

The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2020 FEBRUARY/MARCH

2020 Seeing Jesus Clearly

Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.'

WHEN JESUS GAVE HIS DISCIPLES THE GREAT COMMISSION at the end of Matthew's gospel, they may not have clearly understood what Jesus' instructions really meant for their futures. As we see in Acts and reading between the lines in the Epistles, the making disciples of all nations was hard, terrifying and sometimes, fatal. As the disciples travelled around so much of the known world at that time, they surely would not have imagined that those words would be taken to make disciples of people in places like Lightning Ridge, Quirindi, North Star and Walcha.

For the Great Commission still stands in 2020, unchanged in its intent. But individual circumstances, life, culture and communication have changed beyond recognition.

Making disciples of all nations for us may not mean getting shipwrecked, being flogged or enduring years in prison. Instead, it

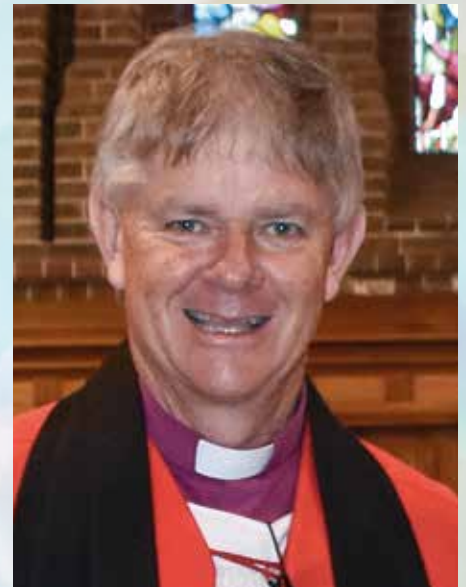
may mean driving our kids to youth group when we would rather be watching TV, fighting the language barrier with a newly arrived immigrant, inviting our neighbours to church (even though they have refused the invitations for years) taking on a Scripture class or making conversation with the barista at the coffee shop that goes beyond the quality of the beans and ventures into the scary territory of talking about life and all its complications.

For your encouragement, we have devoted most of this issue of *The Link* to *The Year of Seeing Jesus Clearly*.

Making disciples of all nations in 2020 might look different to the way it did in 33AD but it, like the Lord Jesus Himself, remains the same.

The very end of the age has not yet come, and just as He promised, Jesus is still with us. Let us pray that many, many people come to a living faith in Him this year.

Getting excited and pointing the way



Bishop Rick Lewers

AS WE BEGIN A YEAR IN WHICH WE ARE seeking to help people see Jesus clearly, we need to look at the events which unfold in the first chapter of John's gospel. It is in this chapter we are introduced to three firsts: the preaching evangelist, family evangelist and friendship evangelist.

The **preaching** evangelist is, of course, John the Baptist. Unlike most of my sermons, his sermon in this chapter was brief. In verse 29 he says, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world". Like any good evangelist he simply points people to Jesus. In the Old Testament we see the best lambs being offered by the people as a sacrifice for their sin. But from this opening chapter in John's gospel, God is the one who makes the new offering of heaven's best Lamb, His Son. But the reason does not change. He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world.

That is a sacrifice for you and me. That is a payment to erase our debt before God. That is a sacrifice that only needs doing once and is sufficient for all. That is sin taken and guilt removed. Instead of condemnation there is the promise of forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. That is history's statement of God's loving commitment to us all... Oops! Sorry! I have got a little carried away with the excitement of all this. Back to John chapter one, we see two disciples follow Jesus, who asks them, "What are you seeking?" What I find amazing is that the one who asks the

question is the God who seeks us!

The first thing the now excited disciple Andrew does after following Jesus is to go and find his brother, Peter. As far as I can tell Andrew is the first **family** evangelist, and like a preaching evangelist all he does is point his brother to Jesus: "We have found the Messiah." That is what you do when excited about Jesus. You tell your family.

Jesus is also an evangelist which is no surprise because He is, after all, the seeking Shepherd of the lost. We are told he found Philip and the content of his message is "Follow me!" The preaching and family evangelist point to Jesus and Jesus draws people to Himself.

Philip immediately finds his friend Nathanael and becomes the first **friendship** evangelist. His message is a little longer. Sometimes it takes a little longer when you are telling people that Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promises to Moses and the Prophets. But don't miss what the friendship evangelist did – he pointed Nathanael to Jesus. The sceptical Nathanael recognised Jesus as the Son of God and the King of Israel. We are not told who Nathanael excitedly went to tell but we know that he too became an excited disciple of Jesus.

Now I don't want to bore you, but as you read John 1 you see the reason for all the excitement. Verse one says that Jesus is the Word; verse three tells us Jesus is the Creator;

in verse five He is the light that shines in the darkness; in verse 12 Jesus gives us the right to become children of God, and in verse 14 Jesus is the Word become flesh, full of grace and truth. The preaching evangelist says, "Look the Lamb of God." The family evangelist says, "We have found the Messiah." The friendship evangelist says, "We have found the one Moses and the Prophets wrote about", and the sceptic declares "Jesus is the Son of God".

If you are as excited as I am by these words, let me add some more to your excitement! Jesus responds to Nathanael, saying "The day is coming when you will see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." That odd title "Son of Man" is used humbly of man in Psalm 8 but of a heavenly royal in Daniel chapter seven. It describes a heavenly royal who is given universal authority. It is a title that suggests a figure who seems to have a foot in heaven and a foot on earth. A person who is the connection between heaven and earth. The most exciting thing about this is that all the resources of God are provided to us in the life of this person, and Jesus is the person.

That is exciting to know in a year where we are helping people to see Jesus clearly. He connects people to heaven when we point them to Jesus and He will provide you with all you need to point people to Jesus. So, POINT PEOPLE TO JESUS! It will be the greatest contribution you will ever make to life.

About

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A privileged life

Margie Newman is a child of the Diocese. As the daughter of Bishop Peter and Mrs Betty Chiswell she experienced the nurture of a close Christian family and came to understand the importance of evangelism as a child. Margie and her husband Andrew are now serving as missionaries in Uganda.

"As Andrew and I head to Uganda to live and work, I have reflected about the enormous privilege it has been to be raised in this Armidale Diocese.

I was privileged to witness the firm priority of trusting and teaching the Word of God. Throughout my childhood and youth, solid bible teaching meant that I understood that we are always on about serving the Lord wherever we are. That meant talking to our friends about the good news of Jesus, inviting them to join us at youth group or on camps and they often did. Mum and Dad

were always involved with the Church Missionary Society and caring for missionaries. Many missionaries stayed at our place. As a family we prayed for them and knew them personally. They had a large view of the outreaching work of God in our world.

The development of youth work, lay-led bible study groups, support of Scripture Union, Cursillo and of course the great history of family and Diocesan involvement with John Chapman meant that we were taught well, disciplined well, experienced close Christian community and learnt from childhood what it meant to share our faith with others.

As well as all the above, my mum was a natural evangelist and we witnessed her in action all our lives; even to her last days in her Alzheimer's years: as we walked out of the dining room at Nazareth Care in Tamworth singing "Follow, follow, I will follow Jesus..." she stopped in the corridor and said "Well, we've done our evangelism for the day... I don't suppose they minded."



What an amazing blessing it is, belonging to a Christ-centred family and Diocese all my life! With all that the Lord has given me by token of belonging to this Diocese and family, there has been every opportunity to serve the Lord here in this Diocese. Now Andrew and I have an amazing opportunity to continue serving him in another country. Same Lord. Same great news. He is worth proclaiming!"

Growth in Uganda

Lisa Newnham from Tamworth has recently returned from her third trip to the Diocese of North Kigezi in Uganda.

"A small team of eight travelled to North Kigezi this year", Lisa said. "I keep going back because it is such a wonderful opportunity to see God's kingdom growing throughout the world.

Our team runs NextGen Conferences. These conferences aim to train current and future leaders to better understand the Bible themselves and be able to teach it to others. We do this through strand groups where we teach the NextGen model and main sessions with Bible talks, singing, prayer, and some smaller teaching segments.

It was especially encouraging this trip to see more Ugandans being able to step up and lead in the conference. We also had some strand groups fully lead by Ugandans with Ugandan leaders, co-leaders and trainees. It was also great to see the way some leaders had grown and matured since my previous trip. Another difference was having the training days.

This year, we had a particular focus on mentoring and training the Ugandan conference leaders, to equip them to run the NextGen conference, and to become Christian leaders. We had two training days with the Australian and Ugandan leadership teams which included talks from 2 Timothy, as well as looking at discussion papers about Christian leadership in small groups. This



Lisa with strand leaders Sandrah and Fiona.

was valuable time to ensure we worked well together. We also had a combined Australian and Ugandan leaders feedback time each day during the conference, as well as mentoring time within our strand groups. We were thrilled to have 165 delegates attend the conference along with about 25 Ugandan leaders

With the evangelism going on in our own Diocese this year, we were very aware that we were training people to better understand the Bible and therefore equipping them to share it with others. We also taught the *Bridge to Life* evangelistic tract during the conference sessions

to show delegates a simple way of sharing the gospel with those around them. It was particularly encouraging when we went to church on Sunday and saw delegates sharing what they had learned at the conference and seeing them explain the *Bridge to Life* to their church family.

We would love people to continue to pray for those who attended the conference this year. Please pray that God would use what they have learned at the conference to grow them to know and love Him more. And pray that they might be able to share what they have learned with those around them who do not yet know Jesus."

Faith through care

The Right Reverend Richard Condie is the Bishop of Tasmania. But a long time ago, he was just Richard Condie, student at the University of New England.

"University is a very formative time in young people's lives. They are naturally asking questions of meaning and often re-examining the assumed worldviews they have learnt from their parents. This makes them especially open to the gospel.

It is so important for our churches to pay particular attention to sharing the good news at this time. Helping students grapple with worldview, ask tough questions, and get intellectually satisfying answers should be at the forefront of our mission.

I am so grateful that care was taken with me as a university student as I came to own my faith for myself. I remember sitting in my college room at UNE with a copy of Josh McDowell's *More than a Carpenter* and my Bible, trying to work out if I was going to continue with my childhood faith. I was so grateful for the faithful ministry team and elders at the Uni Chapel for answering my questions and helping me grow."



Leading and sharing

Dr Glenn Davies is the Archbishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of New South Wales.

"It is wonderful to see a Bishop lead his Diocese in the cause of Christ by training and equipping members of congregations to be ambassadors for Christ. I would like to encourage you to be a part of this great task.

It is a great blessing for people to be able to explain the gospel and to invite their friends, relatives and neighbours to hear the good news of Jesus either by their own witness or through bringing them to events and opportunities to hear the word of God clearly preached and Christ honoured. Yes, we have seen pain and heartbreak from drought and bushfire. But we have also seen many people question their own world view and there is an openness to the message of Jesus that we have not encountered for some time.

The Armidale Diocese has gifted people and willing hands for this work and many, many people are praying for the Spirit of God to work in the hearts of those around you. I am thankful for the leadership of Bishop Rick Lewers and pray that God might richly bless the Diocese of Armidale with an influx and an inflow by God's grace of many people turning to Christ."



A vision for



WHEN SCOTT AND JO DUNLOP MOVED to Gunnedah in 1997, they were not expecting to spend most of the next 24 years there. With a break of six years, while Scott was the rector at Wee Waa, Gunnedah has been their home, and the place they have raised their family. But now Scott is heading up a new church plant in Tamworth.

Tamworth is a city richly blessed with churches, so the question is...why another one?

"Every church that exists has been "planted" at some point in the past", Scott said. "The most recent church plant in Tamworth was the Oxley Vale parish 25 years ago, and St Peter's South Tamworth before that. This Armidale Anglican Diocese project will use a model for church planting that will involve starting with a small team of committed Christians with a heart for evangelism who, under God, will seek to grow through outreach into a new, fully established parish. With so many churches declining and closing around Australia, it is very encouraging that our Diocese is seeking to establish a new church and parish in this growing area.

This new church has been planted on the northern side of Tamworth in the quickly expanding Moore Creek area and has begun meeting in the William Cowper Campus at Calrossy Anglican School. The Diocese has purchased land right next to William Cowper Campus on the Moore Creek side, and the aim is to put a new church building there.

But a church is much more than just a building. The church is the people inside

The Link

Tamworth



Excited for the future: smiles all round at the new North Tamworth Anglican Church.

the building, and those people need care and encouragement as well as teaching. God has graciously provided us with a non-stipendary women's and children's ministry worker, Lisa Newnham, who has just finished her MTS Apprenticeship with us in Gunnedah. God has given her a heart for ministry, and she has generously offered to work voluntarily two days a week for the church plant, while she works the rest of the week as a Speech Pathologist. I am also very thankful for God's provision of a small but very capable group of people to be the launch team members to start off the new church.

The Shire Council has projected that Tamworth will grow by 2000 people each year into the future, with the forward projection of 100,000 people by 2040. A very large percent of that growth is expected to be in the Moore Creek area. Under the direction of the Bishop and Diocesan Council, it was thought to be a good idea for the Diocese to be forward planning and have a presence in this area at the start of this growth. The Australian National Church Life Survey statistics show that newly planted churches are very effective at reaching new people for Jesus. It showed that 6% of people in *established churches* were not coming 5 years ago, compared to 33% of people in *church plants*. So, church plants are effective for evangelism.

Our church is prayerfully seeking to take the name of Jesus to the people of Moore Creek and the Calrossy Anglican School community. This year we will be aiming to reach these people through visiting and meeting

as many people as possible in the community and at the school. We will have an online and social media presence, while also doing leaflet drops to provide people with information about the new church. The church website is up and running at www.northtamworthanglican.org.au. Because we are on Moore Creek Rd, along the main stretch into town, we hope to make ourselves known and visible.

The mission of North Tamworth Anglican Church is to reach new people for Jesus who are yet to know Him personally. We are not seeking to grow the church by transferring people from other churches. One of the reasons I went into full time ministry was because so many people do not understand the good news about Jesus. I am excited by this opportunity to help the people in this area to come to know Him and have their eternity changed.

The foundation of everything we do will be undergirded by prayer as we engage in personal evangelism, seeking to introduce people to Jesus. We will be aiming to run a number of Christianity Explained and Explored courses for the parents in the Calrossy community and

the Moore Creek area. A strong focus will be on establishing a kid's club fairly quickly in order to reach families. It is exciting for us, as a new Tamworth Anglican church, to be part of the great plans that Tamworth Anglican Churches already have in place for the Seeing Jesus Clearly Mission, and we will be fully supporting these events in whatever ways we can."

If this is a ministry of the Diocese that you would like to support, you can help in two ways. First of all, pray. It is God who builds His church, so much prayer is needed for the church plant. If you would like to be a personal Prayer Partner and receive the regular prayer points to inform you so you can commit to faithfully praying for the growth of the gospel in this area, please get in touch with Scott at office@northtamworthanglican.org.au. The second way to assist is through financial help. Contributions will go towards initial church set up costs and for other needed resources such as those for evangelism. People can deposit directly into the new church's account at National Australia Bank

BSB 082842, ACC 277237887

Vision Prayer for North Tamworth

Heavenly Father, please be at work in this North Tamworth and Moore Creek area opening many hearts to the gospel and using this new church to shine as a light for you, that many would be drawn to Jesus in repentance and faith and become established among His people. Please compel this church with Christ's love, strengthen them in their prayer & witness, give them courage to speak, and faithfulness to persevere. In Jesus Name.

Amen

Searching for heroes

Tim Stevens
Diocesan Youth Encourager

I WONDER IF YOU CAN PICTURE THE SCENE WITH ME? IT was early morning on the first of September 1939. Earlier that year, Germany had annexed the Lithuanian region of Klaipėda, which meant that for around six months the nearby Polish garrison at Westerplatte had been on high alert. Tensions were high, and it was during the early hours of that morning that the German ship, the *Schleswig-Holstein*, commenced an unannounced, synchronised, and devastating five minutes of artillery fire.

Once the bombardment had finally ceased, the Polish garrison frantically radioed the army base on the nearby Hel Peninsula with the following message “SOS: I’m under fire”. If you are not aware of the history, that radio call was eventually answered by the United Kingdom, France, Australia, New Zealand, and many others. I am sure on that morning, soldiers from both sides had no idea what the ramifications would be from that artillery bombardment. But history records that this was the event that began the Second World War. It was a war that was often brutal, and directly affected 100 million people from over 30 different countries.

Understandably, the human toll of the war was enormous. It permeated through every aspect of life. From the breakdown of international relations, right down to individual families as it claimed the lives of our brightest young men and women, the war was devastating and left people without hope. But with all that taking place in Europe, we need to travel 6,500km to the American city of New York, because two small publishing houses were preparing a response.

With the absence of hope abounding, Detective Comics introduced the world to Batman, Wonder Woman, and Superman, while the company which would eventually become known as Marvel Comics introduced us to Captain America. The former would be founding members of the Justice League, and Captain America with the help of Thor and others would one day assemble the Avengers. Both groups

would fight evil and injustice and would be a source of hope in a hopeless world. They had a personal character that people could rely on while also providing the justice that people desired so much. Thus, in 1939, the *Golden Age of Comics* was born. The first edition of Captain America was an instant hit, as people turned page after page watching Steve Rogers fight the Nazis, with the climax coming as he punches the German leader, Adolf Hitler, in the head. Their success was guaranteed, with many historians noting the unique role that these hope-filled stories played in securing victory for the allied forces.

Now, even though I could write endlessly about the superheroes I loved as a kid (and still do now!), this little history lesson tells us that throughout the ages before and especially since, humans have longed for hope. I’m not suggesting that superheroes were the only escape, because the sexual revolution of the 1960s and the growing consumption of recreational drugs during that time were also an attempt to find an escape from the pressures of a fallen world. But on a more positive note, with this desperate search for hope, is it any wonder why so many people came forward after finding lasting hope in Jesus, as Billy Graham preached around the world in 1959 and 1968?

This history lesson is valuable as we commence our Diocesan year of evangelism because, despite appearances and efforts, humans still long for reliable and inspiring sources of hope. This quest is especially true for young people. Recently the Barna Group* released the findings of a significant research project into the lives of young people. They interviewed over 15,000 young people from 25 countries to find out what values, dreams and worries they were bringing with them into adulthood. The results were staggering.

Despite being the most connected and globally-minded generation in history, large numbers of Gen Z report that they often feel lonely. Despite a renewed focus on maintaining positive mental health, many individuals in this generation report that they are anxious about the



future. Within Gen Z, there is also an underlying pressure to make a positive difference to the world which, with the other two findings, means that lots of young people feel crippled in life. They do not feel equipped to cause the positive change that they sense they need to provide. In a word, they lack hope. Is it any wonder that amid this despair, superheroes have once again come to the fore, as the Marvel Cinematic Universe has become the highest-grossing movie franchise of all time, giving Disney a tidy \$22.5 Billion in a decade?

With this reality, the words of Jesus in Matthew 11 are as applicable now as they ever have been...

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.'

In a world that longs for hope, Jesus invites us to turn our eyes away from ourselves, and instead to look to Him for what we desire.

Which is good news, because another one of the findings reported that among those who have had little experience with church, there is a general openness to exploring spiritual things. Alternatively, for those who had left their faith, there is very little interest in revisiting the practices that they had left behind.

This research means that while lots of teenagers feel especially hopeless with the state of their lives and the world, many are open to exploring the spiritual solutions to those problems. What an encouragement for those of us who are trying to help them make that connection! It seems like there is plenty to do, yet the work can often feel crippling. My mind turns back to Jesus words in Matthew 9, *The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.*

With all of this, I feel a little bit silly being surprised that the youth ministry of our Diocese continues to grow. After all, even in the most hopeless situations, we have a mighty God who can work miracles,

and we have a generation to reach who have never been so open to exploring the solutions that the Gospel of Jesus offers. If you'd like to help us this year with some youth programs or conferences, we'd love to hear from you. Just go to ArmidaleDioceseYouth.com to get in touch with the committee.

But as we commence our year of evangelism, we should remember that people all over the world are looking for hope. We also need to remember that it's only the Lord Jesus, who offers it in a lasting way. So we turn to Jesus again in John 10

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

I've always loved superheroes. The X-Men were my favourites. Wolverine in particular. But when I was 14, as I read Mark's Gospel for the first time, I understood that there was an even greater superhero who needed my attention. After being involved in Youth Ministry for 15 years, I've discovered that my conversion is pretty typical. 14 seems to be about the age that many people come to trust in Jesus, so could you please pray for our youth events as we help young people from our region see Jesus clearly. We've got an incredible opportunity and an even more wonderful Gospel to share. So as I finish, let's remember it together, as reworked by Colin Buchanan.

Who can save the day?

Take our sins away?

Who can rescue us

With mighty power...?

Super Saviour, to the rescue!

Super Saviour, Mighty to save!

Look! Look!

Here comes Jesus

Up! Up!

And out of the grave!

**for more information on the Barna Group study of younger generations, visit TheConnectedGeneration.com*

Global mission, local conference

Nick Stone
CMS Northern NSW rep

GOD IS AT WORK RIGHT AROUND THE world, seeking and saving the lost. Do you believe that? I believe that. But unless we hear about it we tend to lose our focus on being on board with God's mission in His world – praying to the Lord of the harvest to raise up more workers, giving to the Lord of the harvest, and considering whether the Lord of the harvest is calling us to go.

God's mission is global. Yes, He is concerned for our patch. He is concerned for the lost in Boggabri, Tamworth, Armidale, Baradine, Tenterfield, Walgett, Inverell and every other place in our Diocese. But He's also concerned for folk in South America, Namibia, Europe, Japan, Africa, the Middle East and every place where there are people without God and therefore without hope in this world. They can only be brought near to Him as they respond to Jesus. (Eph. 2:12) And they can only respond to Jesus as someone proclaims Him to them. (Rom. 10:14-15)

We grow as Christians the more God's concerns are our concerns. And His are global. For many years folk from our Diocese have

heard of God's mission through the Church Missionary Society's Autumn School and then CMS Autumn Encounter. Now, I'd love to invite you to CMS Mission Encounter: Friday 7th-Saturday 8th August, at the William Cowper campus of Calrossy, Tamworth. Wei-Han Kuan will help us to see God's mission in His Word, the Bible. Wei-Han is the CMS General Secretary of Victoria. Our Diocese's own Gillian Law (right) will be with us as we hear about God's work in Rome. B and L will join us and we'll hear about God's work in South Asia.

This is a conference for all ages, with a youth and children's program running as well. Our hope is for many youth groups to attend on the Friday night. Of course, to be growing strong as followers of the Lord Jesus, we need to be pursuing what God pursues. And He is pursuing the nations so that the nations might honour Christ. And how does God primarily pursue the nations? It is through the church preaching Christ among the nations. Our youth need to be growing in this global perspective too. There will be an opportunity for



fellowship after Mission Encounter for those who want it, with a casual BBQ dinner on the Saturday night, as well as joining with other Mission Encounter attendees at church in Tamworth on the Sunday.

The Church Missionary Society's vision is for a world that knows Jesus. Will you join us in this vision, in sending workers into the harvest field, or in going yourself into the harvest field? Please visit the website for booking details, and then join us for CMS Mission Encounter in August.

Camping and giving hope

Dave Tankard
NorthWest Regional Coordinator
Scripture Union NSW

IN 2018 SCRIPTURE UNION NSW WAS approached by Sydney radio station Hope 103.2 to see how listeners could help drought-affected families in the bush. So, the *Kids to Camp* campaign was born and has raised more than 600 camp sponsorships, to date.

That year, Sydneysiders donated to send over 100 kids from drought-affected areas away to Scripture Union Christian camps to get a break from the crushing effect of this terrible drought. This was so successful, Scripture Union NSW and Hope 103.2 decided to run it again. Exceeding all expectations, the 2019 *Kids to Camp* raised sponsorship for 531 kids and youth from drought-affected families

to go to the SU Camp of their choice in 2020. Incredible!

With over 32 SU Camps happening across the State this year, even more kids will get respite from the drought, as well as an opportunity to have heaps of fun and make new friends for life. But now we need to spread the good news!

Despite the rainfall in many areas of NSW, much of the state is still in drought. So please let someone know there are sponsorships available to any SU Camp in 2020, for any camper from a drought-affected area. Fun and affordable, SU Camps run every school holiday, covering a range of interests. They

are run by approved volunteer leaders who have boundless energy for fun and adventure. Applying for *Kids to Camp* funding is easy, just register online for any camp at sunsw.org.au/camps.

There are other ways to give hope to drought-affected families through SU as well. Donations to the *SU Give Hope to Drought-Affected Families Appeal* will allow us to continue making sure SU Camps are well-resourced in the following ways: supporting volunteer leaders; helping regional workers travel to remote areas; and developing ministry resources. You can make a donation at: sunsw.org.au/donate.



Christians and the art of church maintenance

The MMM workers hard at it.

WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR CHURCH BUILDING IS looking a little the worse for wear? You call in Mobile Mission Maintenance, that's what! That is certainly what the Reverend David Robinson in Glen Innes did, and he could not be happier.

"MMM is a group of mainly retired Christians who are seeking to serve local Churches by doing maintenance work at low cost", he said. Their motto is *Serving those who serve*. Most volunteers are retirees who are looking to use their time and skills for to help churches focus on their core ministries.

The group has been in operation for 40 years. They work in all states of Australia and have had some international projects in recent years in Hong Kong, Papua New Guinea, China and Zambia.

We heard about MMM when they came to town about 12 months ago to help another church. We were very impressed by not only the quality of the work they were doing, but also by their concern for supporting gospel ministry. Ian Dawson headed up the team to Glen

Innes. He is a trained engineer who also studied at Sydney Missionary and Bible College in order to work with SIM in Ethiopia. In our case, they repaired and painted the interior walls of our church building. No one quite remembers the last time this happened. Our history book suggests possibly in about 1993. As you can imagine, the walls had become pretty dirty and worn since then!

In our case, had it not been for MMM or some similar group the painting probably couldn't have happened at this stage. We did seek a commercial quote on the job a couple of years ago which was very expensive. MMM only asked that we cover the costs of the paint.

Our Parish Council has been working toward the employment of a youth worker and there was simply not enough money in the bank to both hire someone and paint at commercial rates. The very real gospel impact of this job has been that it has allowed us to both expand our ministry and maintain the building for future use."

To find out more, visit www.mmm.org.au

Farewell to Polly...



POLLY WONG HAS BEEN AN INSTITUTION IN ARMIDALE, both at the Cathedral and at the University of New England where she has been the International Student Worker since 2007. Through her ministry, countless numbers of overseas students have heard the gospel as they have been educated. But life moves on and ministries have to change. Polly has now returned to her hometown, Hong Kong for a very important reason.

“Family is always the top priority for me”, she said. “I have been far away from my family for many years, so it is a good time for me to go back to spend quality time with my aged mother. She will turn 90 soon, and her health is getting weaker and weaker.

I am so grateful for the Armidale community and the diversity I have encountered over the years. I have broadened my mind and opened my eyes to see how wonderful is God’s creation of humanity. So many different cultures and languages, as well as different religious beliefs! Friendships are absolutely the most valuable thing to me. I expect to visit some former students who are back to their home countries. I have friends from Iraq, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Russia... and on and on.

We are so grateful to be our Almighty God’s children and which we have not deserved, but because of His love, and mercy, we have been saved. For many overseas students, they have never had the chance of visiting churches or meeting Christians in their lives. Sharing the gospel with them has been such a privilege! We were so excited to see some students decide to follow Jesus Christ and get baptised later on before heading back to their home countries. We still are in touch in order to provide them with pastoral care and support, particularly for those in countries where there is very limited freedom for them to choose other religions, like Christianity. I was overjoyed, when we saw those students born again in Christ! They began to act differently...so much more joy and hope in their lives since then.

We are so blessed to have a new International Ministry team in the Cathedral, so we pray that the ministry both at St Mark’s Chapel at UNE which focuses on international students, and at the Cathedral which concentrates more on international people in town, will prosper.”

Excited to serve

MOST PEOPLE BEGIN HIGHER education with some idea of where they want to be. But that was not the case for Matt Sheridan. “My wife and I started theological college not knowing where we would end up and even assumed we would study for an additional year. But God had his plans for us and has brought us here to the Armidale Diocese.” Matt was one of three men ordained in February this year. He, along with the Rev George Ferguson (Walgett/Collarembri) was ordained as a Deacon. The Reverend Neil

Hunt was ordained as a Presbyterian for service in Narrabri.

Matt’s journey to serve at St Mark’s Chapel, University of New England, began long ago.

“I first put my trust in Jesus at age 19 when I was in my first year of university in Newcastle”, he said. “I grew up going to church my whole life, but it really wasn’t until this point that I understood fully that Jesus’ death and resurrection weren’t mere accidents of history but were part of God’s plan for the salvation of the world. It was (and

still is) amazingly good news! Soon after this, persuaded that the harvest is plentiful and the workers are few, I began the long road to full-time ministry. I started serving in our youth group and later took on leading a Bible study group. These experiences led to people encouraging me to consider full-time ministry, beginning with a two-year ministry apprenticeship. After completing the Ministry Training Strategy, it was off to Bible college for three years and now I have the privilege of serving at St Marks, UNE with a primary

...and hello Grace

GRACE BARRATT HAS NOW BEGUN WORK AT THE UNIVERSITY of New England as the new International Student Worker.

"I became a Christian because someone followed up my interest from primary school scripture classes and invited me along to a weekly Bible study in early high school", she said. "This someone was Mary Lou Doe. In her scripture classes I learned that Jesus died for my sins and I gained comfort knowing that because of Him I would go to heaven when I died. However, I didn't realise how this had any impact on my life before death, until I started going along to bible study as a teenager. I learned that Jesus wants a relationship with us now, and He has things for us to do; namely following Him and sharing His gospel with the world.

After spending many years under Keith and Mary Lou's weekly discipleship, I arrived at the University of New England in 2015 as a Christian, with seeds planted in my brain about world mission as a future vocation, namely in Japan. I had a great time growing as a Christian through the ministry of the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) and St Mark's UNE church, and became convicted about the huge opportunity inherent in working with international students. I learned that many of the students whom I passed by on campus, often came from countries with little or no access to the gospel, and that now away from their home country they were desperate to make Australian friends, experience Australian culture – which they often thought of as church. Some, of course, were legitimately seeking to know God through exploring Christianity. The opportunity and the responsibility we have completely overwhelmed me, and I decided to begin MTS at St Mark's UNE Church from 2018, specialising in international student ministry.

I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to sow into this growing ministry through my appointment as International Student Worker from this year. I am grateful for the guidance and training I have received through Polly Wong, Gary Eastment, and many, many more people around the Diocese and the AFES family. International student ministry is notoriously short term, even as write this I am overseeing a team of students ministering to Japanese students during their three-week stay at UNE. Please pray for stamina and gospel vision, and that many, many lost souls will find salvation in the name of Jesus."



focus on ministry to the university campus.

Felicity, Bethany and I are settling in well to Armidale and the St Mark's community and are pleased to get stuck into the work of ministry as a family. As it was for me, the university years are a key time where people consider what they believe about life, the universe and everything. In this year (and every year) of evangelism we're seeking to reach the UNE campus with the good news of Jesus Christ. Please pray for us – God is the one who changes hearts and minds!



Neil Hunt, George Ferguson and Matt Sheridan on their ordination day.



Thankful but still praying

Do any of the worthless idols of the nations bring rain?
Do the skies themselves send down showers?
No, it is you, Lord our God.
Therefore our hope is in you,
for you are the one who does all this.
Jeremiah 14:22

Low levels at Copeton Dam.

THERE HAS BEEN MUCH REJOICING IN WIDE AREAS OF NEW South Wales that significant rain has fallen. It has not been enough to entirely break the drought, but as everyone jubilantly says to everyone else “It’s a great start!”. We are thankful to God for this great blessing.

But there are still many areas, including some in our Diocese where the rain has not yet fallen. It is hard to rejoice and give thanks for the rain others are receiving, while still handfeeding stock and watching the dams stay dry. It is hard to read Jeremiah’s words and not wonder why God has withheld the rain from me.

It is hard to continue to have hope.

Praying brings hope, because it reminds us of who God is. He is our Father, who loves us.

If you have not received the rain, keep praying.

If you now look out on green paddocks and fattening animals, keep praying.

If you live in town and your garden has burst back into life, keep praying.

If your street is still brown and dusty, keep praying.

Let us pray, as Isaiah did for all kinds of rain...the wet stuff and the rain of righteousness which will last forever.

You heavens above, rain down my righteousness;
let the clouds shower it down.
Let the earth open wide,
let salvation spring up,
let righteousness flourish with it;
I, the Lord, have created it.
Isaiah 45:8



Lightning Ridge, a place of drought and flooding rain. At left, the flooded cemetery in February and right the golf course before the rains came.