

# ANGLICAN NEWS

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# GOOD NEWS FOR FAITH



At the annual clergy conference in May, Mark McCrindle, of McCrindle social researchers, spent an evening presenting the latest research results in answer to the question 'What do Australians actually think about faith?'

The news initially was all bad. While the population in Australia is and has been growing significantly, there is one area that is not growing and that is church attendance. From the mid-1970s to today church attendance has decreased from 30% of all Australians attending once a month or more to half of that at 15% attendance. And while the population is now more mobile than ever before, both geographically and vocationally, the movement of people is *from* religion. Those people choosing no religion has shifted from 1 in 5 in the 1970s to a predicted 1 in 3 in the next census (if the question is compulsory).

When McCrindle tweaked the 2011 census question – which asked what is a person's religion and resulted in 61% of the population choosing Christianity – to a question that determined Christianity based more on identity and practice than on ancestry or historical connection, and made that question compulsory, they recorded that 45% of the national population identified as Christian. One third of those identifying as Christians went to church once a month or more and just under half of those people

chose the highest option of being extremely active and involved in their church.

However, one of the interesting factors in the current landscape in Australia is the change that has occurred in migration patterns (based on Census data). Three decades ago the top five countries for Australians born overseas were all European countries plus New Zealand, countries from which people were most likely to nominate Christianity as their religion (those countries are Southern Europe, Western Europe, Oceania, America), but the top five countries for Australians born overseas now include China, India and Vietnam, which are included in those countries from which people are least likely to list Christianity as their religion (those being South East Asia, Africa/Middle East, North and Central Asia). What this means is that a large proportion of people more recently coming to Australia are those less exposed to Christianity, such that we are now not even a post-Christian culture but in many ways a pre-Christian one. People are arriving who don't have an experience of Christianity in their background and upbringing. This factor is amplified by younger generations in Australia who now have no prior experience of Christianity.

The good news was that the research suggests we are not necessarily connecting in tough terrain.



Results indicate a warmth towards Christianity in Australia. When McCrindle investigated the attitude of people to Christianity, they found that when you add together those who would use the personal label of Christian, those who either believe in Christianity but don't consider themselves a Christian, those who believe much of Christianity or believe in the ethics and values of Christianity, plus those in the neutral category, you have over 3 in 4 Australians who are neutral or warm towards Christianity.



So Australians are not opposed to Christianity. More than half of people even said they talk about religion or spirituality at least once a quarter, with younger people more likely to talk about spiritual things than older people. When non-Christians were then asked how open they were to changing their worldview, 1 in 4 of them have the door somewhat or very open.

There's also a challenge in how we can engage the two-thirds of those who said they identified with Christianity but do not attend church,

plus those who chose 'spirituality' in the religion question. Leaving out those who regularly attend church, there's another 44% who identify in some way with spiritual things.

While there might be warmth towards the church there's not a lot of connection with it, with results showing that Australia is now a society that does not have a lot of information. Almost 1 in 5 Australians said they know nothing at all about the church as a whole and when it came to knowledge of the local church more than half chose the 'not well at all' option. What's more, 1 in 29 people said they have never heard of Jesus, and more than a quarter said they know very little or nothing about Jesus' life.

There is clearly work for the church to do, yet it is not without potential. This potential includes the large mission field coming to the country from Asia. Further, the three countries with the highest proportion of youth, or Gen Zs (aged 7-22), on the planet, which are now India, China and Indonesia, are all our neighbours. Reaching these people presents an opportunity but also a challenge in being able to understand and engage with this generation (which the research defined as being global, digital, mobile, visual and social).

If you'd like to see more detail of the research results you can download the full McCrindle report from [faithandbelief.org.au](http://faithandbelief.org.au).



BISHOP TREVOR EDWARDS WRITES

# Two Gifts of the Risen Jesus

It was my very real privilege to preside at two confirmations on Pentecost Sunday in Tumut and Gundagai. I was able to confirm two adults and nine young people who stood in the presence of their family, friends and congregation to publicly declare that they had turned to Christ and away from sin and selfishness. I hope they will always remember the Gospel reading, which focused on two gifts the risen Jesus gave to his frightened followers on that first Easter night, and which he still delights to personally give to all his disciples.

The first gift is the gift of his peace. On his betrayal night Jesus had promised to give his disciples a different sort of peace to that which the world gives. He promised a deep serenity which exists even in the face of trouble. After his death he appeared in the locked upper room and twice said for emphasis 'peace be with you.' Given the context this is not just a conventional greeting (like our Australian 'how'ya going mate?'). It is an assurance that victory has been achieved, the devil has been defeated and sins have been forgiven. This greeting is the fulfil-

ment of his promise. Through his once-for-all work on the cross our relationship with God has been restored. We are now at peace with God provided that we have enthroned Jesus as Lord and Saviour in our lives. This is a wonderful Easter gift. There is nothing so liberating as knowing that God has pushed the delete button in his memory. While we all have haunting memories of things we have done or left undone, which displease God and hurt our neighbours, the risen Jesus assures us that he has paid for them all and so we no longer need to punish ourselves.

But this gift of peace also means we can face death with confidence. Woody Allen once famously quipped, 'I'm not afraid of death. I just don't want to be there when it happens.' While we smile at the quip, the saying is hugely ambivalent. Our natural human response is to shrink from the prospect of dying. So it is only the resurrection of Jesus and our faith in him that enables us to face our end with tranquillity in the full knowledge that he will meet us at the end of this brief dark tunnel to escort us to our true eternal home



in the Father's house.

The second gift of the risen Jesus is the gift of his presence. After commissioning these first followers to reproduce his mission in the world he breathed on them and said 'Receive the Holy Spirit'. This is a prophetic sign or a pledge of the full gift to come on the Day of Pentecost but the text is very evocative because this gift is designed to make people new from the inside out. Using the same word from the creation narrative when God breathed into the nostrils of the creature he had made out of the dust and he became a living being, in this new era Jesus, the risen Son of God, breathes new life into his disciples. They have not only been forgiven, but they have become new people with a new task and a new life. Further,

since he is the Holy Spirit he will work inside them to complete the transformation of their characters into the likeness of Christ.

Finally, the really good news is that Jesus gives the gift of his presence once and for all to all his friends. In the Old Testament the Spirit was only given to particular people for particular tasks in particular seasons, but now he will live with us and be in us if we belong to Jesus. In human life other friends might be fickle and desert us, but in this new resurrection age this divine indwelling friend continues to comfort, encourage, advise, teach, defend and pray for us. This ever-present friend will never let us down.

May I therefore ask whether we all know the reality of these two Pentecost gifts? Do we know the real experience of the peace of Christ and the transforming presence of his Holy Spirit? If you don't, why not take the simple step to receive these gifts by renewing your trust in the one who gave his life to give you his all. Turning to Christ as my confirmation candidates did unlocks all the gifts the risen Jesus delights to give to his people.

## Anglicare Winter Appeal



This winter there are many disadvantaged families in desperate need throughout our communities. Although we know that with God they are never alone in those dark times, struggling families often feel completely isolated and overwhelmed. Anglicare is raising money to help meet those growing and urgent needs through our local Survive and Thrive Community Centres. These centres are critically underfunded as they receive little to no government support. It is only through the generosity of

our supporters that we can keep them running and give the gift of hope to our most vulnerable.

We have created a video about the Community Centres and the lives that are being transformed there. You can watch the video and find out more about the Community Centres and the families who find renewed hope there at <http://bit.ly/2qqmvm0>. You can also contact Kate Jennings (Donor Engagement Manager) on 6278 8400 if you would like more information or to give a gift of hope.



*creating*  
**safe ministries**

**Our Diocese is committed to holistic Safe Church Ministry. This means: we commit to our pastoral, duty of care, legal and insurance obligations; with the goal that all ministries are spiritually, emotionally and physically safe; based on the premise that Diocesan parishes and ministries should be person-valuing and respectful places free from abuse and harm, for ministry to God's glory.**

The Creating Safe Ministries program assists us to fulfil this commitment. Details of these can be found here: [www.anglicancg.org.au/pages/safe-communities-training-and-workshops.html](http://www.anglicancg.org.au/pages/safe-communities-training-and-workshops.html)

Soon the Diocese will have access to an *Online Version* of the Creating Safe Ministries workshop through OpenLearning. Once the Online Course is ready to go, the Safe Communities Unit will be in contact with all parishes to give them information on how to access the course.

**Reporting Abuse Hotline: 1800 070 511**

AnglicanNews is a magazine for the Anglican community in Canberra and Goulburn.

Editor: Alison Payne  
 Address: GPO Box 1981, Canberra, ACT 2601  
 Phone: 02 6245 7154 Email: [alison.payne@anglicands.org.au](mailto:alison.payne@anglicands.org.au)  
 Advertising: enquiries to the editor. ISSN 2207-6484

## Celebrating 25 Years of Excellence in Student Accommodation



2017 marks the 25th anniversary of St Martin's College. The college is a co-operative ministry of the Dioceses of Canberra Goulburn and Riverina. Historically the bequest that enabled the establishment of the college in 1992 was given to the Diocese of the Riverina for ministry with young people. After discussions it was decided that building an Anglican residential College on CSU's Wagga Wagga campus would be of great benefit to young Australians from rural areas moving away from home for the first time to study at University. However, the College is 'just over the border' of Riverina Diocese – by about 200m – and lies in the Diocese of Canberra Goulburn. As a result it became a joint ministry of the two Dioceses.

A Silver Anniversary dinner was held in May and was a wonderful celebration of the life and ministry of the St Martin's College. The evening included the presentation of a banner by current students. The design and creation of the banner was co-ordinated by current student

Francesca Smith. Entertainment for the evening was provided by musicians, Shona Stevenson, Catriona Stevenson and Lisa Berry, supported by Justin Hunt reading from his newly published book, 'A Tail to Remember'.

It was a privilege to welcome Emeritus Professor Ross Chambers back to Wagga campus as the guest speaker for the dinner. Ross was one of the people involved in the creation of the College and also served as the inaugural CSU Board representative for almost 20 years. Ross had guests enthralled with his reminiscences about the College and its partnership with the university. Ross joined with the Rev'd Glenn Maytum (the first Head of College) to cut the anniversary cake which was baked and decorated by current students Tanya Levick and Emma Camilleri.

Current Head of College Rev'd Jenny Willsher made presentations to the Diocese of Riverina, the Diocese of Canberra Goulburn, Miriam Dayhew Head of Charles Sturt University's Wagga Wagga Campus and current Board members, in appreciation of their generosity of their time and their ongoing support of St Martin's College.

Guests received a thumb drive containing the revised History of the College. The dinner saw the launch of FoSM (the Friends of

St Martin's), a support group encouraging Alumni and others to pray for the college, mentor students, support the college financially, and to gather for a 'friends' dinner each year. A College prayer written by Board members Frances Tsoukalidis and Bill Barwick was also written for the dinner. The College Board also launched the 25th Anniversary fundraiser 'Martin's Cloak', the aim of which is to raise \$25,000 in order to provide a full accommodation scholarship each year to a first-year student in financial need. Information about each of these can be found on the St Martin's College website [www.stmartinscollege.org](http://www.stmartinscollege.org).

The evening provided the opportunity to say some farewells to Head of College, Rev'd Jenny Willsher, who is leaving the college at the end of June, after 11 and a half years at St Martin's

College, to take up a new ministry as rector of the Parish of Woden. Head of CSU's Wagga campus, Miriam Dayhew, presented the College with a crystal vase as an anniversary gift, but also took the opportunity to make presentations from herself and from the Vice Chancellor, Professor Andy Vann, thanking Jenny for her many contributions to Charles Sturt University. Dr Bill Anscombe, President of the College Board, presented Jenny with half a coat as a farewell gift! In doing so he reminded guests of the story of St Martin presenting half his cloak to a beggar. Why half a cloak? That was the half he owned as the other half belonged to the Roman Army. In doing so Martin gave all he had to the beggar. Bill said this was a reminder that as Head of College Jenny had given her all to her ministry as Head of College.



Reverend Jenny Willsher, centre, with family members.

## Launch of Anglicare Community Centre in Gordon Responds to Local Needs



Residents in and around the Canberra suburb of Gordon can look forward to a greater level of community support with the launch of the Gordon Community Centre. Saturday 3 June marked the official launch of the centre, which is a partnership between Anglicare and the Lanyon Valley Anglican Church. Community members, staff, volun-

teers and local politicians gathered to mark the occasion and celebrate what this new centre will mean for the community.

'We have already begun running activities here,' says Lanyon Valley rector, Jonathan Holt. 'We have a group that meets here to help people who are going through the trauma of divorce. We also have a food pantry here

## Clergy Moves

The Induction for the Reverend Jenny Willsher as Rector of the Parish of Woden will be held on Tuesday 18 July 2017 at St Alban's Woden at 6.00pm led by Bishop Trevor Edwards. All Welcome.

to help families who might need help with groceries, particularly during the cold and financially challenging winter months.'

Anglicare CEO, Jeremy Halcrow, sees the community centre launch as an important step in meeting the needs of families in Canberra. 'In Anglicare's recent Rental Affordability Snapshot, we found the housing prices – often the biggest household cost – are at catastrophically unaffordable levels for the most vulnerable families. That's why we're so excited to launch a community centre like this to extend much

needed help and support to families who are struggling.'

The new centre is the first of its kind that Anglicare has opened in the south of Canberra. It is designed to meet critical community needs such as emergency food support, and to also offer programs to build family relationships, help young children become school ready and move people out of a cycle of need.

For more information visit [www.anglicare.com.au](http://www.anglicare.com.au) or call Amy Lanham on 6248 8410 or 0437 321 451.

EFAC Canberra & Goulburn presents

# THE PREACHING SEMINARS

## The Preaching Seminars Announces Topics for This Year

A brand new initiative, The Preaching Seminars, will kick off this year with three seminars selected. Those who gave early indication that they were planning to attend were invited to vote on five options, with the top three being presented.

This year The Preaching Seminars will see the topics of Pub-

lic Theology, the Gospel and the Prayer Book and TED talks covered by three of our own local, regular preachers. 'Many of us regular preachers have things we have learned and can share with others,' said Jonathan Holt, one of the presenters for the day. 'Preaching is a craft that takes time to learn. One way we learn

is by watching and listening to those who are at work on the craft week by week.'

The Preaching Seminars is sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship in the Anglican Communion (EFAC), and anyone is welcome to attend, whether you preach regularly or occasionally. Setting aside a Saturday in July

to think about your preaching is a good thing to do. The local branch of EFAC is looking to make this a regular event for preachers, by preachers. For more information visit the website (<http://jonathan6412.wixsite.com/preachingseminars>).

## Holy Land Workshop



Following on from a motion passed at our Synod in 2015, which encouraged us to become more aware of the situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories, a short Workshop was held recently hosted by St Saviour's Cathedral Goulburn. The particular focus for this event was *Behind the News: Palestinian Christians and Theology*. A presentation was given by Helen Rainger and then participants divided into smaller groups to engage with certain texts.

One group, led by Fred Rainger, took a closer look at the changing map and geographical boundaries. Other groups looked at the *Kairos* Document from 2009 where Palestinian Christian leaders have set out their call for justice, and a letter from an Ecumenical Accompanier who had witnessed certain events in East Jerusalem. The work of the Palestine Israel Ecumenical Network ([www.pien.org.au](http://www.pien.org.au)) was also highlighted.

Helen and Fred Rainger, from the Cathedral parish, had travelled to Palestine and Israel in March to attend the 10th International Sabeel conference, held in Bethlehem and Nazareth. Sabeel is an organisation formed to promote an understanding of Palestinian Theology.

About 40 people attended the evening. Another such Workshop is being held on **Friday 25th August** this time hosted by St Paul's Manuka, 6-7pm, followed by refreshments. All welcome.

by Helen Rainger



### Canberra Men's Christian Convention

In the beginning, God brought order out of nothing.

In the beginning, God created Adam out of the dust.

But what does that mean for our lives today? What does it mean to be a man? What does it mean to be made in the image of God?

Genesis 1-3 are the opening chapters of the

Bible and the foundation of the Christian faith. They will transform the way you think about this world and your fellow humans.

Join men from all over our region to explore issues like marriage, sex & meaning.

**When:** Saturday, 5 August 8:45-4:30pm

**Location:** CIT Campus Bruce



### Canberra Women's Christian Convention

Join us for a day filled with worship, prayer, friendship and fun as we open God's Word and trust that He will transform us by His Spirit. We welcome women of all ages as we gather to grow in our love for each other and our heavenly Father.

**DO YOU PRAY?**

The familiar words of

the Lord's Prayer are the words Jesus used to revolutionise the prayer lives of his closest friends. Set aside a day to gather with your sisters to worship, pray and grow.

**When:** Saturday, 21 October 8:30am-4pm

**Location:** Canberra Girls Grammar School

**The theme for this year's End of Financial Year Appeal comes from the parable of the mustard seed in Matthew 13.**

This year we are celebrating the many ways in which the work of our partners overseas is like the mustard seed growing into something bigger than its beginnings.

Your donation to our End of Financial Year Appeal will help us to continue to sow new seeds.

**DONATE:** 1800 249 880 or [anglicanoverseasaid.org.au](http://anglicanoverseasaid.org.au)

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