

# The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2023 OCTOBER/NOVEMBER



## In joy and sorrow

*Sausage sizzle time under the trees at Walgett Kids' Club.*

**THE HURTS OF THE PAST AND CYCLES OF DISADVANTAGE** continue to affect members of the Indigenous communities of Walgett and Collarenebri (Colly). Many suffer from ongoing social issues and death is far too common, leaving families to regularly deal with grief.

The Reverend George Ferguson and his wife Carmel are having a significant impact amongst the Indigenous people of Walgett and Colly. George is widely respected and provides invaluable support to families in times of grief and great need. As the only ordained minister in the community he is often looked upon as the local community Chaplain. It is not uncommon for George to conduct at least one funeral a week. George writes:

“In Walgett when there is a death, Carmel and one of the ladies from church go and visit the family and give them a food hamper. We find that this is highly appreciated as there can be quite a number of family members come back to country for the funeral service. This visitation to grieving families has opened up opportunities to listen and pray with people.

As a result of all the funerals I do here in Walgett/Collarenebri, I have built a rapport with the Aboriginal community. Carmel and I get invited to events in our community such as NAIDOC week ceremonies, Harmony day, RUOK and other similar events. At our NAIDOC ceremonies this year, Carmel and I were considered Elders and were asked to join with the Elders in judging different activities held on the day.”

Both George and Carmel are also committed to working with younger generations, running a monthly kids' club and providing a safe and fun space for kids to gather. They report:

“Our kids' club in Collarenebri is on the first Saturday of the month during the school term. Up to 30 kids attend this every month and we continue to supply food and a craft activity for them. The children really enjoy the kids' club and are waiting for us to turn up on the day we go over to Colly.

We have a similar kids' club here in Walgett on the second Saturday of the month during the school term. We usually have between 10 to 30 children attending as well and some mums and grandmothers. We also supply food and a craft activity for them.

The Colly kids' club starts off with games, and a sausage sizzle outdoors. Then we go inside the community hall and sing some songs. The kids are encouraged to get involved by holding up the words for singing, and by playing the wooden box drum. Paul Strahan, from Ephraim House and Northwest NSW Community Church (both ministries in Moree), starts the story which is an object lesson with a recap of what last month's object lesson was, and then tells a new story based on the framework that we have a designer, a maker, and a purpose. Mick and Kietta Allen do a puppet show that explains the object lesson and brings the story together, and Carmel has a craft activity that gives

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George in front of St Peter's Walgett.

further clarity to the story Paul tells them from the Bible.

Walgett kids' club starts off with some games while the kids arrive, and then we go inside the Peoples' church and sing some songs with actions. Next we have a Bible story—we are doing creation/fall at the moment—finishing with a recap of the story and a craft activity fitting the story. We finish our kids' club with a sausage sizzle and an icy pole.

The children continually turn up each month for the kids' clubs. In Walgett, there is a group of mothers/grandmothers that bring their children along, and this group seems to be growing in numbers, thank the Lord."

A ministry like this can never sustain itself financially. With good support from interested parties however, we believe that ministry in Walgett will continue. One of the big challenges ahead will be to identify and train a replacement for George, ready for when he and Carmel decide to retire.

In addition to BCA and the diocese, Anglicare has partnered with the church to see this ministry continue and grow through their Community Care Program which enables church community projects to receive tax deductible donations and additional support and exposure. The program was originally an Anglican Aid program called the Community Care Fund. In 2021 it was agreed that the responsibility for the activities of the fund be transferred to Anglicare. This has allowed for Anglican Aid to sharpen their focus on significant international work. It also aligns with Anglicare's commitment to supporting local charitable work.

To date, the necessary financial targets for this project of \$10,000 per calendar year have not been met, and a necessary review of the project is looming. Please consider whether you are in a position to help keep this important ministry viable and make a donation by the beginning of November, either online via the Anglicare website <https://www.anglicare.org.au/donate/community-care-programs/walgett-indigenous-ministry/> or by mailing a donation to Anglicare or via the unique QR code below. (All donations are fully tax deductible. There are no administration costs deducted or held by Anglicare.)



If you would like to know more please contact Wendy Smith, Chaplain and Partnership Development Officer – New England North West: [wendy.smith@anglicare.org.au](mailto:wendy.smith@anglicare.org.au) 0407 035 197

Whether or not you are able to make a financial contribution at this time, your prayer support for this ministry is greatly appreciated.



Jenny Salt, speaker, and Dee Stones at this year's New Life Conference.

# Relentless, unrelenting love

**WE READ THE BIBLE AND OFTEN RECOGNISE OURSELVES ON** the pages. When enduring deep suffering we can align ourselves with Job. When we are struggling with our enemies we can pour out our hearts to God with David, 'How long O Lord?,' or confess with him 'Against you, and you only, have I sinned'.

It can shock us to learn however, that God also wants us to identify with Gomer, a whore who won't choose to leave her whoredom. It's not an image that we tend to portray to the rest of the world or even ourselves.

And yet it's the confronting nature of this picture that is also the gift of Hosea. Jenny Salt, speaker at this year's New Life Conference in Tamworth, discusses why she loves this book:

"There are so many threads that run through Hosea. You've got the most beautiful verses in chapter 11 like, 'How can I give you up, Oh Ephraim?,' and those that give the picture of the father heart of God

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in terms of leading his people and teaching them to walk, like a father or a parent teaching a little toddler to walk. I love those images. And it's not like the people have come to their senses and are now living for God. It's in the context of where they are in terms of turning away from him. But this is what the Lord says to them, 'How can I give you up?'

"In other words, the Lord is saying even in the context of the worst sin, 'I'm going to pursue my people,' which makes me think of the parable of the prodigal son with the father running to his son. And it's that pursuit, that love – that is the grace. So there's a grace that ripples through Hosea. And it's kind of jarring because it's not like the first half of Hosea – the book – is judgement, and the second half is grace. It's judgement, grace, judgement, grace, judgement, grace, and it kind of flips so quickly that your head spins a bit.

"I think what the book of Hosea does more than many other books in the Bible, is to give us a sense of our relationship with God from his point of view. He's been rejected and his heart is broken. His wife is adulterous and is described as a whore, which is very in your face. But then we realise that God's love remains true, and continues in terms of his redeeming or the unrelenting nature of it. It causes us to marvel even more.

"There's a real pursuit and there's also a cost when Hosea is called to pursue Gomer and has to buy her. Imagine how humiliating that would

have been. Gomer in the book of Hosea is not a victim. It wasn't like she was saying, 'Please take me back'. You have a sense of God who is willing to humiliate himself and it's Jesus as he lay naked on the cross. Because in a sense, Hosea is illustrative of God.

"I think that the purpose of the book of Hosea is for us to identify with Gomer. You think, 'Well, I don't want to identify with Gomer'. But I think that's even more powerful. The parallel gives us a sense of who we are in our natural state, and what God has done for us. That love, that unrelenting love, it just keeps coming. It's amazing. We stand back and allow each part of God's word to be part of the bigger picture. It fits so beautifully. Hosea has allusions back to the promises of God made in Genesis and then it points forward and it's picked up in books like Romans and 1 Peter. I love that."

As 500 women from around the diocese gathered at Calrossy's attractive William Cowper Campus on September 2nd, the blessings were not limited to the enrichment that came through Jenny's Hosea talks. It was also a beautiful spring day to catch up with friends over delicious food, to sing, to shop at the well-stocked book stall and be inspired by heartfelt interviews.

*New Life conference will take place again in 2024 – on September 7th. In the meantime the talks will be made available along with those from previous years at <https://newlifeconference.org.au>*



# Why I am an Anglican

The Reverend Joshua Bovis

It has been many years since I entered holy orders. Why do I remain an Anglican Christian? Here are a few reasons:

## Because I am Reformed and Protestant

The Anglican Church stands in the great reformed tradition that is rooted in the primacy of the scriptures (*sola Scriptura*) and the doctrine of salvation by grace alone (*sola gratia*) through faith alone (*sola fide*) in Christ alone (*sola Christus*) to the glory of God alone (*Soli Deo Gloria*), which is foundationally expressed in the classic *Book of Common Prayer*. One of the architects of Anglican worship, Thomas Cranmer, set out a pattern of liturgical worship that is very much in protest against the Roman Church – i.e. confession is made to God through Christ, rather than to a priest; rather than forgive a person on behalf of Christ, an Anglican priest announces God’s forgiveness. The Anglican Church also rejects transubstantiation (the physical presence of Christ in the elements of the Lord’s supper).

## Because I am a Crucicentric

The Anglican Church is focussed on the atoning life, death and resurrection of Christ—specifically His perfect obedience to His heavenly father, His substitutionary and atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection from the grave on the third day—which are the only means given for our salvation and reconciliation with God.

In other words, the Anglican church is ‘evangelical’. A good definition is the late J.I. Packer’s six distinctives of evangelicalism, endorsed by John Stott and Alister McGrath – all prominent Anglican Christians.

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|---|---|
| 1. The supreme authority of Scripture for knowledge of God and as guide to Christian living.  | 4. The need for personal conversion.  |
| 2. The majesty of Jesus Christ as incarnate God and Lord, and the saviour of sinful humanity. | 5. The priority of evangelism for both individual Christians and for the church as a whole. |
| 3. The lordship of the Holy Spirit.   | 6. The importance of Christian community for spiritual nourishment, fellowship and growth.  |

Here we see the Anglican commitment to: the Bible as not only the word of human authors but also the word of God; the unique person and work of Jesus Christ by which sinners may be justified before a holy God by putting their faith in him; an encounter with God’s Spirit who inspired the Scriptures and speaks through them; the call to personal (though not individualistic) repentance; the commission to proclaim the Gospel in all the world; the life of the church.

## Because I am Catholic

The word *Catholic* is not to be confused with *Roman Catholic*. It comes from the Greek καθολικός [catholikos], which means ‘according to the whole,’ or ‘universal’. The Anglican Church sees itself as part of the one holy catholic and apostolic church. There is one church—made up souls that have been redeemed entirely by the work of Christ and called out of slavery into freedom, out of darkness into light, out of error into truth, out of death into eternal life—and it has one head, the Lord Jesus Christ!

## Other reasons

The Very Reverend Dr. Justyn Terry, Dean/President of Trinity School for ministry in the USA until recently, nails it as far as I am concerned about the strengths of Anglican Christianity:

“What excites me about Anglicanism, and what I have come to see all the more clearly with the benefit of further study and experience, is that “Anglicanism offers the historical anchoring that many evangelicals seek (and I believe should seek). It allows us to root our convictions in the riches of the tradition of Christian thought and prayer that faithful followers of Jesus Christ have passed down to us. We can discover an ancestry that goes back two thousand years – right back to the teaching of Jesus himself, with great theologians, liturgists and saints whose writings can help us to be the disciples that Jesus calls us to be. It also makes us more clearly part of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. This blend of biblical authority and evangelistic fervour makes for a powerful Christian witness and nutritious soil for growing disciples”.

Amen to that I say!

# Praise for fruitfulness



Bishop Rod Chiswell

## THANK GOD FOR NEW GROWTH

What a joy it was to gather for our Armidale Diocesan Synod. It is clear that we have much to thank God for. The fruit of over 50 years of strong evangelical leadership is evident in every parish.

Last weekend I was at Bundarra, who since I last visited have grown in number, started a once-a-month kids’ club, and painted the inside of the church! In the coming year they are planning to employ someone one day a week to run a Bible study group, restart Scripture, and do pastoral work with families in the community.

A few weeks ago one of the Archdeacons reported that every one of the parishes in their patch had seen encouraging growth in recent months. The good news included new people coming to church, offerings on the increase, and a general upswing in the mood of clergy. I sense that the same has been true in varying measure across all Deaneries in our diocese over the last six months. I feel privileged as Bishop to see God at work through his people in gospel ministry.

One of the real strengths of our diocese currently is that we have so many quality conferences to encourage and equip God’s people to use their gifts well to honour him and further his kingdom. Can I encourage you all to support these gatherings that together we might grow in Christ-like maturity?



*The Reverend Mike Uptin, QLD and NNSW Regional Officer for BCA, shared with Synod his gratitude for the Armidale diocese sending trained staff to other regions of Australia. He is pictured here with BCA field staff, The Reverends: George Ferguson, David Thompson, Kurt Langmead and Tim Stevens.*

## Thank God for raising up workers for the harvest

In Matthew 9:36-37 we read, ‘When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”’

I regularly use these verses as a basis for prayer and God continues in his kindness to answer those prayers. In the coming year it is likely that we will have four new curates join our clergy team and I expect three more the following year. All of these gospel workers come with full theological training – godly men who are keen to consolidate their learning under experienced rural clergy trainers – so that we can continue to place well-rounded clergy in our parishes and also train and send them further afield. My hope and prayer is that we will be able to send both lay people and clergy to rural dioceses all over Australia. Other evangelical bishops and the national director of BCA are encouraged by the prospect of closer partnership with the Armidale Diocese. Please continue to pray with me for workers for the harvest.

## Pray for the wider Anglican Communion

From the gathering of over 1300 delegates representing 85% of the worldwide Anglican Communion of evangelicals for the Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON) in Kigali Rwanda, came an important document called the Kigali commitment. It affirms the



*Sharon Kirk, above, and The Reverend Tory Cayzer addressing Synod.*

united commitment of both GAFCON and Global South members on three fundamentals.

The quote that summed it up best for me was this: “Most importantly of all, we commit ourselves afresh to the gospel mission of proclaiming the crucified, risen and ascended Christ, calling on all to acknowledge him as Lord in repentance and faith, and living out a joyful, faithful obedience to his Word in all areas of our lives.”

The Kigali commitment also rejected the leadership of the Archbishop of Canterbury, due to his failure to hold fast to the teaching of Scripture on issues concerning human sexuality. The tone of the Kigali commitment was necessarily strong in view of the very sad departure of the Church of England from Biblical orthodoxy, but its overall tone was positive as we look to the future of the

worldwide Anglican Communion.

I want to affirm that I stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in GAFCON and the Global South and wholeheartedly endorse the Kigali commitment. I believe that there is still hope for the Anglican Church of Australia as the number of evangelical clergy and laity are steadily growing. Pray that God will raise up godly bishops to ensure that dioceses around the country are led in line with the plain truth of God’s word going forward.

## Thank You

In conclusion, I want to say thank you to both laity and clergy for your commitment and faithfulness in persevering through the COVID recovery period. My prayer is that the signs of new growth following that season of pruning will continue, that together we might see abundant fruit for God’s kingdom in the months and years ahead.

I’d also like to thank the outgoing editor of *The Link*, Robyn Powell, for her wonderful service in producing such a high-quality magazine for the past seven years. The latest edition arrived on my desk as I was preparing this report, and I was reminded again of how grateful to God I am for Robyn.

Finally, I’d like to thank the excellent team at the Diocesan Registry. I’m very thankful to God for each of them and I find it a joy to serve alongside them.

May the Lord grant us wisdom, love and strength to serve Him well.

*This is an excerpt from Rod’s Presidential Address to Synod in September. The full Address can be found on the diocesan website.*

# Partners in ministry

The future of  
Nextgen Uganda

## Greetings from North Kigezi

### A message from Bishop Onesimus

Hello, greetings in the name of Jesus, from your friends, the Diocese of North Kigezi. We are thankful to God for our partnership with you and I want to express our appreciation. My hearty thanks to Bishop Rod Chiswell who made it for my consecration – you made a statement.



I'm aware that you are having a Synod and we are praying for a spirit-filled and spirit-led Synod. This quick message is to express our gratitude to you for our partnership, especially in the area of biblical literacy. Thank you for the famous program, the Nextgen, which is doing some great work. Our young people getting to know the Lord, and learning deeper through his word. You have also helped stock our library, at Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College. I have been there myself, and arguably it is one of the best libraries we have here in East Africa.

We are so grateful to God for the support in human resource empowerment. Andrew and Margie Newman are a classic example, and we pray for more of you, even the young people, to come, and give us support. There's a lot of work to be done – the harvesters are few but the harvest is plentiful. We would also like to express our gratitude to you, for your support in the infrastructure department. You have been very supportive. We need buildings, because the prospect of enlarging the College is real. We are registering the College now for the National College for Education to be accredited and so there is going to be need for more space.

Finally I want to thank God for Sue and Robert Boland who have been here running the training classes for children's school (Sunday School). I was led to believe that God used them to do a tremendous work. Sadly they are poorly, this is what I was told, but we pray – for healing, for God's hand upon that precious couple. And so, that's another area of need we still have.

We are praying that God will continue to strengthen our partnership with you and we look forward to receiving the team that will be coming in January for Nextgen. May God richly bless you.



Ugandans lead 'The King, The Snake and The Promise' with great competence during the morning sessions of Nextgen. In this photo Peggy is seen teaching at the conference.

## Mother's Union in North Kigezi

### Steph Hunt

President of MU Armidale

Meet Mama Rose Kasemire, the Principal of the Canon Beatrice Ruhinda Training Centre in downtown Rukungiri. She has attended Nextgen twice now and speaks of how helpful it has been: "I've learnt how to read the Bible, get the big idea, the content, and how to get the passage and apply it. So that is going to help in my school, in my vocation with how to minister to and teach the students how to minister to other students using the Bible."



The Training Centre provides training for girls who, for various reasons, cannot finish their schooling to certificate level. This might be because the family can't afford school fees, or because the student is struggling at school and/or those who would rather have practical training instead of schooling. There are seven full-time and three part-time teachers. The girls begin each

day in prayer and on Fridays have fellowship where they share from the Bible, have singing and pray together.

The Centre has been doing this amazing work in the name of Jesus since 2002. There are between 30-40 students who stay onsite in dormitory accommodation with a short walk outside to shared amenities, Ugandan style....think drop toilet without the toilet on top!

All students learn home management and the training centre equips girls and women with competency in

- computer training for secretarial work
- crafts such as jewellery making
- salon (hairdressing skills)
- tailoring (this is an important industry in this country – as they are far less reliant on imported clothing than the west. Buying clothes in Uganda means buying fabric and paying for a tailor to make it to fit you)

The Centre also has a shop onsite with clothes, bags, jewellery and Ugandan souvenirs.

This is a vital ministry to these girls and the community so they can support themselves in a country that does not provide unemployment protection in the form of welfare payments. For example, in a remote parish called Nyakashenyi a Christian girl who has been supported by Compassion because her family is very poor was sponsored by Compassion to attend Canon Beatrice Centre and she has learnt tailoring and has full time work in Rukungiri.

MU Armidale feel privileged to support, pray for and give to the ministry of MU North Kigezi and specifically the Canon Beatrice Centre – who are helping girls in Jesus' name and for his glory and our joy!

The future of Nextgen is looking strong. There are already Ugandan leaders who have been through each of the two strands and are now competent leaders of the groups. There are others who are in the process of training as leaders. With feedback given each day of the conference, and the opportunity to teach the entirety of the course over a 2 year period (they are trainees for 2 years), we are confident that many Ugandan leaders are coming through the training process. We work together with the Ugandans to modify the course where needed to ensure what we are teaching is working cross culturally.

Our plan is to continue to decrease the number of Australian leaders and increase the number of Ugandan leaders, so that in the future it will be entirely lead by Ugandans with only the assistance of Australians.

Nextgen 2024 is on the way with tickets and planning well in place. The topic focusses on Kingdom, looking at Psalms and Parables. Adam Draycott will lead the team, assisted by Lou Davies, with Nathan Craven on logistics. Also on team are Sophie Draycott, Daniel Hayes, Will Bloomfield, Trace Akunkunda and Maddie Gillham. Trace is in 3rd year at Moore College and a local to the Rukungiri area. Maddie Gillham has an interest in Nextgen in Uganda, and is the daughter of Simon Gillham who lectures in missions at Moore College where Maddie also studies.

Please pray for the team as they work hard, for Lou Davies as she leads the Nextgen portion of our partnership, and speak to your minister or call the Diocesan office on 6772 4491 if you are able to help with sponsorship for the conference.

## The year so far

**The Reverend Andrew Kananura**  
Youth and Health Coordinator of the North Kigezi Diocese



After the January 2023 Nextgen Uganda conference a lot of ideas were developed, and among them we're availing opportunities to youth and adults who have interest in trainings on the Nextgen model. As a result in April we had a Nextgen training at All Saints church in Rukungiri.

The delegates did strand one in five days and the majority were able to write the BIG IDEA and write their own Bible studies on day five. The delegates were informed of the strands needed to finish the course, and they agreed to do two locally and finish the other two at the main conference.

The classes were organised by February Mugisha, an architect in Rukungiri and one of the consistent and committed trainees from the previous conferences. Interesting to note are the people who showed up for the training and among them are 5 business men/women, a teacher, a tailor, a probation officer and one taxi driver who parked his vehicle and said, "First things first!"

We also conducted another strand at Kinyasano Girls' High school in June 2023. The class was comprised of both students and staff. We have realised that smaller classes are easier for us to operate and follow up individuals. I thank the Lord for you and the partnership with the Nextgen conferences. I'm grateful for the generous support rendered to me by the Armidale Diocese. The vehicle that I purchased has made my work as a youth coordinator easier. Thank you so much.

a kid **Like me**  
need? Someone  
**Like you**



If you... have time to care for a child, have experience in working with or caring for children, can instil hope in a child and help them have a better future...**YOU** could be that someone!

We'd love you to start this conversation with us on **9890 6800**, or email us at **foster.care@anglicare.org.au** to be that someone.

[anglicare.org.au/fostercare](http://anglicare.org.au/fostercare)



## Supporting your independence with home care



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[anglicare.org.au/at-home](http://anglicare.org.au/at-home)



# Building relationships

The Reverend Lou Davies  
NEGS Chaplain

**THE** NEW ENGLAND GIRLS SCHOOL (NEGS) IS BOTH A DAY and Boarding school, so the evangelistic opportunities don't end when the bell rings at the end of the day. They continue as I support and cheer on students at their weekend sporting events, take students to Youth Group on a Friday night, or simply by walking around the school grounds after school with my two dogs beside me, allowing Boarders to love them as they miss their own dogs back home. The role of a Chaplain is wide and varied and the opportunities endless. Each week I teach Christian Studies to every student from Pre-K to Year 10, run independent Chapel services and lunchtime groups for both the junior and senior students, and provide pastoral care to students, staff and families.

Two glimpses into opportunities I have had daily during the past year –

Emma\* is a Year 7 student who showed enthusiasm and a keenness to learn from day 1:

Emma: I believe in God and I believe that Jesus is God, but how can He be both God's son and God at the same time?

Me: What a brilliant question! Everyone grab a Bible from the shelf. I want this side of the room to read this passage from Genesis 1, and this side of the room to read this passage from John 1.

(What followed was a discussion where the students were able to compare the passages and see how the Father, Son and Holy Spirit were there at the beginning of the world, and how The Word is actually Jesus.)

Kirilly\*: I think my Scripture teacher showed me a diagram for this. Can I draw it on the board?

(Student then draws a diagram which gives the students a visual prompt as they begin to understand the complexities of the trinity.)

This interaction was in just my second lesson with them, and each lesson since has been an absolute joy. They don't all believe in God, however, they are all respectful, inquisitive and are keen to ask the questions they have and discover the answers.

\*Names have been changed for confidentiality.



Lou, ready for a school dance as the disco pelican.



An interaction between a Kindergarten class and me:

Context: In Junior School Chapel we had been working through 'The King, The Snake and The Promise' where we see the big picture of the Bible.

Me: This story is all about what God did to fix the problem of sin. Let's see if we can remember what we've been looking at in chapel, so we know where we are up to in God's story. What is the first picture we looked at?

A range of students from there the class told the story from creation to exile prompting each other as they went. They remembered every picture and used them to recall the story. I barely had to say a word to help them. Their teacher and I looked at each other in disbelief because they had remembered so many details!

One of the most amazing things as a school Chaplain at a Pre-K – 12 school is that there are students who remain at the school for up to 14 years. When you see students in your class regularly each week, in Chapel services, at sporting events, youth group etc., you don't have to rush to get the message of Jesus out there thinking you'll never see them again. There is time. I'm there to love and support staff, families and students day to day and it's through everyday things that the school gets to know me, and I them. When that evangelistic

opportunity comes, either formally in a Chapel service or informally during a discussion at recess, my hope is that they are more likely to listen as there is trust, not judgement.

I would like to publicly thank the staff at NEGS and Ian Millican, assistant to the Bishop, who have been very supportive of me. Although NEGS has been through a lot in the past few years, the opportunity to share the news of Jesus continues. I look forward with great anticipation to see what God holds for NEGS.



# Sharing in kingdom work

*Year 8 students had an incredible time on the annual Christian service trip to St Christopher's Orphanage in Fiji, where they painted kitchen cabinets, concreted a new basketball court, erected a boundary fence and befriended the young residents.*

Mrs Joanne Benham  
Acting TAS Chaplain

**THE** MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES 'ON THE GROUND' AT THE Armidale School (TAS) are many and varied. Since farewelling Richard Newton as Chaplain at the end of 2022, the focus of the remaining chaplaincy team has not changed. Our aim in introducing Christ to people and discipling those who have already come to faith has continued unhindered. Attempts to fill the Chaplain position with someone suitable from outside the school has so far been unsuccessful and I have therefore had the privilege of covering the majority of this role throughout the year.

Within the school Mr Ben Cook and Mr Tim Williams, whose main roles are Heads of Boarding Houses, have been teaching some Christian Development (CD) classes and preaching occasionally at Boarders' Chapel. Local clergy have been helping through preaching regularly at Boarders' Chapel, which we are grateful for and we would particularly like to thank Matt Sheridan for doing blocks of preaching at these services.

This year it has become clear that support from St Mark's and St Peter's in Armidale and the Diocesan office is always just a phone call away. Not only has this been helpful and encouraging for the TAS chaplaincy team, I believe it has helped to build relationships between the school and these local ministries. I am also very thankful for the support of those in leadership at TAS. They not only support the work of the chaplaincy department; it is evident they genuinely care about the wellbeing of their staff who are covering extra loads.

Each year group from Kindergarten to Year 12 attend one Chapel service per fortnight, while Kindergarten to Year 10 have one CD lesson per week. Boarding students and Boarding staff attend a 30-minute Chapel service outside of the school day, which is a great way to bring the Boarding community together. They love singing and the talks are always Bible centred, engaging and helpful. All Year 3 to Year 12 students have the opportunity to attend a voluntary lunchtime Bible study each week. These have been well attended, and in April we

took 15 students from Year 7 to 11 to the KYCK conference at Katoomba. This was an exciting and encouraging trip for all.

The staff at TAS begin each term with a Chapel service and they have the opportunity to meet for weekly prayer throughout the term. This has been a great way to pray for each other and the school community.

In September we were very pleased to have Bishop Rod Chiswell join us for a service of baptism and confirmation where 10 confirmees affirmed their faith in Jesus Christ, supported by family, friends, staff members and the TAS Chapel Choir. The service was a helpful reminder of our Anglican foundations and Christian beliefs as expressed in weekly assembly, Chapel services, service work and voluntary Bible study.

From the 18th – 29th September Mrs Fiona Taber again led the Christian Service trip to St Christopher's Home in Suva, supported by a small team of staff. My husband Matt and I had the privilege of attending again so that we could help lead the Christian aspect of the trip and Matt, as a tradesman, could lead the larger construction jobs at St Christopher's Home. This trip is an excellent opportunity for our Year 8 students to experience Christian service in action, especially through seeing the selfless work of the staff at St Christopher's. Another exciting partnership in service that is quickly growing this year is between TAS and Anglicare and we are making plans to work together in packing and distributing Anglicare's Christmas Hampers.

On top of these ministry-focussed activities, there are many opportunities for the chaplaincy team and Christian staff to build relationships and have gospel conversations with students and colleagues in sport, the cadet program, Boarding and other social or co-curricular events. They not only provide excellent ways to get alongside students and colleagues but are a reminder that God can and does use our unique skills and interests for kingdom work.

It has overall been a very positive and productive year which we give thanks to God for.

# A century of faithfulness



*Calrossy students helping at Hillvue School's Breakfast Club.*

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## The Reverend Mark Rundle Calrossy Chaplain

**IT'S BEEN A CENTENARY YEAR FOR CALROSSY! MANY OF YOU** might be wondering if my memory is very short or my counting is very bad... as you recall that Calrossy Anglican School celebrated its centenary just a few years ago in 2019. While perhaps not as significant as the centenary of the school's foundation, this year's commemoration reminds us of both the identity of Calrossy as a diocesan school and God's gracious provision of Calrossy House, the surrounding buildings and land and other physical resources which have enabled the school to operate over the last 100 years. All this affirms and underlines the Christian foundations of Calrossy – which, in God's goodness, hasn't changed over the last 104 years and we pray will remain steadfast into the future.

2023 has also been designated a Year of Hope. Hope that rests on the faithfulness of God to our school – and all that teach, study and work in it – in countless ways over the past century. Hope that begins each day looking to God's care and provision, guidance and wisdom. Hope that looks to the future with confidence that, in God's grace, the message of the gospel, taught and lived out in Christ's people at the school, will keep doing its saving work. What are some of the ways we've sought to proclaim our hope in Christ this year at Calrossy?

Weekly Chapel services at both secondary campuses and regular chapels in the Junior School have seen members of the chaplaincy team sharing God's word with students and staff, and clergy and ministry staff contributing at times, further enabling and encouraging links to local Anglican churches. We continue to see the majority of students come to Calrossy with little or no understanding of God, Jesus or the Bible (so much for the so-called stereotyped 'Sunday School answers!'). Therefore our lessons aim to equip students with a clear and sound understanding of these central aspects of our Christian faith and why they are so important and relevant to our lives.

'LIGHT', our voluntary lunchtime groups keep running weekly across the school and continue to draw in students who want to learn more about Christianity or want to grow in their faith.

Community Prayer Breakfasts each term enable staff, students, parents, Board members and other supporters of the school to encourage each other in prayer. Other prayer opportunities include the Calrossy Christian Fellowship for parents and friends, and a gathering



for staff on Friday mornings at a local cafe. In what are always busy days in the life of a school, making prayer a priority as a reminder of our dependence on God in all things is essential.

Ministry to our Boarding community is faithfully led by Mrs Maria Buster, linking students to local church groups and involving (mainly boarders) in service activities including the Breakfast Club at Hillvue Public School. Boarders' Chapel services happen twice a term at Calrossy, with some Boarders continuing to be involved in youth groups in the local Anglican churches. Chaplaincy team members are steadily involving themselves in other Boarders' activities with the aim of making further gospel connections with the students in Boarding.

As Calrossy seeks to pursue 'excellence within a Christian environment' we have been blessed with the support and encouragement of the members of our godly and wise school Board and the leadership of our executive team under our exceptional Principal, Mr David Smith.

The strong connections with Calrossy from within the diocese are a blessing, with Christian students, families and staff being key in growing and extending the 'Christian environment' that we are seeking to cultivate in our school. The witness and example of fellow Christians makes a great impact in the school and is an important (if unofficial!) part of the chaplaincy ministry. It is a privilege to serve as Head Chaplain at Calrossy and I pray that in all things at Calrossy we will, as Hebrews 10:23 encourages us, 'hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for He who promised is faithful.'

# Getting on with gospel growth

## Blessings abound in Ashford



Dave and Margy Wood were trainees in Ashford for 6 months in 2022 and are now doing a second year of theological study at Sydney Mission and Bible College (SMBC). Rod Chiswell met them on his first visit to SMBC as Bishop in early 2021 and suggested they help Adam Draycott, Vicar of Inverell, with looking after Ashford/Delunga. Dave and Margy absolutely loved ministry in a small town and recently returned to Ashford with Mobile Mission Maintenance (MMM), writing:

"A team of MMM and Ashford locals (Tom and Kerry Julius plus others), spent the first week of the October school holidays doing a load of work on the Ashford Anglican church vicarage. The exterior plus parts of the interior needed repair work and renewed painting. The team bonded really well over the five days and enjoyed the work plus the time at morning tea in God's word, doing a short study series on SHAPE (spirit, heart, ability, personality and experience). We had many catch ups with the locals who we came to know and love from 2022. A highlight was the involvement (cooking, food, time doing work) of the locals who are known to the church but not frequent church attendees – their desire to be part of something bigger than all of us was a joy to observe. Overall God's blessing on this work for his kingdom was clear to see."



## Confirmed in their faith



It was with joyful celebration that St Mark's church at the University of New England witnessed Aaron and Callum publicly declare their faith through baptism and confirmation at the 9:30AM service on September 10th. There was further thanks given to God for Emily and Grace, who were confirmed at the 6:30PM service that same Sunday. Pray for these four, that they'd continue to grow in their faith and in their love for Jesus.



## A commitment prayer offered during the confirmation of students at The Armidale School



### A prayer to lose the burden of sin and find a fresh start in Jesus

Dear God, thank you for sending your only son Jesus to die on the cross to pay the price for my sin.

You know the burden of sin that I carry and the guilt that I feel for not living as you would have me live. Please forgive me.

Help me by your Holy Spirit to live with Jesus as my Lord from now on. Amen.



# Retiring to... work



**ON SEPTEMBER 10<sup>TH</sup>**, ST PAUL'S WEST TAMWORTH HAD BOTH the sad and joyful task of farewelling much-loved parishioners David and Anita Thomas, in order for them to join the ministry team as lay people at St Augustine's in Inverell. They kindly agreed to share the journey that has led to this move.

*Anita:* "I grew up in a Christian home with parents who were very committed to doing outreach and supporting missionaries. When I was in high school I made a personal commitment to follow Jesus. I met David when I moved house and had decided to try a different church at that time."

*David:* "I became a Christian as a primary school boy whilst attending Sunday school at Hornsby Methodist church. As I grew I developed a deeper understanding of God and was confirmed at about 16. I met Anita at St Mark's Anglican Church, Pennant Hills in 1991 and we were married in November 1992.

Early in our marriage it never occurred to us to serve as full time lay workers. We commenced our married life together at Dubbo and joined the Presbyterian church. In May 1995 we moved to Forbes and joined the Baptist Church, a small church in a small country town where for large periods of time, years sometimes, there was no minister. Whilst we were at Forbes Anita and I, among several in the congregation, were involved in Kids' spots, teaching Sunday school and leading Bible studies. I was asked along with a couple of other men to lead services and, eventually, occasionally to preach.

I felt compelled that if I was going to be asked to preach I needed to have some training. A minister at Forbes Baptist Church encouraged Anita and me to consider going to Bible College. We applied in late Spring 2002 to go to Sydney Missionary Bible College (SMBC) in 2004 to be better equipped to serve as lay people at Forbes. Our year at SMBC looking at the Bible in depth was invaluable. I enjoyed all the Bible subjects and others including Theology, Church History, Introduction to Preaching and Children's Ministry. A highlight was being part of a mission team to Yamba Presbyterian Church in Autumn of 2004.

In Dubbo, Forbes and Tamworth I have observed and been encouraged by retired Christians serving in their local churches. I went to Uganda in July 2022 as part of a team from the Armidale Diocese. It challenged me concerning how much need there is, and made me ask, 'How can I best use my time and serve when there are so many needs?' Then at Mission Encounter last year the Bishop spoke on the Saturday morning. I'm glad we were wearing masks. The Holy Spirit knocked me over effectively. Tears were streaming down my face.

There's a godly person at St Paul's West Tamworth who was sitting

diagonally behind us and after that talk said, 'The Holy Spirit's doing something in your life.' I said, 'How do you know?' But God was. During the lunch break I went to Bishop Rod Chiswell and said, 'I'm happy to serve. How can I help?' He and his wife, Jenni, came round to our place the following Thursday night. They didn't waste any time. Short story – a couple of meetings later Rod suggested that we go to Inverell. That parish now looks after Ashford and Delungra and they may have other places to provide ministry to. So we're open to serve. In the big picture, we're simply being obedient to the Holy Spirit calling us. God had been working in us, preparing us for this full time volunteer ministry. When I spoke to Anita her response was, 'It's about time.'

*Anita:* "During the three decades of our marriage, we have primarily lived in three different places. At each of these we have seen our lives and relationships with God's people interwoven like a piece of string art. In Dubbo David renewed his friendship with Gilbert Appleby (they met in Muswellbrook a few years before) who then married Ruth (who had been a few years behind me at school). They now call Inverell home when they are not serving in Cambodia. When we were at Bible College, Keith and Naomi McPherson were also students and it was a pleasure to see them at St Paul's West Tamworth on our first Sunday there. At SMBC we spent time with Adam and Tanya Draycott and Tineke Dekkers babysat for us – all of whom are now in ministry at St Augustine's. The idea of moving to Inverell has not been a daunting one for us; it's just another interweaving of our lives with our brothers and sisters in Christ!"

*David:* "What we're going to do in the Inverell parish is still to be worked out. Adam has given us only one strong suggestion – to go to Ashford one day a week to go to Sunhaven Hostel, the retirement village, and do visitation and possibly Bible studies there. There will be some lay preaching when needed. I look forward to Adam directing me to serve where he believes I can meet a need."

*Anita:* "Next year will be 20 years since we went to Bible College and David can now cease paid employment and use his time fully for God. I don't know what I'm going to be doing besides helping David. I'm too young to retire. I just want to put that out there! And, you know, maybe God's got plans for my bookkeeping skills. Who's to say?"

"...there's no discouragement shall make him once relent his first avowed intent to be a pilgrim..."

John Bunyan