

GFS Australia

Newsletter 1

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President's Patch

Hello to everyone and welcome to our first National GFS newsletter from me.

Let me introduce myself for those I haven't yet met in person.

I have been a member of GFS for over 20 years and led our GFS Group/Kids Plus at the Kenmore Church of the Holy Spirit for 16 years with other leaders.

My leadership of our GFS Group for girls started in 1997 and morphed into Kids Plus for boys and girls, which closed in 2015.

I attended GFS Brisbane meetings to assist with the Brisbane GFS Branch. In addition, I have taught Christian Religious Instruction in local schools, run Messy Churches and supported "The Home Away from Homelessness".

Currently, I organise with some great helpers, a Homeless Person's Ministry in Kenmore and Brookfield Churches. Parishioners and the community donate, and we package the toiletries for our Home Away from Homelessness and other Anglican Church homes.

I have four themes which we can develop during this year and next. Please read more about them in this first edition of the Australian Newsletter.

As we look forward, through the journey of Lent to the joy of our Risen Lord at Easter, I wish you many blessings as you celebrate with your friends and family, In GFS love, **Suzanne Claire**



I have four themes which we can develop during this year and next. As I felt a certain fatigue among members during our recent AGM, I prayed and thought about you all, and came up with:

“We will proclaim the word of God with JOY and CONFIDENCE!”

We will continue to tell others about God and Jesus, as we always have done, and at the same time invite and encourage friends and family to join our wonderful society. We need more members and we all need to increase the profile of GFS in our churches, community and nationally. Our National Executive stands ready to support and assist Dioceses in these matters. When I read and heard your amazing reports from across Australia and overseas, I know we have all offered and are still offering sooo much, so the National Executive entreat you to tell others about YOUR ministry! INVITE parishioners and friends to be GFS members in your Diocese. It is modestly priced and easy to join. Then they can join a long list of amazing Christian people with the wonderful history of the GFS!

Our society can only move forward if we all encourage and invite membership!



I feel we all need filling up our glasses with some JOY! Acts 2: 25-28 speaks of the paths of life that we all can follow with joy and confidence because we are children of God. Hence, we can be filled with joy in the presence of God. I urge us all to pray and contemplate on this passage. Contemplate and re-read our GFS Annual Report for 20/21 and let's all give thanks to God for all our contributions. We remember that it is the Holy Spirit that

helps people to become a Christian, our job is to pass on the Word! We are doing that!

CONFIDENCE

In addition, as we give thanks for our many ministries, we can be CONFIDENT (1 John 2: 28- 3: 1) as children of God. We are unashamed in Him as we have been born of God. We all aim to do what is right, with God's help, and it is our right and privilege as Christians to approach him as His children. This will also bring us joy!



We can approach God with confidence that He will answer our prayer and He loves us a child! Christian PRAYER is intentional, personal and meaningful and all these aspects are essential parts of Christianity. So, I wish for us to study and look at prayer. Please use prayers from later in this newsletter and from our AGM reports where people outlined prayer concerns.

My final theme for us to consider is: TRUTH AND STORIES. A picture they say says 1,000 words but what can a single word say or imply? That will be for us to follow-through later this year or maybe next year. Watch this space!



Introducing the “new look” 2021 National Executive

Reverend Ann Edwards—
National Treasurer



Hi, I'm Rev'd Ann Edwards your new Treasurer of GFS Australia, taking on the role in 2021. I am currently the Honorary Assistant Curate of St Andrew's Anglican Church, Indooroopilly but excited with a new appointment to St Marks, the Gap from Easter and I also teach Rehabilitation and Speech Pathology at the Australian Catholic University. I am married and have two 11 year old children and a cat called Morgan. For me, joining GFS in only recent times, I discovered GFS Southern Queensland, and I found a group of similarly minded women, who have a collective wisdom and obvious love for Christ, who are active in making the voices of our youth and families heard". I wanted to offer my services to belong to this group.

Val Gribble
Executive Member



(Lay Canon) Val Gribble, Rockhampton diocese, by far the elder member of Executive, which has given me more time to experience many joys through membership of GFS. Membership of GFS, itself, is a joy; to belong to a worldwide organisation that is committed to bringing others to Christ and to serving others, whether at a branch, diocesan, national or international level. My greatest joy has been the privilege of travelling to so many different GFS countries and seeing the amazing and different work of GFS, seeing the very positive differences made to the lives of women, men and children through GFS; seeing a number of the world projects in action, meeting so many leaders who continue to sacrifice so much to be great models to GFS members; the joy of talking with many church and community leaders and perhaps being able to encourage their support of GFS (who would have thought I would be having breakfast at the same hotel as the Archbishop of Canterbury, when visiting India, and making sure I introduced myself!). And experiencing the joy of being part of the GFS membership in Papua New Guinea over 20 years, with its highs and lows and challenges. It has not been a joy only but a great privilege to serve at world level and to experience so many different facets of GFS life. May we always have joy in our membership.

Noeleen Stewart
Vice President



I'm Noeleen and I have been in GFS since I was 7, so just a few years now!! I have been on the Branch and Executive Committee in Perth on and off in various roles for the past 35+ years and on the National Executive since being Kate's secretary in 2009. My joy in GFS is definitely knowing how there is a place for everyone and the joy we share in growing together and sharing the love of Christ with others and for me sharing that joy with children.

Stephanie Stewart
Junior Delegate



Reverend Nicole Baldwin
Executive Member



What is my joy in GFS? I became involved in GFS as an adult when Bishop Sonia was the Priest of Morpeth, NSW. GFS world day of Prayer was coming up and I decided to attend the service at Morpeth. I was deeply moved each year by the services. Then Gail asked me to be her Secretary. I said "yes" and there began a steep learning curve! I attended the National Council in Tasmania and was welcomed by so many people. I found another community in which I felt that I belonged and have made many friends. Being part of GFS means that I am part of something much bigger than family, a parish a Diocese or even our own country. It is this that gives me joy .. Knowing that I have friends who are stepping out in faith to share their faith, their time and their talents so that others all over the world may witness the love of Christ.

Chris Rooney
Executive Member



I have been a member of GFS for 44 years. I started my GFS journey in 1976 at St Peters, West End in Townsville and was lucky to have Jennifer Buckby, Jenny Nolan and others as my leaders, mentors and now friends. In 2000, I moved to Brisbane and joined Suzanne Claire as a fellow leader at GFS/KidsPlus+ at Kenmore Anglican Church. I also was also warmly welcomed by my fellow GFS friends and leaders onto GFS Brisbane's executive.

I was fortunate enough to attend GFS World Council in Wellington, New Zealand in 1993 as Junior Delegate and have been able to attend all World Council's since, with the exception of South Korea and most recently South Africa. I have previously been a member of GFS Australia's Executive and was pleased to be able to assist Val on her GFS World Team from 2014 – 2017.

My greatest joy in GFS has been having the opportunity to learn from so many amazing Christian, GFS women in Australia and across the world. All inspiring!

Bronwyn Barber
Executive Member



Hi Bronwyn from Brisbane here, I am a leader at St Mark's Clayfield in Brisbane. I love being able to show God's love in action to the little kids in KidsPlus+ and the girls at GFS. I am so excited to be part of the larger family of GFS in Australia and the world.

Julie Somerville
Secretary



Hi I am Julie and GFS has been a very big part of my life since I was a 7 year old going along to my first night of GFS. I instantly felt I had found a place in which I belonged, just as I was. And as the ad goes, I am "still feeling it". GFS has been a place to find other like minded women who are passionate about sharing the love of God to others, and bringing them into the faith. As a leader and then as a member of executives, Tasmanian diocesan and nationally (and even on the world team) I just love being able to serve others as our motto reminds us. Sharing our talents with others, particularly as I went to Melanesia and World Councils, has been a privilege and a great joy as I met with some amazing GFS members who shared their joy in GFS with us.

Reverend Sandra Skjellgren
National Chaplain



I have been blessed to share in the lives of many people in ministry since my ordination in 1993. My passion has always been to share the love and compassion of Jesus both in parishes and the wider community.

It has been a privilege to enjoy a significant baptismal ministry in my life as parish priest and consider it a joy to support young parents in their faith journeys. The future of the Church is tied significantly to relationships formed with young families and children as we live in a geographically scattered world. So many young people are without family support.

It is a joy also to be appointed National Chaplain for GFS Australia Inc. I believe the organisation of GFS is of critical importance to the Mission of the Church as it continues to promote and support ministry with Children and Young People – the next generation of Christian believers.



What is your joy in GFS?

Why not ask around your GFS members and send some of your responses to me to share with others? (julie679233@gmail.com)

PRAYERS

We want to be an intentionally prayerful group, lifting up others and bringing our hearts to God. You might like this regular reminder for your prayers, perhaps setting aside one day a week to specifically pray for GFS and its ministries.

Week one

Prayer for those closest to us—friends, family and neighbours, our immediate GFS group in their everyday ministries—from those who run children's groups, adult Townsend groups busy knitting, collecting items to give away to help those in need. Pray for those who are affected by COVID and the restrictions on meeting together once again in a safe way.

Week two

Prayer for our Diocese—for leaders, for decisions made, for those entrusted with the duties of leadership and those who assist through their giftings as secretary, treasurer, trainers for leaders. We pray for those new to roles as they take up the challenge of serving

Week three

Prayer for our nation—for the National Executive and their duties, particularly as they complete the requirements for the National Redress Scheme and Suzanne as she adjusts into her new role.

Week four

Prayer for our world—pray for the countries of GFS—many and varied as they are around the world. We think of the meeting to be held via Zoom in March, 13th to consider the future of meeting as world council, about where and when we will meet and how that will be worked out. Pray for those leading in the World Team with Thembeke's leadership. Pray for the decisions they are making, for the many changes thrust upon them and their dashed hopes in hosting the 2020 or 2021 World council.

A request from Thembeke (not specifically related to GFS, but close to her heart)

At the AGM Cheryl spoke of Thembeke's desire to share her project from her own parish, Christ the King in Sophia Town. They are trying to establish a feature of the history of their site (Demond Tutu has a link to the Church here, citing it as important in his moral formation.) Trevor Huddleston shared the plight of those black people, forcibly removed from their towns and the destruction of the town in the name of Apartheid. It is this church of Christ the King that is quite a survivor and has become the focus for commemorative times now.

The project seeks to add the Church to the Heritage route, employ and engage younger generations (who are relatives of those forcibly removed) to be tour guides, improve the site with landscaping and promote the issues of social justice through recalling these events and plans for the future.

Thembeke is inviting any parish in Australia who might be interested in partnering /joining with the project as a sponsor.

For further information please contact Julie on julie679233@gmail.com and I can send you Thembeke's information sheet for your interest.

Renewal of Registration forms

These forms have been sent out to Dioceses and are now available for you to complete. Please return to your Diocesan group who will compile the information to send to me. A gentle reminder that we would love all those forms back by the end of June.

World Zoom meeting for World Council discussions

We met online as a world group in January. Following this a questionnaire was sent to each country and will form the basis of our discussion for the next meeting in March.

From the first meeting it was decided -

The world Council in 2021 will be of a virtual format and not be a face to face meeting.

The future of further council meetings is still to be decided. Various options were put forward and these were discussed by each country. We supported the suggested move to have a 2023 council hosted by South Africa, but would like it to be open as to whether it is a virtual or face to face meeting. This is still to be discussed.

Discussions are still to take place regarding return of deposits (which will no doubt be minus amounts to take into account bank transfer fees, exchange rates and even some non refundable components already expended.)

Please pray for the meeting to be held on Saturday, 13th March where the future world council host countries will be discussed.

Membership of NRS

We are still working on this, the sticking point being the financial guarantor. We received a letter from ARNRS suggesting an amount we would need to hold and that we could have a group of GFS member dioceses and GFS Australia who could jointly guarantee this amount. So we are now awaiting the outcome of diocesan discussions about support for this. Please continue to keep this matter in your prayers.



Feeding program in Port Moresby



At the AGM held in January, Val and Cheryl spoke about a feeding program to help homeless youth that had been underway in Port Moresby but halted by COVID. Since the AGM we have had a breakdown of costs supplied by Collins (a male GFS PNG member who was leading this group) to look at continuing the program. With the restrictions imposed in PNG funding has also been limited. The costing of the program for another period of time (about 6 months) would be approximately \$1850 (AUD) which included some training and support in the field. Already two dioceses have pledged some support—how amazing and great is the generosity of GFS groups! If you would like to contribute please contact Val Gribble (valgribble1@bigpond.com) for more details .