’s forgive someone. And let’s thank a lot of random people. We may make their Christmas that little bit merrier.

Saying thank you



Bishop Rick Lewers

I OPENED THE DOOR TO LET PEOPLE IN. IT WAS ONLY THE door to Heatherbrae Pies. Sorry! Not “only”. It was the door to Heatherbrae Pies. It is my favourite restaurant but not one I take my wife to on our wedding anniversary. Not because I would be unhappy to do so, but for other reasons. Let the reader understand. When there I feel like the boy in the lolly shop, but I am the adult in the pie shop. As I stand in the queue I look at the menu board like a child looking into the glass bowl of liquorice allsorts. The lady behind the counter has to ask me three times for my order, so absorbed have I become with choice. And all this without so much as a glimpse of the vanilla, apple and blueberry slices, muffins, donuts and cakes which my wife notices. Feeling hungry?

I apologise. I have lost track of my reason for writing which is not hard for a man thinking about his pies. “I opened the door to let people in...” was where I began. I thought I was acting with courtesy but perhaps my motionless stance had them think I was the bellhop or worse, the door stop. A number of travelling pie connoisseurs passed me by and to each I nodded as I held the door. Was it the smell of pies, the grumble of the stomach, the tiredness of the journey or some other malady that meant that not so much as a thank you was offered? “Come on Rick,” I said to myself, “you are only opening the door for people. What do you want people to do, sing the Hallelujah Chorus?” You know those conversations you have with yourself. Well I ended up arguing with myself, “No I don’t need the Chorus, but a simple ‘thank you’ would suffice.”

“Thank you!” A word so under-utilised but when used makes one feel appreciated. Imagine living your life to help people feel appreciated. That would lift spirits and inspire smiles and other acts of kindness. Imagine that!

Now there’s a contribution to climate change that no one could argue with. It doesn’t cost anything to offer and you don’t have to close down coal-fired power stations to do it. All you have to do is close down something of yourself to see something in others that you appreciate.

I know what you are thinking! It’s easier to close down the coal-fired power station than to shut down the self-absorbed life. I know...

As hard as it is I want to encourage us to become “Thank you” activists. Thank your spouse for marrying you. You aren’t perfect and they put up with you, which is something to be thankful for. March the streets with “thank you” placards. Walk into shops and chant, “thank you”. As you blow into the random breath test say thank you, not because you’re under but because the cops are trying to protect you. Write letters to the Rural Fire Service, to the council, to your doctors, to your church. They don’t have to be long. Just two words will do, “thank you” and then sign it. Go home from school and declare to your parents “Thank you” and when you go back to school interrupt the class and announce to your teachers, “thank you”. When the sun rises, when the rain falls, when fun is had or you simply take your next breath, thank God. I say, “Let the revolution begin!”

Before I forget, thank you for reading this article or any others I write. Thank you!

I strongly believe that we could change the climate of life by a “thank you” led revolution. A simple “thank you!” makes holding the door for someone much more enjoyable. Of course, people’s ingratitude is no reason not to serve and if no one says thank you while you’re holding the door for them you, can always go back for another pie to make you feel better about things.

Christmas is the season to be merry but it is also the season to be thankful.

On forgiveness



Sharon Kirk

ON THE EVENING OF APRIL 17, FOUR years ago, 21-year old Dylan Roof walked into a Bible Study meeting at an African Methodist Church in Charlestown, South Carolina. He took part in the Bible study, and then, when the group began to pray, Dylan stood up, pulled out a gun and opened fire. He killed 9 people that night out of pure racial hatred.

Scenes like this, sadly, are not unfamiliar to us these days. What was most striking about this massacre, though, was the reaction of the relatives of those who were killed. At the bond hearing two months later, each of the victims' families addressed the murderer and one by one they told him they forgave him. Astonishing! They were offering this cold-blooded killer grace in the face of a hateful and brutal crime.

When I first heard this story on the news I

was utterly amazed. How could these people, in the midst of their profound grief, offer forgiveness to someone who had acted so intentionally and so cruelly? Why did they not hate him and want revenge? Even though I knew about forgiveness, this was an example that really challenged me. Would I be able to forgive like that? Would you?

Perhaps none of us has been called upon to respond to a situation quite like this, but I am sure every one of us has been called upon at one time or another to forgive someone who has wronged us. And when that someone is a family member, offering forgiveness can be particularly difficult.

You may have grown up in a family where trust was abused. Your parents were meant to love and protect you; but they didn't. You should have been safe; but you weren't. Abuse, neglect, trauma, shame, control, abandonment; instead of a childhood of happy memories, they've left you with scars so deep you'll carry them forever.

It might not be your parents, but your child who has left you with deep wounds. You remember holding that tiny baby in your arms, so fragile and innocent. You thought your heart would burst with love and joy. You had such hopes and dreams for the years ahead. Never did you imagine your own flesh and blood could hurt you the way they have done. You gave them everything, and they took it all ...and walked away, slapping you in the face and slamming the door behind them.

Or it may not be your parents or your child, but your spouse who has wronged you. A string of broken promises, infidelity, a thousand shattered expectations, an unwanted divorce.

When we think about what it means to forgive our families, the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-24 gives us a good place to start. Like the father with his son, and like God in his treatment of us, forgiving someone means that we don't give them what they deserve, instead we give them what they do not deserve. We give up our right to get revenge or hurt back or make someone else pay for what they have done to us.

When someone hurts us, our natural reaction is to retaliate, isn't it? As adults we have much more subtle ways of making others suffer for what they've done to us. We might deliberately make life difficult for them, or we might quietly wish them harm and rejoice when things don't go their way. But the father doesn't say: 'I want you to hurt the way you have hurt me'. The father says, 'I choose to let it go and not take revenge'; 'I give up my right for payback'. That's the essence of forgiveness.

Forgiving our families for the hurt they have caused us can be one of the most difficult things we do in life. Deep hurts are very real, and they become part of us. We can't erase what has happened, but we don't have to let it consume and control us. We can choose to forgive – to make a continual cross-shaped choice to let go of our right to hurt back.

We all have different stories of hurt and pain. Your story may be very different to mine. Whatever your history has been—whether you have been hurt by your parents, children, spouse, or other family members—my hope and prayer is that you may be able to find hope and freedom in the forgiveness God offers you in Christ, and the ability to then forgive others.

How's your prayer life, mate?

WE ALL KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF prayer and what an amazing privilege it is. But we also know that it can be really hard work to be consistent and organised. PrayerMate is an award-winning Christian prayer app that seeks to help you actually pray for all the people and causes you care about. It is a free download for your tablet or phone.

The app allows you to list and organise your prayer points, to get prayer points from our partner mission organisations, training colleges, etc, as well as offering biblical and other prayers to help you. A number of parishes already use it for their church prayers

and the Diocese of Armidale Prayer Diary is available on this app. As we enter our '2020 Seeing Jesus Clearly' year of evangelism and prayer, the PrayerMate app will allow parish prayers to be updated, so you can pray for current events and give thanks for the way God has been at work during the year.

If you want to improve your prayer time, get this great resource from <https://www.prayermate.net/> or download the app from your app store. Once on the app, under the 'Add Subject' icon, go to the 'Church Life' icon, then 'Australian Churches', then find the 'Armidale Anglican Diocese' icon to join.



Fond farewells and warm hellos

The end of the year always brings change, especially in the lives of our clergy who will be moving from one parish to another. This year, several people are moving on. They have asked for prayer as they begin their new ministries.



Tim, Kirsty, William and Edward Stevens.

Tim Stevens has been ministering with his wife Kirsty and sons William and Edward in Mungindi for the past three years, but will be moving to Guyra early next year.

We are sad to be leaving Mungindi for many reasons. Since starting ministry training many years ago, Mungindi has been the church that we have been at the longest. This means that we are leaving genuine friendships and a ministry which has often brought us great joy. Even though they are small in number, the congregation members in Mungindi are always keen to dig deep into the scriptures, which has been an enormous encouragement.

We are excited about taking up ministry in Guyra because we feel like we are coming back to familiar territory. Our first experience of ministry in the country was during a college mission in Guyra in 2012. We are excited to be involved in gospel ministry in the town again. We are also excited about ministering in Guyra because it will be easier to balance my Youth Encourager ministry with the ministry of the parish. We would really appreciate your prayers as we leave our friends in Mungindi and take up the new opportunities waiting for us further east.

George and Carmel Ferguson are making a move from Tamworth, taking George back to familiar territory!

I was raised in Collarenebri. I lived there until I turned 30, and moved away to Moree, and then to Lightning Ridge. I have an association with the area but have never lived in Walgett. I worked in the Community Mental Health service at Lightning Ridge for a number of years and Walgett was one of the towns that I used to visit weekly.

The most daunting thing about becoming the Vicar of Walgett/Collie is that becoming a vicar is new to me. I know that I won't be alone in the role of vicar as Jesus has promised that He will never leave me and has given me His Holy Spirit to help me. I try to visualise what the role of vicar might look like in Walgett/Collarenebri but just can't get a clear picture in my mind at the moment. Carmel will help teach scripture, be involved in the JAFFA Club at Walgett school and hopefully SUPA Club for the older kids. She is prayerfully seeking guidance on other aspects of ministry. I am praying that I will be able to teach and disciple the congregations of both Walgett/Collie churches well. That I will be able to find ways to encourage them to spur one another on to love and good deeds. I am also praying that the gospel will be well received, and many will come to know Jesus as their Lord and King.



Please pray that our move will go well and that we quickly find our feet. Pray that God will give us wisdom as I settle into the role of vicar and be sensitive to the needs of the congregations at Walgett and Collarenebri. Pray that we will be able to start scripture again at the Collarenebri school and to continue with JAFFA Club. Please pray that we will be a church that will reach out to our community.



Daniel Avenell (alongside wife Jenni) has been working as an associate minister in Inverell, but next year will become the Vicar of Barraba.

When it comes to what makes us stressed, moving house would – I suspect – rank in the top ten list. That we would typically do this at the height of summer, and when most other Australians are relaxing at the beach, adds a hint of insanity into the mix. Nevertheless, it can be a mixed blessing, especially when clergy move from one parish to another. It's sad to have to say farewell to friends that became family. And it's daunting to leave the familiar, the comfortable, and what was beginning to feel like home. But the blessing is that going to a new parish means finding friends and family that you never knew you had. It means forging new relationships, and perhaps new ministries, to advance the Kingdom of God and the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Please pray for all clergy as they move this summer, that they will have the grace to finish well where they are, and the enthusiasm to start well where they go. Pray that they will settle quickly into new experiences and ministries and that they will be a blessing to many, even as they are blessed.

Kurt Langmead, with Bec, June, Lydia, Arthur and Jeremiah will be leaving the cool heights of Armidale to take up new challenges in Lightning Ridge.

We are excited to be heading out to Lightning Ridge in this next chapter of life and ministry as a family. Of course, we will miss our friendships and gospel opportunities from Armidale (we will miss the cooler weather too!) But we are looking forward to new opportunities to be sharing both our lives and the gospel in a new and pretty different place to Armidale. In particular, we are looking forward to heading out to the 'wild west' not only with our Diocese, but also in partnership with BCA (Bush Church Aid). Our postcode might be changing, but our part in the Diocesan mission stays the same: 'Introducing people to Jesus, helping them home to heaven'. Please pray for a good start to the ministry next year and please thank God for the work of the Bush Church Aid Society.



Kurt and Bec Langmead with June, Lydia and Arthur. Jeremiah is clinging to his mum like a baby koala, and cannot be seen in this photo.



Emma Little will be leaving the Cathedral in Armidale to return to Sydney.

Here is what I've learned from my five years in the Armidale Diocese:

I've been struck by the joy and privilege of parish ministry, of walking through the Christian life with people at

different times and stages. It was wonderful seeing people come to faith and then growing in their faith.

I also learned the great blessing of fellowship with many like-minded brothers and sisters whom I had the great joy of working alongside in the Diocese. They were a great encouragement to me!

Scott and Jo Dunlop are on the move after almost a decade and a half.

At the end of this year Jo and I will have been in Gunnedah fourteen years. That's a very long time and makes me the longest serving vicar in the parish's 150-year history, by two years. I'm very thankful to God for the privilege of being vicar here, and for His faithfulness over that time. We love our church family deeply, and have opened our hearts and lives to them as we have sought to serve Jesus faithfully among this community. We are very thankful for everyone who has opened their hearts and lives to us, as we have served Jesus together. We have been able to grow healthier as a church, by dealing with some of the problems that were holding us back and we have held strongly to God's word even when we've been tested in a number of areas. God has helped us grow up and out in Christ, and we now have a very strong, united, and loving church family.

Having said all that, after much agonizing in prayer, Jo and I feel that God is calling us to serve Him somewhere else. The Diocese is planting another Anglican church in Tamworth next year and the bishop has asked me to head that up, due to my passion for evangelism and seeing God's kingdom grow. Putting a new church in the town with the largest population in the Diocese, will strengthen our Diocese into the future to the benefit of all parishes, including Gunnedah.

The population of the Armidale Diocese has been changing. Regional centres have been growing and smaller rural towns declining. To keep up with this population shift, it is important that the Diocese continues to put churches where people are, so they get the opportunity to be introduced to Jesus and helped home to heaven. Tamworth has been expanding and, over the last 25 years since the Diocese planted the last Anglican church in Tamworth, it has grown by over 20000 people and is expected to continue to grow. The new church will be planted on the northern side of Tamworth in the quickly expanding Moore Creek area and will meet at the William Cowper Campus at Calrossy Anglican School. This is a big step that the Diocese is taking and I am excited to be heading it up as, under God, we hold to His word and share the good news of Jesus in order to grow more like Jesus.

We know that it is God who builds His church, but we all have a part to play. Therefore, much prayer is needed for the church plant. As this will be



Flashback: The young Scott and Jo Dunlop with Amelia, Deanna, Jono and Tim when they first moved to Gunnedah.

a ministry of the Diocese it would be helpful for all churches to become 'Prayer Partners' with the Church Plant, committed to faithfully praying for the growth of the gospel, especially in this area. If you would like to be a prayer partner personally and receive the termly prayer points to inform your prayers, please contact me at scottdunlop@gunnedahanglican.org.au

It will be extremely difficult leaving Gunnedah, but Jo and I have always wanted to be where God wants us to be and where we can be most effective for His kingdom, as all of us are always happiest in the will of God. All this will mean finishing up and moving at the beginning of February. I trust God will provide the needs of Gunnedah in this new chapter, as it is His church not ours. Please be assured of Jo's and my prayers for you as the bishop and the parish nominators go through the process of finding a new vicar to replace me. Also, Jo and I would appreciate your ongoing prayers for us at this time. We look forward to that day, when all God's people will be united around Jesus in His presence for all eternity and we can be one forever in Him, but in the meantime, we must keep our eyes on Jesus in trust and obedience, and seek to take up our cross and follow Him, wherever He might lead.'



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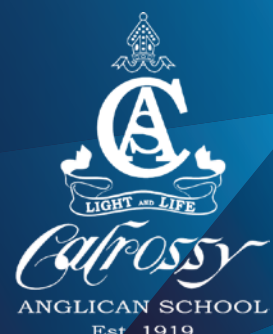
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From here to there to here

All Church Missionary Society missionaries have different stories about how God led them to serve cross-culturally, yet they all share common goals; Bible-based, gospel priority, in-depth training and long term focus (the CMS distinctives), underpin everything our missionaries do; whether it's preparing to go, serving on location or completing their final home assignment.

Our Diocese has missionaries in each of these stages. Andrew and Margie Newman are preparing to leave in early 2020 to serve in Uganda to work at the Bible college in Rukungiri, training pastors for the region. Gillian Law has been in Italy since 2013. She's now in Rome with the Christian Union at the university, training and equipping students to share the gospel. K and M are on final assignment, having served as a teacher mathematics and trainer of leaders.

Gillian Law



When Gillian Law started looking at missionary organisations, CMS was an obvious starting point. She was a CMS missionary kid, attended CMS conferences and met many CMS missionaries.

"You get a deeper cultural understanding the longer you're in the culture. Early on, I gained an initial understanding of words and my ability to express ideas came as I learned Italian. Over time, I am learning what stands behind those words and phrases. Gaining a better understanding of Italian culture has helped me minister here more effectively through what I say and do."

Through her ministry, Gillian has been able to work with students, which she considers one of her main joys.

"Although young, some of them have incredible courage and maturity to stand up as Christians. They are willing to share their faith and be trained in leading bible studies by an older foreigner whose Italian still gets quite muddled. That's a real joy and very humbling! One of the challenges here is that in Italy the evangelical church is very small and often not united, so we often feel alone. Letters and emails are where I get my encouragement. Often, it's just a short little email to say we got your newsletters. Sometimes it is a longer letter. Mostly they come from people within my link churches because they are the people I know best and there's an ongoing relationship there."

Andrew and Margie Newman



"We look forward to having Ugandans take us under their wing and help us to merge into their culture. We really look forward to being able to know them and communicate the gospel within their framework, as we teach and help equip the students at the Bible College."

Yet it's also in this same area of language and culture that holds some fears for them.

"Having had the opportunity at St Andrew's Hall to think through the differences in culture, we now believe that we have a picture in our minds about a significant period of time where we will be in Uganda like young children trying to relate to an adult world. We fear the language and cultural barrier and the social isolation it brings."

As they prepare to go, Andrew and Margie encourage those who are considering going themselves, saying, *"... pray and push on some doors. Investigate further...The Lord is sovereign over our lives...He is good at putting his people where He wants them to achieve his purposes in growing His gospel."*

K and M

Serving with CMS had great benefits for K and M.

"Our partnership with churches back home was crucial to our ability to serve. To know we were upheld through prayer, emails, finances, personal visits on the field and verbal encouragement when we were on home assignment was so important."

Now back in Australia for their final home assignment they explained some of the mixed feelings they have experienced.

"We don't miss the pollution in the city we were serving, but we do miss the individuals we worked with and the locals who became our friends."

As they finish up, K and M want to encourage others who are a bit older to consider serving.

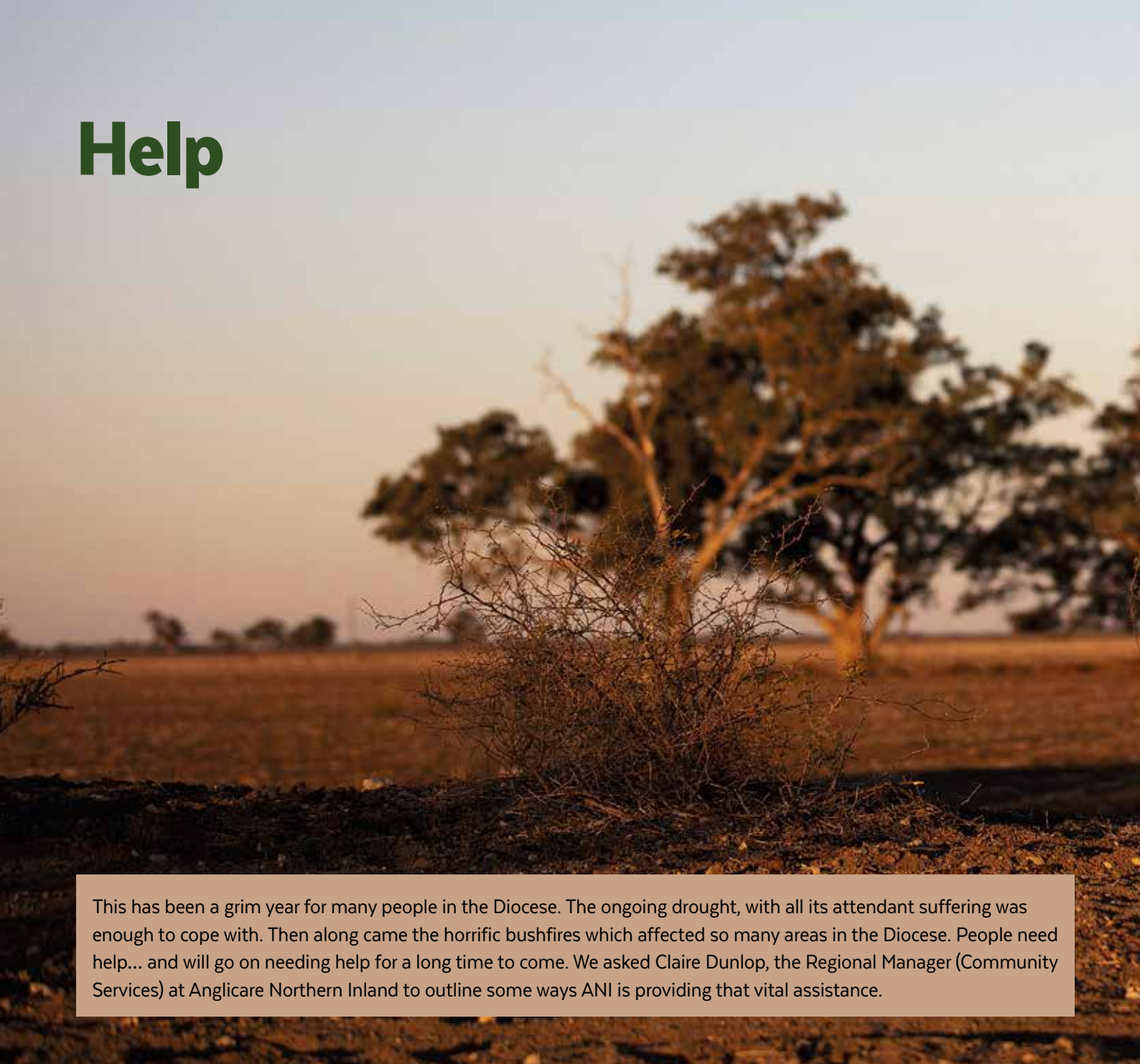
"Never think it is too late to go where you believe God is calling you!"

Each one of our missionaries is aware and thankful to God for the importance of their link churches. Without link churches praying and giving, there would be no people sent.

Link churches also play a critical role in encouraging people to seek after God and his will in cross-cultural mission. If no one is sent, others around the world will not hear about Jesus and have lasting hope. So, is God calling you, to cross cultures with the life-saving news of Jesus?

There are many opportunities to serve, in various capacities, each seeking to proclaim the gospel, because we believe that the gospel is our number one need and it is the gospel that is God's power to save. Check out how you could serve at cms.org.au/opportunities

Help



This has been a grim year for many people in the Diocese. The ongoing drought, with all its attendant suffering was enough to cope with. Then along came the horrific bushfires which affected so many areas in the Diocese. People need help... and will go on needing help for a long time to come. We asked Claire Dunlop, the Regional Manager (Community Services) at Anglicare Northern Inland to outline some ways ANI is providing that vital assistance.

How is ANI ‘embedded’ in the community?

Anglicare in some form or another has been represented in New England North West for nearly 40 years. We have a solid footprint that enables us to understand the needs of our communities, to strengthen communities and to offer services that are appropriate, compassionate and Christ-centred. Locals can be assured that Anglicare journeys alongside them to weather the drought together and to support communities in the aftermath of the bush fires.

What does the long-term support that you provide look like?

Anglicare understands that sometimes people need some help to get over short term difficulties in their life, other times they need ongoing support. Anglicare is able to offer both of these kinds of support through

our Financial Counselling, Mental Health programs and counselling services. If people want to access Anglicare services they can call Regional Intake Line on 6701 8200 and speak to our staff about their needs.

As well as the drought, many northern NSW communities are now suffering from the effects of devastating bushfires. What does a major disaster like that do to people’s minds and hearts?

People in the areas affected by the bushfires are also severely affected by the drought, the sense of hopelessness can be overwhelming and a real risk factor to people’s hearts and minds. People need other people to come alongside them; humans are created to be in community to journey through life together and Anglicare wants to help in this space through our services.

What sort of help can ANI provide once the fires are over, but the long-term difficulties set in?

In January 2020 we have a new Mental Health program funded by the Primary Health Network that we will be providing to Moree, Inverell, Armidale, Tamworth, Narrabri, Wyallda and surrounding small towns and we hope to be able to offer support to people in these bushfire and drought affected areas. This is alongside our normal counselling and financial counselling services.

If people want to donate to Anglicare in a way that particularly helps their local area, how can they do that?

Anglicare in the region is funded for some programs but there are other areas where we still need donations to subsidize services, particularly in the area of counselling which



DROUGHT

Digging the disposal trench
Resting place for the beloved cattle!
Concrete ground rising to fine powder.
Green grass just a distant memory!
The rocks in our hearts grow heavier,
And sleep evades us.
As debt hill continues to rise.
Will we ever see good rain again?
Has all hope gone?
Where is the support we need?
Some blame God.
How could he do this?
Others repent for ignoring Him,
Swearing to put right their lives.
Is there anyone else to call on?
What is the point of struggling?
Will suicide bring solutions?
Only grief to those close by!
There must be another way.
Trust.
Can we trust the giver of life?
What other hope do we have?
Listen to the birds.....
They are still chirping!
They sing a song of hope....
Praising their creator everyday.
We can choose to do the same,
Awaiting the healing of our land.

Anne Levingston

is an ongoing need but with minimal funding.

We appreciate any donation small or large that is given and we use it predominantly to provide free drought counselling.

Donations can be made by sending a cheque to Anglicare PO Box 1140, Moree NSW 2400. Or email claire.dunlop@anglicare.org.au for direct debit options.

Tell us about *Go Without for the Drought*.

Go Without for the Drought is an initiative between Anglicare and the Armidale Diocese.

"When things get tight..." says Simon Pain, a farmer from outside of Moree, "...the first thing to go is luxuries." We can all live without coffee, (some would find this truer than others) but data collected by Anglicare's Social Policy and Research Unit demonstrates that the same is not true of community. We all need to connect and to belong. Community

connections are often made in cafés over a cup of coffee. Luxuries like meeting for a tea or coffee at a local café, where connections are made, is the first thing to go when things are tight.

For that reason, Anglicare invited Sydneysiders as well as locals to support an initiative to help their brothers and sisters in the drought affected areas of the Northern Inland to make connections over coffee. By supporting the *Go Without for the Drought* campaign, vouchers will be provided to members of Anglican churches in the Northern Inland. Those vouchers can be spent on meeting with friends and neighbours at local cafes. It is a small gesture that helps local businesses, but more importantly will encourage Christians to reach out, connect and restore real hope.

Watch more at youtube.com/watch?v=8FtBox5J2ZY

Seeing Jesus in the Holy Land



The Rev Dub Gannon

IN JUNE THIS YEAR A GROUP OF US FROM THE DIOCESE OF Armidale and a few extras had the privilege of visiting biblical sites in Israel and Jordan.

We had a wonderful time together visiting different places we read about in the Bible and being encouraged and built up in our trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. I thought I would share some of my highlights from the trip.

First of all, it was good to be able to get a better understanding of the geography of the land which helped to give a clearer picture of things we read about in the Bible. We not only visited places where Jesus ministered, such as Jerusalem and around the Sea of Galilee, but we also visited places which are mentioned in the Old Testament.

Secondly there is a great deal of archaeology which reinforces the truth of what we read in the Bible. One of my favourite sites was the archaeological ruins of the city of Lachish. This city was defeated during a campaign by the Assyrian King Sennacherib in 701 BC. You can read the story for yourself in Isaiah 36-37. It is a place I had wanted to visit for a long time.

Prior to coming to the Diocese of Armidale I used to lead tours of the British Museum in London. Some of my favourite displays there are the victory panels taken from King Sennacherib's palace. They show his conquest of Lachish as he couldn't defeat Jerusalem because it was defended by God. For me it was good to finally see Lachish.

Thirdly another highlight was seeing some of the Dead Sea Scrolls on display in a museum and seeing the place where they found them. The discovery of these scrolls in 1947 was remarkable. Amongst the scrolls they found a complete copy of the scroll of Isaiah. It was dated to the first and second centuries BC. Prior to that discovery the oldest copy of Isaiah dated from around 900 AD and critics of the Bible had argued that the prophecies about Jesus was added in later on in an effort to authenticate Jesus. The obvious question was, 'Were they the same?' Other than a few minor grammar differences they were identical! It is a good example to illustrate that we can trust our Bible as the authentic word of God.

On our trip we were also able to visit Bethlehem and be reminded that over 2000 years ago Jesus was born into the world not in a stable as we often imagine but most likely in a cave where animals were sheltered at night.



From top: A happy travelling party in Israel: Church of the Nativity: Lachish.

Jesus came as a helpless babe into the world to usher in the Kingdom of God and grow up to make the necessary sacrifice to pay the price for our sins on the cross so we could be forgiven and granted eternal life. Seeing where Jesus lived and ministered was a great encouragement for me and others to read our Bibles more and more and keep looking to Jesus as the King who saves.

If you would be interested in coming to Israel at some point, I am hoping to go again in June 2021. Please contact me at St Paul's Anglican Church in Tamworth if you are interested.

Safe Ministry is for everyone

Rev Geoff Hearne

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHANGES TO THE WAY WE DO MINISTRY over the last few years has been to ensure our churches and gatherings are safe places for people. This has come about as a result of people failing in their duty of care, and in occasions of sexual misconduct in the past which have been highlighted by the Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse. This is a source of hurt for those who were abused, and of shame and sorrow for the church and the good name of Jesus whom we represent.

In response to these issues, Safe Ministry training has been established across our Diocese. Our Safe Ministry training not only raises our awareness of the importance of protecting children and other vulnerable persons, but provides people with practical advice so our churches are places that function under good policy and ensure that our behaviour is consistent with scripture.

The Archbishop of Sydney makes this point clear in his introduction to our Safe Ministry training course. "We have a high calling to protect the vulnerable among us, especially the very young, and it comes from none other than the Lord Jesus himself", he says. "The protection of the vulnerable, especially children, is a consistent theme in Scripture and one which we are to take very seriously. Widows, orphans and aliens (or refugees) comprise a familiar triad of responsibility for Ancient Israel and the New Testament reinforces this responsibility for Christian care to those who might otherwise be marginalised.

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while considering such things as staff to student ratios and working on facilities. They look to advance the schools interest in a competitive environment while managing complaints that seem to come from all points of the human compass. From the teacher responsible for a class, the principal becomes responsible for a school. The teacher's responsibility is to teach while the principal must ensure they teach well; that students learn, that parents are placated, and that every issue of compliance is met while scrutinised by the community, the media and anyone with an opinion whether it is educated or ignorant.

When you put it like this it makes you wonder why anyone would be a principal. A leech would never take on such a job... but a contributor would.

I write these things in honour of a contributor. Only a few weeks ago Armidale lost a contributor, and when a contributor of the ilk of Murray Guest, the principal of The Armidale School, becomes another road fatality, it is only right to pause for a moment to applaud his contribution. Mr Guest was an educator, not a perfect educator because, other than Jesus Christ, such an educator does not exist. But Mr Guest's ambition as an educator was to see all his students make such a contribution to life and country that blessing would follow and we would all be the beneficiaries. Having had my hand firmly shaken by hundreds of young men and women after chapel services at The Armidale School, I have no doubt the teaching principal has made a contribution that will last through the well lived lives of his students.

To the students of The Armidale School, pay your tribute to the principal who served you by being contributors to the welfare of others.

To the family of Murray Guest, on behalf of the community in which I live, we offer our heartfelt condolences praying that your grief finds comfort in Christ, in whom is the promise of the resurrection of the dead.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ whom we serve and our desire is to honour Him in every community, but especially in our churches and organisations, that they might be places of safety and security wherein all people, particularly children and youth, might hear the good news of Christ and be built up in their faith."

As we take up this calling, the 2019 Synod moved that wardens and parish councillors, who are in positions of responsibility for the management of our churches, are required to undergo Safe Ministry training as well as those working with young people and children. The goal of course would be to have all members of our congregations trained so they are aware of our obligations, best practices to protect each other, and are able to respond to risk or abuse. The Safe Ministry training course is provided to us by the Sydney Anglican Diocese, and addresses the principles of appropriate leadership, what are best practices and ensuring safe environments. The topics covered include leadership duty to care; appropriate leadership characteristics; power and vulnerability; leadership selection process; protecting vulnerable people and responding to abuse; risk management; identifying and maintaining a safe environment. So let us introduce people to Jesus and help them home to heaven in safe churches and organisations. Training can be done on-line at <https://safeministry.training/online-training-information/>, in groups through your vicar or by contacting the Diocesan registry.

SAFE MINISTRY

THERE IS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ABUSE

The Anglican Diocese of Armidale has adopted policies and procedures to prevent and respond to abuse of children or vulnerable people

REPORT ABUSE

HELP IS AVAILABLE
YOU CAN TALK TO THE DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Email- psd@armidaleanglicandiocese.com
Phone- 0408 218 940



“...there’s no discouragement shall make him once relent his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim...”

John Bunyan



The contributor

Bishop Rick Lewers

MR MURRAY GUEST, PRINCIPAL OF THE Armidale School (TAS), was killed in a single vehicle car accident on Waterfall Way not far from Armidale on 30th October.

The shock of his death has been palpable around the Armidale community, as it is for me personally. Murray and I have spent significant time together over TAS matters, and we have enjoyed a prayerful relationship and one of great respect. I never had a meeting with Murray where he did not ask me to pray for him and with him. I will miss him as will the School and all associated.

The biggest loss is of course for his wife, Joanne and their children, and I would ask you to please pray for them and the TAS community as they come to terms with this loss. His death has led me to ponder on the great difference a good teacher can make in the lives of a child, a family and a whole community.

Every community has its leeches, sucking up what they can from their host while giving nothing back. Perhaps a parent never taught them the value of a work ethic. Maybe an education was lost on minds that are closed, and responsibility avoided by those who consider themselves entitled. Then there are those whose only interest is in the security of self with little concern for people beyond the door of their own home. Perhaps a parent spoilt them, education betrayed them, the love of money overwhelmed them, or the needs of others was simply lost on them.

O for the teacher of wisdom, a leader who knows how to work and models it! O for the strength of one who teaches a firm handshake and expects its return from the student! O for the teacher who invests not just in a mind but also in the heart!

I am speaking of the teacher who pauses in the school yard to speak to a student a word of encouragement and who shows no favourites but shows favour to all. A teacher who takes time to know a student’s name and invites them into the adventure we call life. Such a teacher stands to attention when the Cadets are on parade and applauds from the sideline while waving the school flag. If they could, they would yell at the netball but they silently submit to the umpire because they understand and show respect for all. This teacher is the one who leaves no one behind and would come last in order to inspire a person to something better. They are there when the cooking needs doing, when the losing is overwhelming, when the grief is tear producing, when the results are disappointing and at the finish line when the student needs applauding.

When such a teacher becomes a principal they sacrifice love of their subject to advance the subjects of all. They yield their class to another only to seek the development of student and teacher together. They once stood teaching a class they loved but now stand before meetings, and study accounts

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About

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