

The Link

ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF ARMIDALE

2024 JULY/AUGUST

Community Building

All God's children

THERE IS A PALPABLE LEVEL OF excitement in Glen Street on Wednesdays. Children finish school for the day and go straight to Aunty Lucy's place where they wait for up to three hours for Frontyard Church to begin. They fill in time by jumping on the trampoline and running around until late afternoon when a core group of 12 from St Peter's arrive. It takes about 30 minutes for the group to unpack the shipping container on the vacant block at No. 5, next door to Aunty Lucy's. They organise the 100 chairs, tables, lights, sound system, two barbecues, food preparation stations, and either four shade gazebos or three fire drums plus bags of lap blankets and beanies, depending on the season.

While this is happening, a couple of people from St Peter's go around Coledale to invite people to come to Frontyard Church, building relationships week by week. The ministry is aimed at primary school-aged children with 60 to 120 children joining each week. Rain means the night has to be cancelled, usually at the last minute.

For a number of years St Peter's Anglican

Church South Tamworth has employed the Reverend Jum Naden to lead this work. He says, "This ministry is highly relational and we try to keep things fairly simple." Simple in format does not mean unsubstantial however, with Jum taking the children through a doctrine series based on J.I.Packer's *Knowing God in Term 1*, followed by studies in *Judges* and, after the winter break, prayer.

Each week Frontyard Church follows the same format. It begins with everyone singing five or six well-known songs – usually by Colin Buchanan – accompanied by two people on amplified acoustic guitars. Then there is prayer, Bible reading and an explanation of that reading. Over time they have looked at 'Important Words' from the Bible such as sin, salvation, illumination, sanctification and completed *The King, the Snake and the Promise* series.

Annette Gill knows who everyone is and prepares a simple bag of small birthday gifts for each child who has a birthday fall somewhere in the week. This is a big hit! And of course everyone sings Happy Birthday. As people sit and eat they are asked, "What

can you thank God for this week?", then the 'Chairperson' that week leads in prayer thanking God for the things mentioned.

Currently dinner every week is cooked on two large gas barbecues. St Peter's supplies buns, sauces and 120 beef hamburger patties and one volunteer generously supplies sliced onions. A different St Peter's Bible study group is rostered each week to help with the food so the wider church family also gets to see, serve and enjoy Frontyard Church. The groups supply cut up fruit for when kids arrive; lettuce, tomatoes, cheese slices and beetroot for burgers served after the Bible talk; and something sweet (slice/cake or ice-blocks in summer) to finish.

When there is no daylight saving a bus is kindly provided by a local bus company (with a Frontyard Church leader driver) to deliver the kids home as it is very cold and dark by 6:30! Usually four extra volunteers travel on the bus to assist.

Since September 2022 St Peter's and Anglicare have partnered together to employ Mark Cooper-White three days a week as

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the Coledale Community Chaplain. Prior to this George and Carmel Ferguson were very involved in the Coledale ministry during George's two-year traineeship. In the early years, Geoff and Sarah Chambers and their family moved to Coledale for three years to build relationships in the community, with the support of Bush Church Aid (BCA).

Mark's ministry includes meeting and following up people around the Coledale community, listening to them talk about their sometimes messy and tragic lives. These conversations raise the truth about the hope Jesus brings us, and also provide opportunities to pray with people about their concerns. Because Mark drives a ute many people ask for help to clear up around their dwellings and move unwanted household items to the tip, or to collect furniture from one house and move it to another. He also has St Peter's people donate household items that are then moved on to Coledale people who really need them.

Every second Thursday morning Anglicare brings their Mobile Community Pantry Van of discounted groceries and St Peter's provides around 12 volunteers, led by Peter Smith. Mark organises morning tea for the customers while Annette Gill runs a stall of used clothes and toys with a few pot plants which is separate to the van. For a gold coin donation people can buy needed items and this has raised \$3000.00 towards the building. Ed Dubbledee from St Peter's comments, "Of all the things I do these days, Pantry Van is the most worthwhile."

On the alternate Thursdays, Annette and Mark set up morning tea and host people sitting around in a circle to read the Bible, discuss what is read and to pray. They've been using resources based on the 'Plain English Version' of the Bible produced by The Bible League for Indigenous people whose first language is not English. Mark is involved as a volunteer at Hillvue Public School in the Breakfast Club programme too every Thursday morning, where St Peter's organises a roster of volunteers to prepare and serve toast and cereal with milk. Most Coledale kids attend Hillvue Public School and this additional contact helps build relationships. Mark also participates in the Scripture Union SupaClub activity run each Wednesday lunchtime by Kerry and Lindy Kurtz after they teach Scripture.

Jum is appreciative of so much support of the Coledale community. "It's really



Artist's impression of the Cola structure being built at No. 5 Glen Street.

encouraging to see more and more people come and be part of the church service and to see more people join the team of volunteers who make things happen. And that applies to the Anglicare Pantry Van and Bible Circle on Thursdays as well."

On the last weekend in May a gospel rally was held on the Frontyard Church block. The early part of the evening was run like the Wednesday service with songs, a story from the Bible, birthday presents, and a barbecue for the 102 children and adults. Kids were then taken home by bus and the 68 adults who attended shared curry hotpots and rice before Jum led the rally service. The Reverend George Ferguson spoke and appealed to those who were there to put their trust in the Lord Jesus. Jum had chosen Christian songs that people from an Indigenous background know well with lyrics that express hope and God's goodness. On Saturday morning the Reverend Neville Naden from BCA led the rally and Jum gave a sermon with approximately 50 adults present. Afterwards lunch provided by local business My Thai was shared.

Bishop Rod Chiswell and his wife Jenni were delighted to be able to share in the rally. Rod's passion for Indigenous ministry and love of Indigenous people has given him a real burden for reaching them with the gospel. "In our region 11%, and sometimes up to 60%, of the population are Aboriginal people in our communities and, if we're not reaching out with the good news of Jesus, who is doing it? We are one humanity in God's image, with one problem – all are under sin, and one solution – the Lord Jesus Christ."

He sees his early days in ministry in Mungindi as foundational for this passion. "Within the first few weeks of arriving in Mungindi some Aboriginal women came to me and asked, 'Would you be prepared to read the Bible with us, to help us in our Christian faith? And I said, 'I would love to.' So I started going to the 'The Mish' to sit and meet with these women. We had a group of two initially, which grew to three and five and so on, all in the front yard. We'd sit around in chairs and

chat. Sometimes we'd have a fire and cook doughboys with honey. I loved it and how relational it was.

In Tamworth I had Coledale with 3000 residents in my parish, one third of whom are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islanders. We were growing as a church at St Peter's and looking to potentially plant another congregation and I had a vision to begin a work in Coledale, mainly to reach the Aboriginal people. We started as a small Bible study group in Mark Ovington's loungeroom, then we would go outside and sit around a fire and offer hot chocolate to those who wandered by and read Bible stories to kids if they wanted us to."

Meeting around the fire in Lucy's front yard, Lucy Gibbs and Angie Haines yarn with Maria Johnstone and Margaret Love about those humble beginnings. "We would walk past Mark's house with our cans and Annette would sing out to us every time, 'Come on, come in.' We'd say, 'No, we're right,' and keep going. But we started to go in. Even with the cans it didn't matter. We remember the marshmallows. And baked potatoes. After Mark moved we brought it up here. We'd take it week about at our houses. Then it became Aunty Lucy's because everyone paid attention when it was at her place."

Rod recalls, "Annette and I started door knocking and inviting people with flyers each Wednesday afternoon then we would have a Frontyard Church gathering at around 5.00pm in a similar format to now but much smaller: first eight people, then ten, then twelve, then fifteen, then twenty and so on over the years."

For Lucy, it's always been about the children. "I'll do anything for any kids. If they come and ask Aunty Lucy I'll make sure I get what they need. I've lived my life, but theirs is just beginning and that's where I've got to step in. I'm trying to guide them." Angie adds, "At least we know the kids are fed. You know yourself, you can think clearly and you're more open to things when you're not hungry. At Frontyard Church they've got a belly full of food, they're learning about God. They've got beautiful people around them. It's a beautiful environment."

Currently when the children reach Year six or seven they tend to stop coming to Frontyard Church because they think they've outgrown it. Everyone wants to see teenagers stay involved and Lucy says, "With the building

Cover image: Joining the action at Frontyard Church on May 24th: Bishop Rod Chiswell with Kerry Kurtz on guitar, Cassee Margery and the Reverend Jum Naden.

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Margaret Love, Maria Johnstone, Angie Haines and Lucy Gibbs yarn around the fire in Auntie Lucy's front yard.

we might be able to run a homework centre after school.”

Lucy, Angie and Maria see Coledale as their long-term home and love the community. Maria says, “Since Frontyard Church has been going, Coledale has changed. People come down here because they know where their kids are. They know that we pray for them and they see those prayers answered. We’ve got people who really care. They’ve brought respect back into the kids, and the adults too.”

According to Jum, “The most exciting thing happening in Coledale at the moment is the prospect of the permanent covered area being built to give us a ministry centre. This has been a long-term dream for the Coledale ministry – it’s exciting because the attendance has grown so much it would never fit in Lucy’s front yard anymore!”

Senior Minister at St Peter’s, the Reverend Xavier Lukins, notes that a key aspect of the success of Frontyard Church is Jum’s leadership and the core team of approximately 12 people who are resilient, enthusiastic and committed. “I think another key aspect is that we are staffing this ministry. We’re praying

that it will be a training platform for others interested in Indigenous ministry or ministry in marginalised areas. We’ve now got a block of land, we’ve got a committed team, we’ve got a staff member and we have a building. It’s a really good platform to work from.”

When asked what readers can pray for Frontyard Church, Xavier says, “Please thank God that we have finally been given a construction certificate for work to begin on July 8. Pray that there will be a successful and timely completion of the building and for the logistics involved with meeting during the construction process.

Pray for God’s fulfillment of the dream to plant a congregation at Coledale on a Sunday and for wisdom that we culturally hit the right notes so that the building will be full in the years to come with people praising the Lord Jesus, and for much fruit from those seeds sown into the children.

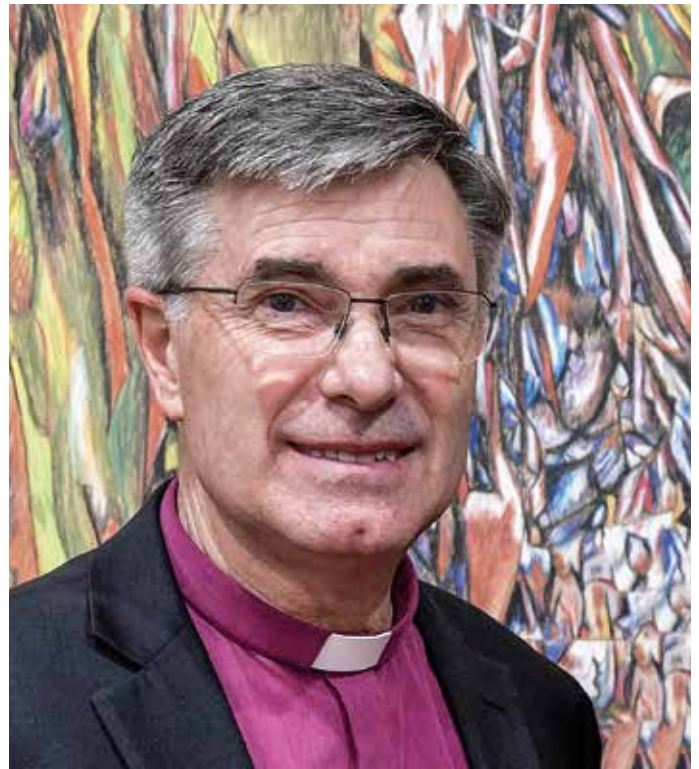
Pray for staffing into the future, because Jum’s not going to stay with us forever. Mark Cooper-White is finishing up as the chaplain and we’re going to miss Mark. We’d love to see somebody raised up to replace him. Our

biggest prayer point is that that teenagers and adults will come under God’s word regularly.”

As the conversation around the fire draws to a close, Margaret asks the other women what the building will mean to the community. Maria answers, “The main message the building will bring is that it’s something being given to Coledale. They know now that there are people trying to help the community, that they love Coledale for what it is and are not putting it down. You get a lot of people who used to come in and do something which didn’t work, so they moved out again. There was no trust. Knowing that you’re bringing the building people say, ‘Oh, wow, they’re gonna stay here. You’re gonna stay.’”

Many people from St Peter’s and our diocese, alongside the Sydney Diocese, have generously made financial contributions to the Coledale Building Project. Currently \$206,742 has been donated towards the estimated cost of \$300,000 to complete the build. If you would like to support this project financially go to stpeterstamworth.org.au/in-the-community/coledale-building-project. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Finding ways to serve



Bishop Rod Chiswell

GREETINGS FROM ARMIDALE IN THE THICK OF WINTER. All through June the fire at our place has been roaring most evenings. However, there will be a pause in July as Jenni and I head to Uganda for three and a half weeks to take part in the North Kigezi Bi-Annual clergy conference. I consider it a great privilege to be able to open God's word with the 125 strong clergy team in Rukengiri. I write this just prior to our departure, but during our time at the clergy conference we will consider Romans 12 over five days. My hope and prayer is that we will have a very rich time unpacking what it means to "In view of God's mercy, offer our bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God." (Romans 12:1)

In my last article for *The Link*, I encouraged us all to frame our lives in the same way and live them in loving service of Him for his glory. In Romans 12:4-5 we learnt that as Christians we are all members of one body. A Christian person is never an island, and Christian faith is not individualistic. We belong together and we serve together, each member playing our part. Now the obvious question that arises from all of this is, "How might I best serve in the life of my church?" To give us a start on the answer to that question Paul now goes on to give a list of gifts with which we might serve. "*We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.*" (Romans 12:6-8) This is just one of three lists that Paul gives in his letters, and it's by no means exhaustive. I think Paul writes lists like this to give us some categories which help us to consider how we might serve.

Years ago I read a chapter in a book called *The Purpose Driven Life* that helped people explore what their gifts might be, with five letters that spelt SHAPE. Discovering how you were SHAPED was the focus. At one level it was memorable and I liked it, but at another level I was concerned that it was a little self-centred and didn't take into account

the current need factor in the life of the church. Anyhow, I came up with a mnemonic of my own to help people think about how they might best serve in the life of the church. The word was PTHA! Not very clever I know but hopefully helpful.

P stands for Pray – pray that God will give you eyes to see how you could serve him in your church family or community.

T stands for Talk – talk to the leadership in your church, maybe your Bible study leader, maybe your youth group leader, maybe the minister, and ask them what you could do to build up God's family where you are. You might need some training depending on what it is, but don't be put off by that. I'm always ready to have that kind of conversation with people as I know your minister also is.

H stands for 'have a go' – having prayed and talked about your opportunities and received some direction, get started and see how things go! Anyone who has worked with me over the years will have heard me say when it comes to ministry, "Pray for wisdom and have a go". It's such a sensible and freeing way to think about serving God with the gifts he has entrusted to you. God always blesses those who have a go and seek to serve.

A stands for 'Assess' – after you have done what you decided to do for six months or so make an assessment. Think and pray about how your ministry is going, maybe talk to the leadership again and get some feedback. If things are going well, clearly it's a gift you've been given for that time, if it's not then don't be afraid to make a change, by starting the PTHA cycle again: Pray, Talk, Have a go & Assess.

If you do this you will discover how you can use your gifts to best serve as a member of Christ's body. And in getting on with serving you will be obeying God and worshipping him.

Brothers and sisters in Christ, my prayer is that each one of us will play our part as members of Christ's body in local churches right across our diocese, that together Christ's church will be built up and strengthened, for his glory. Amen.



Intentional living

The Reverend Tim Stevens
Guyra Anglican Church

WHAT DO A VETERINARIAN IN TULLY (QLD), A NURSE IN Quairading (WA), a Physiotherapist in Port Headland (WA), and a Tiler in Uralla all have in common? If you said nothing, then you'd be right! That is if you forget entirely that in Matthew 16:18, Jesus said, "... I will build my church ..."

So, what do they have in common? First, they're all part of the building project that Jesus is still working on, which means that despite distances they're all siblings in Christ. Secondly, they're all part of a remarkable and growing group of faithful, trained, and godly young people leaving the big cities – after gaining a qualification through a University/TAFE – to live, work, and serve Jesus in the bush.

They're also part of a generation of Christians making a difference in rural communities across Australia after seeing how their unique gifts and ministry skills can bless the gospel in less-reached and less-resourced parts of the country.

I have the privilege of knowing these young people as I work for Bush Church Aid (BCA) as the coordinator of BCA ONTRACK. ONTRACK is a program we run for graduates who have landed in the bush. It seeks to help them thrive as they live, work, and serve Jesus in the country. To give you a snapshot, I wanted to share two stories of the difference this humble program is making in their lives and for the kingdom.

The first person I want to introduce you to is Jess *. Jess studied in Albury and, a few years ago, began working as an emergency nurse in Central Australia. She also became heavily involved in the local Anglican Church, and recently she joined their Parish Council.

In summary, Jess is making a huge difference for Jesus in that part of the world simply because she is living as a Christian in a town filled with so many challenges. She's not reinventing the wheel. But she's making a huge difference simply by living, working, and intentionally serving Jesus in that place.

The second person I want to tell you about is Anna *, a physiotherapist in regional South Australia. She moved there because she understood that regional SA has huge gospel needs. Recognising that she had gifts and training that many didn't, she realised she could be helpful to the kingdom.

Anna is one of the bravest people I know because she moved to a place where it was clear before she moved that there was not a single church

that would tick all the boxes for her. Isn't that rare in 2024, where big life decisions always seem governed by how comfortable we will be?

Anna has moved to a challenging town with limited gospel prospects but has thrown herself into it. In two years she started that town's first Bible study for young people. This group has grown and several cross-church Bible studies are meeting weekly.

Just like Jess, Anna is making a difference for Jesus simply because she is living as a Christian in a town with a very confused Christian history marked with lots of division. She also is not reinventing the wheel or doing anything that will dramatically change the world. But she's making a huge difference simply by being a faithful, trained and godly young woman in that place.

Apart from God giving these young adults ministry gifts and skills, he has also provided them with a group of peers in the ONTRACK program who encourage them to keep going the distance for Jesus where God has placed them. This is why ONTRACK is such an important ministry tool; in otherwise isolated places, we've created a space where these young Christians feel supported and they're thriving as a result.

Knowing this, it won't come as a surprise to learn that Jess and Anna (along with a few others in the program) are currently trying to determine whether they should consider training for full-time ministry. This is really exciting because I'd employ either of them!

But this means that as we move forward, we must replace the Jess and the Annas of rural Australia. There is a massive need for more young Christians with a gospel heart to move to the country to see the lost reached with the saving news of God's love shown to us clearly in Jesus.

So, if you're a young Christian currently studying at University or TAFE, could you come and be part of what God's already doing in Australia? You might never have heard of Tully, Quairading, or Port Headland but if you turned up, your impact on the cause of the gospel could be huge!

If you couldn't honestly call yourself a "young" Christian worker, we would love your prayers as we seek to revitalise ministry in the bush. You can find out more at bushchurchaid.com.au/Ontrack

** Names have been changed for privacy reasons*

Translating God's love

It may be a surprise to learn that in a predominantly English-speaking rural diocese we have two Wycliffe Bible Translators' staff members living among us. This could well be on brand, however, for an organisation whose headquarters began in the Californian garage apartment of businessman Bill Nyman in 1942.

Margaret Love discusses some of the busy roles she and her husband, Robert, fill for Wycliffe while living in Tamworth.



WYCLIFFE AUSTRALIA IS A MEMBER OF WYCLIFFE GLOBAL Alliance along with other organisations like the Lutheran Bible Translators and Pioneers Bible Translators, where the Bible is their key focus and they all come under one umbrella to work together. When you're on the field, if you are one of three or four expatriates you have to learn to trust people from other denominations and trust the locals and work with them, otherwise you'll never survive.

A lot of my time for Wycliffe involves liaising with people, (including those exploring doing translation work) and attending planning meetings. I've been working throughout this year to organise the ReachOut NorthWest Missions Conference in Moree on August 16th and 17th where the Reverend Tim Stevens will be speaking. At the previous two ReachOut NorthWest conferences we've had 20 plus mission agencies come, including Sydney Mission and Bible College (SMBC), Serving In Mission (SIM), Pioneers, Global Recordings Network, Worldwide Evangelisation for Christ (WEC), Mission Aviation Fellowship and Compassion. We're trying to coordinate interviews and testimonies to highlight how various people from the diocese such as Phil and Lauren (Mole) Castelijns serving with Africa Inland Mission (AIM); Stephen and Rachel Thornton who served with Pioneers in both Cameroon and Montpellier, France; and Robyn, serving in the Middle East, have been drawn into missions. We know that the country church prays for missions yet doesn't get the same opportunities that Christians in cities do to go to missions conferences where multiple mission agencies are represented.

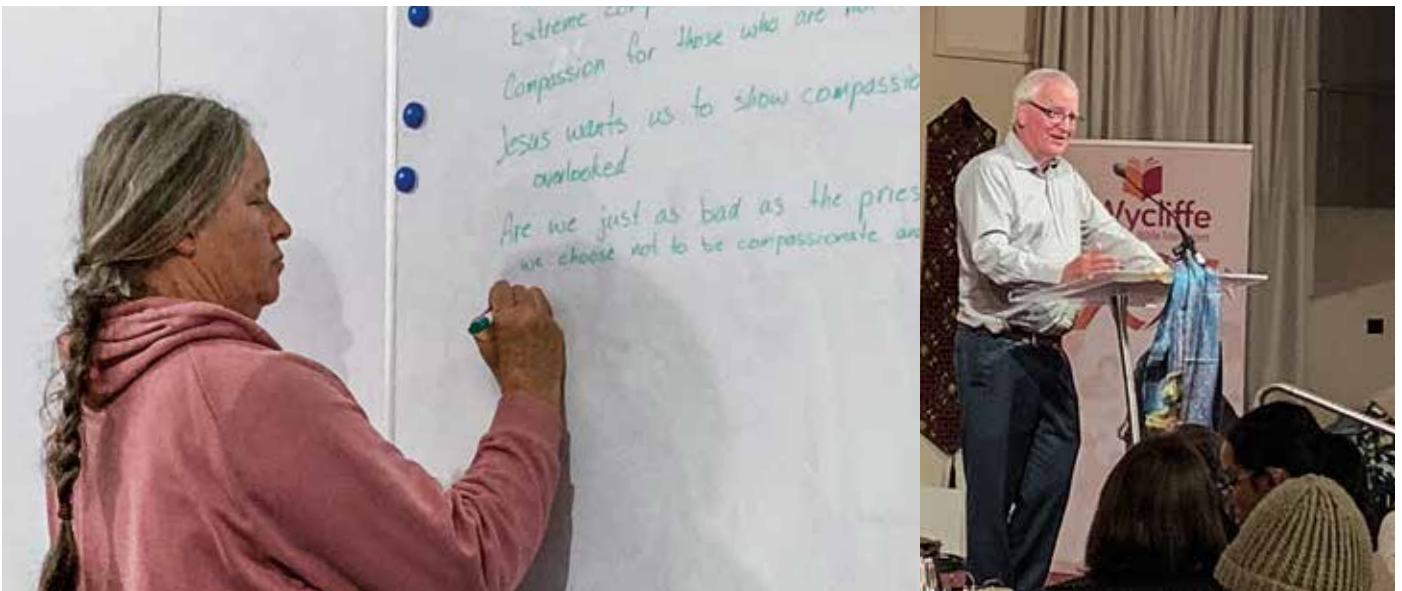
From the time I was in Year six I went to a very quiet Methodist/Uniting Church in West Wyalong, and after finishing school I trained as an enrolled nurse. During the 1982 Commonwealth Games I travelled to Brisbane for a Youth With A Mission (YWAM) Summer of Service, which was a short-term mission. This was inspired by a lady who had been in YWAM coming to teach in West Wyalong and fellowshiping at my church. In 1984 I was at a crossroads, considering both nursing and further YWAM training, so I thought/prayed, 'Well God, if you want me to go nursing, you'll get me into placements and if

not I'll go and do a Discipleship Training School (DTS).' In February 1985 I moved to the YWAM base in Goulburn for my DTS and did outreach in Sydney. I returned to Goulburn on staff in 1986, working mainly in the kitchen and on a few mobile teams, two to the Northern Territory and one to the Riverina. In 1989 I became a DTS staff member with Outreach Phase in Fiji, returning to Fiji in 1990 to serve for another three years.

I met Robert in 1993 at a church in Port Moresby soon after my arrival with YWAM. Robert's mum was a Christian and had taken him as a baby, along with his older siblings, to St Peter's, South Tamworth when it was just starting. Robert became a Christian at university. He was a bit of a sceptic and was reading of Saul's conversion and at that point decided he could take God and the Bible seriously.

Robert ended up in Papua New Guinea (PNG) after hearing Kirk and Christine Franklin speak at St Peter's about Wycliffe's need for finance people. He was working at an accounting firm, having just finished his professional year and he took a year off to do a short-term mission in PNG in the Aviation Department. He then returned to Australia to study for a year at a Bible college before going back to Port Moresby with Bible Translation Association (BTA). We were married in Australia in 1996 and returned to Port Moresby in January 1998, when our son Sam was 7 months old. Neither of us have ever worked in translation. During our time in PNG Robert worked in centre management and Government Relations in Port Moresby and at the Ukarumpa Centre store up in the highlands. In 2003 Kirk asked us if we could come back and work in NSW or Queensland. In 2004 we moved to Sydney where Robert became the NSW State Coordinator for Wycliffe until we moved to Tamworth in 2010, where he continues in various roles but not as State Coordinator. Robert facilitates various courses such as:

'The Journey' which is a four-hour simulation program showing what it's like to be called to missions, get accepted for mission work, raise support, learn language and a new culture, and go through a tough migration.



Kathrine Cooper at the 'Story the Bible' course in Inverell (left); Barry Borneman, Wycliffe's Associate Director for Language Programme Services for Asia/Pacific, speaking at the Celebration of Bible Translation Dinner, St Peter's, South Tamworth.

'Encounter Culture' – a four-week course one night a week, which gets people to think outside of themselves and consider culture, values, beliefs and worldviews.

'Explore Language' which comes in two formats and looks at phonetics, phonics, grammar, literacy and computers. We have someone who speaks another language come in and teach their language and then the work we do in the other subjects is based on that language. If we have people home on furlough, we get them to come and share their journey with translation. This is either a one day or a week-long course.

'Story the Bible' – a course which we both organise, with the most recent one taking place in Inverell. In the workshops we ask people to read the passage out and then imagine the story with the sounds, sights and scents involved and then retell as much as they can remember. This is done with two different versions of the Bible and provides the bones of the story. We get participants to look at cultural language, religious language, past and present tense and other aspects of the text. It takes three days to learn the principles and become somewhat proficient in making stories that are short, accurate and memorable. After this almost any passage in the Bible can be made into a story. And if you can imagine what is happening as you're telling the story, your audience will see it too. In Scripture lessons I've been able to use storytelling, integrating the CEP lesson material with Bible stories I know and can craft.

For some oral people groups, Bible stories might be all that they ever get of the Bible in their language – whether because the language is dying or for various other reasons. Having Bible stories in their own language helps people to grow in their walk with Jesus. It may even inspire them to have their native language written down. And ultimately that's why Bible translation happens, because people need the Bible in a language that best speaks to their heart.

During 2024, Wycliffe Australia is celebrating 70 years of changing the world through Bible translation and attracts members through events and representatives like myself and Robert speaking at the request of churches. We also attend events like the National Training Event (NTE), run by the Australian Fellowship of Evangelical Students (AFES) in December every year, with the hope that we can talk to university students still completing their degrees. There are about 3000 students from different universities across Australia who come and have four or five days of teaching and then go out on mission, serve in a church and share their testimonies. At our displays we think of a project and a country we want students to focus on and then develop a related activity, creating an interactive display with a competition.

We've had bicycles, rowing machines, skiing... even blow darts one year. Students pay to have a go at the competition, and we ask them to sign up to pray for that project for its duration or get information about Wycliffe, including short-term mission trips. We frequently have a translation desk and a translator demonstrating part of the translation process. We usually say people who are good at maths and music make great translators because maths involves solving problems, and music is concentrated on sounds and looking at patterns. But it doesn't mean you can't become a translator without those skills!

Apart from various short mission trips, most recently for Robert last year, we haven't been on assignment overseas since 2004. Last Christmas /New Year period we worked for six weeks in Cairns at Tree Tops Lodge (a Wycliffe-owned Motel). As Home Assigned members, we need to look for ways to refresh and renew our knowledge of what's happening on the field. It's hard to find ongoing space for this however, because Robert and I are busy trying to engage people to think about the work of Bible translation. We are dependent on God to provide all that we need, and we whilst we have wonderful faithful supporters who continue to give even in periods of silence from us, we do also need to take time to share with folks what God is doing to raise more support.

Before I retire in five years, I dream of doing things like going to the Northern Territory for three months to learn some culture from our Aboriginal brothers and sisters, and see how Aboriginal believers at Nungalinga college are being trained. Although I am involved in the Coledale ministry, I feel that I still don't really understand Aboriginal culture well. I think that to keep making inroads, and to try to make a difference, we need to understand Indigenous culture better and build on this knowledge, being willing to acknowledge mistakes and learn how to wisely improve the way we do things.

There is a course, run in two-week blocks, specifically for those who are coming to work in the Northern Territory with Indigenous people. It'd be great if we could get a couple of people from Tamworth who are involved in Coledale to join that course. I'd love to go and do that.

To support Robert and Margaret, learn more about the work of Wycliffe Bible Translators or participate in any of the events they organise please go to the following websites
wycliffe.org.au/member/robert-margaret/
wycliffe.org.au/events/story-the-bible-liverpool-nsw/
reachoutmissionsnw.com/
nte.org.au/



Enhancing spiritual and emotional wellbeing

Ruth France (Tamworth West Chaplain) with two students at breakfast.

Howard Barnes,
St Paul's Anglican Church, West Tamworth

IT'S A NO BRAINER. HOSPITALS HAVE chaplains; police have chaplains. There are chaplains for armed forces, race horses, golf courses. And we know why. People need spiritual and emotional support. It seems obvious that schools should have chaplains too.

The National School Chaplain Scheme was launched in 2006, tentatively at first, but it has grown to become an intrinsic and highly acclaimed part of the modern education landscape. One principal remarked recently, "We would be devastated to lose our chaplain. He is making such a positive impact and is an integral member of our support staff."

Unfortunately not all schools get a chaplain. The Commonwealth Government sets aside \$61.4 million a year which is enough to fund 3000 chaplaincies at two days a week. Schools need to apply for the grant but there aren't enough to go around so some schools will miss out.

You might find the chaplain as an extra person in the classroom, or taking a referral for a chat: perhaps the little girl who can't let go of mum's hand on the first day, or the boy who needs some time out. They may take someone for one-to-one reading or a game in the playground or have opportunities to run a course on resilience, self-esteem, anger management, leadership or handling grief.

A typical chaplain's day may start by praying

in the car, welcoming students at the gate, taking note of any issues that need special help and following them up. There will be time to take a walk with a student who is upset or lonely. Chaplains cannot teach Scripture in their work hours, but they can assist with the lesson or run a Christian lunchtime group. Paul Briscoe at Duri teams up with Scripture teacher, Anne Wall, to run the weekly SUPA club (Scripture Union Primary Age) where they can talk about Jesus.

SUPA Clubs and their high school equivalent, ISCF (Inter-School Christian Fellowship), are entirely encouraged by the Department of Education as part of helping students to explore spiritual issues. There's a myth that chaplains are not allowed to talk about God: "Not so," says Paul Briscoe. He has had countless God conversations with staff who want to know about his faith. When a child asks a question, the chaplain is expected to give an honest answer, always giving due consideration to the faith position of the parents.

There are 30 school chaplains in the northwest region. They exist to provide pastoral care to students for their emotional, social and spiritual wellbeing, irrespective of their faiths or beliefs. And this will often flow over to staff and parents and even the wider community. Matt Carter at Curlewis runs an after-school kids' club. Kathrine Cooper

at Woolomin has a parents' cuppa and chat space on Mondays. Mim Player at Attunga holds a weekly playgroup which has become so popular they'd like another one.

When Tamworth West Public School needed a box for sports equipment, chaplain Ruth France said, "I reckon some lads from church could do that". And with help from Bunnings, the lads from church coached the students in building the box themselves.

Principal Sara Spokes reflects, "Ruth has been the most amazing addition to our school community. The chaplain role has enhanced our ability to reach more students through social and emotional wellbeing programs".

Ruth says, "I love the freedom to encourage students to be kind. I love having them seek me out for a chat. I am grateful that the staff see the need for a chaplain and make me feel welcomed. God opened the door at the right time in a fantastic way and it's right on our doorstep."

While chaplains are there to care for the non-curricular side of a child's development, they will often use their own skills to help with reading, art, sport and one-to-one remediation. Alan Skippen at Walhallow, involves students in cooking lunch for the school. Katherine Cooper at Woolomin teaches every student the piano.

Jenny Tang, chaplain at Kootingal Public School, often uses board games and puzzles



Mim Player (Attunga Chaplain) with Ben Rowe.

to connect with the students. She says, “Every morning I pray that I will love God well by loving the people I encounter well. I pray that, by the graciousness of my interactions, he would establish a culture of kindness that would permeate every room, corridor and playground. That every time someone bumps into me it will somehow be an opportunity to bump into God. These prayers are answered every day. Sometimes in big ways, sometimes tiny.”

Attunga Public School’s Principal, Patricia Sharp says, “It seems like Mim is everywhere. She is versatile and energetic and the children go to her a lot. They feel comfortable with her ready smiles and cuddles, which are so important.”

Mim Player responds, “I love the connections I can make with students and families. Teachers mostly need to concentrate on the curriculum, but I have the opportunities for more personal conversations. A little chat about what happened on the weekend can develop into a sharing of how they feel about themselves. You never know the impact you have on a life.

The child you are working with today will go back to a home, then to a high school and eventually to a family of their own. It’s such a privilege to be God’s person in a school.”

Pray for your local school:

- that God will bring about a culture of kindness
- that God will raise up people to lead SUPA clubs in primary schools and ISCF groups in high schools
- that Christian staff, chaplains and Scripture teachers will be angels of light in their schools
- that parents will get involved in P&C Associations (Parents and Citizens’) and use their influence to support what is good
- that God will work through chaplains to bring healing and hope to damaged children

Armidale’s legacy to GAFCON



Kids’ entertainer Colin Buchanan was a special guest at the GAFCON Australia meeting where he explained his writing process and his desire to write songs that will resonate with all ages. He also gave a full concert which was equally enjoyed by adults and kids alike.

Robyn Powell

WHILE GAFCON (GLOBAL ANGLICAN Future Conference) is a global movement of orthodox Anglican churches, it was amazing to see the influence of the Diocese of Armidale evident at the most recent meeting in early July this year. Around four hundred people from all over Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific joined at the second ever GAFCON Australia gathering in Brisbane. The meeting was only hours old when the first mention of Armidale came from an Indigenous brother who shared that he had been taught the gospel by the Vicar of Moonbi many years ago. This Aboriginal man now ministers to Indigenous communities in the northern desert of Australia.

Bishop of Tasmania, Right Reverend Richard Condie told me how, despite growing up going to church every week, it was his time at the University of New England Chapel (St Mark’s UNEchurch) which brought him to a clear understanding of the importance of the gospel in his life. This then led him to



his future as a minister of the gospel and on to his former role as Chair of GAFCON Australia.

But it was a brief chat to the Reverend Peter Smith (above), Rector of Dalkeith Anglican Church in Perth, Western Australia and current Chair of GAFCON Australia, that showed me yet again what a special place the Diocese of Armidale is.

“I was born in Armidale and I do remember great struggles and challenges but Mum and

from page 9

Dad (Shirley and Ray Smith) were always positive about the church. Dad said we didn't go out to bring revival but just persevered... ordinary people in little groups, in each church, persevering. I think of my parents, of John Chapman, of Auntie Betty and Uncle Peter (Chiswell) who left their families in the city and came to minister in tiny places in the middle of nowhere but, over time, the churches of the Diocese were transformed."

I asked him if that kind of transformation is what GAFCON is all about. "GAFCON exists to stand by and support people who are longing for renewal and reformation. For me in the liberal Diocese of Perth, and for so many others around the globe, we are under tremendous pressure to conform to the ways of the world. We need people to stand by us. GAFCON means so much to me because we are just a little gang of evangelicals, hanging on together. So I would want to say to the people of the Diocese of Armidale: stand by us! We need you! Tell the story of GAFCON, tell the story of those suffering for the gospel and standing for truth."

Please continue to pray for Peter and those around the world like him, who are standing firm for the gospel despite the pressure to give in to the prevailing culture. To find out more about GAFCON and to inform your prayers visit: gafconaustralia.org

Farewell for Brian Kirk and Armidale Hospitals and Aged Care Chaplaincy Fundraiser



The Reverend Brian Kirk is thanked by Guy Davidson, member of the Armidale Hospitals Chaplaincy Steering and Support Team.

Eighty-nine people joined together on a wintry Armidale evening in late May to collectively show gratitude for Brian Kirk's ministry in the Diocese as he prepares for his retirement in July. Brian

was also thanked for his wise, dedicated and compassionate work as the Armidale Hospitals' and Aged Care Chaplain, with the event raising funds for ongoing chaplaincy work.

Emu Music Word in Song Music Ministry Conference



'Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.' (Colossians 3:16)

Singing is a wonderful gift from God, that should be used for the sake of edifying his people as we praise and thank him for saving us.

In May an Emu Music team travelled from Sydney to Tamworth to help people in our diocese think more deeply about how the Bible should shape the what, why, and how of our singing in church. Time was spent in the Bible,

and in thinking about how bands work in church and how different roles in church music ministry should work.

In response to the team modelling what a healthy band practice might look in order for the music to serve the voice of the congregation - identified as the main instrument in the gathering - Angela Brown from St Peter's, South Tamworth commented, "The church music masterclass was brilliant!"

We have already begun discussions about having the Emu Music team return in 2026 to run this training again, so keep an eye out for the advertising!

Growing funds for ministry

MINISTRY NEEDS MONEY. WITH THAT IN MIND, THE Diocese began to build a monetary fund in 1992. From small beginnings the Diocesan Development Fund (DDF) aimed to both contribute money towards ministry and aid those engaged in ministry. Things started slowly. In 2014 there was \$266,858 of investor funds held by the DDF.

This prompted the Diocese to consider their options for the fund: whether to close it or to invigorate it. At the 2014 Synod a decision was made to re-energise the DDF. New roles were developed, new strategies were implemented and nine years later, the fund was able to make a contribution to the Diocese of \$70,000, with another \$44,000

distributed to parishes and ministries throughout our diocese as part of the bonus interest incentive. Further to this the DDF has been able to assist parishes and ministry staff by providing finance in the form of competitive loans for land, buildings, housing, and motor vehicles. From small things, big things grow.

A great example of the fund's value in assisting the Diocese was the crucial role it played in financing the purchase of the property at 280 Moore Creek Road in North Tamworth. This part of Tamworth was identified as a major growth area for the city and the Diocese saw the strategic importance of establishing a church in the area. Through the purchase of that property North Tamworth Anglican Church was created – a parish that four years later is thriving – with additional land able to be used for the expansion of the Calrossy Anglican School site.

The main investment product offered by the DDF is the Monthly Saver Account. There is no minimum to invest. Investors are required to provide 31 days' written notice to withdraw funds from their accounts. The current total interest rate on this account is 5.25% per annum. Of this, 4.75% is paid to the investor. The bonus 0.5% is paid annually by the DDF to the parish, diocesan project, or diocesan organisation that the investor has chosen. Please check the DDF webpage for the latest interest rate information: armidaleanglicandiocese.com/invest-with-us/

To invest in the DDF you must be over 18 years, primarily and usually attend services of public worship for a period of no less than three months in a parochial district of the Diocese and are not a member of any other Christian denomination.

Lay Preaching Day



The Reverends Mike Uptin and Jonathan Earnshaw.

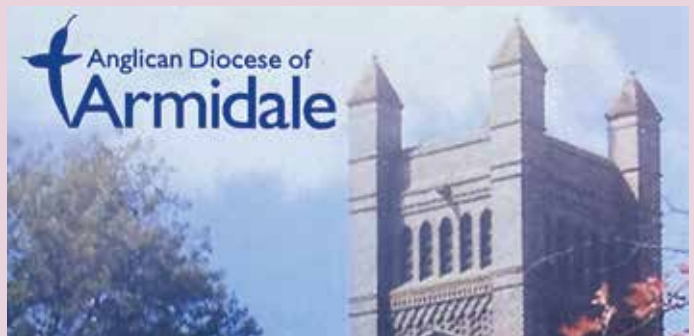
Approximately 42 lay preachers gathered in Barraba on June 1st for an encouraging day of help with preparing talks and sermons, run by members of the Commission for Education and Discipleship and the Reverend Mike Uptin, Regional Director of Bush Church Aid (BCA).

Attendees travelled from 13 parishes: Warialda, Lightning Ridge, Walcha, Gunnedah, South Tamworth, Inverell, Armidale, University of New England, Tenterfield, Glen Innes, Cockburn Valley / Kootingal, Emmaville and Manilla. Mike spoke on adapting sermons for different contexts such as women's events, regular Sunday services and memorials. Big ideas and outlines for Psalm 23 were then workshopped in groups before everyone listened to a sample sermon preached on the same passage by Mike. The day concluded with participants doing some guided sermon feedback together.

For those who'd like another opportunity to hear Mike Uptin go to bush-churchaid.com.au/content/events-tours/gk6fdk to learn about the BCA connect day on August 24th at St Mark's UNEchurch in Armidale

Come celebrate!

On August 10th St Peter's Cathedral in Armidale will hold an ordination service for the Reverends Jared Lidgerwood from the Cathedral and Nathan Tuckwell from St Mark's UNEchurch who will be ordained as presbyters. In addition to this, David Freeman, his wife Briony and son Declan, will be welcomed by the Diocese and David ordained as deacon ready for his dual roles as Diocesan Trainer and the new Armidale Hospitals and Aged Care Chaplain. Please see the Diocesan website for further details: armidaleanglicandiocese.com or call the Registry Office on (02) 6772 4491



Diocesan Development Fund

Monthly Saver Account

CURRENT INTEREST RATE

4.75% P.A.

THE DDF WILL PAY AN ADDITIONAL

0.50% P.A.

TO THE PARISH, DIOCESAN ENTITY OR PROJECT OF YOUR CHOICE.

Fee free account. Rates are variable.

For further information please contact:
Diocesan Development Fund
Mrs. Samantha Brennan 02 6772 4491
ddfaccounts@armidaleanglicandiocese.com
PO Box 198, Armidale NSW 2350

armidaleanglicandiocese.com/invest-with-us/



Life with Jesus

Maria with Sammy and Pip Naden

Introducing Aunty Maria Johnstone

Pip Naden

I attend Coledale Frontyard Church on Wednesdays and I'm also a member of the 10am congregation at St Peter's, South Tamworth. I'm married to Jum and mother to little Sammy. I'm really thankful to be able to introduce you to my dear friend and sister in Christ, Aunty Maria Johnstone.

Aunty Maria is a proud Gamilaraay woman on her mum's side and she is also proud to be the daughter of her white father. Most importantly she is a follower of Jesus.

Aunty Maria is originally from Moree and has been living in Tamworth since 1981. Aunty Maria has four children and 14 grandchildren. She also has eight

great grandies too! Aunty Maria has been attending Coledale Frontyard Church with her son Scooby and grandchildren for the last eight years. Since 2019, Aunty Maria has been studying the Bible through Nungalinya Bible College in Darwin. She will graduate later this year! She loves studying the scriptures and is encouraged by seeing other Aboriginal men and women study God's word from across the country.

Aunty Maria also attends the 8am service at St Peter's and is part of the Anglicare Community Pantry Van team where she serves as a welcomer who makes cups of tea and encourages the community who utilise the van.

Maria Johnstone

WHEN I FIRST KNEW GOD, I WAS ONLY five years old. My mother's father was an Aboriginal Pastor with AIM (Australian Indigenous Ministries, formerly Aborigines Inland Mission of Australia), so my mum took us all to church and Sunday school. My dad was an atheist, so I felt muddled up in listening to the word of God preached by my grandfather and then listening to my own dad. I felt in between what my dad said, as it was the opposite of what my grandfather preached and told me. From the age of 20, I experienced really bad domestic violence. My four kids were with me during that time and we all spent time in and out of refuges, due to how hard life was for us.

When I was 36 years old, my friend and I

"It comes down to
when you are at your lowest,
where you are, God meets you."

were about to take some tablets to overdose, but at that exact moment another friend of ours just happened to knock at the door. When I opened the door to our friend she asked what we were doing. When I told her, she started to tell us about God and his son Jesus. I said back to her, "If God is real, then why is he never there for me?" But she continued to say, "He is here for you."

I told her, "I'm a gambling person and I bet you anything that If I go to church with you tomorrow, he won't be there." I also said, "I'll

give you all of my pension money for the week if he is real!"

When I went to church on that Sunday afternoon at Peel High, I gave my life to Jesus!

The next week I went back to church with all my pension money that I had promised but the pastor and my neighbour didn't take it! They both said to me, "God just wanted YOU." And I haven't stopped going to church since. In 1986 I took my youngest two kids Scooby and Missy with me to church.

Life with Jesus looks a whole lot better. God's unconditional love has washed over me. I know that when Jesus died he took all of my sins to the cross. I am so thankful for the hope of eternal life because of Jesus' death and resurrection.