

# The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2019 AUGUST – OCTOBER



Three faces of Synod: Briony Freeman (NEGS), the Rev Tim Stevens (Mungindi) and Mick Clarke (Guyra)

This year marked the 50th Synod for the Diocese of Armidale. Synod acts as the parliament for a diocese, where decisions are made by lay and clerical representatives of each parish. Traditionally, Synod begins with the Presidential Address by the Bishop.

This year's address by **Bishop Rick Lewers** was passionate and urgent... not only for members of the Synod, but for all Christians. Space does not permit us to re-produce the whole speech, but we are publishing extracts of that address in this issue.



This address is brought to you by the letters T.B.A, and I begin with those matters that need **To Be Appreciated**.

Colossians exhorts Christians to live in gratitude and so I begin. Thanks be to God! Praise be to Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Everything we have and don't have is the gift of God who works all things together for good for those who love Him.

As those appointed to Synod you may well be aware that it is not easy to find clergy to serve in our Diocese and easy to lose clergy to other Dioceses. The decline in those training for ministry and increasing competition with other Dioceses for clergy puts pressure on our capacity to meet ministry needs. Attachments, isolation, finances, prospects and children's education are among the factors that impact decisions for ministry in this Diocese. Mindful of these realities I want to praise the clergy who have given themselves to serve in this Diocese. We enjoy the ministry of some extraordinary men and women who at personal sacrifice under God seek to disciple God's people and proclaim the saving gospel of the Lord Jesus to the lost. They enjoy my admiration and affection and I thank them all for their partnership in the gospel, as I do for our laity.

Everyone understands the plight facing our communities as the drought has become the worst in our history. To make matters worse,



fire has ravaged a number of areas in the Diocese. I want to commend the resolve of our farming communities, both in town and on the land and I am thankful that this Synod will provide us with opportunity to pray for all who are struggling. I also want to express our gratitude to the many who have donated support and for those organisations like Anglicare and Anglican Aid who have helped. At this point of time we have received for distribution \$251,377.50 in drought relief.

I have no idea why God has allowed such difficult times to beset us but I do know that it is an opportunity for all of us to consider our relationship with God, repent of our sins and seek His mercy. Our brothers and sisters in Christ who persevere in serving Christ under adversity are a great witness to me and I remain humbled by their example.

Core to my – and our – gratitude for this denomination is a commitment to **Truth Built Anglicanism**.

Anglicans stand in the great tradition of the Reformers and enjoy the fruits of such notables as Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer's Prayer Book remains a discipleship resource expounding in its Creeds, the Articles of Religion, its liturgies and Collects, the doctrines and teachings of the Scriptures for the Christian church. Thankfully these things are enshrined in the Fundamental Declarations of our denomination.

It is firstly to the Scriptures as God's word given and secondly to our formularies that Christian Anglicans are gratefully committed. Every clergyman ordained in the Anglican Church of Australia is asked to give their assent to these things - *assent* meaning that they believe these things. It is from these foundations that we gratefully receive from the Reformers the reminder of the unchanging Solas - by grace alone, by faith alone, by the Bible alone, by Christ alone, to the glory of God alone.

Any departure from God's Word and all doctrines proved thereby would be a departure from the Christian faith, resulting in a sect that must be called to repentance.

This moment of gratitude might seem a tiresome repetition of what you already believe but it must not be taken for granted. The current reality for global Anglicanism has reached crisis point as some retain the title Anglican but depart from Christendom via a **Truth Broken Anglicanism**.

As many of you may know, the movement known as Gafcon is a modern attempt at reformation and one that this Diocese has aligned itself with. It is not a movement away from Anglicanism but a movement for its reformation. It would be a mistake to see this movement as an evangelical one as it includes genuine Anglo Catholics and Charismatics who are committed to the authority of the Bible. Gafcon began in 2008 with a reiteration of what Anglicans around the world believe, expressed in The Jerusalem Declaration which I commend to your reading. (see [gafcon.org/resources/the-jerusalem-declaration](http://gafcon.org/resources/the-jerusalem-declaration)).

Such is the crisis of unbelief in our denomination and the move away from the Scriptures that many of the world's bishops, including myself and other evangelical bishops around the nation, have refused to attend Lambeth, traditionally the key meeting for global Anglican leaders. This is due to Canterbury's unwillingness to recognise many faithful Anglicans while offering invitations to bishops who are completely out of step with the word of God. Far from a call to repentance, Lambeth's invitation is to conversation. Conversation sounds respectable but it is a conversation that for many years has proven only to highlight disrespect of the word of God.

Prior to Lambeth 2020, those Gafcon bishops not attending Lambeth will gather in Kigali, Rwanda. I am planning to attend.

This crisis is in part due to issues related to human sexuality. I say in part because the confusion surrounding human sexuality is only symptomatic of a more deeply rooted problem which centres around the word of God as the sole authority on faith and practice.

The seriousness of this touches upon the lordship of Christ, the nature of sin, repentance and faith and their eternal implications.

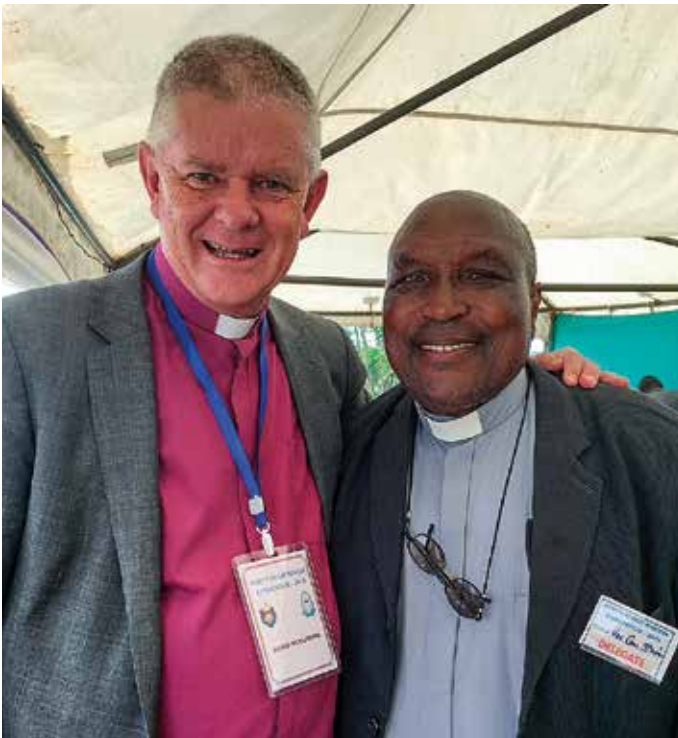
The recent series of essays prepared for our 2020 General Synod by the Doctrine Commission (*Marriage, Same Sex Marriage and the Anglican Church: Essays from the Doctrine Commission*) highlights the issues and indicates the potential for a very turbulent future for our national church. This address does not offer sufficient time to deal with the issues in full. In essence the divide focuses on the relationship between the Bible, tradition and reason.

The error is in letting tradition and reason have authority equal to, or over, the Bible. The argument from my perspective is an easy one. How can tradition and reason, which are marked by our fallen humanity, be matched against the authority of God's given word? As I understand the arguments, this can only happen if you no longer accept the Bible as God's word. I have written a response to the Doctrine Commission's book of essays. My response has been published in the



The Global Anglican Future Conference (GAFCON 2018) in Jerusalem





Rick Lewers with the Reverend Canon Steven of Kigezi in Uganda this year.

Spring Edition of the EFAC magazine *Essentials*, should you wish to explore the matter further.

Put simply, the Bible is given by God and governs and corrects tradition and reason. When the alternative is taken, permissions are offered to accommodate people's sin rather than a call to repentance and the security of God's saving grace. Such permission will have horrific eternal consequences.

While in South Africa, the country once cursed by Apartheid, I was reminded by a brother in Christ that alongside the great commission is the command to love my neighbour. It is hardly loving to see evil and not do something about it.

Speaking in Uganda I was reminded that a revival was born through martyrs who would not give in to evil. In the Apartheid Museum in South Africa I was reminded that Mandela lost 27 years of his life in prison to end an evil. And as I read my Bible, I am reminded that in Israel my hero, Jesus Christ, lost His life to end evil. But what is it to be reminded and remain personally unmoved by the evil we encounter? To be slow to act and to excuse our inaction with a sense of "what could I do to change things"? We could at least start by praying.

I admit at age 61, I recently went to my first protest rally outside State Parliament. The noise of my voice among others was heard by our political leaders as we said, "no to abortion" and urged our politicians to do the same. I know that many of you voiced your objections as well and I am so proud to have the privilege of being your bishop. It



The anti-abortion protest in Sydney in September



needs to be said publicly that our local State members have been a total disappointment on this issue and I believe alternatives should be looked for when we approach the next election. Should the bill to legalise abortion be passed, you can expect that it will be followed by a similar bill concerning euthanasia. I encourage our clergy to prepare all God's people to meet the challenges ahead.

In the crowd of anti-abortion protestors one sign read, "Adoption not Abortion". It was a great sign. That sign was more than just a protest of "NO", it was a call for us all to exercise our responsibility to the unborn. That sign got me to thinking about my TBAs and a different but **Truly Blessed Adoption**.

It remains a mystery to me why God didn't abort humanity. We are more trouble than we are worth, yet God chose to go the distance with us. He chose to adopt us. He paid the ultimate purchase price to give us life and declare us to be His beloved children. He made His home in us by the Holy Spirit and promised us an inheritance that will never spoil or fade and I can think of nothing more important **To Be Announced**. It is the responsibility of the adopted to do this.

There is much before us in this Synod and other speeches to be given. While the matters in this speech and others are significant, it is my hope that you will hear in all of them an exhortation. Wherever the gospel and its implications are challenged, the gospel has **To Be Announced**. If like the Colossians you want to live in gratitude, the gospel has **To Be Announced**. If a lost people are to be saved from a future in hell, the gospel has **To Be Announced**. If you understand these things then you will know, you have **To Be Announcing** the Christ we serve.

Messages often finish with the letters TBA and so does this address. Our world needs **To Be Advised**. The question is whether we will commit **To Being Advisors**?

*Read the full address online at [bit.ly/armidalesynod2019](http://bit.ly/armidalesynod2019)*

## SAFE MINISTRY

# THERE IS ZERO TOLERANCE FOR ABUSE

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

REPORT ABUSE

HELP IS AVAILABLE

YOU CAN TALK TO THE DIRECTOR OF PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

Email- [psd@armidaleanglicandiocese.com](mailto:psd@armidaleanglicandiocese.com)  
Phone- 0408 218 940

# Surprises in Kootingal



*The Kootingal Moonbi kids in their recycled fashion..*

**ONE OF THE FIRST THINGS** TORY CAYZER HEARD ABOUT HIS new church was how good the Holiday Kids Club was each year. For the past five years a group of young adults from St James Croydon have come to help Kootingal Moonbi Anglican Church share Jesus with the kids of Kootingal by running a Holiday Kids Club. An after-school Kids Club at Kootingal Anglican Church every Thursday has steadily grown this year from 20 kids to 40–50 kids, and so Tory was expecting the Holiday Kids Club would be a great way to connect further with these kids and their families.

Between 40 and 50 kids turned up to have some fun each day. Yet, surprisingly most of the kids were not regular Thursday Kids Club attendees! They were kids and families that had not been seen before.

**The Link**





They came for fun...and they had it! The St James team made sure they sat and spent time with each child, while the program, using John's gospel and an Underwater Kingdom theme, was 100% Jesus presented in an engaging and clear way.

Before they arrived, the St James team suggested that the church should try to connect more with parents this year. So each morning a café was set up in front of the church for parents to sit for a coffee and morning tea. There was a short parenting topic each day: building better relationships with your children, healthy eating for kids, keeping kids safe on the internet, and raising children with behavioural and learning difficulties.

These were well received, and by the end of the week parents were

changing their appointments and plans so they wouldn't miss out!

A highlight was the Thursday night Family Night. The St James team ran a short program to invite parents and show what they had been doing. Tory was really impressed by the way the team was able to include the parents in a really comfortable way. There were many more kids and parents than anyone expected. Everyone heard the gospel loud and clear and most stayed behind to chat over dinner. The last event of the week was a Family Church service on the following Sunday, which was an opportunity to connect with even more families.

It was a great week for everyone, and we continue to pray that it was a week when the lives of many children and their families took their first steps on a life-long journey with Jesus as Lord.





# Jesus in hospital

This year at Synod both Gus Batley, Chaplain at Tamworth hospital, (left) and Jonathan Earnshaw, who works part-time at Armidale hospital, gave moving reports about their work.

## Gus Batley

has again provided some snapshots of his day-to-day work which show the importance of chaplaincy in a hospital setting.

**Monday 1 January, 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.'

**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 and 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.

## Jonathan Earnshaw

saw his work from a whole different perspective. He said;

"Earlier this year, I had my own experience as a patient. A simple procedure which should have been an overnight stay resulted in a full week. However, despite the discomfort there were some important lessons to be learned. (Perhaps I should claim the operation on tax as 'professional development') The first lesson was just how much pressure the staff (especially the nursing staff) find themselves under and how under-appreciated they feel. My time as a patient has built new bonds with the staff and created opportunities for gospel ministry. If you find yourself in hospital, do remember to be grateful for the efforts of those caring for you. And use that grace and thankfulness as an opportunity to share about Jesus. The second lesson was the importance of the ministry of hospital visitation. It was always an encouragement when someone came in for a chat, a pray, and to share from God's word. Having been on the horizontal side of the ward, it was an important reminder of the great opportunities we have to minister in the hospitals and nursing homes within our Diocese."

Please keep these chaplains in your prayers as they so often stand at the junction between life and death, holding out the promise of eternal life in Christ.





# Helping to unite a broken world

*Catherine Hearne and Elizabeth Parker lead our local MU branch.*

**IF YOU EVER HAVE A CHANCE TO ATTEND A CHRISTIAN** Conference in Africa, it won't take very long for you to notice large groups of African ladies all dressed alike in beautiful long, colourful dresses and magnificent head wraps. These will be groups of Mothers' Union women from all over Africa. In Africa, Mothers' Union is a huge force for good. They uphold Scriptural, moral and social good, building up families and encouraging Christian principles.

Here in Australia, you can join your own local branch of Mothers' Union. Sadly, you will not be supplied with a beautiful African headdress, but you can become a part of an international organization which still says that the family as we know it is a good and important part of God's creation.

Elizabeth Parker from St Paul's West Tamworth is the president of our local (Armidale) Mothers' Union branch. We asked her about the relevance of a group like Mothers' Union amidst the social upheaval of these days.

"Mothers Union is for everybody who cares about the welfare of marriages, families and children (whether they are mothers themselves or not)," she said. "Men are very welcome to join...in fact anybody who fills out our membership form and signs a statement of Christian faith, which is the foundation of our concern and action, is eligible to join.

In recent years, we have not done a good job of signing up younger women and convincing people of its ongoing relevance. But when it was founded, Mothers Union was quite a radical institution. MU began in the mid 19th Century as a movement of women before they could vote or own property, and in a time when the care of children was neither prioritised nor valued. The woman who founded Mothers Union, Mary Sumner, was distressed because she felt the young women in her village neither knew their Bible nor anything about parenting. In today's world, marriages are failing at a higher rate than ever before, the care of children is seen as a lesser pursuit, and families still struggle just as they have always struggled. Mothers Union has as many opportunities to be useful in today's world as it has ever had.

If Mothers' Union is not serving younger women, particularly those with children, then it is missing one of its most significant ministries. How a woman copes with being a mother and wife is often key to the whole family's happiness and survival. For this reason, we need to have the voice of young women in our activities. This doesn't mean



that the young women who are time poor need to organise our events or work hard, but we do need them as members.

Membership is a statement of "I belong" and "I identify" with your aims, not a signal that you want to be given a job. Membership makes it easier for MU Armidale to communicate with people who are likely to be interested in our resources and activities. We also need members in order to exist, but we exist to serve our members.

People should join MU in our Diocese because we are genuinely trying to serve Christian families and provide events and resources that will supplement what is available in your local church."

Living as a Christian is going to get harder in the days to come. Being a part of a group like Mothers' Union will help to build and consolidate your faith; will help you to answer questions when people ask you why you still hold with the Christian model of marriage and family, and will connect you with new friends. Please contact Catherine Hearne at the Cathedral in Armidale or Elizabeth Parker at St Paul's in Tamworth and they will be happy to answer your questions. If you want to join it is as easy as filling in an emailed membership form and statement of faith. Meanwhile, please pray for our local Mothers' Union, that they will faithfully serve the Christian families of our Diocese and have an outreach into our broken and divided world.





# A More Accessible Calrossy

**ACCESSING** AN INDEPENDENT, Christian education is not always possible for families who live in regional towns and isolated circumstances. The drought only exacerbates that situation.

Calrossy Anglican School has been 'thinking outside the square' and has started advertising a new way that quality education might be accessed by families for whom 6 years of boarding school is not a viable option.

eCalrossy, at an annual cost totalling approximately \$6000, involves utilising capabilities of video conferencing technologies to enable students to be in video and audio connection with their teachers and fellow distance students for almost 100% of their school day. This is quite different to previous models of distance education in which physical mailing of materials meant slow turnaround between student and teacher and very limited connection between students.

Under the proposed eCalrossy model, a class dedicated to distance education students means each subject's specialist teacher is focused solely on those learning in this way. These students will have a typical secondary school timetable and 'attend school' each day by logging in to a series of live lessons in which they are taught by the teachers,

receive immediate response to questions as in a usual class experience and can also be involved in discussions and groupwork with their distance education peers.

Some teaching and learning experiences cannot be adequately covered via an e-learning format. For this reason, students enrolled in eCalrossy will be required to travel to Tamworth 3 times per year for week-long residential sessions (in times that the remainder of the students are on holidays). During these residential sessions students will live in Calrossy's boarding facilities and engage in a series of practical activities in subjects such as Science, PDHPE, History, Geography and Technology. This will also be valuable time for students to engage in face-to-face relating with others in the distance education program.

Will being enrolled in eCalrossy be as good as being a Calrossy day or boarding student? No. Nothing completely replaces being physically in the same place as the teachers and other students. The wide co-curricular options available to students on campus cannot be accessed by distance education students. eCalrossy students will also not have choices regarding any subject selections, such as electives in Year 9. For some families, however, the limitations inherent in a distance

education program will none the less provide a worthwhile and more valuable educational experience than other options.

eCalrossy is initially being considered for Year 7 2020, with the plan being, by 2022, to have classes for each of Years 7 to 9. The eCalrossy offering would finish at the end of Year 9 - these students being encouraged to join Calrossy as day or boarding students from Year 10 onwards.

At this point they would have the advantage of being familiar with Calrossy's educational and conduct standards and be better placed to relatively easily continue their senior secondary education.

Since making this initiative public at the end of June, the concept has been met with widespread approval. Commencement of the Year 7 eCalrossy class will be contingent on enough families submitting expressions of interest for their son or daughter to access a Calrossy education in this way. Calrossy has a history of high levels of growth for students at all academic levels and HSC results over the long-term which exceed any other New England/North West school. It will be a win-win situation if this can benefit an even greater number of students into the future.

Further information can be obtained via the eCalrossy link on the School's website.



# Go tell it on the mountain...and New England and the plains

IN LATE AUGUST AND EARLY SEPTEMBER THIS YEAR, THE Reverend Steve Abbott visited the Diocese to conduct his *Everyday Evangelism* seminars. In Tamworth, Gunnedah and Narrabri people came along to see if Steve's promise to make the idea of evangelism less scary and more accessible could be fulfilled. Judging by the reaction of some of the participants, it seems that Steve's course has been a great help as we run up to 2020, the year of evangelism.

Yvonne Drysdale (pictured right with husband, John) from the parish of South Tamworth definitely knew what she wanted from the course. "Before this course I really believed Ephesians 4:11 and that Jesus had given some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists etc – meaning not everyone had the gift of evangelism," she said. "I wanted to learn HOW to evangelise and to tell people about Jesus, and about how He changes our lives and how beautiful it is to walk in His ways. At the very start of the course Steve said we're not all evangelists, but we can all share our faith. That really changed my perception of evangelism. The course challenged me to be intentional! To pray for the person we want to share our faith with, ask the Lord for guidance. We belong to a Vietnam Veterans' group and I would love to share my faith with them. Most of them are lovely, kind people but they don't know about Jesus. They know John and I are Christians and John has said to the group that we would be happy to share about our faith but so far no one has asked. So, I need to choose someone in the group and be intentional about sharing my faith."

Kim Triggs from the parish of *Kootinjal*/Moonbi probably speaks for many of us.

"Before this course I was not good at sharing the gospel with strangers," she said. "I felt better doing friendship evangelism over time. I feel my evangelism in general is greatly lacking... I always feel unprepared and unskilled. The course was fabulous! I loved the changes in mindset... that the best thing is just being myself and telling my story rather than trying to be like someone whom I admire for their speaking skills."

"The course has totally transformed my confidence in sharing the gospel and has made it much more do-able. It took the pressure off and showed me that I've been given an ability perfectly suited to who I am."



If you didn't get to the course, talk to someone who did. Ask them to practise what they learned on you. Learn from them and start practising yourself. It is never too late to start learning to tell your own story of your walk with Jesus...and next year, there will be many, many opportunities to tell your story to your family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

As we prepare for our '2020 Seeing Jesus Clearly' Year of Evangelism our priority this year is prayer and evangelism training, and so please:

- Give thanks for the encouragement from the Everyday Evangelism course and that many now feel better equipped to share Jesus; ask for encouragement for parishes that will run the EE course in their own church this year.
- Ask that God-talk would be natural in our churches and for each of us in everyday conversation.
- Wisdom and godly leadership for committees planning the evangelistic calendar for 2020.
- That we each begin praying for opportunities with family and friends in 2020 to speak about Jesus and invite to an event.



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# Starting the year on solid ground

*At Summer School last year, the message of Jesus was heard loud and clear.*

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Nick Stone  
CMS Northern NSW representative

**PICTURE THIS.** IT'S THE BEGINNING OF 2020. YOU ARE WITH your brothers and sisters in Christ on top of a tranquil mountain with trees surrounding you. You are being fed from the Bible and hearing from missionaries. There are people of all ages around, all with a love for Jesus.

Sounds pretty good doesn't it? The good news – this is completely possible!

CMS Summer School is happening again in 2020 from Friday 3 – Wednesday 8 January at Mt Tambourine just outside of Brisbane. Together we will hear God speak through his word and be encouraged and challenged by his mission throughout the world. Gary Millar, the Principal of the Queensland Theological College (QTC) will lead us through 1 Thessalonians; 'Steadfast: Living for Christ's return'. We will also be blessed by Grishma Parajuli as our international speaker. Grishma is the senior pastor of Nayagaun church in Nepal, where he has been serving for more than 30 years with his wife Laxmi. And of course, we will have several missionaries on home assignment giving us an insight into what their cross-cultural ministry looks like. What a great opportunity to be encouraged by them and encourage them in return.

Grant and Amelia Kennedy have been attending Summer School for many years. They are now joined by their young children, Hailey (4) and Levi (1). Grant said he believed starting the year at Summer School was fantastic for them as a family. "It is a really good time to zoom out on your life and take a step back before you start the year,"

he explained. "You get to see what God is doing and be encouraged by each other, talk mission and then head into the year with a proper focus. It's definitely worth the money and time investment and effort."

"During the main session the kids are getting looked after and getting Bible input as well," Amelia added.

The CMS-QNNSW Children & Youth Coordinator, Paul Vandersee, is already locking in leaders for 2020 and planning a terrific program (something my own kids were blessed by last year).

"We're getting pumped for another chance to teach our children and youth about Jesus and God's mission for the world," he said. "We have so many leaders joining us from Northern New South Wales and they play such an important role each year.

Our leaders are enthusiastic and have a real desire to help every age group know how much Jesus loves them and how much He loves the entire world and why cross-cultural mission is so important!" Paul exclaimed.

While there are lots of opportunities to hear from our speakers and missionaries, there's also lots of time to fellowship and just be together. The annual volleyball game is back on Sunday afternoon. There's plenty of fun in the sun with the waterslide making an appearance on Saturday and Monday afternoon. I would love to see you at Summer School in 2020 as we start the year focussed on our King and his mission for the world.

Registrations are open now at [cms.org.au/qnnsw/summerschool](https://cms.org.au/qnnsw/summerschool) or call the team in the office on 07 3171 3020.



# Growing youth

**WHEN IS SOMEONE MOST LIKELY TO BE** become a Christian? In Australia, the answer is before the age of 20. For many people, this is the most important reason for Christian ministry among children and youth.

The Diocesan Youth Encourager, the Reverend Tim Stevens (right) is deeply enthusiastic about ministry to young people, and ably backed up by his committee of equally enthusiastic people, his report at this year's Synod was full of good news.

"Youth Muster continues to grow as a conference for young people in our region", he said. "This growth, combined with positive and encouraging feedback, means that for 2020, we are actively inviting other evangelical ministries from our region to attend. The youth committee is keen for Youth Muster to be a blessing to youth ministries that cannot enjoy fellowship like this regularly. As a result, we have invited several Anglican and Presbyterian evangelicals in the Grafton Diocese, along with some smaller evangelical churches in southern Queensland to join us at Youth Muster next year."

Later in his report, Tim was able to reveal

that a kind friend of the Diocese has donated \$10,000 to subsidise next year's Youth Muster. This means that the price of tickets can be significantly reduced, and that more young people will be able to attend.

He outlined other plans for 2020, the year of evangelism. "Bishop Rick will be speaking evangelistically at our Youth Muster next year, as we run with the theme of *Seeing Jesus Clearly*. We are hoping and praying that with the invitations to other churches, and this evangelistic focus, we might – God willing – have 300 young people attend the weekend.

Later in 2020 we will be running our annual FUEL leaders' training weekend, with Archie Poulos from Moore College coming to speak. He will be encouraging our youth leaders in the task of discipling young people, and challenging them to think about their future ministry. Nick Stone will also come along to help us to think about world mission."

He ended his report with a plea for help. "As Youth Muster continues to grow, we need help to keep it going. I would like to ask for people in your churches to consider helping us with the running of Youth Muster. There is



always a need for cooks, for help with setting up equipment and lots of other things. Could you be involved in this growing ministry?"

Please keep Tim and his Youth Committee in your prayers as they plan for a big year and please consider helping out in any way you can.

From page 12

and will keep them securely. I wanted to one day be able to share that great good news with these girls, but I was puzzled as to how I could possibly do this. When my world was so hugely removed from theirs that we had no common ground to build on, what could I do?

The answer that I settled on was crochet.

Before I moved to Moree, I used to be involved in a girls' ministry in Sydney called GFS. One of the many things we would do was teach girls skills like crochet, and I found it became an awesome opportunity to share life together in big ways and small ways. Once you put a crochet hook in their hands, you have a captive audience for a while. Once you have a project and a common goal, there's a reason to keep coming back, and keep building relationship, keep sharing.

And so the thinking began. 'What if I could teach these girls in Moree to crochet too?' What if I could start an informal 'crochet club' of sorts. Catch up in the park in the afternoon after work, do some crochet together, share some of life together, and hopefully one day share the hope that I have too.

It will be a big project. So far I have done a lot of ground work in terms of initial relationship-building with the girls, and developing some interest in crochet through my own crochet. But I'm a long way off handing out a crochet hook and some yarn yet. It is a slow ministry, but one that I would like to keep striving for. These girls need the gospel. And if God wants me to share it with them, I want to be obedient to him in that.

So really when I think about the question of 'how do we help people realise the dire situation they're in, and present to them the beautiful alternative of God's grace?' the answers are many and varied. There are as many different ways to share the gospel as there are different people in the world. But at the end of the day there's only one gospel. And it's the gospel that every person in the world needs to hear.



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

John Bunyan



## Jen’s hook

### About

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### Jen Adams

I BECAME A CHRISTIAN AT THE AGE OF seven. Growing up in a Christian family I had always thought I was a Christian, but I remember very clearly the day I realised that not every human was automatically a Christian, a part of God’s family. I learned that even though Jesus had died so that we could be forgiven, and be friends with God, not everyone *wanted* to be friends with God. And at the moment I realised that, two other things fell into place for me as well: I knew without a doubt that I wanted to be in God’s family, and I knew that I wanted my friends to be in God’s family too.

And that is the essence of evangelism. My childish understanding has grown and developed over the years but at the heart of it, I still want that same thing.

In the Bible we read that God “[does not

want] anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” (2 Peter 3:9b, NIV). I think that, as God’s people, we should be wanting that too. The question remains: ‘How?’ How do you help people realise the dire situation they are in, and present to them the beautiful alternative of God’s grace?

Since moving to Moree almost three years ago, I have met many people who need to be made right with God, but this story is about just a few of them. A group of Aboriginal girls roams the streets at all hours of the day and night, presumably feeling safer there than they do at home, and more like they belong there than they do at school. These girls are desperate for love and security, and I would like nothing more than to see them come to know our great God who loves them perfectly

*Continued on page 11*