



NORTHWEST NETWORK



DECEMBER 2015 No. 101

From the Bishop

Looking back, Looking forward!



**LET US
PUT ASIDE THE
WORKS OF
DARKNESS
AND PUT ON
THE ARMOUR
OF LIGHT**

- Thomas Cranmer

Advent Sunday Romans 13⁸⁻¹⁴ v.12

Cranmer's prayer for the first Sunday in Advent is terrific. Let me share it with you ...

Almighty God, give us grace that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life, in which your Son Jesus Christ came among us in great humility; that on the last day, when he comes again in his glorious Majesty to judge both the living and the dead, we may rise to the life immortal; through him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and ever. Amen.

He's captured looking back, looking forward. He encourages us to act on who Jesus is in the present on the basis of Jesus' past and future actions. So this prayer catches the true spirit of the season ... as we remember Jesus' *first* advent, we *can't* do this without raising our mind's eye to his coming, second advent. As we *celebrate* Christ's first coming, we *anticipate*, we look forward to his second.

It seems that Cranmer's prayer is in part a *reflection* upon the appointed epistle reading for Advent Sunday Romans 13⁸⁻¹⁴, in particular v.12,

"The night is nearly over, the day is almost here. So let us put aside the works of darkness and put on the armour of light."

The momentous event we call Christmas is God keeping his word, God entering into this world, taking on flesh in order to save us (Matthew 1²¹⁻²³). This great promised act of God to undo the effects of sin and rebellion has occurred – and didn't we need it! Without God's love in Jesus we're lost, adrift in a sea

with no anchor or safe harbour to enter. But Christ's first advent wasn't the end, for we now live in the 'in-between' period ... looking back, yet looking forward. God's promise still dominates our horizon, a promise of a second advent when the end will suddenly come - when the Son will return in *his glorious Majesty to judge both the living and the dead, and we will rise to the life immortal.*

Friends, Cranmer's prayer brings us face to face with these twin realities and calls us to respond. And this response is shaped by Paul's words in Romans 13. As we take to heart the power of the gospel to renew our minds and lead us to transformed conduct we'll look to the future (Romans 12¹⁻²) - to the day when we'll be fully 'conformed to the image of God's Son' (Romans 8²⁹). Christmas says to us rejoice as we look back, yet change clothes as we look to the future. Or as Moo writes, we're called 'not only to "become what we are"; but also to "*become what we one day will be.*"'¹

Looking back, looking forward involves being alert, being watchful. Jesus calls us to be alert (e.g. Matthew 24⁴²⁻⁴⁴), while Paul and Peter reinforce this vital aspect of our discipleship (e.g. Colossians 4²; 1 Peter 1¹³⁻¹⁶). In Romans 13 we're to be alert to our behaviour so that it conforms to the character of Christ (v.14). And in Cranmer's words we pray for God's grace so that *we may cast away the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light, now in the time of this mortal life.*

As Christmas comes upon us will we be looking both back, celebrating Christ's first advent; yet looking forward, preparing for his second advent?

¹ Moo, D. J., 'The Epistle to the Romans' (NICNT); Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1996, p.818.



From the Bishop continues...

An invitation too good to miss!

In October I had the privilege of a visit to Anglican churches in America – a visit to inform and hopefully encourage new gospel partners for our mission in the North West. It was an amazing time and I am very grateful to God for the opportunity. It began after a long series of flights from Perth to Pittsburgh via Sydney and LA. After 31 hours of flying I still arrived on the same day I left!

At Trinity School for Ministry, Pittsburgh, I preached at their chapel and taught on evangelism (with a special focus on the North West). Their mission agencies warmly welcomed me as I shared about Indigenous needs. From there it was an early morning flight to Atlanta to meet with leaders including Archbishop Foley Beach. They talked of their struggles to uphold biblical teaching in an environment increasingly turning away from the truth – helpful reflections for us as we stand on the same precipice in Australia. It was a wonderful honour to preach at Holy Cross Cathedral and spend time with the congregations meeting there.

From the south I flew back across the states to Mark Zimmerman in New Mexico. Mark's a relatively new bishop seeking to plant and grow churches throughout an area crossing over three states with links to churches in Mexico. In many ways his diocese is similar to the North West ... hot, dry, hard going and vast!

Next, it was back to the east coast to visit my friend John Yates in Raleigh, North Carolina. John provided me with lots of opportunities to share about the diocese, as well as preaching on 'encountering Jesus' from Acts 9. Gospel hearted people were challenged by our mission. They're praying about how they may partner with us – certainly in prayer, but financial support, mission visits and ongoing concern as well. God graciously brought me into contact with fellow Christians who truly impacted my life – and so allowed more to hear of what He is accomplishing in our 'small' patch of the North West. What a great God we have to thank and praise!



Rev Dr John Yates,
Rector of Holy Trinity, Raleigh

Building Relationships

by Rev Eldred Royce - Parish of Northampton

Geraldine and I arrived in Northampton at the end of July 2015. The faithful who have held the church together in the absence of a minister welcomed us with warmth and enthusiasm. So how have we approached building relationships?

Initially we visited most of the shops around the town introducing ourselves; and found them a friendly group of people. Geraldine then volunteered to help out at the local aged care facility twice a week which is greatly appreciated. Eldred also drops in as he is able. Our presence has encouraged some of the staff to consider joining us at church, so we'll keep working on that contact. Geraldine's involvement at the aged care facility led her to be involved in the RSL "Remembrance Day" lunch. She read from Isaiah and led in Prayer. As a result we now have the opportunity to start a monthly church service at the hospital!

Recently we had two funerals. It's a privilege to be asked to conduct a funeral as



many families don't walk away from the church. But we can provide a wonderful platform for the Gospel of Jesus and many who normally don't attend can hear that the God's Spirit works through us to hear these messages.

The ladies Bible study group meet and recently we had a group. We find it is a good personal spiritual growth.

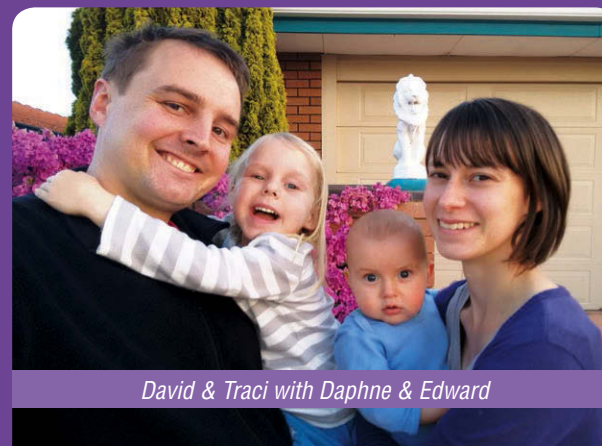
Our first Christmas service in the Park" with about 100 people. Eldred was able to preach a message. Other events include a service for the Nabawa and our own Christmas service.

Please pray for us as we build relationships around the town. They all need to be wonderful saving grace.

Big Shoes to Fill

The Stubbs have small feet, yet they left huge shoes to fill in the parish of Dongara -Mingenew - not just in the church, but amongst those in both towns. Rob and Jenny got stuck into the community and had a really positive impact. They shared the gospel and the fruit of the gospel lived out in sacrifice. While Traci and I will do things according to our own giftedness and tastes, we really hope that we can emulate their attitude of engagement and the effect it had among the congregations and wider communities.

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David & Traci with Daphne & Edward



Best View in the Diocese!

by Rev Steve Combe - Parish of Shark Bay



Stephen & Tamara with Hannah, Sarah & Nathanael

During our five month long journey from Sydney to Denham through the heart of Australia, we were the envy of many fellow travellers – why? Because we were moving to a stunning holiday destination! As we drove from the highway turnoff into Denham we were greeted by the natural beauty of the area and welcomed into our new home. I think we've been blessed with (arguably) the best view in the diocese! We've spent more than a few evenings on the balcony watching the sky being painted in the red and orange hues of sunset. Here in Denham, we're surrounded by spectacular examples of creation declaring the glory and majesty of the Lord.

Since we arrived in early October we've been

slowly settling in to our new home. It's such a huge change from our previous home. Without leaving the country, we reckon we could not have picked a more extreme change. It's a swap we're excited about, and love adapting to it. So we now know the good days to go the local grocery store – pick the wrong day and there will be no milk, bread or fresh fruit! We are relearning the school routine: school lunches, banking, library days and assemblies. Both girls have adjusted well to their new school, and enjoying it. It's been a great natural connection for meeting other families – something that we hope and pray will develop into folks coming to faith.

The school Principal asked me to participate with a prayer in their Remembrance Day service. This was a wonderful opportunity to introduce our faces to the town folk, and also to pray about those who have sacrificed their lives to bring about the freedom and peace that we enjoy today. Whilst only brief, it was an opportunity to publically talk of Jesus' ultimate sacrifice – as well as pointing to the true freedom, comfort and hope that comes only through being restored to a right relationship with God through faith in Jesus Christ.

The congregation have been gracious and welcoming as we all get used to each other. They are keen to have a young family join them, and appreciate the placement of a permanent minister. May God continue to grow his church and build His kingdom here in Denham, and use us as He sees fit, for His glory.

by Rev David Mitchell - Parish of Dongara/Mingenew

A common mistake that new pastors make is underestimating what can be accomplished in five years. We moved to Dongara in early 2017, but it feels like it's been about five years. My main aim is to begin to know the people and the places. To do that I need to be sure I listen well and that takes time. This process will be slowed a little bit by the fact that I'm still wrapping up things in Geraldton. In some ways a delayed transition might be a good thing, helping me not do too much.

Another mistake is to underestimate what can be accomplished in five years. The same Christ who calls us to make disciples of nations also has all authority in heaven and on earth, and he is with us. Working under him with his means of grace, I believe that we could see transformational growth in the parish. In God's grace we can welcome people

into Christ's eternal church and grow together as disciples. The Parish's mission statement already sums it up well: 'prepare ... proclaim ... know Christ, and the members of the church are well connected to each other and the wider community. There is every reason to think that God will accomplish big things in his timing.'

The church buildings in Dongara and Mingeneew have each been standing for over 100 years. They have been meeting places for God's people in war and peace, in famine and glut; they have hosted baptisms, weddings and funerals. These along with a hall, a rectory and trust funds offer a significant historical, administrative and financial resource to be used for kingdom work. But they are nothing compared to the resources that come from God when his people ask. So please join with our congregations in praying that a great harvest is taken for the kingdom in Dongara-Mingenew.

St George's Church Birthday Party

by Rev Andrew Burr - Bluff Point Parish

People have been worshipping Jesus Christ on this property for 80 years!

To commemorate this history we are planning a 'church birthday party' for Sunday 13th December with our bishop speaking. We'll set up marquees on the lawn where we will have church, followed by our 'birthday' lunch. We want to thank God for the past, but also stir ourselves up for the Christian work to come.





Power behind the Port

The Port Hedland Seafarers Centre has produced an informative DVD documentary which includes interviews with Seafarers, Port users, Seafarers Committee Members and their two Chaplains, Alan Mower, Operations Manager and Gary South. This excellent DVD gives great insight into life in the port!

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Fellow Workers' Conference 2015

Every second year the diocesan family gathers together for conference at Swanleigh. With the vast distances and remoteness of the North West that's our normal daily life, it's wonderful to spend a week when we're only walking distance away from each other.

This year we had the joy of Rob and Claire Smith joining us. They contributed in a number of ways to the 'authentic Anglican ministry' theme of the conference. We were refreshed by Rob's teaching on passages that occur in our services (eg Ps 95; 1 Cor 11); stretched by workshops led by Rob and Claire for men and women respectively on issues such as the nature of leadership and purpose of church, loving sex in marriage and congregational music/singing. As well, both Rob and Claire

"The conference was a very encouraging time, with great music and helpful Bible studies with Rob Smith. The presentation about human sexuality was really helpful; as was the Protective Behaviours workshop. It was good to catch up with people."

- Dale Appleby

helped us to grapple with the transgender issue.

A real delight was experienced by all as Rob provided an evening of song - especially his amazing Beatles repertoire!!

Another terrific feature of the week was the snapshots of life and ministry around the diocese. What a great God we have at work across our diocese.

"It was great for the ladies to have an opportunity to meet with Claire a few times"

- Jenny Day

"It's always an encouragement to meet up with new and old friends who are contending for the gospel in similar circumstances as us"

- David Day

As we journeyed home (whether for hours or days) from the conference we were thankful for the precious privilege God has given us to serve in the Diocese of North West Australia.



PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS

The Diocese of North West Australia seeks to be a safe place for all. If you have a complaint or a question about sexual abuse or inappropriate behaviour please contact the **Director of Professional Standards:**
Tracie Chambers-Clark (JP) Phone: (08) 9325 7455 Email: tchambers-clark@perth.anglican.org