

The Link

ANGLICAN

2017 JUNE/JULY



The gospel, as told by puppets

Scruff and his human, Kim Hayde.

PUPPETS, AS ANY FAN OF THE MUPPETS will attest, are magical. Even though you know that there is a person standing under or behind them, somehow that person fades away and you are sucked into a world where anything is possible; where even apparently silly people have something important to say and where laughter is a prime medium for teaching. When puppets speak, children listen. This is a truth which Sydney based company Quiz Worx has used to teach thousands of children about the gospel of Jesus for nearly 20 years.

Kim Hayde is preparing to come north for the July school holidays, to bring the message of Jesus to children in Armidale and Boggabri. "Our main goal is always to share Jesus with kids everywhere", she said. "We are a unique ministry, and have a lot of highly skilled,

well-trained people who put enormous amounts of time and effort into making resources and creating live performances. We are very aware that most churches (city or country) just do not have the time and resources to do what we do, so it is our great joy to partner with these churches in their childrens' work."

Quiz Worx programs come in several different forms. In the Armidale Diocese these coming holidays, the churches involved will benefit from the holiday club program. This includes upfront teaching (by the puppets and their humans), small group Bible studies, craft, games and songs, all tied to the main theme.

"We send teams of just two people, who are the puppeteers. The rest of the leadership comes from the church. Each place we visit

supplies leaders to run small groups and games. We are very aware that we are going to leave, but those leaders will be around to build relationships which may see those children come to Christ."

In a digital world, Kim believes puppets are a great communication tool. "Children are used to screens so having a real puppet character is special. They can interact with them. The puppet can ask questions the kids might want to ask. They are also funny and you can never underestimate a child's sense of humour!"

One puppeteer who won't be visiting this time is Mike Pickering. "I'm a bit sad I can't make it this year. Our regular tours to Armidale and Boggabri have become some of my most cherished memories of my time

Continued on page 2

The best of partnerships

Bishop Rick Lewers

THE BUSINESS WORLD HAS PARTNERSHIPS, YOU “DO-SI-DO” with a partner at a bush dance and children partner up on excursions. I play golf with a partner which can get confusing when I introduce them as my partner and then am asked, “How long have you been together?” It is a confusing world we live in. For this reason, I don’t much like the expression ‘partner’ when it comes to wife or husband. There are, however, fewer better descriptions of partnership than that expressed in the marriage between a man and woman. So as we reflect on the value and character of partnerships for our churches and Diocese, I want to draw from marriage some helpful guidelines.

It seemed good for God to express His partnership with the people of God in terms of marriage. The church is the bride of Christ, and husbands and wives are to model their partnership on the partnership we see existing in the triune God. With that in mind and the brevity with which the topic needs to be approached I want to speak of partnership in terms of faith, hope and love.

Faith implies an object and faith is dashed when the object of it proves false. Partnership cannot flourish when the object of our faith is at variance. Shared truth is an essential ingredient in any partnership and especially in God’s church. The Bible is the source of all truth in the Christian church and as such it is the measure of the nature of any partnership we enter into. In terms of the church’s teaching ministry, Biblical truth is a non-negotiable in a partnership. That does not mean we could not enjoy limited partnership, for example, with schools, the SES, hospitals, chaplaincies etc. The nature of our involvement in those partnerships would, however, still be governed and controlled by the

Scriptures and may even be encouraged by the Scriptures.

Faith, as you know, gives rise to hope. Every partnership hopes for something. In a marriage it might be having children or purchasing a home. The development of partnerships by our churches or our Diocese will express hopes and aspirations. In our partnership with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ our hope is in the introduction of people to Jesus and helping them home to heaven.

God is the object of our faith, hope is the salvation we await the completion of in glory, but the journey of any partnership demands the faithfulness that springs from love. Where a partner compromises faithfulness, love is vandalised. A good marriage is built on the reliability of the spouse’s faithfulness. Partnerships are protected by faithfulness and faithfulness is the outworking of one’s love. It is always unwise to enter into partnerships with people or organisations that have a track record of unfaithfulness to those things crucial to our existence. After unfaithfulness there can be no partnership without repentance.

All partnerships should be driven by our theology of mission and our love for all the saints. The great thing is that an organisation, a group of people or an individual can enter into such partnerships. Partnerships can extend across the whole world and yet be enjoyed locally in partnership with the person who sits next to me in church. I can even express my partnership in church by giving attention to the pastor’s sermon or in prayer for those in need. It is so easy to be a partner with Christ and His people. “#Together... we can do more” is a slogan I read recently, but I pray is true of Christendom all the time.

From page 1



Mike Pickering getting the message across.

at Quiz Worx”, he said. “As we have worked in partnership to present the gospel to these communities we have made firm friends with those who live there. In particular, it was a real blessing working with Simon and Ali Reeve in Armidale and John and Sarah

Cooper in Boggabri and their families. They have been a shining example of wanting the children of their area to come to know Jesus even though resources - especially human resources - can be in short supply. It’s clear that childrens’ ministry is a high priority in

these Armidale and Boggabri parishes and it is a real delight to hear of the gospel fruit that has appeared as evidenced by increased numbers in their regular childrens’ ministry at church and in their Scripture classes.”

Alison Reeve has been there for all the previous Quiz Worx programs at St Peter’s in Armidale. “The Quiz Worx team always brings new ideas and songs to our Sunday Kids’ Church program”, she said. “As teachers, we can take this momentum and continue to teach the children in our care to live for Christ. It also allows us to strengthen and build on relationships with others outside our church as we see the children in school Scripture classes and in the community. Many of the children come back year after year so it builds on their understanding of Jesus and the Bible and really adds to our relationship with them and their families. We have one family from the community which has sent their now 11, nine and seven year-old children each year. They have asked, “Can you automatically register our kids each year? They love coming so much!”

Namoi comes together

The Rev. Tim Baxter

IN MID-2015 A NARRABRI CHRISTIAN WOMAN HEARD AN advertisement on Vision radio, the local Christian FM station. The ad was from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA), offering communities their support in gospel mission. Within two years, that seed of an idea grew into the largest combined Churches outreach to the Narrabri community in at least 50 years (if not ever), called “Come Together Namoi”.

The weekend of 24th-26th March saw over 1700 people from the Namoi region attending one or more of the five different outreach events – the Friday night youth event, Saturday morning Kidzfest, Saturday night gathering, Sunday morning combined churches gathering, and Sunday night gathering.

The guest gospel presenters featured Bill Newman, Rodney Trinidad, and Sean W. Smith, supported by musicians Steve Grace and Skypilot, and rap artists ‘Krosswerdz’. At each event a clear gospel message was proclaimed and people were called to come forward to give their lives to Jesus, in the same way that Billy Graham himself had done for many years. They were met and ‘counselled’ by local Christians who had been trained to share the gospel and pray with them, and were asked for contact details to be followed up by the local churches.

Local farmer Phil Firth was one of the counsellors. “The thing I enjoyed most was seeing some of the people Lyn and I have had discussions with over time go forward to make commitments. I also counselled a young fellow at the youth night and it was a great joy to be able to talk with him and pray for him.”

As a witness to the life changing impact of knowing Jesus as Saviour and Lord, testimonies were shared. Peter and Ebonnie Whan from Narrabri Anglican shared their story of coming to faith and knowing God’s direction despite some traumatic life events, and encouraged others to do the same. Beth Robinson commented, “I loved the testimony on Saturday night – it was sincere and natural and told a story that many people could relate to and I’m sure it made a difference to them.”

The Sunday morning combined churches gathering saw about 600 people from many denominations come together. Joan Williams, who has been a faithful church attender for many years, enjoyed the opportunity. “It was just a wonderful weekend. Singing and praising God among like-minded Christians with Steve Grace and his band was beautiful. Bill Newman’s preaching was so powerful and passionate. I left the mission with a refreshing newness of my faith in my Lord Jesus Christ.”

The BGEA seeks to help and motivate communities across Australia and around the world to proclaim the gospel. It provides a framework that has been developed and practised over many years, including a leadership and organisational model, along with training programs and approved preachers and presenters. The model has great strengths, promoting the absolute necessity of prayer and a Biblical foundation for Christian life and witness.

The mission inspired many local Christians to take opportunities



Bill Newman preaches.

to reach out to their friends and family. “The event stimulated a lot of hope and expectation in the hearts of people who have been praying and witnessing to loved ones and friends and gave the opportunity to them to challenge these people with an invitation to attend. For some of us, our hopes were fulfilled as our prayers were answered wonderfully. But for others whose prayers were not answered at the mission, we need to help them know that their prayers are not futile – to keep at it and trusting God for the hearts and souls of those they love” said Beth.

The engine room of the mission was the prayer meetings that began in October, organised by Kaylene McClenaghan and led by the various local ministers. Christian fellowship across the local churches was strengthened as people joined together to pray for the lost.

At all the events it was a great joy to see many people come forward to respond to the message. The official figures show that 212 people took this step, either to make a first time commitment (88), to rededicate their life to Jesus, or to find out more. We praise and thank God for bringing people to this moment.

Dave and Ally Thomson are thankful for the opportunity that the mission gave their family. “A fantastic result from the weekend was one of my sons made the commitment to follow Jesus. He said he felt a tugging in his heart to go up the front which I know to be the Holy Spirit. Even though he has been brought up in a Christian home the decision still needs to be a personal one. Parents can’t save their children, only God can and He is faithful.”

Now we have the great opportunity to get alongside people and help build on this initial step. Please pray for the local churches as we begin the task of follow up. Phil expressed it well, “I think the amount of prayer before and during the event was really important. I felt a real expectation that God was working in people leading up to the event and still feel like He is at work. I am really looking forward to the follow up with a friend who made a commitment.”

Chaplains at work

noun

1. an ecclesiastic attached to the chapel of a royal court, college, etc., or to a military unit.
2. a person who says the prayer, invocation, etc., for an organization or at an assembly.

THIS IS THE DEFINITION OF THE WORD “CHAPLAIN” AS given by dictionary.com but Tineke Dekkers (right) who works as a school chaplain in Inverell has a much fuller description.

“Chaplains are people who patiently care for people. This means caring for people’s spiritual and emotional needs, helping them when struggling with a range of issues, including family problems, confusing relationships, friendship issues, peer pressure, self esteem issues, bullying or depression”, she said. “Sadly, many people don’t have access to someone who is interested in reaching out for this purpose, so chaplains are needed, especially in all places where there are vulnerable people, such as schools, hospitals and places where emergencies happen every day, such as the police and other emergency services.”

Chaplaincy is a ministry which grows over time. As Tineke explained, “From my experience, it’s good to go in slowly but consistently, to ‘be there’ over a period of time, and to use the non-crisis times to build relationships so that when the problems arise, there’s rapport and trust there already. This isn’t always possible of course- for example, in a hospital or emergency situation.”

Tineke’s job is in a state school, where she has worked for many years. “It wasn’t always easy at first and many people seemed very suspicious about what I was doing there. But over the years I have built lots of genuine friendships among staff, students and parents. It is not my job to preach, but I have opportunities to shine the light of the gospel in that community. I live and interact in a Christ-like way



and I encourage and pray with the Christian staff.”

Tineke is quick to point out that chaplains are not counsellors, but that they can facilitate professional help if it is needed. “As Christ’s followers, we have the commandment to ‘love God and love others’. As we follow and obey our leader, chaplaincy is a wonderful way to show self-sacrifice for the sake of others and to love God and others. It’s a very different drum beat to live by compared with the world’s drum beat of ‘serve self and look after number one.’ It often becomes very noticeable to those we serve that there’s a difference in the way we treat other people.”

Tineke is just one of many many chaplains who work within various organisations in our Diocese. In this issue of *The Link* we want to highlight the vital work of chaplaincy in the North West.

David Weidemann - State Emergency Service

David Weidemann grew up in the Diocese and has ministered in Guyra, Glen Innes, Walgett, Manilla, Tingha/ Gilgai, Ashford/Delungra and Emmaville/Deepwater over the past 30 years. Because of his familiarity with the conditions in the area, he is ideally placed to work with the State Emergency Service.

“SES chaplaincy is highly regarded in the way that it is in the armed services. The link with the Critical Incident Support Team adds credibility. Critical incidents can challenge a volunteer’s basic values and sense of meaning of life. Chaplains understand and can talk about these things. The SES staff also appreciate being supported and knowing that there is a representative of God present when ‘acts of God’ strike. I am sensitive to the growing anti-Christian sentiment in the world and so I’m careful not to push ‘religion’ on anyone, but always be alert to opportunities to respond. Chaplaincy is a ministry of prayer and pastoral support. We pray that the leaders will make wise decisions, for the safety and wellbeing of volunteers, and for families requesting assistance during flood, storm and road crash events. The Support Line, 1800 626 800, is always open and ready to offer personal and timely support to volunteers and their families.”



Simon Carter - Royal Australian Air Force



Simon Carter has been ministering in the Armidale Diocese since he was ordained in 2004. Most of the week, you can find him serving as Vicar at Oxley Vale in Tamworth, but at other times you will find him up, up and away and answering to the name 'Padre'.

"I have always had a love of things that fly and the people that fly them, so it was exciting when I discovered a RAAF Reserve Chaplain's position had opened up in Tamworth. Members of the Australian Defence Force seem to be very willing to quickly have deep conversations about the spiritual things in life. I think this is because they have a respect for chaplains and seem to generally appreciate their ministry. For instance, because you wear the uniform, have a recognised role and respect confidentiality, people will come

and chat with you for a 'Christian' opinion on what is on their minds. The hardest thing about the job is hearing the stories of conflict where people are dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and moral injury. Some of our members of the Australian Defence Force are put through very difficult situations. Their courage and bravery demands our respect. The RAAF supports chaplaincy very well and provides for its ministry. They provide the logistics, training, infrastructure and salary on par with any other office within the ADF. The executive staff seem to value the role of a chaplain as a provider of pastoral care and support, as an impartial sounding board and someone to turn to for spiritual issues. The ADF recognises that its Defence members are more than just 'assets' but people who have genuine spiritual needs."

Gus Batley - Tamworth Hospital



Gus Batley has worked in the Diocese since 1992, at St Paul's West Tamworth, St Mary's Bundarra and St Peter's South Tamworth. "I was drawn to chaplaincy, initially, by a desire to minister somewhere other than in a parish context. The best things about this job include walking into a room, not knowing what's going to happen, and finding a patient who expresses a desire to do serious business with God. It is a privilege to be invited, by patient or family, to the bedside of the dying, and to have the opportunity to care in a very private, raw and intimate context. Naturally, we want to bring the Word of life to patients. While that is my goal, a nurse's goals are different and I must complement their work, not complicate it. So I am generally seen and accepted as part of the care team, along with other allied health workers. When nurses see for themselves the impact of chaplaincy on their patients, they become more supportive. I once spent a few minutes with a patient experiencing post-operative discomfort and pain and finished by praying with her. On my way out, her nurse quietly said to me, 'Thanks, that was probably the best medicine she could have had.'"

Gary Stuart - Police

Gary Stuart has wide experience, having worked as a chaplain in state schools, the State Emergency Service and the NSW Police. His other ministry experience includes a stint as a pilot with the Missionary Aviation Fellowship in Papua New Guinea and Central Australia. We asked him how he sees the role of chaplaincy in a world where the Christian voice is being silenced by the media.



"Chaplaincy holds an aspect that usually does not come from any other organization. Nobody writes about or even notices the safety net at a circus, and yet that net allows the high wire or trapeze artists to perform with confidence knowing a fall will be only an interruption to their performance and not an end to it. Chaplaincy is like the safety net. It is seen as being available to prevent complete disaster, and allows people to see another aspect in life that enhances performance in their lives and duties. The NSW Police Force places a high value on chaplaincy, and they go out their way to facilitate my work as a chaplain."

Diary of a new vicar

#2

Tim Stevens

Well, we've been in Mungindi for a few months now. How have things changed since we first arrived, and what have we learnt?

One thing we've always known (but which has become real recently) is just how life up here is so reliant on rain falling in the right place at the right time. It's been funny for us to see Sydney friends complaining about the rain, while we consistently pray for it. But on to more important things.

Even though 30 years in the northern suburbs of Sydney doesn't necessarily prepare for some of the practicalities that small town country life can sometimes require, we've been trying to learn quickly. Where one-to-one meetups in the city will often include the finest coffee with a side of smashed avo on sourdough, here they're more likely to include shovelling stock feed and dealing with dead farm animals (let the reader understand). But apart from that, we're quickly discovering that, even though from place to place it might look a little different, Christian ministry is pretty much the same wherever you go. Ministry that is truly Christian is all about introducing people to Jesus and helping them home to heaven. The need for people to have Jesus as their Lord and Saviour is the same in the city and the country.

We've settled into life in Mungindi well, and we're starting to get used to some of the natural movements and flow of the town. This edition of *The Link* features an article about chaplaincy, and this is a very appropriate way for us to describe the ministry in a town like Mungindi. The ministry of St James' is one of chaplaincy to the entire town, and as good chaplains, we need to know what's happening around the place. It also means taking the joyful with the challenging.

The most obvious way that we've begun to do this is by meeting people. So we've been to community dinners, we've been to the town pool lots, Tim has joined the local cycling club, we've spent extended periods of time at the shops just to meet people. To do this last one we need to a) remember when the shops close and then, b) make sure that we have the time to chat if opportunities arise. Not appearing hurried is a great skill to learn when you're new in a small town. If people feel like you're able to chat, we've found that they'll quite often want to talk.

When we moved, Mungindi was quiet, though recently it has become much noisier with all the trucks and heavy machinery rolling into town for the impending cotton harvest. It's been cool seeing all the huge irrigation paddocks filled with small green bushes with white 'snow' on top. But, just as a small town like ours experiences the joy of a harvest together, it also experiences grief together.

So when there were three fatal farming accidents outside town recently, we saw the joy turn to pain as people grappled with what had happened. Because we're still new to town, we've only had limited opportunities to care for all the people directly affected by these tragedies, but we made a point early on to connect with the emergency services in town and have been offering them support and the hope of Jesus in this difficult time.

I was heavily involved in Anzac Day commemorations, and that is another great way to serve, love and meet with the community as the town's only pastor. My role as the Youth Encourager is also busy one in the lead up to Youth Muster.

We are also here to care for the Christians in town, and in our first few months here we were keen to get to know people from the church as quickly as possible. We thought that people usually say yes to food, so we've had some Sunday lunches and weeknight dinners where we've been able to have people into our home. These meals have been a great ministry of our home, and have been a great way for us to minister as a family.

Transitioning from a large parish to a small one has taken some adjustment. Going from preaching once every three weeks to every week is a big increase, so could you pray for ministers like me? Please pray that God would help us to preach His word faithfully, and that He would help us to do it in an engaging way continually.

I hope that through this diary you've got the picture that even though in our Diocese there are many small towns, there is never a shortage of things that can be done in the care and service of these places. It's right that we remember to pray for small towns, that God will sustain and grow the ministries in and through the communities of Christians that gather in them.



Tim and Kirsty Stevens with their son, Will.



Top: The cotton harvest. Bottom: Sunset over Mungindi.

No fear counselling

WHAT DO YOU THINK WHEN YOU HEAR THE WORD 'counsellor'? For many of us it is an uncomfortable word; a word that is associated with problems that other people have. "I don't need a counsellor" is something you may have heard someone say. You may even have said it yourself.

At the Anglicare Northern Inland office in Moree, counsellors Wendy Long and Jenny James seem to have no shortage of people who think they do need a counsellor. So what is it all about? What is a counsellor? Who needs one? How can a counsellor help me or my loved one?

Jenny James has a simple answer for the question 'What is counselling all about?'

"It is as basic as offloading your burdens to someone disconnected from the situation, who will listen with no judgement", she says. "People get to the point of needing a counsellor for a lot of different reasons. Marriage problems, difficulty with children, grief, bereavement, depression, gambling and addiction problems, and long-term illness are everyday difficulties which can just become too much to bear for some people. As Christians we often feel we should just rely on God, but just as God uses a doctor's skill and Plaster of Paris to help heal a broken bone, so He can also use counsellors to help heal a hurting heart and mind. Clients often tell me that they say things to me that they have never said to anyone! Even though we can (and should!) talk to God about things, sometimes it is very beneficial to communicate with another person face to face. A counsellor can provide strategies, that may never occur to you, to help deal with difficult situations."

Jenny has worked at Anglicare Northern Inland for eight years, beginning as an administrator and educator. She became a counsellor for a very personal reason. "After I received counselling myself, I could see the benefits of it. My life was transformed and I wanted to help others in the same way. It was a great career change for me because I love being able to help others, and seeing the growth in people is really rewarding. I think that being a counsellor is a great job for a Christian, because it's all about unconditional love. We love our clients!"

Jenny admits that for some people, the thought of seeking counselling is scary. There is a stigma around it that really should not exist. "It's so easy to get help", she says, "You don't need a doctor's referral, but can just call and book an appointment." What is Jenny's final word about



Anglicare Northern Inland counsellors Jenny James and Wendy Long.

the fear so many people feel at the thought of seeking counselling? "It is not a scary thing to come...you come to see a counsellor not because you are crazy, but to stop you from getting there!"

Anglicare Northern Inland has counselling service centres in Tamworth, Moree (which also services Narrabri and Glen Innes), Armidale and Inverell.

For phone numbers and more information, check the website <http://www.acsdarm.org.au/counselling-service-centres.php>



Give your child the Diamond School Advantage...

One school, two campuses, three unique learning environments.

Secondary Girls Day and Boarding
Brisbane Street Campus
140 Brisbane Street, Tamworth

Secondary Boys Day and Boarding
William Cowper Campus
242 Moore Creek Road, Tamworth

Phone 02 5776 5100

www.calrossy.nsw.edu.au



When the Bishop met the Premier



The Bishop and the Premier talk at Parliament House in Sydney.

Bishop Rick Lewers

I LOVE GOING TO A MOVIE PREMIERE but, apart from the fact that it is spelt differently, I really enjoyed a moment when a Premier came to meet me. That sounds very important but Gladys Berejiklian was also meeting 40 other senior religious figures, organised by the Christian Democrats.

I liked her. She was gracious and humble; two traits that are very endearing. The importance of my introduction to her could be measured by the few seconds in which we spoke. In the forlorn hope of her remembering our momentary encounter my introduction was as follows, “Premier I doubt you will remember me beyond this moment but if it helps, you are of Armenian Evangelical

background and I am the Bishop of the Armidale Evangelical Anglican Diocese.” She laughed, I smiled and then asked “What do you do for fun?” I think it was one of the more difficult questions a Premier ever had to answer. Her response was “Spending time with family and reading.” I said I would pray for her and the family and I would encourage us all to do this.

The real significance of the meeting is that those invited represent some four million people across our state. The influence of such a large voting mass is not lost on our politicians and it is reflected in Christian representation in the parliament. Please pray for our political leaders.

Moore students get busy

EVERY YEAR MOORE THEOLOGICAL College in Sydney empties out as its students and lecturers are sent throughout Sydney, across Australia and even overseas to partner with churches in their work for a week. The focus is very much on evangelism but that is just one ministry in which students can be involved.

Vicar of Glen Innes, David Robinson, was himself a Moore College student who went on missions. He remembers, “My experiences of college mission as a student were fantastic as it was a chance to learn from the church we went to, as well as to train, encourage and partner with them in the work that they were doing. I wanted our churches to have that same encouragement, so from March 26th to April 2nd of this year, the Moore College mission came to Glen Innes!

“The team really threw themselves into anything they could. We had a number of outreach events, some visiting and door knocking, as well as giving them time to try things that they thought might be helpful in their ministries later on. That led to them doing things like running workshops with some of our musicians, training some of our youth on how to prepare Bible studies and making time to meet up with church members over a coffee to chat about the Bible.

“There were many ways that the mission enhanced the ministry that we are doing here. One highlight was that some of the team members were exceptionally gifted and experienced in certain areas of ministry. It was really great for us to learn from them; to see how they operated and to have the chance to pick their brains. A number of us learnt plenty from them that will shape how we go about things into the future.”

James Tait, a member of the youth group said, “The best part was when they came to Crunch (our high school lunch time group) and we had lots of new kids come. The way they ran the group made it really good for our non-Christian friends to come along.”

David Robinson is hoping the short mission will have a long-term benefit. “It was really exciting to see the way our people embraced what the team was doing. In everything, from seeing people inviting their friends to outreach events, to seeing bigger crowds of people hanging around longer after our Sunday services, people wanted to be involved in what was going on and I am grateful to God for that.”

What's on in the Diocese

Fuel: Youth Leaders Weekend

Gavin Perkins from St Thomas' North Sydney will be speaking on *Faithful and Sustainable Ministry* from 2 Corinthians 3-5

When: 21st-23rd of July

Where: Copeton Dam

Find out more from

<http://armidaledioceseyouth.weebly.com/fuel-2017.html>

NewLife Women's Conference

Join Christine Jensen on Friday night as she speaks on *Prayer*, and Carmelina Read on Saturday as she opens 2 Thessalonians, and the theme *Waiting for the Day*.

When: 25th -26th August

Where: Carinya School, Tamworth

Cost: early bird \$50 standard \$60

For more information, visit www.newlife.org.au



A family legacy continues

WHEN A PARISH LOSES ITS CLERGYMAN, THERE IS OFTEN A period of waiting before a new Vicar is appointed. During this time, it is common for a locum to step in to keep things ticking over at the church. These locums are often clergymen who have retired from full-time ministry. Sometimes they come from our Diocese, and sometimes they are borrowed from another Diocese. Stephen Gabbott is one of these occasional workers in our Diocese, but he has a family association with Armidale which goes back three generations.

His grandfather the Reverend Leonard Gabbott, arrived from England in 1909 to take up an appointment as Vicar of South Grafton. This was in the years before the Diocese of Grafton split to create the Diocese of Armidale. He later moved to West Tamworth before finishing his life of ministry in Sydney. Jump forward many years, and we find Stephen's son Bernard is now the Vicar at Wee Waa, and Stephen – along with wife Marion – is back in the Diocese for his sixth locum!

“I've done locum ministry for various reasons”, said Stephen. “In Narrabri, Oxley Vale and Boggabri we covered for clergy and their families who were on leave; in Tambar Springs and Bundarra there had not been resident clergy for some time, and now in Tenterfield we are filling in while the parish waits for a new minister to be appointed.”

For many people a ministry like this would be difficult – relatively short-term and with a lot of moving around and meeting new people – but Stephen and Marion relish the opportunities. With most of their ministry lives being passed in Sydney, Asia and Africa (as CMS missionaries), they find there is still much to learn in an Aussie country parish.

“There is a rawness and immediacy about life in the bush that is absent from suburban life in a big city. There is so much that one cannot take for granted when the nearest hospital may be 200 kilometres away; where the local school is small; where people take it for granted that sons and daughters leave home for tertiary education; where all sorts of professional services are not on hand and where internet access is poor to non-existent. People have to trust one another in the bush and that strips away the anonymity that is often possible in a city.”

Marion has spent years of her life working among women, and she sees big differences in country women. “They are much more straightforward and plain speaking. They work hard – many of them

work on their family farms and small properties alongside their men-folk and also at some other job, maybe waitressing or doing office work in town. Many of the farms near towns are three income places because it is hard to make a living just farming. They work long hours in often difficult conditions. Overall, they have retained the skills of homemaking such as baking, making jams, preserves, chutneys and so on. The Country Women's Association is a force to be reckoned with! Country women will drive long distances to help one another, especially to get medical services – round trips of 400 or 500 kilometres are not a problem in a single day. There is a raw edge to their lives that you do not see in city suburbia. Many of them present as open and instantly trustworthy.”

Stephen and Marion are two more examples of Christian people who are using their retirement years to work hard in ministry. “We choose to do what we are doing”, said Stephen. “We enjoy good health and no particular family responsibilities. We have reliable income through adequate superannuation and a part pension. We are in the habit of living modestly. There are no compelling reasons why we should not be involved in this way. People have helped us in the past, so it is time to return the favours. Above all, there are needs that should be met, and there is no reason why we should not meet them.”

Both Stephen and Marion are grateful for the opportunities God has given them. “We are so grateful for the chance to meet Christian men and women who want to be faithful and do not live in easy places. We are grateful for opportunities to test God's grace and provision in situations with which we are not familiar, and we love the freedom to teach the Bible free (at least initially) from having to be careful of parish politics”, Stephen said.

For Marion who lived and worked at Canowindra in the Central West earlier in her life, a return to country living has been welcome. “I had a taste for country town life early on. Bishop Peter and Mrs Betty Chiswell became great friends and I learned a lot about the New England region from them. As a clergy wife in Sydney I often came up to Armidale to speak for Peter and Betty. I am glad that at this stage of his life Stephen has shown an interest in rural ministry!”

Please continue to pray for the parishes who have no full-time Vicar, and for the locums and laypeople who continue the ministry of these churches so diligently.

Why Safe Ministry matters

Janene Lewers

AS WE INTRODUCE PEOPLE TO JESUS AND HELP THEM HOME to heaven we want to do so in a way that shows we are serious about living for Jesus. Jesus is our example of how we treat all people. We need to remember it is a privilege to share His message and to care for all people. Always with privilege comes responsibility and so we have a responsibility to minister in a way that is safe. Safe Ministry policy is one thing, but we need to show we are serious about how it is implemented through 'best practice'. Unfortunately as a result of sin, people in churches haven't always got it right. We see from the recent Royal Commission Into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse that lives have been shattered by people who haven't really been concerned for the vulnerable but have taken advantage of them. We especially want the wider community (that is, those not in our churches) to see that we are serious about the responsibility that we are entrusted with, and that we are seeking to care for all vulnerable people, including children.

We want everyone who is involved in ministry to children, youth and the vulnerable to be trained in Safe Ministry. Often people who have done Child Protection training for their professions, such as school teachers or health professionals, ask the question 'I have done training at work - isn't that enough- do I really have to do it at church?' It is important that people know in our church context, how best to protect the vulnerable and care for them as God wants us to. The Armidale Diocese Safe Ministry Policy is not just about protecting children it is about protecting the vulnerable as well. I am always amazed how appreciative people are, after they have done our training. People often comment on the insights that they have received and how helpful the training is in practical ways. Many people go away wanting to change things in their ministry and that is very encouraging because we want



every person who comes to church to see their responsibility to make church a 'safe place'.

In the Diocese there are a number of local Safe Ministry Trainers who run training for their churches throughout the year, according to need. As the Senior Safe Ministry trainer in the Diocese, I usually run training at the beginning and end of the year, and sometimes as requested. All people over 18 years of age who are leaders in ministry are required to do the training. Some churches encourage as many people as possible to do the training because at some point in the future they may be a leader or they may be required to help out with children's ministry. There is also a Junior Safe Ministry course for those under 18 years of age who are helping out in children's ministries. If you have not yet done your Safe Ministry training, can I urge you to do it this year? You will be glad you did.

Good news about SRE

SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE or Scripture) has been part of New South Wales Public Schools since the 1880's, when churches owned the schools. In the latter part of the 19th century the government took over the schools on the understanding that clergy had up to an hour a day to teach the Protestant faith. In 1990 the law was changed so that approved religious groups had the opportunity to teach the faith of the family for up to an hour a week.

Across the Armidale Diocese, Scripture is taught in more than 90 schools. It is a ministry that most of our churches are involved in. One ministry leader once said that if Scripture was removed from schools, her school would want her to come in and still teach the children

because they were not being taught about morals and ethics at home.

In 2015 the NSW Government engaged ARTD Consultants to conduct an independent review into SRE and SEE (Special Education in Ethics). The review was released April 11, 2017. It was welcomed by providers of SRE as 'it continues to affirm the important place of Special Religious Education (SRE) and Special Education and Ethics (SEE) in Public Education.'

What this means for us is that Scripture is still seen as a good thing in schools.

Heather Roworth from Quirindi didn't need a government review to know that!

"Young children are often more spiritually aware than anyone except the old and frail,

or the terminally or chronically ill", she said. "Because personal ambition is at a minimum, the big questions of life become very important.

"Even though they lack sophistication, their simple questions are aimed at the big issues of why we are here, what happens to us when we die, etc. Teenagers can voice these concerns better, but they are more skeptical of the answers, because they are beset by more conflicting views from peers as well as home and school. Primary-age children are on a continuum between the two. Nevertheless, everyone is seeking truth."

Please pray for our Scripture teachers and their students in schools throughout our Diocese.

Some things we did at Easter



Walcha Art Show

The town of Walcha is well-known as an artistic community. So, for the past two years the local Anglican church has put on an art show in the week leading up to Easter. "We wanted to give people the opportunity to consider Easter in a less threatening environment. Because Walcha is an arty town, we saw this as an element of local culture which we could tap into," said Vicar, Ben France.

Last year's art show was held inside the church, but this year it was moved to the church hall. "It was so much better", said Ben, "There was much more space for displays and I think it was less threatening for those who don't regularly step inside a church." The theme of the exhibition was New Life, and pieces were exhibited with an accompanying Bible verse. Ben was pleased when someone said it really added value to each piece.

So, is this an idea that other churches could utilize in their outreach to the community?

"It was great to start something that taps into the fabric of our local area," Ben said. "Because it is a part of the community culture, it reflects the interests of our congregation members. Art is an interest God has given them to express themselves. I guess we see this art show as pre-evangelism. If we are able to point people to God through a medium they may not have thought about and utilize their interests and passions, it may then lead on to further discussions about the part God plays in people's lives. We hope that we can keep honing this idea, so that we become even more effective in reaching out to others with the gospel."

Collarenebri Holiday Club

By The Rev. Tory Cayzer

This is the second year that a team has come from North Epping to help us with some children's ministry. A team of 28 arrived, much to the joy of the Colly kids who were glad to see team members they had known from last year. Because there were kids and young adults on team, we had good engagement with older local boys - something we find difficult as a small church of elderly people! Continuity from last year also meant the kids were more comfortable. It was great to see new faces who hadn't come last year.

Carnival Collarenebri was a four-day kids club held in The Red Shed looking at how Jesus has real power, unlike magicians. Each day Trixie (aka Chelsea Sillar) would unsuccessfully try a new magic trick, and Tim Sillar would show from the Bible how Jesus did real miracles because He is God. Numbers were up from last year; we had 40 kids each day. It was aimed at Primary School aged kids, but we let High Schoolers come too as we have no other Christian ministry for them in Colly. I found it encouraging to see the way the whole team chipped in each day serving with registrations, games, Bible teaching, discussion groups, teaching the memory verse (John 3:16), craft, and great food. On Easter Sunday we invited the kids to church; most came and it was great to have them there for a positive experience. With a low life expectancy in Colly (I am always doing funerals), these kids are very used to going to



our church for the funerals of their siblings and parents, so it was terrific for them to have a fun and positive connection with the church.

One night, for the first time, we held an Easter Church Service at Walli Reserve, the local Aboriginal Reserve, known as 'The Camp'. This was probably the highlight for me. We invited the locals along for a sausage, to sing some of the good old gospel songs, and celebrate the good news of our Saviour. As one team member said, "It's great to see church can be done in such a simple

way with a few chairs in the dark under the stars!" Again, it was terrific to have a team of all ages so we could reach the Walli people from young to old. Two Walli couples stayed on to talk for some time after the service. It was well received by the locals and is something we hope to build on in future years.

This partnership is made possible by a Diocese of Armidale Indigenous Ministry grant.

I have put a video of the Kids Club on YouTube. Search for 'Colly Kids Club 2017'



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

John Bunyan



Pauline’s Cross

PAULINE NORTON IS A LIFE-LONG local. Born and raised on a dairy farm at Tintinhull, she started working at the telephone exchange at Tamworth, married Frank at an early age, and moved on to work at Tamworth’s radio station, 2TM, as a receptionist.

After meeting some Christians there, she started to think about the role Jesus played in her life and soon after, gave her life to Jesus. Pauline embraced Christian life and ministry enthusiastically, raised two children and sought to live as the Lord would want. Then things changed.

At the age of 49 she was diagnosed with breast cancer, and had a radical mastectomy of the right breast. She asked God “Why me?” and the answer came back, “Why not you?” She recovered and life resumed its usual path... for 24 years.

“In February 2014, I was feeling very fatigued, but took no notice as we were busy getting the caravan ready for our annual trip outback as a Bush Church Aid nomad volunteer. After several tests and a MRI, the doctor rang me and said; “I’m sorry to tell you this, you have pancreatic cancer.” I knew what pancreatic cancer was, as my grandmother had died a terrible death from it many years before. I was very calm and said to my doctor, “Well, what do we do now? I’m in private health and am willing to go anywhere in Australia for treatment.” He was stunned with my calm attitude. The next day he phoned and said; “I have got onto the best pancreatic specialist in Australia at Royal North Shore Hospital in Sydney. Will you go there?” I said; “When do I go?” He said, “Be at RNS emergency 10am on Sunday”. That gave me three days to get there. My family and friends were stunned by the news, but still I had perfect peace

about it all. I knew very few people recovered from it but I wasn’t afraid. I knew if I died I would be with the Lord, and if I lived I would live for the Lord. I was in RNS for ten days having all sorts of tests, my tumour was three centimetres in diameter. My tumour markers were 970 and a PET scan showed no tumours anywhere else in my body. The hospital team was trialling a new drug to treat pancreatic cancer and I was accepted. I could have had the treatment in Sydney for free but we decided to come home to Tamworth for the first two months of treatment. I spent one day each week at the Oncology department. After two months, my tumour had shrunk to 1.3 cm and my tumour markers came down to 28. I lost all my hair within the first couple of weeks and was very, very sick during that time. I went back to North Shore private to have the radical Whipple procedure which took about eight hours. The next day when I woke, I had tubes everywhere. During the next five days, I had nothing to eat or drink, I felt terrible and at times I didn’t even feel like praying, I was so thankful for all those people who were praying for me.

“While I was there, they were pulling down a building next door, and I could see the crane operating from my window each day. On the third night of my stay in hospital, I was feeling so sick and alone that I felt like dying. I called out to God, then opened my eyes and on the ceiling of my room was the shadow of a cross which had not been there on other nights. I said, ‘Thank you Lord’, and went off to sleep. Why the shadow? Because we had a bad storm that evening and the crane operator didn’t put his crane in the usual place. With the lights below, it threw a shadow of a cross on my ceiling, and God knew I needed to see that cross that night.”

About

The Link, Number 59, June/July 2017
ISSN 1834-0741

The Link is published six times a year by the Anglican Diocese of Armidale as part of the Diocesan vision to “Introduce people to Jesus and help them home to Heaven”.

Anglican Diocese of Armidale
PO Box 198 Armidale 2350
T: 02 6772 4491 F: 02 6772 9261
www.armidaleanglicandiocese.com

Editor: Robyn Powell
E: robyn@redropewriting.com

Art direction and assistance from
Stephen Mason and Anglican Media Sydney.

Special thanks James Levingston and all other photographers featured in this edition.