

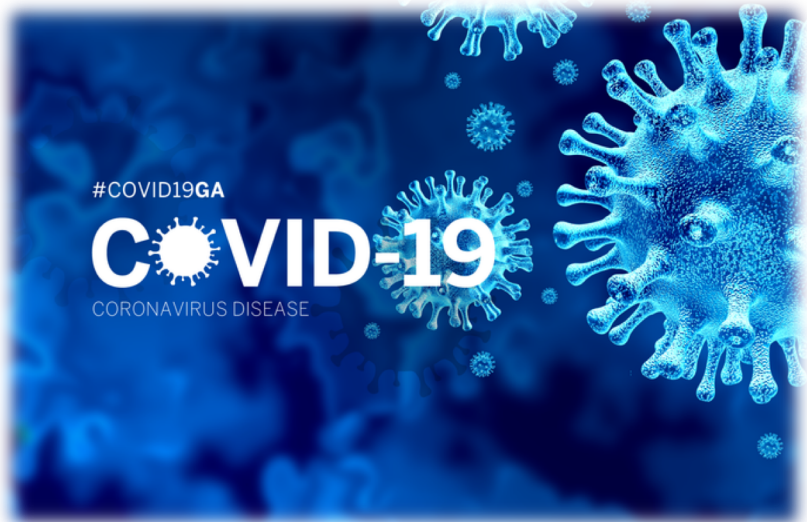
... from Tom

Since stepping into the Administrator role, I have been keen to re-launch a gazette or newsletter to let everyone in Central Queensland know what is happening in our churches and communities, on a regular basis. Then our world changed.

Our community has been broad-sided by the pandemic COVID-19. So, our first edition will be coronavirus dominated - and I'm expecting that this will be the case for many of our 2020 newsletters.

The working 'title' of our newsletter is *CQ First*. I apologise for my 'dad-joke' but my prayer is that in this newsletter, and in all its subsequent offerings, our readers will be encouraged to '**seek you first**' the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Our world is in crisis. We are anxious and fearful. Many people are getting sick and dying. Financial markets have



crashed. Now is **not** a time for the Anglican Church to retreat into the relative safety of our comfort zones and pretend that we can 'ride this crisis out'. No, this is not an option for God's people.

Now is the time for action. Now is the time to love our neighbour like they've never been loved before. Now is the time for mobilization and putting God's love into action. Now is the time to seek first the kingdom of God, remembering Jesus' promise that all these things, our needs, will be added unto you.

In Christ,

Ven. Tom Henderson-Brooks

Bishop's Commissary (Diocesan Administrator)

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"Where does my help come from?
My help comes from the Lord,
the Maker of heaven and earth!"
Psalm 121

Farewell Bishop David + Jan



On Saturday the 22nd February, folk from around our Diocese, as well as representatives from further afield, came together to give thanks to God for the ministry of Bishop David Robinson, the twelfth Bishop of the Diocese of Rockhampton, and his wife Jan.

It was fitting to be able to hold the service in the recently reopened St Paul's Cathedral. The 'Laying Up of Staff' Service was a mixture of traditional and modern, reflecting Bishop David's legacy of introducing change.

Dean Melusi Sibanda led the service and Archbishop Philip Aspinall addressed the congregation on behalf of the Australian Anglican Church at the close of the service.

Bishop David addressed his flock for the last time as our Bishop, encouraging us to persevere in our faith and to keep following Jesus.



From Archbishop Aspinall

"Every Diocese in Australia is unique and has its own challenges. In some respects, Rockhampton is a small Diocese – it doesn't have vast numbers of stipendiary clergy, huge financial resources and so on, but that does not make life for its Bishops simple or easy. Rockhampton includes a significant proportion of Queensland, it's not small geographically, it requires substantial travelling on the part of its Bishop and clergy. It faces all the challenges of ministry to rural and isolated communities as well as the unique issues of mining communities, rural depopulation, years of prolonged drought, the shifting place of churches in Australian society in the 21st century. They've all added to the difficulties faced in Rockhampton – not to mention the perennial problems of buildings and even Cathedrals. David has been a Bishop who has faced all of these challenges squarely.

David has worked not only within the Diocese but also with other Dioceses in the Province of Queensland and at a National level to grapple with these shifting realities. We've made some progress from sharing resources and knowledge and people and infrastructure in Qld and that has often been guided by David's prudent encouragement and collaboration. David has also been a member of the National Structures and Liability Task Force ...there are no easy solutions...but David has been prepared to consider new possibilities and new ways of collaborating.

David's background in education and training has been an asset to Rockhampton and more broadly. Jan has not only ably supported David in his episcopal, pastoral and educational ministry but has exercised a significant ministry of education training and service in her own right.

Is it not ironic that on this occasion when we farewell two people who have devoted most of their lives to education and forming people for service in Christ's name that the epistle should begin with '*not many of you should become teachers*'? I had to check with the Archdeacon before the service whether David had especially chosen that passage for today – but no, it is in our lectionary for this occasion, which just goes to show that God does have a sense of humour.

David and Jan have contributed very significantly to Rockhampton and to the wider church and today we thank God for you and give thanks for all that God has done for us through you. We pray that God's richest lesson might be with you in this next stage of your journey.

COVID-19 + Our Diocese Update

Please continue to pray to our heavenly Father, for each other, for our leaders, for our doctors and nurses and all who keep essential services happening. Here is what's happening in our church across CQ.

Diocesan Office

The Diocesan office is closed to visitors but otherwise 'open'. All our staff can be contacted via phone and email.

Church Services

All church services, both indoor and outdoor are closed until further notice. Many of our churches are setting up live streaming.

Funerals + Weddings

Funerals are limited to ten people. Weddings are limited to five people; the celebrant, the couple and two witnesses. Naturally, all the current regulations of self-isolation, good hygiene and social distancing apply. Check with your minister for live streaming of these services.

Unnecessary Travel + Closures

Qld borders are now closed. Everyone is encouraged to stay at home and minimize social interaction. Food outlets and

essential services remain open. But all social gathering places are closed.

Small Group Gatherings

For as long as it is allowed, very small gatherings (10 or under) are allowed at home. So, you can still meet for Bible study and prayer. Remember to follow good hygiene and social distancing rules. Those at greater risk (the elderly and unwell) should self-isolate. When our society goes into lockdown, all of our groups can be facilitated via social media. This may well be our new norm for a while.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight."

Proverbs 3:4-5

Churches Open for Prayer

Whilst we are allowed, the Administrator has asked for all our churches to be left open to the public for personal, private prayer. An area inside may be marked out. Sanitation points

must be made available by the doorway.

Pastoral Care Groups

The Administrator has instructed all Incumbents and priests responsible for congregations, to divide every congregation into small pastoral care groups. These groups don't have to meet, they have to care. We want everyone in our churches to belong to a group that will be a first point of contact for support when we are isolated. These groups will provide practical support and will offer prayer and encouragement.

Synod 10-12 October 2020

Our May Synod (along with General Synod) have been cancelled. Our current plan is to hold synod from Friday 10th October to Sunday the 12th.

Diocesan Webpage

We want to keep people up to date across our Diocese. Our Diocesan Website frontpage, is being updated so that all current information is available easily. It will have the latest info, weblinks to streaming events and this newsletter.

Prayer in a Time of Epidemic Disease

Lord Jesus Christ, healer and friend, come and care for all of us through the danger and uncertainty of the coronavirus epidemic. To people who are sick, bring healing. To people who are displaced, isolated, or cut off from family, friends or work, bring comfort and companionship. Work with medical staff as they care for the sick, and protect them from harm. Give skill and fruitful research to scientists as they search for treatments, prevention and a cure. To public health authorities, give wisdom to decide the best ways to manage both this crisis and our anxieties. When communities are fearful, give a calm spirit, and kindness to neighbours and strangers. Through this testing time, and through all the risks we face together, teach us once again how we can love one another as you have loved us. Amen.

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Government Funded Counselling

As well as taking a physical toll on people, the coronavirus is also taking a psychological toll on people. During this crisis our government is providing funding for people to access the help they need. The following groups are able to access psychological support and counselling at **no 'out-of-pocket' cost**:

- a) those diagnosed with COVID-19 virus but not in hospital;
- b) those required to isolate themselves;
- c) those who are considered more susceptible to the COVID-19 virus, eg.
 - i. at least 70 years old;
 - ii. at least 50 years old and of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent;
 - iii. pregnant;
 - iv. a parent of a child under 12 months;
 - v. those being treated for chronic health conditions or immuno-compromised;

(d) those who meet the current national triage protocol criteria for suspected COVID-19 infection.

If the Government announces a total lock down, these services will be available to everyone as they will be considered as requiring to isolate themselves.

Jane Chambers, a member of the North Rockhampton parish, has provided this information and is making herself available to people during this crisis. However, this help can be sought many other local psychologists and counsellors (who bulk bill). No referral from a GP is needed. Jane is also offering her sessions by phone or by skype and can be contacted on.

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E: jtcpsychologist@gmail.com

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Vale Reverend Arthur Gregory Fellows (1922-2020)

Reverend Arthur Fellows served in the Rockhampton diocese from 1950 until 1959. He was deaconed in 1950 and priested in 1951 while Assistant Curate at North Rockhampton for three years. His father was the Rector at Mt Morgan at the same time and served in the Diocese for almost fifty years.

After his Curacy, Arthur was Vicar at Springsure for four years and then Vicar at the Callide Valley Parish for two years. He then ventured south and served the remainder of his years in the Brisbane Diocese.

The Rev Arthur Fellows died on Saturday morning 14th March in hospital. While Arthur was 97 years old and had been in declining health for some time, the news still came as a shock to those close to him. His life was celebrated at All Saints' Wickham Terrace, Brisbane on Friday 20th March.

The Rev Arthur Fellows' wife, Bev, predeceased him quite some years ago. Together they had three children. His daughter Margaret cared for him over the last decade of his life. His younger brother Clive, lives in Wales, but was, providentially, visiting him at the time of his death.

Those who knew the Rev Arthur Fellows speak of his wit, his insights and his deep devotion to God. He will be remembered as a wonderful mentor to those who had the honour of knowing him. Well done good and faithful servant. *(Thanks to Val Gribble for supplying this information.)*