

GFS Australia
Newsletter - Issue 1

February, 2018

SEEK
justice



LOVE
mercy



WALK
humbly
with
your
God



 *Micah 6:8*



Dear GFS member,

A very warm welcome to you all as you read our first newsletter for this period. I hope you will continue to **Seek** to find all sorts of news and ideas through this publication. I trust there may be something you can **Love** about each edition and all will contribute in whatever your **Walk** is with God.

In this edition we hope to introduce you to the wonderful members who have generously offered themselves to serve GFS as your National Team. I would like to recap a little of the theme I have chosen for the next three years. There will be a Lenten message with some resources we hope will be useful for your upcoming ministry and of course prayer points to focus on.

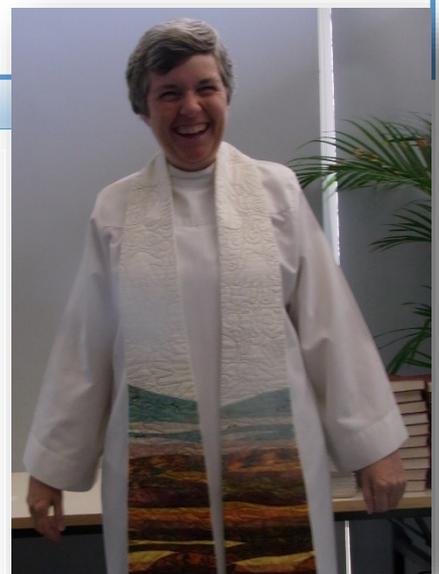
For anyone I haven't had the pleasure of meeting yet, and I did manage to meet a couple at our latest Council, I am Cheryl Selvage. I have been a dedicated member of GFS ever since I was invited by our local parish priest to consider leading a GFS group, as he wanted something good for his four daughters to be involved in. I was quickly welcomed to the GFS family and have been heavily involved in all levels of GFS from branch to international ever since. My super supportive husband, Ross has been there all along and I have had the joy of our daughter, Jemma, sharing many GFS adventures with me.

Ross and I met early in high school and have been together for well over 40 years and married for many of them. We live on acreage outside of Brisbane, Queensland and share our home with a menagerie of both domestic and wild native animals. Jemma, now graduated as a paramedic and nurse has left home but for the moment still lives in Brisbane. She currently works as a paediatric oncology nurse at our state Children's Hospital. Ross and I have run a business in transport for the past 35 years and I am currently ministering as the Pastoral Care Coordinator for the PA Hospital as well as having the honour of being the Anglican Brisbane Diocesan Hospital Ministries Coordinator. Enough of us for now. Enjoy reading my first GFS Australian newsletter to everyone!

In GFS love, *Cheryl*

We have just heard the good news!

We send our love and prayers to our National Chaplain—the Venerable Canon Sonia Roulston on her appointment as an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Newcastle. The service of Episcopal Ordination will take place in the Cathedral Church of Christ the King, Newcastle at 6pm on Ascension Day (10 May).



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Introducing the new GFS National Executive L-R: Venerable Canon Sonia Roulston, Chaplain (Newcastle) ; Canon Cheryl Selvage, National President (Brisbane); Julie Smith, Secretary (Tasmania); Leanne Kapetanovski Ordinary Member (Melbourne); Noeleen Stewart, Treasurer (Perth); Lyn Vaak, Vice President (Sydney); Val Gribble, Ordinary Member (Rockhampton) and (absent) Abuok Majok, Junior Delegate (Gippsland).

We ask for your constant prayers for our new group of GFS members serving on the National Executive.

Reverend Cheryl Selvage—President

Hails from sunny Brisbane, has served as our Chaplain and is a long time supporter of PNG and veteran of many trips to be part of their training sessions.

Email: olytrans2@hotmail.com

Julie Smith—Secretary

From way down south—been a member since she was 8 years old, Chairman of GFS in Tasmania for a while now and about to visit GFS in Melanesia again.

Email: julie679233@gmail.com

Abuok Majok—Junior Delegate

Our fine young representative in Perth to the World Council and about to start a nursing career - another role suited for her caring nature.

Email: 2015abuok@gmail.com

Lay Canon Val Gribble—Ordinary Member

Serving in so many ways—from World President to GFS member, promoting GFS in PNG and a friend to so many throughout the world.

Email: valgribble1@bigpond.com

Lyn Vaak—Vice President

Took on the role of Chairman of GFS in Sydney after their restructuring several years ago. Long time member and organiser of their many wonderful programs.

Email: l.vaak93@gmail.com

Noeleen Stewart - Treasurer

From way out west in Perth, life and soul of GFS as she promotes GFS working as their field worker and lover of their GFS Townsend Lodge.

Email: noeleen.stewart1@bigpond.com

Venerable Canon Sonia Roulston

Our very own soon to be Bishop! From representing GFS as a junior delegate to promoting GFS in many new ways in Newcastle—land of floods and fire.

Email: soniaroulston@bigpond.com

Leanne Kapetanovski

A Melbourne GFS'er, once a Junior Delegate, now treasurer and secretary for Melbourne and enthusiastic worker overseeing the Pat Franklin Fund.

Email: gfsmelbourne@hotmail.com

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Exploring Cheryl's Theme

SEEK, LOVE, WALK WITH YOUR GOD Micah 6:8

You may think my selection of an Old Testament verse as unusual but I have to share with you that it is the one which kept coming back to me as I prayed to God for guidance for my leadership of GFS Australia. Those who know me well will know I place a great deal of emphasis on God's guidance in all decisions. In fact you will probably become tired and possibly even frustrated with me as I ask that we all take a breath and pray before we act. This is the invitation that was given, that I now offer you.

Many will also know this process of prayer and guidance tested me, as I waited for God's direction when it came to who would join me in this team. Maybe here in lies some of the answer as to why we might have been directed back to this verse, maybe we need to return to basics if we are to follow God's call for us in GFS into the future. I do not see this as a step backwards but rather a call to ensure we focus on what we have done so well and has allowed us to continue for so long. We in GFS have such a wonderfully rich history of serving God through bearing one another's burdens.



I see a direct connection in our current concerns with those of the Church we indeed are connected to. A connection I will encourage you to reconnect with and to strengthen. We have so much to offer our churches as they begin to review and rebuild. We have all just experienced the exposure of much of the most horrible of the church's activities. It has certainly shocked many but unfortunately only confirmed what many have known for a long time. It is time again to seek Justice.

I also see it is time to Love mercy. Now is not a time for us to remind others that we have acted prudently but rather to offer and encourage, maybe even trying again in places where in the past connections have not flourished. I believe so often we use language to defeat ourselves. "We tried this before, it won't work." Now you're invited to a language that speaks to the positivity of God's great Love for us. Let us hear that language, "We could give that a go."



Finally we are called to walk humbly with our God. We as GFS have been walking this journey for such a long time and I believe God will continue to bless us and our service if we continue to breath, pray, offer our decisions to God, to seek Justice, To Love Mercy and thus walk humbly with our God.



The invitation is now before you and me. God, the same God who invited Mary Elizabeth Townsend all those years ago, invites each of us to continue that walk together.

Cheryl

Lenten thought...

If you are giving up something for Lent, what is God asking you to replace it with—more time spent listening to Him, more of loving others, more time for prayer, more time to seek His will, more time to walk humbly with him?

Chaplain's Chat ...

Micah 6:6-8

"With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of

rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? "He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"

From Matthew 6:1-21

"...Whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do that they may be praised by others. ... And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at street corners, so that they may be seen by others. ... And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. ... Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth ... but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven ... For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."



Dear friends,

It is Ash Wednesday as I write this reflection. I have spent the morning in one of our country parishes discussing with them their mission and ministry, and have just come back to the office where I have been told that I have a smudged forehead. It took me a moment to remember that it was the Ash used at this morning's worship!

As this ash was applied to our foreheads the words used were: *"Remember that you are but dust and to dust you shall return"*.

The two passages above, and these words each remind us that we are not to think too much of ourselves, but rather to live our lives focussed on God's call to us to be His people.

In the Old Testament Micah asked, "What does the Lord require?" His answer was succinct: "Do justice, love kindness, walk humbly with God".

In her President's theme Cheryl has condensed this to three words: **"Seek, Love, Walk (with God)"**.

As we begin the Lenten season the sign of the ash reminds us of the call to humble faithfulness and repentance, with the Matthew 6 reading set for today (above) echoing Micah's call to seek, love and walk humbly with God. This is what the people of the Parish I met with this morning were discussing. We are discussing the same things at a GFS National level, and I have no doubt it is being discussed locally in many places as well. How will we respond to God's call to us to be a church for others, not just ourselves ... to be outward focussed in our life, and to be people who are always being invitational? And how will we each take our parts as members of the family of GFS as we strive to Seek, Love and Walk with God and others into the future God has before us at this time?

And for you, as we begin another Lenten season, how will you be seeking, loving, and walking?

Every blessing,

Sonia



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Prayer Needs

We join with our friends in Brisbane as they mourn the loss of **Lady Jan Proctor** and celebrate her life and time given to GFS both nationally and within her diocese.

At the end of December, our dear friend in Sydney, **Ev Beckenham** passed on to be with her beloved Lord. Ev was much loved by all in GFS especially through her time as National Chairman from 1981—1984 and as Sydney Chairman following this—a reluctant but much loved leader and friend.

We remember the family, formerly from Gippsland, Amber and Chris Caplin as they mourn the loss of their daughter, **Aliyana** in an accident.

We are excited to see God using talents as Newcastle Diocese welcomes the appointment to Assistant Bishop of our wonderful Chaplain, **Venerable Canon Sonia Roulston**. We are overjoyed with this appointment and send our prayers as she prepares for Episcopal Ordination in May (Ascension Day).

Please pray for our **new Executive** as they look to the future and seek new ways for GFS to become relevant and vibrant within their communities.

Lenten study ideas



Walking Humbly with God

Cheryl's suggestion

I have a lenten Study, published a couple of years ago, entitled *Walking Humbly with God*." Written by Dr Timothy Gaden (An Anglican Priest) & published by Grassroots Resources Australia - PO Box 484 Brighton SA 5048 E:

info@grassroots.com.au

(try googling Grassroots Resources Australia, under "study books" you will find a big range (including the above mentioned) and they are reasonably priced at about \$10.



Julie's suggestion

fortomorrow.org.au/lent

You will find a set of pictures and prayers—one for each week of Lent. The pictures are by an Australian artist and includes a prayer and a reflection for each week. (I particularly like the picture that suggests 'walking humbly'.

Brisbane GFS and many friends around Australia will remember Lady Jan Proctor who passed away sadly on 23rd January 2018.



Jan was a GFS member for many years before she was married and then with her husband, Sir Roderick, they opened their home for many Diocesan and Provincial activities and meetings. From 1981—1986 Jan was our Brisbane Leader Development officer and after that our Northside District Leader. Jan was also editor of GFS Notes for a time and assisted Lou White with the CB's

(Correspondence Branch) Newsletter "Torch". Jan became GFS Australian Literature Distribution Secretary when Ev Beckenham was Chairman. Her friendship with Eve continued until Ev died on 30th December. Then Jan left us too on 23rd January. We shall miss them both.

We mourn with Sydney GFS as they remember Ev Beckenham who passed away on December 30th 2017.

Evelyn's first involvement with G.F.S. was in 1958 as a helper at a new branch of GFS at St Pauls' Gynea and led to 17 years of service in the Branch as Leader-in-Charge. In 1980 she was elected as Australian Vice Chairman for 3 years, served as Australian Chairman and 3 years as Immediate Past Chairman. In her role as Australian Chairman, Ev travelled great distances to visit and encourage G.F.S. branches throughout Australia. She attended 5 World Councils. She was Sydney Chairman for 10 years from 1997 and was instrumental in establishing a house for homeless girls. In 1998 she was awarded an Order of Australia for her work with GFS. Ev, along with her constant companion, Norm, will be remembered for her loving Christian way, using her talents to help others.



Sydney GFS invite others to join them at Dawn Fergusons' home on Saturday 5th May from 2—5 to remember our dear Evelyn.

RSVP to Tania taniabrown.gfs@gmail.com.

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New contact details for Rockhampton GFS

Pam Guy and Jacqui Keily are having a rest from the roles of Co-ordinator and Secretary within their diocese. While they are searching for the way forward, Val Gribble has offered to take on the role of Coordinator for the diocese until June. Her contact details are

32 Angela Road, Rockyview, Qld 4701

Valgribble1@bigpond.com

Gippsland GFS and Kidsplus News

Reverend Jenny Ramage was commissioned as the GFS Chaplain on September, 23rd. We were delighted to meet Jenny at the Australian Council meeting and share worship and GFS life with her.

GFS and Kidsplus is in recess in Gippsland while they do an audit of their policies as are all Children’s groups within the diocese.

We pray for a quick resolution of this so that the very worthwhile activities may once again commence and provide a vital ministry to all those children and adults.



Scenes from Kurri Kurri murals and the firing of the Canon at Fort Scritchley, Newcastle
From Australian Council outings



Seek

We are always seeking—seeking God’s discernment for our way forward.

One of the questions we asked during our Australian Council meeting was how do we best fit in a national meeting and a midterm meeting—how long should each be? Where and when do we meet?

And so we are inviting you to make comments to be forwarded to the National Executive who have been charged with continuing these discussions and bringing them before the whole Australian membership.

Please send your diocesan comments by May 30th.

VISION

What is our main focus for GFS Australia as we move forward towards 2020 and beyond? Where do we want to be in the year 2030?

This is one of the questions discussed in the open spaces forum from Australian Council.

How relevant is our current vision in today’s changing GFS world? WE have more Townsend groups than ever and fewer children’s groups.

If you would like to be part of an online (via email) discussion group, please email to Cheryl by the end of February so that a group can begin the process of working on a more appropriate wording of our Vision and mission .

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Australian Council 2018

The Opening service was held at the Kurri Kurri TAFE—our venue, and led by our Chaplain Sonia, who reminded us of our one body although we are many parts in many different ways.

Below—Opening and closing dinners Victorian folk and some of the Queenslanders.



We enjoyed different reflective early morning worship services. This one was led by Gippsland’s Chaplain Jenny as she had each banner laying prostrate before the altar.



We had workshops on topics ranging from Prayer and Spirituality, Children’s ministry today, Leadership training, craft, Townsend ministry, Messy church and Mainly Music, Pastoral care including some time spent hearing about Domestic Violence.



Sergeant Debra Rowe was an inspiring guest speaker talking about her Christian walk that led her into the police force and how she is making a difference to lives that need to hear about God.

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Presentation to Val as World President

Each diocese contributed a square which Sandra stitched into this magnificent quilt presented to Val to recognise her time as World President and our appreciation of her time serving us all.



Open Spaces

We were invited to participate in an open space forum where we could pose questions that were of concern to us about the future of GFS. Where did we see ourselves in 10 years and what might we need to do before we reach that point?

We were led through into groups to discuss this with others. Out of this we have now arranged the ideas and discussions into 3 main areas and will be working on this through the National Executive.

One of the first questions is about our vision and purpose, is it still reflecting who and what we are and want to achieve.



Commissioning of the new executive

Took place in the beautiful Cathedral Church of Christ the King, Newcastle. We were welcomed by Dean Katherine who also had GFS connections.



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How to contact your National Executive



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Vice President

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Treasurer

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Junior Delegate

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Executive Members

Val Gribble ML

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Leanne Kapetanovski

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Let's pray ...

Do justice, love kindness

Our worship has not ended—

It has only just begun!

For God is with us every moment of every day!

Go then, and offer the worship God desires



To do justice,

To love kindness,

And to walk humbly with God, every step along the way.

(Nick Fawcett, England)

He has shown you, O mortal, what is good.

And what does the LORD require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

Renewal of Membership



Fees are due by May, 2018

Please send your forms and money to your diocesan secretary/ treasurers.