

President's Advent Message

Yes it's that time again! It seems little time since I was with many of you in Newcastle at the very beginning of the year. How time flies at one level, and yet as we take just a brief moment out of our hectic lives to reflect on all that has happened in less than a year we know that God is very active in our worlds. So I invite you to stop, even just for a moment, to still your self, your mind and your heart (well don't still that too much!) and just sit where ever you are reading this and allow God to be fully present with you. No, No! Stop, actually stop and close your eyes if you have to, take the moment God demands of you.

Because this is what Christmas is about, "God With Us. " I am reminded of that great Advent Hymn, "O Come, O Come Emmanuel, " based on the seven 'O's or antiphons, which were sung before and after the 'Magnificat' or 'The Canticle of Mary' at Vespers in the week before Christmas. The 'O' suggests a longing for the coming of Christ. I hope this year there is time in your life to recognise the longing for Christ. For me and my family it will involve countless Christmas services and celebrations, Christmas Carolling in wards of hospitals and great Cathedrals, Nativity scene setting in offices, public spaces and our own home. Shared time with family and friends gathering to exchange gifts, stories of the year, memories of the past and future hopes. May your Christmas be filled with all the richness and tradition that fills our hearts with Love and Peace and Hope for a future with our God.

"Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel is come to thee. O Israel."

Love and prayers,

Cheryl

A Tribute to our dear Pat Byron

Early on Sunday morning, 2nd September, 2018, the GFS Family received news that our long-time member and friend Pat Byron had died. Pat was 79 and had been living at Wauchope for some years, the last few in care as she succumbed to dementia. In the GFS family she will be well remembered for her lively faith, sharp mind, and engaging personality. Pat exercised leadership in GFS at branch, diocesan and national level over many years, as well as participating in world councils over many years. She was well-loved and deeply respected by all who knew her.

Val Gribble summed up the thoughts of many when she wrote, "Such sad news. She was a special friend to me for so long and so encouraging and her presence on National Council in many roles will always be a special memory to me."

Bishop Sonia Roulston remembers "I knew that Pat was very committed to her faith and to sharing that with others. Away with friends once I found that one of them had begun her working life in the accounts department at AMP. When I asked if she knew Pat Byron she replied enthusiastically of this leading woman in that organisation – one of their first female executives, and said, "We all [the young women starting out] wanted to be like Pat Byron". Perhaps there are many more people whom Pat struck in such a way than she will ever know! "



From our Chaplain, Bishop Sonia

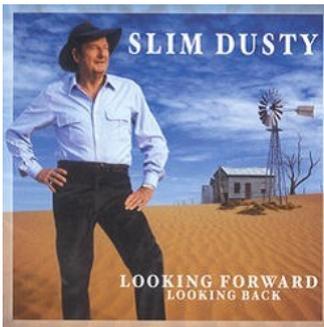
Dear sisters and brothers,

As I write this it is with the realisation that the end of the year is now rushing up on us! Perhaps like me you are wondering what has happened to the last few months!

As we come to the end of the year there is much to reflect on – the work and ministry of the year past; the life of GFS groups – be they children’s groups, or Townsend group, or other; the gifts and the sorrows of this year now passing; and our reflections on how God has been present with us on this.

As we come to the end of our calendar year, however, the church takes us into a new year – and into a season of preparation and reflection. Advent calls us, in all this craziness, to make time for restoration and preparation in our spiritual lives. This is actually an important balance to the frenetic pace of the rest of our lives. For without this space to prepare to receive Christ we run the risk of the great celebration of Christmas rushing by a sigh that says, “Thank goodness that’s all over for another year.”

Advent is a season that calls us to look forwards, backwards and to the present day. The words of Slim Dusty’s song are good words for Advent:



*Looking forward, looking back
I've come a long way down the track
Got a long way left to go
Making songs, from what I know*

*Making sense of what I've seen
All the love we've had between
You and I, along the track
Looking forward, looking back*

In Advent we are reminded that we too have a long way to go, with the Bible readings at the beginning of the season looking to God’s future, a time when Christ shall come again.

As the season moves on, we look to the birth of Christ – to the great promises of the past being fulfilled in the coming Jesus the baby, and the acceptance of Mary to be part of this great plan. I imagine that it might take Mary some time to make sense of all that she has seen!

Dusty’s words, “All the love we’ve had between, you and I along the track”, remind us that in between these two great comings of Christ is the truth of Christ present with us daily.

How is it that we see God’s presence through his love in our daily lives?

How is it that others share that presence with us?

How is it that we share that presence with others?

And how is it that Christ comes to us unexpectedly, stirring up our settled lives as he calls us to follow him and make him known today?

Advent is a season of reflection and preparation giving us space, so that we might be ready to receive Christ as he comes to us at Christmas, in the future, and today. May Christ’s gracious and loving presence fill your Advent and Christmas celebrations, and lead you into your new day with him!

Bishop Sonia



¹ Sung by Slim Dusty. From the album: "Looking Forward, Looking Back". Songwriters/Composers: Don Walker;

*Celebrating 50 Years of the
Dedication of St Philip Mount
Waverley, Victoria*



During 2018 the parish of St Philip Mount Waverley has been celebrating 50 years of being at the Catherine Avenue site.

GFS and CEBS ran at this parish for a number of years, GFS leaders included; Nan Watson (Branch Leader 1969 – 1974), Margaret Myers, Gail Chugg, Lyn Calvert (Branch Leader 1977 -1995) Jeanette Tait, Liz Shiels nee Myers (Junior delegate 1984 in Japan) and Leanne Kapetanovski (Junior Delegate 1996 in England), (CEBS) Doug Calvert (Branch Governor) and Doug Myers (including other leaders) before they both folded in the 1990's.



As part of the parish celebrations, a reunion was held for past members of GFS and CEBS.

Many written greetings were received from past members and around 30 people joined us for an afternoon of reminiscing, joining in a variety of games (as the CEBS members used to play during their meeting times) and when it came time for speeches, we said the GFS Motto, CEBS Rule of Life and the GFS and CEBS prayers.

Leanne and Doug M. talked about the history of both societies in the parish and they were both able to discuss how GFS and CEBS are still active in the Melbourne diocese today.

It was wonderful hearing of everyone's memories of their time in GFS and CEBS and the memorabilia display prompted more stories to be shared.



In 2019 it will be 60 years since GFS and CEBS started in the parish and it is hoped to have a bigger reunion at that time.

Thank you Leanne for your report of this weekend.

Jeanette Tait and Doug Calvert cutting the celebration cake.

GFS AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

Seek Love Walk

KidsPlus+™ Southern Beaches, Tasmania

Number of Leaders: 5-6 + 3 ladies who help with catering

Number of kids that have attended KidsPlus+ in 2018: 31

Regular weekly attendees: 15

KidsPlus+™ has allowed interaction with many kids from non-church backgrounds. Of the 31 kids that are on the KidsPlus+™ books, 14 do not attend church or come from Christian families. Of our regular attendees, 5 do not come from Christian homes and have no other church connections. One family has begun to interact closely with Southern Beaches Anglican as a result of KidsPlus+™, one student from KidsPlus+™ has visited Southern Beaches Anglican services, and one pupil from the mentoring program at the school has attended KidsPlus+™.

The Principal of Dodges Ferry Primary School speaks very positively about the presence of KidsPlus+™, and as leaders we have made strong connections with some of the staff at the school. Whilst we have faced opposition from some individuals, and some students have been prevented from coming because we are an overtly Christian program, we currently have full school support.

KidsPlus+™ commenced for the last two weeks of Term 2, with our first full term of meetings in Term 3. Teaching for the term was based on John 3:16, all attendees memorized this verse as we constructed the verse word by word in craft time; and many heard the gospel for the first time. In Term 4 teachings were based on Christmas with preparations for our very own KidsPlus+™ Christmas nativity.

Our students are a very energetic bunch, and behaviour management has been our primary issue, with a high proportion of energetic boys in attendance. Our weekly gatherings consist of snacks, games and teaching time through story, video, skits and small group discussions.

Tegan and Joel Gillie



From South Australia

GFS SA held our World Day of Prayer service on the 3rd of November. While the date was later than usual, we were very pleased to welcome around 15 GFS friends to the service. Lunch followed at a nearby venue, where we enjoyed a great time of fellowship and catching up with each other. It was also wonderful to confirm that GFS has informed much of the Parish Ministry of those who may no longer be directly involved in GFS, so the links are very much appreciated.

In 2019 GFS in South Australia will celebrate 140 years of ministry to Australian women. We look forward to sharing this celebration.



Seek Love Walk

From Brisbane

BRISBANE DIOCESE – LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Congratulations to Mrs Lesley Gee who received Life Membership of GFS in Brisbane Diocese at the World Day of Prayer Service this year.

Congratulations to Suzanne Claire as she received her 21 year star—well done on a great contribution to GFS. (as pictured)

And pictured below—an excited mob gathered for the Brisbane end of year Christmas get together on Saturday, 8th December.

Gerard, Chris, Louis, Cheryl, Margaret, (left) and Suzanne, Chris at back. Cheryl and Kate (seated)



From Ballarat

We celebrated our **World Day of Prayer** on St Michael and All Angels day with a Service at Holy Trinity Church in Sebastopol. Our Chaplain, Fr Chris Keast celebrated with Howard Terrill on the organ and members participating with readings and intercessions. Afterwards we all gathered around a very large table and enjoyed much fellowship and food—a very special celebration!

Our Christmas Theatre Luncheon on Monday 26th November

43 GFS Townsend personnel enjoyed this end of year occasion. We saw the film, “The Nutcracker and the 4 Realms” with our honorary men enjoying “The Old Man and the Gun”. Everyone enjoyed a high tea luncheon afterwards. Our Chaplain, Fr Chris, visited and handed out gifts which everyone had brought to exchange. A Rug raffle was drawn and a collection taken for Anglicare raising approximately \$250. Christmas music was enjoyed by us all. Chairman Wendy Veal handled proceedings and thanked members who had provided a huge amount of hand made rugs, twiddle muffs, children’s warm clothes and prem baby clothes during the year. Marian and Ros were thanked for visiting and handing out these items. Everyone was wished a happy, holy and safe Christmas. President Wendy and Secretary Nathalie visited members in residential care with Christmas cards and posies.

Pictured—younger Townsend members at the Christmas Theatre



From North Queensland



Reverend Janet Story was recognised for 40 years as a leader with a presentation of flowers to her at their Annual Meeting. Well done Janet, a fitting tribute to your dedication.

Bishop's Medal to a tireless GFS worker—Bishop Bill's admiration, respect and regard for Nancie was evident in his speech. "From time to time I award a Bishop's Medal for outstanding ministry over many years. Tonight it is with great joy that I award a medal to Mrs Nancie Irwin. Nancie, we thank you for your faith in action, your contribution to the spread of the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

A stained glass window to recognise GFS is to be installed in time in the Cathedral of ST James in Townsville—what a fitting tribute to the work of GFS and Kidzlink.

Kidzlink hosted a farewell and happy retirement for their retiring Bishop Bill and Robin Ray. The formalities began with a presentation to Bishop Bill and Robin of an engraved plaque and crystal Award to show appreciation for their sterling contribution in supporting and facilitating Kidzlink initiatives promoting children's ministry across the Diocese.

WE pray for Clare Reed following the death of her dearly loved mother, Sylvia Raymond. Sylvia Raymond supported the Ingham GFS Branch for many years with knitting and crocheted articles for their market stall.

From Newcastle



Exciting news!!

On Saturday 1 December The Rev'ds Nicole Baldwin, Jacqueline Drewe, Philip Morris and John Quilter were ordained to the priesthood at Christ Church Cathedral.

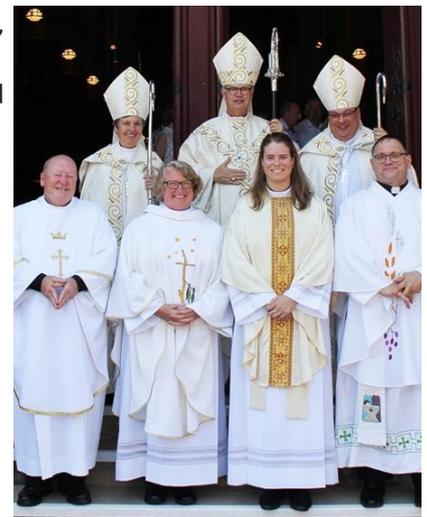
The Cathedral was full as family, friends, Bishops, clergy and visitors came together to celebrate what was a joy-filled occasion, marking the beginning of the priesthood journey for the ordinands. The Very Rev'd Dr Keith Joseph, Bishop-elect of North Queensland, was also in attendance.

Reverend Nicole Baldwin and Bishop Sonia as they prepare for the ordinations.

The Reverend Nicole Baldwin is to serve as the Priest in Charge of Branxton, Greta and Lochinvar.

The Reverend Jacqueline Drewe to serve as the Priest in Charge of Morpeth.

We send our love and prayers for Nicole as she begins this new part of God's calling on her life.



Seek Love Walk

From the Solomon Islands



Gail Orchard and Julie Smith were again privileged to be travelling to the Solomon Islands at the end of September to assist with training the trainers of GFS. We had around 40 participants, many who were present at our initial training. We had 4 days of training held at the Cathedral in Honiara. We covered topics from what is GFS?, Bible programs (which the participants wrote for one year with a further year to be completed by Julie next year), leadership, team leadership and the components of a program. Further sessions were added using local people to include domestic violence (a very big issue) and a savings program (designed to help women in rural areas without access to a bank).

We were able to meet with the Second Secretary of the Australian High Commission as a courtesy visit and spent the time speaking about the programs offered to young women by GFS which was well received. MU receive financial assistance through the programs coordinated by the Australian High Commission and it could be that GFS could be added to their programs for funding.

We were again fortunate to be in Honiara to take part in their World Day of Prayer service on Saturday morning at St Barnabas Cathedral. The GFS girls were a colourful rainbow of members as they paraded in their different t-shirts or dresses. We processed into church with banners from 5 parishes. The sung Eucharist was once again a delight with the singing Melanesian style an absolute highlight. There were 20 GFS girls admitted as members and 7 Townsend members admitted – such a joy to welcome new members to GFS. After the lunch (again lavishly spoiled with choices) we were entertained by many songs, dances and fun from all the branches. With the encouragement of PMU president, Pamela, Gail and I also sang a rousing rendition of Waltzing Matilda.

At the end of the week we had an opportunity to present certificates to those who had participated in the training (nearly 40 in all) and then were beautifully entertained at a lavish dinner – complete with dances and songs many of which had featured during our week together. We were touched by the many gifts presented to us although the true gift was to see the progress of GFS, to have been able to help in a small way to further their understanding and now leave to watch the future growth of GFS. There are many who are talented, passionate and capable within GFS and I pray for them to inspire and encourage many to become members and for GFS to reach the goal of autonomy and flourishing in the many dioceses. 2020 is earmarked as the date for GFS to become autonomous unit and we would hope to once again visit and offer more training during this time.

Many thanks for the prayers offered during our visit.



Orange Days of Awareness around Domestic Violence



Ideas for ORANGE DAYS - Re Domestic Violence Awareness

Many of you will be aware that at our last World Council we were encouraged to work with our groups to promote Domestic Violence Awareness and to take a time each month to take action.

So we thought we might start bringing ideas to help you, where ever your ministry is. Then you might be encouraged to send back photos of what's happening in your part of the world.

The Orange Ladies at the Princess Alexandra Hospital where Cheryl works are pictured above.

We have 16 days of Activism using these Orange Cut out wooden figures representing those whose lives are changed by domestic violence. Facts related to Domestic Violence incidents are offered as well as promoting points of help and contact within the community. Zonta is involved in all this. On the last day we as a staff are invited to wear Orange to show our support of awareness.

I was thinking these wooden stand up figures could be created by either a skilful parent or maybe an approach to a local Men's Shed. (we all saw what amazing work the Men Shed can do with Bp Sonia's Crozier!) Maybe then members of your group could be invited to paint them or collect interesting and useful facts to be displayed with them maybe at your church, or other public place with permission of course. Those with greater digital skills may wish to Instagram them out daily with messages of support, maybe this could even be used in conjunction with our newly created 365 days of GBV Prayer Booklet.

Prayers



Many thanks for the prayer request on the FaceBook page. (In the Mackay and Whitsundays) After the extreme heat, the destruction of the fires in the valley and along the range, came the gentle falling rain from the depression left by ex tropical cyclone Owen. We are hoping that there is no flood as this would wash fresh water and topsoil across the reef where the coral have just had the annual spawning to replenish the reef. We give thanks to God that, although there was loss of property and crops and sadly many native and farmed animals, all the humans, including the amazing emergency services, have survived. The rain cleared the air of the heavy smoke—a blessing for asthmatics.

May God bless all for your care and protection for so many of the communities facing "seasonal" weather.

Reverend Janet Story

From Sydney

Sydney branch at Berowra also celebrated 50 years. They held a 60's themed Birthday Party complete with all the fun and games. The leaders said, "We are thankful for the joy it is

to tell girls in and around Berowra about Jesus and for all the leasers who have served in this ministry over 50 years. We continue to pray that God will use GFS to bring many girls into His Kingdom."

Sydney Girls Camp—from October 2nd - 4th 25 girls and 12 leaders joined together to learn "How to Stand" how to stand tall as a Christian—through opposition, to be equipped by God, to have a Godly character and to watch and pray. With abseiling and other fun things, it was a great time together!

30 members joined together for the World Day of Prayer service at St Paul,s Emu Plains. They were joined for a service by their Chaplain, Reverend Tony Galea and our National Chaplain, Bishop Sonia who spoke about prayer. Afterwards they enjoyed lunch and of course lots of chatter amongst friends.

St Clair Anglican Kids Club had a lovely afternoon in September at Girly Fun Stuff - making crowns, Pom Pom sceptres, beading, making Hamantaschen cookies and learning about brave Queen Esther

Our Chairman Lyn Vaak has had to resign her position due to ill health. She is moving to Wangi Shores Retirement Village so that she will be closer to her sister. Lyn moved on the 13th November. We hope she will settle in quickly and enjoy her new home. We pray for improvement in her health and for her doctors as they treat her. We give thanks for her faithful service to GFS Sydney over so many years. At the last Board meeting the Executive presented Lyn with a Peace Lily plant and pot for her new balcony.

***How to contact executive members*****Reverend Cheryl Selvage (President)****olytrans2@hotmail.com****Julie Smith (Secretary)****julie679233@gmail.com****Noeleen Stewart (Treasurer)****noeleen.stewart1@bigpond.com****Rt. Reverend Sonia Roulston (Chaplain)****soniaroulston@bigpond.com****Val Gribble****valgribble1@bigpond.com****Leanne Kapetanovski****gfsmelbourne@hotmail.com****Lyn Vaak (Vice Chairman)****l.vaak93@gmail.com (Lyn has a new home address—contact****Tania Brown or Julie for details)****Abuok Majok (Junior Delegate)****2015abuok@gmail.com**

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GFS AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

Seek Love Walk

From Perth



Our Melbourne Cup lunch was a lovely afternoon, thanks to all who came it was great fun to share the afternoon with you all. Thanks to Kerry and Carole who helped to prepared the lunch and for Alex, Carole and Kerry for cleaning up.

The final morning tea on Tuesday 4th December was to farewell Raylene, a highly regarded friend of GFS who has worked tirelessly to transform the Lodge (and for an early Christmas Celebration).

Noeleen has been out and about learning new things, she writes .. "I've been very fortunate to have attended two fantastic events in recent weeks. The first was 'The Global Leaders Summit' wow it was a fantastic 2 days of inspirational speakers from around the world. Some great topics were covered, I'm looking forward to working on some of them in the future with GFS.

The second event was "Change the World" which was a wonderful day on Social Media and how NFP's can get the most out of it. Wonderful speakers inspired us, made us laugh, made us cry and gave us heaps of great ideas on using social media "for good!".

You are warmly invited .. to join your
National Executive and Brisbane GFS members
at the **Annual General Meeting**
Get Together

Saturday January 19th—January 20th,
Milton Brisbane



2019 St Francis College,

We invite everyone to come along for a wonderful social time and a time to consider our annual review through our meeting. As a bold move, we have realised that the Midterm conferences are no longer as vital or affordable for us to continue with and so, to allow a time for meeting together as we are urged to do so in Acts 2:46, we have extended the AGM into a weekend of sharing with each other. You might like to enjoy the sights of Brisbane on Saturday morning before joining us at 1 p.m. We will be going for dinner in a local restaurant after the meeting and join for the regular 8.30 morning service on Sunday.

If you are interested, we hope to provide some billets from Brisbane members or you might like to book your own accommodation. We are looking forward to connecting in friendship once again as our Australian GFS family.

Please let me know before the end of December if you are interested in coming and have not yet indicated your interest. (email julie679233@gmail.com or mobile—0419368203)