

# The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2018 OCTOBER/NOVEMBER

## Synod 2018



*The Venerable Geoff Hearne tried without success to find the owner of a briefcase which was left behind at the 2016 Synod.*

**THE** DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE HELD ITS ANNUAL SYNOD ON the weekend of 28-30 September this year. This weekend each year sees both clergy and lay from every parish in the Diocese come together to talk and pray, to hear about future plans, and celebrate God's goodness in the year that has gone by. As usual, it was a noisy gathering of old friends – some of whom had not seen each other since last year – as well as those who were attending for the first time. There were wobbles in the voice as we said goodbye to friends moving on to new mission fields, as well as that mischievous laughter that comes with old (but still funny) jokes.

The weekend always begins on Friday night with the Bishop giving his Presidential Report. In past editions of *The Link*, we have published a portion of that report, but in this edition, we are sharing the whole with the members of the Diocese. Bishop Rick Lewers is always worth hearing, and he touched on things which at some point will affect every member of the Diocese.

Over the course of the weekend, many people had opportunity to speak about many things about many ministries.

As space has allowed, we are sharing just some of the great encouragements of the weekend.

# Presidential Address

Bishop Rick Lewers

**I**N 2018, I have personally seen the celebration of another big zero birthday. Sixty years on, I rejoice to be Christian and I rejoice that all my immediate family equally find their joy and significance in the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. My rejoicing is, and can only find its proper place, in Christ, to whom this sinner along with his family runs daily for protection from what would otherwise be our divine judgement. It is to God's Word we turn and on our knees we pray, living each day in the victories Christ has won on the cross, resting in His undeserved mercies and grace, awaiting and expecting His return. I am encouraged by my children's growth in Christ, inspired by my wife's service of the church, and together we are being built up in Christ by the precious fellowship of the saints we so enjoy and of which the Christians of our Diocese are a part.

## AVOIDING SPIRITUAL DROUGHT

It is fair to say that in a Diocese like ours, my inability to achieve what I think is needed is obvious. Daily I am reminded of my inadequacy, expecting and wondering if someone else might do a better job and

occasionally finding people who would like to confirm my suspicions! However, God is daily reminding me that His grace is sufficient for me.

Not meaning in any way to trivialise the need of others at this time of rural trial, Bishops can experience drought in personal achievement being humbled by circumstances, struggling without resources, being taught to repent and to trust in One greater than myself. It is surprising what a drought can produce and if I could harvest a crop of repentance and faith every day of it, I would in fact be wary of better seasons, when it rains achievements in my own strength.

As purple shirts are of no more consequence than shirts of other colours, I suspect that I am no different from the common or garden variety of clergyman who struggles to till the hard dry ground of human hearts where the soil seems less than receptive - the same clergy who lie awake at night moved by the harassed and helpless flocks they have responsibility for. To all who are called to Gospel ministry I would remind you that true success is our faithful commitment to the God-given task of preaching the Word in season and out of

season, being active in prayer, loving the saints, prioritising the proclamation of the gospel, being active in the mission of making disciples... leaving the results to God, whose grace is sufficient for us. I am an emotional Christian committed to the truth. In fact, I am not sure how you could be any other kind of Christian.

Spurgeon wrote "It's a horrible thing for a man to be so doctrinal and cerebral that he can speak coolly of the doom of the wicked. He experiences no anguish of heart to think of the ruin of millions of people. That's horrible. I hate to hear the terrors of the Lord proclaimed by men whose hard facades, harsh tones, and unfeeling spirit betray a sort of doctrinal dryness. All the milk of human kindness is dehydrated out of them. Having no feeling himself, such a preacher stirs no one. People sit and listen while he keeps to dry, lifeless statements until they come to value him for being sound -founded in truth -and they come to be sound in the same way and just as dry."

I pray that God's Spirit protects us all from becoming like this, as the days we live in should rightly arouse all sorts of emotions.

## THE NATION AND THE DIOCESE

To this end, 2017-18 has brought a heightened sense of sorrow and dread concerning our nation, our denomination and the Church generally. Sadly, the issues remain very much the same as those I spoke to in 2017 and while it may be tiresome for you to hear them again, it is not tiresome for me to remind you.

Giving rise to this sense of sorrow and dread are the outcomes of the Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse, the Same-Sex Marriage vote, issues surrounding gender confusion, the ongoing push on abortion and euthanasia, the prevalence of domestic violence, the moral failure of and disillusionment with political leadership and a sense that the faith we express is increasingly marginalised and despised. Exemplifying this last reality was the response of one parent whose son was mistakenly given a brochure on SRE by the school. The mother said, "Luckily my son didn't read the brochure as it contained phrases such as 'Christian SRE begins with



*The new Chancellor of the Diocese, Mr Michael Eason enjoyed his first Armidale Diocese Synod.*



the understanding that we were created by a loving God, who calls us to fullness of life”. I was staggered by this statement when Janene read it to me and my grief was palpable. What have we as Christians been doing or not doing that the love of God and the life He offers can be seen as poison? What is happening in a mother that she considers her children in danger from the love of God and the life Christ offers?

### **PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE**

The General Synod Ordinances brought before this session of Synod indicate the impact of the Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse. The legislation represents the best efforts of our church to achieve a common national approach in relation to child protection.

Our denomination has not fared well under the Commission. It astounds me that a church governed by the Word of God could find within its ranks perpetrators of such despicable acts,

but worse, leaders who failed in their duties to act in Biblically reasonable and responsible ways regarding abuse, irrespective of the era in which they lived.

Our own Diocese has to deal with past abuses and must do so in accordance with public expectations. To this end, we will enter into the National Redress Scheme and exercise our accountability to those genuinely the victims of past abuses within the Diocese. I personally struggle with redress being financial but it would seem there are few other options that adequately address the pain felt by the victim. As the Diocese makes redress, the full extent of the abusers’ actions reveals that the whole community is abused by them in some measure. This will inevitably affect us financially but our prayer must be for the victims’ repair. I have in the past offered a profound apology to those who have suffered abuse and willingly do so again. Sadly, defending the Church against

those who would groom individuals and communities is not easy and while seeking to live in unity, trust and love we must be ever vigilant, trained and equipped to meet the challenges of protecting children and the vulnerable.

It is worth noting new legislation. Sexual touching of a child under 10 carries a penalty of 16 years’ imprisonment. Between 10 and 16 the penalty is 10 years. Common grooming behaviour attracts a penalty of 12 years’ imprisonment if the child is under 14 and 10 years if the child is 14-15. To drive home the necessity of our Diocesan Safe Ministry Training and compliance, a “Failure to Protect” or “Failure to Report” offences is punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment.

### **GOING INTO THE WORLD AS GRACE-FILLED SERVANTS**

No one would be surprised to hear me express disappointment at our nation’s decision,

## Elizabeth Parker Mothers' Union report



Elizabeth Parker, in her Mothers' Union report invited everyone at the Synod to come along on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> November to St Paul's in Tamworth to take part in a seminar called "Praying for your family to know Jesus". She also told us that the annual Mothers' Union State Conference 2019 will be held in our Diocese. More on that in *The Link* next year.

November 2017, to amend the Marriage Act to include same-sex unions. Regionally, the sad circumstances of a compromised political leadership meant that our representative leadership fell silent in the debate. Before we complain about such leadership it is worth remembering that the Royal Commission into Institutional Abuse also exposed us to the charge of hypocrisy, when speaking on matters sexual.

Perhaps most disappointing has been the surrender of members of our churches to the mood of the age rather than the Lordship of Jesus. At the very least this makes questionable one's Christianity. It is a warning to all pastor-teachers that our congregations may listen to sermons, but find it difficult to extricate themselves emotionally from the environment in which they live to rest in the

environment of God's Kingdom truth. In this regard, prayer for

God's people to trust God's Word is of paramount importance.

No one would be surprised by the suggestion that the Christian capital of our past has been spent and that God and His people have now been pushed to the fringes of society. The question is what we intend to do about it. We must not retreat into ghetto gatherings of legalists and moralists, but in repentance and faith offer ourselves as living sacrifices, going into the world as grace-filled servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, holding out the promise of His love to all while not compromising His truth.

This marriage debate exposed much more sinister concerns, revealing the dark underbelly of worldviews that would, if

necessary, violently silence public debate and free speech and play the victim if it would help their agenda. Those who promote euthanasia and abortion are no less strident in challenging those who would argue.

I am not moved emotionally simply because my views on life, or human sexuality, differ from those of others. I am moved by two things - the glory of God and the abandonment of God's good intentions for us. That sounds cerebral more than emotional, but if I am to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and love my neighbour as myself, I can't help but grieve the despising of God and the subsequent damaging effects that has on my neighbours.

Perhaps the greater tragedy, which comes with many intertwining emotions like sorrow, anger, regret, compassion, is that the helpless and harassed have wolves masquerading as shepherds, both here in Australia and abroad.

### PREACHING CHRIST IN THE ANGLICAN FUTURE

It is difficult to express the tangled emotions of grief and anger that follow the failure of the Instruments of the Anglican Communion to be faithful to our formularies and the truth once delivered to all the saints. This failure has been the catalyst to what is now known as GAFCON, the Global Anglican Future Conference.

In mid-June, the Reverends Tory Cayzer, Dub Gannon, Phillip Brown along with our retired Registrar Ron Perry, his wife Robyn, Janene Lewers and myself attended the third Global Anglican Future Conference in Jerusalem. In a fresh commitment to proclaim Christ to the nations, GAFCON launched nine strategic networks to advance the mission of the Anglican Church. These are: Theological Education, Church Planting, Global Mission Partnerships, Youth and Children's Ministry, Women's Ministry, Sustainable Development, the Bishops' Training Institute, Lawyers' Task Force, and the Intercessors' Fellowship.

To explain something of the history behind GAFCON, in 1998 the Lambeth Conference, one of the Instruments of the Communion, moved Resolution 1.10 on Human Sexuality which was agreed to by an overwhelming majority of the Bishops of the Anglican Communion. This Resolution affirmed the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 19 that there are only two expressions of faithful sexuality: lifelong marriage between a man and a woman, or abstinence. At the same time, it described homosexual practice as "incompatible with Scripture" but called for pastoral care for same-sex attracted persons. It rejected both the authorisation of same-sex rites by the Church and the ordination of those in same-sex unions.

## Youth Encourager report



Youth Encourager Tim Stevens ended his report with the slightly discouraging news that youth events are not being as well attended as they have been in the past.

“Low numbers into the future may affect our capacity to run these events in an ongoing way, and might have an effect on plans to expand youth ministry

in the Diocese,” he said. “So please encourage the young people and youth leaders in your church to attend coming events.”

The next event is YouthSurge, a combined youth night held at Armidale and Gunnedah on Friday, 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2018. Details for this and other upcoming events can be found at <http://armidaledioceseyouth.com/>

Then, contrary to this Resolution, in 2003 Gene Robinson, the first openly gay and partnered Bishop, was consecrated and installed as Bishop of New Hampshire. Subsequently, Canada and Scotland have endorsed same-sex marriage in contradiction to the Resolution. In response, there has been a marked failure of the Instruments of the Anglican Communion (the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Anglican Consultative Council, the Meeting of Primates and the Lambeth Conference) to deal with this breach of trust and collegiality.

More recently the Anglican Church of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia has passed a motion that permits the blessing of same-sex marriages. I have written to the Archbishops involved, expressing my disappointment and the impairment of our fellowship with them. The decision of their General Synod, which is contrary to Lambeth 1.10, our Anglican formularies and most importantly the Holy Scriptures, has led to some of our New Zealand brothers and sisters having to leave the now apostate church and establish new Anglican communities of

faith. GAFCON is supportive of them and I have offered these faithful Anglicans our support where we can. I know and expect that there are those who hold episcopal office in Australia who will push to change our stance on matters of human sexuality and marriage. Should they succeed, division is inevitable.

What should we do? The answer is simple and it is to not give up. Keep preaching Jesus Christ, introducing Him to others. God is sovereign over the hearts and minds of people and He will bring new birth, establishing faith and drawing His elect to Himself.

Beyond the troubling circumstances that gave rise to GAFCON, many new ministry initiatives and opportunities arose for the proclamation of Christ to the nations. One such opportunity fell to our Diocese through an introduction to Bishop Denny of Port Moresby, by Peter Jensen and Peter Tasker. With our partnership in Malaita ended, the Rev. Tory Cayzer has taken up the opportunity to investigate a partnership similar to the one we enjoy with Uganda. Tory and I intend to visit Bishop Denny at some point and I commend this to your prayers.



Tory Cayzer

## Daniel Avenell's report from GAFCON conference in Melbourne



The Reverend Daniel Avenell from Inverell attended the Anglican Future Conference in Melbourne, in September this year. He told us:

I don't know what comes to your mind when you hear the words 'Anglican Future'. You may wonder if there will be a future that's recognisably Anglican. Certainly GAFCON 9 (Global Anglican Future Conference) gives every indication that being 'Anglican' does at least have a global future. But what that means nationally, locally, in the Diocese and in the parish, is far from obvious.

At this year's conference in Melbourne Mike Baird warned us to expect opposition, so proceed with courage and conviction. As for unity in spirit and purpose, he said it was essential – a truism that for some time now has rung hollow from the belfries of Canterbury. Justine Toh outlined a dominant worldview of post-modernism that rejects grand narratives, and so looks for identity and meaning in the ever changing milieu of personal and political preferences. What the world needs more than ever, are Christian neighbours who love the orphans, the widows and the aliens in our midst, and have a big picture apologetic. From Wes Hill, we learned that is meant by radical inclusion according to the gospel; an inclusion that doesn't affirm our felt identity but transforms it. The key note speaker Frog Orr-Ewing had one clear message: Christian community is both the context and the medium for the gospel – whether it's urban renewal or rural. Tent ministries have a future, not because they shelter an evangelist passing through, but because they're the start of a church that's come to build community and the kingdom of God. If the early century Christians taught us anything, it is that worldviews change when faithful communities offer alternative visions of what abundant life can look like.

## PARTNERSHIPS ARE IMPORTANT

Before this Synod will be reports from our Schools. While relationships with the Schools in the past have seen some rocky times, it remains for us as a Diocese to help them achieve their aims in advancing the Christian education of young people. The Schools do not wish to be hindered in their capacity to grow and the Diocese desires synergy in order to advance its own goals while avoiding the kind of risks that led to problems in the Bathurst Diocese.

To this end, I note the willingness of the Diocesan Council to partner with Calrossy in the purchase of 280 Moore Creek Road. This will afford the school room to grow and the Diocese the opportunity to establish a new church to meet the needs of this growing area.

In partnership with The Armidale School (TAS), a motion will be brought to this Synod with a view to amending the Mortgaging Ordinance that presently limits the ability of the school to borrow. This will allow TAS to further the work of the school but, as I expect the discussion will reveal, remove any risk to the Diocese. (*This measure passed.*)

I am very pleased that Anglicare Northern Inland (ANI) has secured a future through its amalgamation with Anglicare Sydney. It was not a simple journey but the staff of ANI have conducted themselves admirably and I can't express sufficient appreciation for the work of Larry Apthorpe. It is early days, but our churches have every reason for confidence and partnership with Anglicare Sydney. I commend Mrs Claire Dunlop, the newly appointed regional manager, to your prayers.

The realities of drought have brought significant stress to many and tears to others. It is a stress that will only continue for many, through an incomeless next 12 months and longer if rain does not come. Isolation will not address this but friendships and partnerships may offer some assistance.

We often complain about the big cities forgetting the rural world, but city populations have been challenged to partner with our rural communities and give generously. That partnership and generosity will suffer if those in need are too proud to receive the help offered. It is commendable to be concerned for those who are worse off than ourselves, but equally commendable is an honest humility that can receive some help and say thank you when others offer it. Our Diocese, in partnership with Anglican Aid, has received financial assistance for those who are in need. We want to offer assistance to those most in need in a way that does not humiliate. If you are someone in need, or know someone in need, please approach your local clergy person or the Registry directly and we will seek to be of assistance. I have found the



*Synod business came to a halt as the Bishop called for prayer about the current drought. Not long after this time of prayer, a small amount of rain fell in Tamworth.*

sale yards and agents to be fertile ground for encountering those in need.

Partnerships are also crucial for us as a Diocese. This becomes obvious when the Diocese cannot attract ministry prospects coming out of Theological Colleges, when there are not enough clergy to fill parishes and when Special Districts can no longer afford to sustain a clergyman. These realities

are not uncommon in all rural Dioceses. Even the Bush Church Aid Society is feeling the effect.

At the May 2018 Diocesan Council meeting the following motion was passed unanimously: “Recognising the significant legal and theological exposure to the Diocese posed by Special Districts that are struggling with compliance, Diocesan Council encourages the

Bishop to allocate responsibility for oversight of a Special District, for the purpose of legal and theological compliance, to a nearby parish where a Vicar presides.” I wish to thank those affected by this decision, but the motion itself raises some very real questions: for example, what defines a Special District, when should a Special District cease to be such and what measure would determine such a change, is

Matthew 6:19-20

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The opal is Australia's national gemstone. It is also called the stone of hope.

Opal miners require endless hope to persevere in their search for opal, but once they have found the Lord Jesus Christ, they have hope eternal.

Turn to the back page to read of one such opal miner.

## Roger Green and the future of Anglicare



Roger Green is the Parish Partnerships Manager at Anglicare, Sydney. With the amalgamation of Anglicare and Anglicare Northern Inland, Roger was pleased to be able to attend Synod, meet with vicars and laity from all the parishes, and generally get a feel for the work in our area. "We want to do whatever we can to become embedded with the churches," he said. "We have no strategy in place yet, but are spending time listening. We have spent a lot of time with the new regional manager Claire Dunlop and are looking forward to a major planning day in early November, when we will begin to make plans for the future. We really appreciate your prayers as we make plans for the continued vital work of Anglicare in northern New South Wales."



there a better model of ministry and what ministry oversight should then be offered?

I believe the time has come for us to make changes to our Diocesan map, by which a number of our Special Districts would become branch churches of a larger parish centre nearby. We have for a long time sustained Special Districts in the hope of changing circumstances. With no prospect of such changes, greater pastoral oversight and care needs to be provided.

The Parish Governance and Administration Ordinance 2015 outlines a process for boundary alterations to accommodate amalgamations. In each case where this might take place, a consultation meeting would occur with respective parish councils and the outcomes conveyed to Diocesan Council,

which will make final determinations. Such boundary changes would entail the rationalising of administration under an elected parish council. Clergy in those larger centres will be charged with the responsibility to ensure the care of such branch churches and accountabilities would be written into clergy appointments to ensure this occurs. Larger centres will also be given the responsibility for the training and equipping of Curates who will have special responsibilities for the branch churches.

I recognise the danger of such changes could be a loss of heart in the Special District or even additional load for some in the parish. Our Diocesan vision to see Christian community in every town, the accountability of parish Vicars to care for such communities and the

faith and purpose of Christians themselves should be a counter to any loss of heart. In fact, where a partnership is one of united, mutual love, the benefit of such changes could relieve some of the administration, compliance and ministry burdens and bring new and refreshing opportunities.

I am not unaware of Parish and Ministry Development Commission's motion regarding a travelling chaplain and expect the debate on this issue to be a helpful one. While not offering my opinion on the travelling chaplaincy I can see no conflict between what I am suggesting and what PAMDC might propose. Should the PAMDC motion gain traction with the Synod, I would expect that such a chaplaincy would be active in its consideration and preparation for such changes across the Diocese.



## Jo Horton and the Drought Motion



On Friday night, the Bishop called for motions to be brought forward, and the very first came from Jo Horton of Moree. It spoke to a subject close to the top of everyone's mind: the disastrous current drought.

“Jeremiah 5:24 says:

‘They do not say in their heart, “Let us now fear the LORD our God, Who gives rain in its season, Both the autumn rain and the spring rain, Who keeps for us The appointed weeks of the harvest.”

This motion is dear to my heart and is not a “mothering motion” as was said to me recently. I was actually a little bit offended by the remark. It is a practical motion and one that leads to evangelism in our communities. I have first-hand experience of living on the land near Mungindi, and living through droughts prior to this one. My husband is a wool broker and buys and sells sheep. He has had about four hours work in the last five weeks. It will take

years for the agriculture industry to come back from this and farmers to rebuild their stock. Australian wool is now in high demand but we don't have the stock to export.

Rain is a blessing from our heavenly Father, we have been praying on Wednesday afternoons at 5.30 for a while now. We have people from other churches come and pray with us which is really encouraging. Furthermore it has rained after all our prayer meetings within a few days. Our God is a faithful God and I cannot encourage you all enough to be praying as a parish on another day each week for rain for our communities. It is a fantastic witness.

I put the motion to you all - a lay person can run it. it doesn't have to be the minister who organises it. But we should be leaders in our communities. Helping those suffering from depression as a result of the length of this drought is something we all should be doing.”

### CONNECTING OUR MINDS AND EMOTIONS

I am an emotional Christian but not one whose emotions are disconnected from his mind. Indeed, I don't know how you could be any other kind of Christian. So, with emotion and mind at work together, I wish to end with a word of thanks to our magnificent God who sustains us in His work. A work not of temporal service but of eternal significance. A work put in place from the fall of man in Genesis, to bring about the redemption of people and a groaning creation. A work that looks forward to a new creation, where sin is no more and where God's people with Christ Jesus will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of our Father.

It's a work not born out of the attractiveness

of man, nor some deep-felt need for man to fill a void within God. This work is given birth through the sovereign will of our Triune God and is governed by His rule over all things. He is ruler, Lord, King, Master and the supreme authority over all. The only safe place to LIVE is within His will. Here and here alone is the reason that God must not be trifled with.

Every age needs to be reminded of this truth. We need to be reminded that God does not stamp with approval our greed and lack of generosity, our cursing lips and gossiping tongues. He doesn't sanction false teaching, careless teaching or acquiescing silence from the pulpits of His churches, in Bible studies or youth ministries. The disasters that follow laziness are a sure sign that He does not bless that. He doesn't play the acceptance game that

offers no correction to sex before marriage, de facto relationships, same-sex unions and so much more. There is no place in the Kingdom of God for those who will sin with a high hand and there is no place for those who silently surrender to the spirit of this adulterous and sinful generation. And in the midst of drought, there can be no expectation of rain where there is no heart for repentance. Prayer meetings for rain are not the essential requirement of our times, for its coming may relieve the temporal problem but leave us with the eternal one, where the drought of hell's judgement is never moistened. My brothers and sisters in Christ, let's get our minds and emotions centred and be introducing people to Jesus and helping each other home to heaven.

# Snapshots of a hospital chaplain

AT SYNOD EACH YEAR, MANY MINISTRY REPORTS ARE tabled. This year one of these reports produced such emotion in those who read it, we knew we had to share it.

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Gus Batley  
Tamworth Base hospital chaplain

**Tuesday 22 August 2017 – morning:** I meet up with a Bible College student, who is required to participate/observe for 20 hours in a hospital setting. This is their first day with me at the Base. After praying, I mention that I generally start in Palliative Care, so we go there. We walk in and the staff say ‘Thanks for coming, did you know we were going to call? There’s a family in room 3 please, their dad has just died.’

We walk in and there must be fifteen people crammed into a single-bed room. They stand around the bed or sit on every available surface, including the bed: their beloved father/grandfather has died only in the last ten minutes. The energy and emotion in the room is extraordinary. We gently make enquiries and the older siblings are happy to talk about their dad. One of them describes her father’s very recent conversion and baptism, and then asks if we can have some prayer. I offer to read, then we pray. The room becomes very still and there is no movement at all. We take our leave and walk out. One visit into the day, and it is time for a debrief.

**Monday 1 January 2018 - 6.30am:** I answer a call to assist a family whose aged mother discovered less than a fortnight ago that she had cancer. The family spends the morning of New Year’s day in the Medical ward around their mother’s/grandmother’s bed. She is alive but unconscious. She had some church-affiliated background in another state, and after some time I offer to pray & read with her, with family present. I leave, and go to write in her file. Three minutes later her nurse walks in and says the patient has died, and could I go back to the family, who say ‘It was almost as if she was waiting for that prayer.’

**February – morning:** I sit with a young man who is covered in cuts and scratches following a road accident that he believes he should never have survived. Over the next hour at two separate meetings he recounts, at least three times, what happened. He probably should have died, and he admits that this is the biggest wake-up call he has had...but he cannot accept that it is God who has made the call, or God who has saved his life.

**Monday 12 March - 8.48am:** A member of staff calls: her aged mother, who was living overseas, has died not two weeks after her daughter returned home from visiting. It is impossible to go back, and in any



*Peter Smith from South Tamworth and Gai Swain from Gunnedah were able to experience Gus Batley’s work as a chaplain first-hand recently; Peter as a patient and Gai in the aftermath of her son’s severe injury. Both spoke movingly at Synod of the loving care they received, and in thanking Gus, they commended the ministry of hospital chaplaincy to the prayers of all.*

case the mother requested that no funeral be held for her. The daughter struggles to describe the emptiness of losing her mother and then the inability to participate in anything that assists with mourning, or acknowledging bereavement. We arrange to hold a brief memorial/prayer time in the Chapel later that week, with Chapel volunteers assisting.

**May, a Monday morning - about 10am:** A palliative care nurse recounts her experience from the weekend. One of her patients is dying but has been made comfortable. Then late on Saturday night he becomes distressed. She walks in and says ‘What’s wrong?’ He is sitting up, fully alert, and saying, ‘I don’t want to die. I don’t want to die, don’t let me die.’ The nurse says ‘We can get a chaplain to come and see you, would you like us to do that?’ His family interrupts and says ‘He’s not religious; we won’t do that.’ He continues to insist, ‘I don’t want to die, please don’t let me die’, but the help offered is not accepted. After attempting to settle him, she leaves the room. Ten minutes later, he dies. On Monday this nurse with 35 years’ experience says, ‘I did what I could; I hope he found peace.’ As we talk she learns that maybe he didn’t; she is mortified that it was so obviously *not* a good death. We pray.

**Friday 9 March – afternoon:** Staff in Nioka palliative care ask if I can touch base with a young patient who has a brain tumour. She is listed as ‘Spiritualist’ and her father is extremely non-committal about faith issues. We meet and walk outside, away from the many afternoon visitors who seem to be filling the ward today. She expresses sorrow that she is running out of time, especially with so many plans and ideas that will probably be left untouched. When prompted in regards to eternity, she is happy to reflect on this, and to hear of the Lord of glory who has done everything to make a place there for her. Time passes and she is in and out of hospital numerous times, and always happy to have a visit. One of my volunteers is asked by her family to pray for them all. Weeks later, against an ailing body and despite the spiritualist ‘label’ she joins in a prayer accepting the Lord Jesus as her one and only. She died a few days later.

Please keep our chaplains (in hospitals, prisons, schools and with the emergency services) in your prayers.



# Farewell to Andrew and Margie

**ONE TIME OF GREAT EMOTION WAS THE SATURDAY NIGHT,** when the Synod said farewell to Calrossy chaplain, Andrew Newman and his wife Margie. After 26 years of ministry in the Diocese, they have been accepted by the Church Missionary Society to train as missionaries, with the plan to move on to Diocese of North Kigezi in Uganda. Once there, they hope to be involved in training the next generation of Bible teachers and pastors. They told us:

“Everyone’s life is like a jigsaw puzzle and God pulls the pieces together to make his picture for our lives. We have felt this keenly. In 2016, the previous Ugandan Bishop Patrick first asked us to consider going over to live in their diocese to help out with the development of the Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College (CNBC). At that point, we felt there was a severe shortage of jigsaw pieces and so began to pray about the opportunity. Since then we have watched in amazement as the Lord has placed so many jigsaw pieces into the puzzle, leaving us asking the question, ‘How can we not go?’

“The task now is to pack up our lives and head to Melbourne in January next year to go to the CMS cross-cultural training centre called St. Andrew’s Hall. We will stay there for five months of training and then come back to the Armidale Diocese to visit and to share the vision of equipping Christian leaders at CNBC (Canon Ndimbirwe Bible College) and form up prayer and financial support ahead of our departure.

“Being in this Diocese of Armidale for 26 years has been a great privilege and an effective training ground for us. It has been filled with the enriching experiences of seeing the Lord bring good from the worst situations and growth in the hardest of hearts, ours included. Our Diocese has maintained a compelling, clear vision: ‘Glorifying God by introducing people to Jesus and helping them home to heaven’. This is a big picture, biblical vision about God’s work in the world. We’ve ministered under this banner, have been shaped by it and now, really, we’re simply diverting resources, relocating into a cross-cultural context and continuing on in the same vein, teaching, pastoring and training, for the cause of Christ the King.

“Wherever we are in the world it’s the ‘who we are, in Christ’ that matters the most. So, in Uganda, we’ll want to be walking alongside our Ugandan brothers and sisters, serving them as they work towards their vision of men and women, at a grass roots level, equipped to teach the bible faithfully and clearly. We’ll be praying that God will enable the bible college to become an accessible education hub for bible learning for the whole Diocese and maybe beyond. The encouraging thing for us is that we are not really leaving the Diocese. We are connected to you by a bridge called ‘the North Kigezi Partnership’. We’re just extending the reach of that Partnership. While we will be under the leadership of a Ugandan Bishop, we are still partners in the same gospel. As CMS says, you can, PRAY... CARE (write to/ visit us) ...GIVE (financially)



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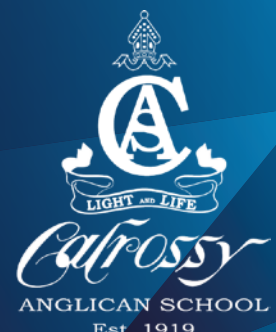
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# Ian's treasure

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

John Bunyan



**IAN HEYNE FIRST CAME TO LIGHTNING RIDGE TO DO A BIT OF OPAL PROSPECTING** for a holiday, and a change from his usual work as a mining engineer in the coal mines of eastern New South Wales. But he quickly became hooked on the lifestyle, as well as the joy of hunting for treasure, and moved to the Ridge permanently in 1984. Treasure is exactly what he found, though not the sort he thought he wanted.

“I went to Sunday school as a kid, but drifted away as I got older. I started drinking and ended up as an alcoholic. I was living a pretty futile life, but I married and that led me to start going to Alcoholics Anonymous which helped me to sober up a bit. In AA, we talk about ‘God as we understand Him’, and of course the way I understood God was from what I learned at Sunday School and in school Scripture lessons. Because of the way I’d been living my life, I thought God would not really be interested in me any more, but going to AA made me realize that God still loved me and wanted me to have the best life. So I gave the alcohol away, and sobered up completely.

“My wife and I used to talk a lot about going to church, but we never went. Then, one night, we had a fire. Our whole camp burned down. I had burns to 35 percent of my body and my wife died. I tried to save her but I couldn’t, and she died in my arms.

“They sent me to Concord hospital in Sydney, and the minister at Lightning Ridge organized for a lay preacher in Sydney to come and visit me. He gave me a Bible, and it seemed that

wherever I turned in the Bible, it was about life after death. I had just lost my wife; she was there one minute and gone the next. That made me want to know more about God, so I got stuck into reading the Bible and going to church, and that is how I got to know Christ.

“Sometimes I wonder why. It would have been good if we could have both got up one morning and just gone to church. I wish my wife had not not died like that, but I don’t resent God. He is the judge of these things, isn’t he?”

“I still work as an opal miner, but I always say I found something better than gold or silver – or opals – at Lightning Ridge. I found Christ and got to know Him. Now, I really want to help people who are suffering with a sense of hopelessness. I think that those who are addicted to drugs or alcohol have often reached a point of hopelessness. I hope I can help some of those people who are in a seemingly hopeless position.

“And to anyone who is looking for treasure, I say, keep looking! But make sure you pick up a Bible as well.”

## About

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