



St Mary's Grapevine

BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST MARY'S ANGLICAN CHURCH, SUNBURY
MAY 2019

Gavin's Grab

Greetings everyone,

I trust everyone was able to take some time over Easter to remember and reflect upon God's amazing love and grace for us all through Jesus work on the Cross and his powerful resurrection.

I'd like to update you on a few Parish matters:-

Chibobo Community in Zambia

I had a long conversation recently with Staivous Mulumba, the Director of Help Ministries Projects (HMP) in Zambia, and he advised me of the following:-

1 Food for the hungry

Many of you contributed to the funds we sent over to HMP to help alleviate the food shortage due to the Zambian Governments decision not to provide farming assistance to those in need.

When the funds arrived, local bureaucracy delayed the purchase of much needed maize for households. Finally when permission was received, the Government had created a huge increase in the price of maize.

HMP took this issue to the Chibobo Community via a representative Board and they decided to allocate funds to the most needy households for the purchase of fertilizer and other inputs to enable the planting of crops for food for the coming year. They said that a bag of maize will feed us for a month but fertilizer etc will enable us to be fed for the next year. This is a great local decision. In the end 355 households in the Chibobo area received these funds and crops have been planted and are growing due to good rains.

Staivous thanks everyone who contributed to this need with deep gratitude.

2 Chicken Project

You will remember Narelle organised a number of events to raise funds for a Chicken Project to be run by HMP. Staivous reports the Community have now constructed a Poultry House and we have sent the funds over this week to enable the purchase of chickens etc to begin the project.

The money raised through the sale of eggs (which will be the only locally grown eggs – if that is what you call egg farming) will assist care for the orphans, the establishment of a fish farm and other farming activities to raise funds and to feed people.

This project is assisting HMP towards greater self-sustainability.

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Katherine Christian Convention

Thankyou for your prayers for Narelle Riley, Kim Burn and I as we attended the Katherine Christian Convention over the weekend of 4 and 5 May. The Convention is held at the Katherine Show grounds and involved over 800 Christians from many Indigenous Communities from the Northern Territory, WA, Queensland and even South Australia. There was a great Kids programme run by Steve Urmston and youth programmes along with the main programme involving a speaker, singing, dancing and sharing groups. The latest edition of the Kriol Bible was also launched. We spent our time serving as welcomers and security on the entrance gates, and serving meals and snacks in the Canteen - so we didn't get to see much of the convention itself, but it was wonderful to witness people worshipping God and being encouraged in their faith. We had the wonderful privilege of speaking with a number of the attendees and ministering at various times with them. The volunteer army, supporting the Convention, included a group of over 20 from a church in Maitland and also a group of BCA Nomads. The over-all sense of the Convention is that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ and any differences of nation, church denomination, community or skin colour are completely irrelevant. It was a blessing to be part of this and we will pray and process our experience, in particular the next steps in what and how God may be calling us as a church to be involved in.



Professional Standards Seminar

I recently updated my Professional Standards qualifications by attending the Seminar conducted at St Mary's. Although I had heard most of what was said before, I found it very helpful to hear it again and to be reminded of the high importance of ensuring our church is a safe place for all who are vulnerable. I encourage you to attend the Seminar (if you haven't already) and to consider attending again (if you haven't been for a few years).

Mission Philosophy

At St Mary's we are engaged in a number of mission activities. I recently reminded Parish Council of my views on how we respond to God's call on us as a Parish and as individuals to be people of mission, reaching out to others with God's love and gospel of salvation through Jesus, Here's what I wrote:-

We are a people focussed on bringing and sharing God's love (the Gospel) through Jesus with all people. Therefore I have been keen to create possibilities for everyone to be involved (as they are able). In doing this we have:-

1 – *Local Mission Activities* (e.g. Kids Hope, Careworks, Chaplaincy Support, Friday Friendship Lunches, Sing and Soup, Sunfest, Refugees etc, etc and now the Winter Night Shelter). We have also run a variety of evangelistic courses (Alpha, Introducing God, The Banquet) and then followed up with various discipling activities. We will continue to actively do this locally.

2 – *National Mission Activities* (e.g. Supporting Ridley College, Prison Fellowship and Bush Church Aid; conducting visits to West Wimmera and supporting the Edwards family in Broome/Exmouth, Mission Aviation Fellowship etc, etc and now hopefully a connection with an Indigenous Community)

3 – *International Mission Activities* (e.g. Supporting CMS (Thompson and now Adams families), and supporting and visiting the Chibobo Community in Zambia. Chris and Grace Adams will be visiting us on Sunday 11 August.

My prayer and desire is and always has been that with this variety of Mission work, everyone can find their place and way they can be involved in Mission, as God calls them.

with God's blessings

Gavin

Welcome to our Church Family

Praise be to God for the safe arrival of two beautiful little girls since our last edition of Grapevine!



Welcome to **Olivia Claire Smith!**
Born at 3.07am on Monday 18th March, weighing 7lb 3oz. A daughter for Lachlan and Elizabeth, and sister for Finn and Teddy!



Welcome to **Mercy Rose Browne!**
Born on Wednesday 8th May, weighing 9lb 10oz. A daughter for Matthew and Erin, and sister for Bella and Timothy!



"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead"

1 Peter 1:3

Congratulations Ros

Congratulations to Ros Armstrong who recently graduated from Ridley Melbourne with a Masters of Arts (Theology). Ros undertook 9 years of study which culminated in an 8000 word essay with the subject title "Understanding Honour Shame Culture for Biblical Interpretation in a dominant Guilt Innocence Culture"



Reconciliation

Danielle Johanesen- Parish Councillor

If you came to services on Easter Sunday, you would have noticed that all services started with an Acknowledgement of Country. The Acknowledgement of Country is said to remind us of Aboriginal peoples' history and culture, and of their connection to the land. It is said in a spirit of reconciliation and to restore Aboriginal peoples' place as original stewards of the land.

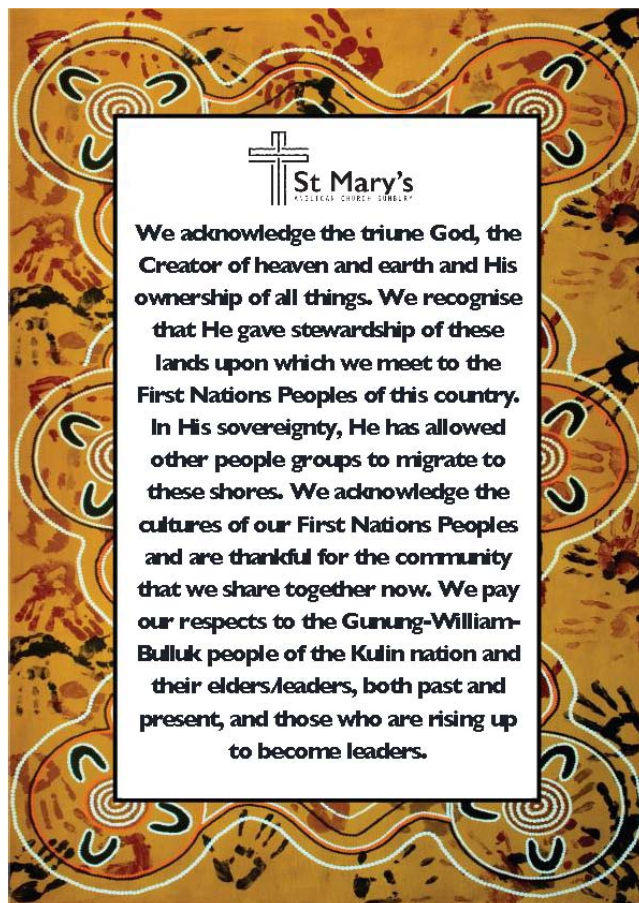
Much has been written about the hurts caused by British Colonialism on Aboriginal peoples. The dispossession, displacement and violence were compounded by subsequent Australian governments enacting policies that further dehumanised and alienated Aboriginal peoples. While this can easily be dismissed as history, the effects continue to this day.


As Christians we must seek to heal these wounds just as Jesus did when he sought out the lost, the hurting and the rejected during his ministry. In 2 Corinthians 5:18-21, Paul writes that Jesus gave us the ministry of reconciliation born out of Jesus's reconciling us to God through his crucifixion. In verse 20, Paul says that we are Christ's ambassadors for reconciliation.

This is not a passive thing, where we sympathise but take no active part. The message in Corinthians is one of action – ambassadors should be peacemakers, taking the steps necessary to bring about reconciliation.

When this issue was raised and voted on by Parish Council, we were concerned that without hearts for reconciliation that it would just be the right thing to do. Through prayer and discussion, we came to consider this a gesture of our willingness to be ambassadors. It is the first step in a longer conversation about how we as a church choose to engage with and minister amongst the indigenous peoples of this land.

The text for the Acknowledgment of Country was provided by the Bush Church Aid Society. The Aboriginal peoples mentioned were the Gunung-William-Bulluk people. This group, lived in the lands around Sunbury, they were part of the Wurundjeri people who along with other Aboriginal tribes formed the Kulin Nation.




We acknowledge the triune God, the Creator of heaven and earth and His ownership of all things. We recognise that He gave stewardship of these lands upon which we meet to the First Nations Peoples of this country. In His sovereignty, He has allowed other people groups to migrate to these shores. We acknowledge the cultures of our First Nations Peoples and are thankful for the community that we share together now. We pay our respects to the Gunung-William-Bulluk people of the Kulin nation and their elders/leaders, both past and present, and those who are rising up to become leaders.

We will be saying the Acknowledgement of Country on dates throughout the year that are important to the church and to Aboriginal peoples. These dates are NAIDOC Week, National Reconciliation Week and on National Sorry Day, as well as at Easter and Christmas. You'll have also noticed the notices around the church and on our website.

If you are interested in knowing more about the Aboriginal culture and history. I'd recommend the following books (although there are many more):

- Dark Emu – Bruce Pascoe
- The Tall Man: Death and Life on Palm Island - Chloe Hooper
- Forgotten War – Henry Reynolds
- Talking to my country – Stan Grant
- Am I Black Enough for You? – Anita Heiss

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