

LAMBETH
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IAFN

Special Edition July 2022



Families in Mission

An invitation to the bishops and spouses

International Anglican Family Network

celebrating the God-given potential of the family as a source of thriving relationships, identity, belonging, discipleship and reconciliation

Families in Mission: An invitation to the bishops and spouses

Since 1992, the International Anglican Family Network (IAFN) has been connecting Anglicans across the Communion to celebrate the God-given potential of the family as a source of thriving relationships, identity, belonging, discipleship and reconciliation. Out of this celebration, IAFN is an advocate for the family in the face of behaviours which diminish this potential. Through our newsletters, regional consultations and social media, we share stories of hope, promoting family care and sustaining the family as the cradle for human dignity.

We hold you in love and prayer as you meet at the Lambeth Conference, and invite you to join our Network

- Visit IAFN representatives at the Networks' stall in the Resource Centre during the Lambeth Conference. We will be delighted to meet you and tell you more about how the network is enabling relationships and serving God's mission in the world.
- Email iafn@anglicancommunion.org to subscribe to our newsletters which explore topical themes and gather stories from every continent. And please forward them to your own networks in your Province or diocese.
- Have a look at our resources, past and present newsletters, and reports of our regional consultations at <http://iafn.anglicancommunion.org>
- Share your stories with the Network. See below for the theme of our next newsletter which will be published later this year.
- Follow IAFN on social media at <https://www.facebook.com/AnglicanFamilies>.
- You can also write to the international IAFN management committee c/o The Anglican Communion Office, St Andrew's House, 16 Tavistock Crescent, London W11 1AP, UK

We look forward to networking with you and, together, supporting families and sharing in God's life-bringing mission among and through them.

The IAFN international management committee

Special edition IAFN newsletter for the Lambeth Conference 2022

For three decades, IAFN's [newsletters](#) have gathered stories on different themes, describing how churches are helping families to overcome the challenges that can distort right relationship in the family context. Such challenges may be frictions between generations; pressures from secularising societies; war and conflict; disease, the impacts of the climate emergency; gender-based violence, and other forces that put stress on families and rob individuals within the family of their God-given dignity.

Other stories have focussed on how families are working together across generations, walking, listening and witnessing together, in order to live out their calling beyond themselves. The COVID-19 pandemic has generated many instances of such activity. Every story has highlighted challenges and joys as families seek to live well together as disciples of Christ, and work together in mission.

This newsletter brings together extracts from previous newsletters. They offer a remarkable flavour of experience among families in many different cultures and circumstances.

We offer these stories in hope and trust that the archbishops, bishops and spouses meeting at Lambeth, and Anglicans everywhere, will find much within these pages to learn from and to inspire.

Families in Mission: Walking, listening and witnessing together

Our next newsletter: From the earliest days of the church, families have been places of mission. Family members have a calling to live missionally within the family itself – sharing the Good News, making disciples, offering loving service, seeking to live justly with each other, and caring for their environment. Families also share in the wider calling to be God's church for God's world – living missionally in the same way with neighbours near and far.

This is not always an easy calling – it involves maintaining right relationship within the family, and yet recognising the need together to look more widely beyond our own family groupings to the wider family of Christ and the wider world.

Our next newsletter, to be published later this year, will gather stories of intergenerational discipleship and examples of how families can be supported in living out the [Five Marks of Mission](#). Can you contribute a story from your Province or diocese? Email iafn@anglicancommunion.org to find out more. We look forward so much to hearing from you.

Front cover photo by [August de Richelieu](#) from Pexels, <https://bit.ly/3w9VlwW>

IAFN Regional Consultations

The Network is most alive and at its most productive when members, male and female; young and old; project workers, project managers and involved church leaders, meet together to share knowledge, ideas and experience. To date, IAFN has held four regional consultations – in East Africa, South-East Asia, Oceania and, most recently, in Central Africa – carefully planned between the host diocese and the IAFN management committee. Each consultation has led to benefits to the local church and the wider Communion and, ultimately, to families being assisted to thrive. For more information about IAFN consultations, see <https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/consultations.aspx>

In October 2018, IAFN and the Church of the Province of Central Africa joined in hosting a consultation on '[Families under Pressure: How can churches respond?](#)' Participants from Botswana, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe asked themselves, how could Christians query the norms and practices of their culture and preserve the values of community and generosity? How could churches minister to multiple generations in the same context, and what tools could they offer to families in the midst of change? How could people reflect on the different hierarchies of value found in different parts of their culture? Where was change offering new opportunities to be embraced?

The consultation revealed starkly how pressures on the family can be both internal and external. Internal pressures emerge as personality, age, experience and the expectations of successive generations affect that network of relationships which are at the heart of all families. External pressures emerge as factors such as economics, politics, culture and the onward march of technology impinge on how families develop and nurture their members.

In 2019, the members of the Anglican Consultative Council meeting in Hong Kong passed a resolution that emphasised the role of families living out the mission of Christ, and encouraged the churches of the Anglican Communion to engage with, and support families in particular ways:

Resolution A17:04 International Anglican Family Network

The Anglican Consultative Council:

1. welcomes the work of the [International Anglican Family Network](#) (IAFN) across the Communion to celebrate the God-given potential of the family as a source of thriving relationships, identity, belonging, discipleship and reconciliation
2. commends the Network for facilitating the 2018 regional consultation for Central Africa entitled '[Families Under Pressure: How can churches respond?](#)' and the report published in the [March 2019 edition of the IAFN newsletter](#)
3. **calls on the Member Churches to engage with the conclusions of the consultation by:**
 - a. **raising awareness of the pressures on families and developing an inclusive approach to supporting families who may be fragile and in need**
 - b. **designating persons at every level of the church who will advocate for the family as precious in itself and as a place for unfolding the Gospel, and encourage their church to include the family as a vital part of its mission narratives and strategies**
 - c. **valuing young people's contributions to the mission of the church, their leadership gifts, and especially their unique experience as 'digital natives' and their potential to use technology to the glory of God**
4. requests IAFN to:
 - a. gather and share information and stories about action taken in Anglican churches to help families respond to current pressures
 - b. report to ACC18 on progress.

Family pressures: A youth perspective

Mphangela Mwale is a young person in the Diocese of Lusaka, Zambia. She attended the IAFN Central Africa consultation's Youth Day at the Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka. Reflecting afterwards, this is what she had to say:



Mphangela Mwale, far right, with other youth participants

We live in a global village. What affects the world out there affects the ordinary person in any community. Family is seen as one of many institutions in society alongside health, education and religion. It is part of the larger, natural and fundamental unit of any society.

Every individual in a community is a member of the family. The degree to which a family can move as a unit to deal with their own problems can maximize the potential of its members, therefore the functioning of the family should be of central concern to the church. Crisis is inevitable in any family. Severe illness, early marriages, divorce cases and remarriage,

and a lack of financial literacy are some of the many crisis situations that cause pressure on the family.

Being a young person in a family facing a crisis situation is not easy. Young people are regarded as too inexperienced and immature to make meaningful contributions in a crisis and as such decisions and possible solutions are left entirely to the elders in the family. In most cases young people are not even allowed to be part of these 'crisis resolution sit downs' even when the crisis directly involves them. For example, when a young woman becomes pregnant they are not allowed to be present during the meeting with the family of the young man who fathered the child.

Children and young people in these situations feel uncertain about their futures. The lack of a proper upbringing in most instances makes it hard to inculcate good moral values, and children learn from school, peers, television and internet. In some cases where the man was the sole provider, once a divorce takes place the sponsorship gets cut off leaving the children with no financial support. This in turn affects the children and young people's futures negatively as most tend to drop out of school. Some tend to keep bad company and pick up bad vices such as selling in the streets, drug abuse and prostitution. These quick fix ways of escaping the harsh reality affects their future development, but they don't feel like any help is available to them.

As a result of remarriage complex family relationships are often created. Step families may go through stress in the initial stages due to rivalries among the children and hostilities towards step parents. Young people feel supported when they are being treated as part of the family, when they have equal rights as the rest of the children in the house, and if they all have equal share in terms of education, clothing and provision

regarded as family matters and are left for family members to sort out. The church only offers help when approached by the affected family. Only then do they intervene.

Young people who have experienced violence in their families tend to feel that their life is meaningless and lose hope for the future. Yes, they can certainly learn to move past the terrible experience by getting help from community support groups and the church. Prayers and counselling would help the violence victims to heal, forgive and move on in life.

Zambia has one of the highest rates of teenage pregnancy in the Southern African Development Community region. The reasons for early pregnancy include low use of contraceptives among sexually active teenagers, ignorance/lack of education, unemployment and poverty. Teenage pregnancy has serious consequences such as failure to complete school, poverty, high birth rate, etc. The church offers counselling and pastoral care. The young people are welcome and the peer relationships tend to be very supportive, but the church environment is not welcoming enough. There is so much criticism and segregation of young people who become pregnant and father children from members of the church. Young people tend to stay away from church in order to not be looked down on.

Young people are received well when they seek spiritual guidance, and helped through prayers and biblical counsel.

The church often provides counselling and biblical guidance to whole families that are struggling, not just the adults. Also, many churches provide free education which not only caters for its members but for the community at large. However, this education is limited to a certain level. During conferences, sessions on sensitization of gender-based violence, human rights and drug abuse are held but are not covered in depth and the information tends to be limited to the participants only. The church should however, provide guidance on how to deal with family pressures by providing a platform for ongoing, in depth, sensitization programmes for its members and the community at large. This sensitization should cater for all ages, because these pressures affect all age groups. It should also engage experts to help its members on issues to do with financial literacy, entrepreneurship programmes, and so on. Another way the church can help families is through youth empowerment by providing scholarships to tertiary education and training of women in survival skills.

Survival skills such as catering, financial literacy and entrepreneurship, tailoring, arts and crafts will equip women with the necessary skills to develop and make a decent living and meaningful contributions for themselves and their children financially. The church could provide a venue for skills training, and help with dissemination of information in order to reach out to the community. It could also identify vulnerable young people with potential in the community and offer assistance.



See the full report of the IAFN Central Africa consultation at <https://iafn.anglicancommunion.org/media/345061/iafn-newsletter-march-2019.pdf>.

IAFN Newsletters

Our newsletters, distributed two or three times each year, provide a unique Anglican digest of grass-root stories from around the world on specific issues affecting family life and mission. The newsletters cover a broad range of topics, from helping children to navigate the challenges they face and families and young people adapting to life in a pandemic, to exploring family as a reconciling community and supporting families on the move as a result of conflict and disaster.

The following are stories extracted from just some of them.

See all IAFN's past newsletters at <https://bit.ly/3PZcUMR>. Email iafn@anglicancommunion.org to subscribe.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on our young people. Their lives have been changed abruptly and perhaps forever. For our September 2021 newsletter '[Young People and the COVID-19 pandemic](#)', we joined with the Anglican Communion Youth Network and the International Anglican Women's Network to tell some of their stories of challenge, creativity, resilience and hope.

"With this pandemic we have discovered how fragile and defenceless we are and we sadly see that we are not prepared for such an event. Human beings boast of having great technologies and sometimes of being the centre of the universe because of their intelligence, and yet a tiny organism has made us tremble, showing us how weak we are. I turn my gaze to God and pray for those people who are suffering the loss of a loved one and for those who are in hospital. And I invite you to be people of faith and prayer."

Alexa, a young person from the Western Diocese of Mexico

COVID-19: The positive side

Toni-Ann Ewen, Spiritual Coordinator for the Anglican Youth Fellowship of the Cathedral of St Jago de la Vega in Spanish Town, Jamaica:

It is no secret that the outbreak of coronavirus has caused a detrimental shift all over the world, from the death of loved ones to the breakdown of the economy; just having everyone on edge and trying to survive physically and mentally. The pandemic has definitely affected the Church community due to lockdowns and congregation restrictions, leading to many concerns about spiritual depletion, especially among youth. Despite all of this, it is a belief that COVID-19 may have also been a blessing in disguise because I have seen how it has reshaped youth ministry.

As a member of the Anglican Church and a member of the Anglican Youth Fellowship (AYF) of the Cathedral Church of St Jago de la Vega, I could see that, pre-COVID, the youth group was not as active as expected. This was due to various reasons but the reality was that many persons could not or would not attend face to face meetings, which definitely created a hole within our group.

BOOM! The first case of COVID hit Jamaica in March 2020 and the numbers of infections slowly climbed the ladder until a huge spike occurred. This resulted in many things shifting to online platforms and, I must say, our AYF really stepped up to the challenge.

On 31 December 2020, I was appointed Spiritual Coordinator of the AYF and both myself and the President of the group have worked assiduously to ensure we improve the state of our youth fellowship regardless of the possibility of there being no in-person interactions. As an executive body, we put our minds together to plan a very fulfilling AYF calendar of events with the majority of these being held virtually. Events included Movie Days, COVID-19 learning sessions, cultural expo, Bible studies, prayer sessions and other general AYF meetings which included spiritually engaging games or activities. The efforts were well received by members and we observed a consistency in the attendance by most members.



While there is always room for more improvement, especially with getting all members actively involved in AYF, we are definitely proud of our progress thus far. There has been a fresh new aura within our fellowship as youths and we have definitely bonded more within this pandemic through the virtual medium. As teen novel author Susane Colasanti once said, 'Even in a bad situation, there's always a positive side, even if you can't see it yet'. The impression at the start of the pandemic was that there would be a total breakdown in spiritual fellowship but adjustments to utilise the virtual space have proven to be effective in bringing spiritual comfort amidst the chaos all around. We are a truly blessed to be living in a time with such advanced technology.

It feels unreal day by day, but we just have to continue to pray, stay safe and keep our spiritual fellowships steady.

Our March 2021 newsletter '[I Will Welcome the Stranger](#)' gathered stories of compassion, mercy, love and hospitality among asylum-seekers, refugees and internally displaced people.

Hospitality, healing and reconciliation

The Anglican Missionary Diocese of Nampula, founded in Mozambique in 2019, is centred in the city of Nampula and covers two Northern Provinces of Mozambique: Nampula and Cabo Delgado.

Nampula Province hosts the National Refugee Camp for external refugees at Marratane. This has 17,000 residents mainly from Democratic Republic of Congo, Burundi, Rwanda and Somalia. It is stable and managed under the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR). Our church has a well-established ministry in the community there with over 386 congregants led by Revd Claudina Cabral.

Since 2017 Cabo Delgado has been the epicentre of an Internally Displaced People (IDP) crisis resulting from the Insurgency which worsened significantly during 2020. There are now over 565,000 IDPs, some in temporary camps in Metuge, Chiure and Namialo-Corrante but the majority are hosted in foster homes throughout southern Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa Provinces. Society was unprepared for the humanitarian crisis brought about by the flow of IDPs in search of security and the church's ministry is being shaped to focus on hospitality, healing and reconciliation.

The Ministry of Hospitality requires the church and its ecumenical and inter faith partners, internal and external, to join hands to welcome new families and assist in meeting their immediate physical and emotional needs.

The state relief agency and other better resourced non-governmental organisations are providing the essentials but the need on the ground is immense. People have been disconnected from their land and the burial places of their ancestors, and have lost all their livelihoods because of the armed insurgency, and now rely entirely on hand-outs. The church is involved in collecting and distributing goods and serving their new neighbours, but most importantly the church provides community where the displaced people are accepted, listened to and cared for.

Many displaced people, including unaccompanied children, come with signs of trauma and the emotional effects of conflict and it will take time for them to find healing. Hawa (name changed) comes from Matemo Island. After losing her husband, two children and many relatives when rebels attacked, she now lives on her own in the suburbs of Pemba, the main city of Cabo Delgado, a place where she never intended to live. There are so many like Hawa who, in this time of COVID-19 and a strong rainy season, need food, shelter, clean water and, in the long term, a place and a community in which to rebuild their futures and begin to heal.



Photo credit: Lucilla de Fatima from Foundation for Community Development Mozambique

Our Healing Ministry attends to the deeply rooted and long term spiritual and emotional scars left by the wounds of the conflict. Northern Mozambique had been known for its cultural and religious diversity: Christian and Muslim families have been living together peacefully since the 5th century AD but the Cabo Delgado conflict (characterised by Islamic extremist attacks on remote communities and ports which were already disadvantaged by poverty, lack of opportunity, alienation from external mining developments in the region, failure of harvests, the devastation caused by Cyclone Kenneth

in 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic) has strained family and community relationships, compromised trust, and distorted the spiritual nature of faith as a divine and life-giving way of bringing people together.

We, and our ecumenical and inter faith partners, are mobilising our spiritual resources and re-reading Scripture in order to reverse these conflicting narratives, to assist families in nurturing good relationships, dialogue and mutual appreciation. Communities are bringing their understanding of God and the needs of the most vulnerable to the debate about migration and refugees.

The situation facing families in Cabo Delgado is complex and has no parallel in our collective memory in Northern Mozambique. But the Bible is full of stories of families in similar, hopeless situations which show that God can change any circumstance. The story of Naomi and her family in Ruth 1.1-22 resonates with the story of Hawa and her fellow widows in Cabo Delgado. The church in Pemba and our diocesan mission team are using this story with the family meetings they organise to illuminate and start conversation when women gather in homes for mutual support and to share experiences. The hope is that these enable community dialogue and healing that will become part of local peace-building work.

Finding community in a new home

Monica Mehaffey, Head of Education at Refuge Egypt, a ministry of the Episcopal/Anglican Province of Alexandria:

Refugees come to Cairo, Egypt, fleeing war and persecution in their home countries. They leave behind their homes, possessions and, most significantly, their local communities. At home, their tribe or extended family served many functions, from providing a safety net in times of trouble, to choosing a spouse for the young people. When they arrive in Cairo, they are forced to adjust to very different circumstances. There are no refugee camps in Egypt, so refugees are integrated into existing neighbourhoods alongside Egyptians and refugees from other nations. They find work in the informal labour sector, often as domestic workers. Life is difficult and they struggle to find the strong social network they had in their home country.

Along with providing high quality education, one of the goals of our educational programming is to foster the social ties that refugees struggle to find in Egypt. Learning alongside fellow refugees from other tribes or nations provides a safe environment for getting to know someone and breaks down the barriers that often exists between people.

Our Adult Education programme is a place where refugee newcomers to Egypt find community. Fatima is a 25-year-old woman from Somalia. When Fatima began English classes as a new student, she was incredibly shy, nervous, and hesitant. She refused to speak to her teacher or classmates, and didn't participate in class even when called on.

A volunteer, Judy, made an effort to reach out to her and encourage her to participate, but struggled to know how to help her open up. She reminded Fatima that class was a safe

place and encouraged her to get to know her classmates, and Fatima did. By the end of the four-month term, Judy commented that Fatima was one of the most social students in class. She was actively involved in class-work and an active participant in class discussions. She had bonded with several of her peers. She became incredibly warm and social, and helped her peers in class. Fatima had found belonging and the class had become community.



At the Happy Child Pre-school, the love of Jesus that the teachers show the students has a dramatic impact on their behaviour and social development. The pre-school was forced to close down for a few months due to the coronavirus pandemic. As is true of young people around the world, the pre-school children suffered greatly during this time due to lack of the structure and routine that school normally provides. Most refugee parents still had to work outside the home, sometimes leaving their children under the supervision of a neighbour or older sibling.

One mother shared about the impact of the pre-school closure on her son, Ahmed. During the quarantine period, Ahmed became addicted to video games and would stay up until the middle of the night playing. Without the routine of getting up for pre-school each morning, he didn't have a bedtime and he wasn't getting enough rest. He also started watching violent movies online and would see the news reports on television about the pandemic. These movies and the news started to affect him emotionally and behaviourally. He started to talk less with his family members and didn't want to play with his relatives when they came for a visit. He also started to be physically aggressive with other kids and adults.

Once the pre-school reopened, the teachers were intentional about helping the children process what they were experiencing as a result of the pandemic. The teachers equipped the kids with knowledge about how to defend themselves against the virus by washing their hands, wearing a mask, and maintaining distance from other kids while playing. They also reassured children that they didn't need to be scared about catching the virus, and if they did become sick, they would get better within a couple of weeks.

This information greatly affected Ahmed, and his anxious demeanour quickly dissipated. The teachers paid him particular attention, showing their love and care for him and encouraging interaction with his peers. As Ahmed began to re-engage in classroom activities and group play, his aggressive and antisocial attitude melted away. At home, Ahmed returned to his regular routines and began to socialize with

family. Ahmed had returned to his warm and social self, thanks to the practical love the teachers showed him at preschool.

In November 2020, IAFN joined with the International Anglican Women's Network to publish a newsletter marking the 16 Days of Activism against Gender-based Violence. Entitled '[A Shadow Pandemic How Anglicans are responding to the increase in domestic abuse and gender-based violence in the time of COVID-19](#)', the newsletter described very different responses to GBV in different parts of the Communion, and how they are action-orientated, effective, and appropriate in their context.

'Say No to Violence' workshop

Amal Sarah describes a one-day workshop on Domestic Abuse Awareness organised and led in September 2020 by the Women Development & Service Society (WDSS) of the Diocese of Raiwind, Church of Pakistan:

The theme of the workshop was 'Say No to Violence' - a step towards preventing domestic abuse and violence. Eighty-nine people from the local community, including students, congregation members from three parishes in the diocese, and trainees in midwifery and community psychiatric nursing trainees from the WDSS Rehabilitation Centre participated.

During the COVID-19 lockdown, a surge in domestic abuse has been observed, and rape cases of women and children increased in Pakistan. So we gathered the local community at one platform to raise awareness among them. Sessions on domestic abuse, violence against women, and men and child abuse/rape cases were conducted by WDSS staff and a volunteer team. The factors that have led these abuses to increase and deteriorate the fabric of society were emphasised.

Participants were grouped for activities and they were asked to propose solutions as to how we can, as individuals, church and society, play a key role in preventing various forms of abuses occurring in the Pakistani society. In one of the group activities, various biblical verses were shared with the participants regarding domestic abuse and they were given an opportunity to reflect upon and relate the biblical references to the current scenario in society. The entire workshop was interactive and has been a safe space, where not only the problems were focused upon, but it was also aimed at moving towards solutions to at least take a small step in creating an aura of peace and harmony.



Across the Anglican Communion, all our churches and communities have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. We have been led to find new ways of 'being church' and to re-root in our faith and belief that God wills health and wholeness for all God's children.

In his Editorial to our August 2020 newsletter '[COVID-19: Church and Family – Responding creatively in a time of pandemic](#)', Archbishop Thabo Makgoba, Primate of Southern Africa, reflected that:

'In the nations in which Anglicans live, the coronavirus pandemic is revealing both the weaknesses and strengths of our lives and societies, from our health systems to the living conditions of our neighbours and communities ... [T]he virus has highlighted the crucial importance of family life to our common existence. By confining us to our homes, the strict 'lockdowns' that have been imposed in a number of Provinces in the Communion have thrown many of us together in our households far more than usual, putting the quality of our relationships firmly in the spotlight.'

All in this together

In this story from the Anglican Diocese of Perth in Western Australia, the Revd Nicholas Lockwood, Priest-in-Charge at Christ the King, Parish of Willetton, describes some of the unforeseen benefits of going online during the pandemic:

One of the challenges of being a family in the 'developed world' in the 21st century is busy-ness, and anyone who leads a church knows that we often find ourselves providing programmes and services for families. For our small parish in the suburb of Willetton, with a predominately older congregation, it was a real joy to see the younger families step up and contribute significantly when we were forced online by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At a time when there was a real risk of isolation and loneliness, it was such a gift to be able to anchor ourselves in worship together Sunday by Sunday, and respond to the love of God in loving one another. The first week of lockdown was a whirlwind of getting prepared to go online, including video tutorials and phone calls to help older members get connected and confident in using online platforms. In order to build congregational connection, I visited different homes each week to video the bible readings and prayers. In the first instance, it meant that people in the congregation were able to see their church family online over the weeks of social distancing. But the families really came into their own in leading us in the Psalms. Our tradition of praying them responsorially meant that family members could contribute multiple voices, so that those on the other side of the screen felt invited to actively join in too. Moreover, we could video families sitting together on the sofa, creating the sense that we were all in this together. We saw sisters, brothers and kids from our church family sitting opposite us on their sofa (albeit through a screen!), leading us in worship while we sat on ours.

As the weeks went on, young adults stepped up to offer their time and technological skills to make our Sunday worship Online at Nine an amazing experience of community and

worship for our people. The live chat function on the pre-recorded service meant that we could still 'talk' to each other, and we even had morning tea over Zoom after the Service (bring-your-own cuppa, of course!). All this was intended to keep our own community connected, and a huge 96 per cent of our congregation made the move to worship online.

The pleasantly surprising consequence of moving online was that our worship was now accessible to others too. Family members who rarely joined us in church on a Sunday morning were now joining their family Online at Nine. People connected to our community outreaches took the opportunity to quietly and comfortably explore Christian worship, without the discomfort of entering a building and facing strangers. Parishioners invited family and friends, locally and abroad, to join them Online at Nine; it proved to be a real gift for those whose churches were unable to go online. And significantly for us, one of our people who had recently moved into aged care was able to rejoin her church family for worship.



For my family, including the two dogs, it proved to be not only a real honour to lead God's people in worship during this season online, but a lot of fun too. Because we all work and study, Monday evenings were the only time we were all available to pre-record our part in leading the church service; however, evenings are also playtime for our dogs! We oscillated between frustration and laughter as the dogs would sneak onto the sofa for pats and scratches while we were trying to do the video recordings. Eventually, they just became a part of church online, and so we made sure we regularly sang the good old hymn 'All Creatures of our God and King'.

Many fellow pastors will have shared my anxieties around pastoral care. Much of our pastoral care usually stems from the face-to-face encounters we have with one other on a Sunday morning. To mitigate this loss we divided the congregation up over the days of the week, and committed to pray for each other daily. For many, this led to a deeper connection with new or other people in the parish; and one young family even took it upon themselves to write and post letters to all on the parish list who lived alone.

Whilst many are still struggling with the impact of the pandemic, thankfully, for us at Willetton now that we are able to worship together again physically, the biggest struggle is no longer being able to roll out of bed for Online at Nine in our pyjamas and with a coffee in hand!

Wherever we are in the world, we are experiencing the impacts of the climate crisis which is affecting all God's good creation.

For its March 2020 newsletter '[Families and the Climate Emergency: Stories of grief, faith, hope and action for all God's creation](#)', IAFN joined with the Anglican Communion Environmental Network and the Anglican Alliance.

In the Editorial for the newsletter, Bishop Philip Huggins, Anglican Church of Australia, wrote:

'This is where the hope of our resurrection faith is so vital. We follow the One 'in whom all things hold together' *Colossians 1.17*. The way the Holy Spirit has guided, and is guiding, our response to this 'climate emergency', shows how much our God wants us to protect and sustain God's good creation. Yes?'

A 'freight train' of a hurricane

Kristoff Ayala-Strachan is a young Anglican who lives in Grand Bahama:

I, and many other Bahamians, were no strangers to hurricanes as we prepared for Hurricane Dorian. However, there was nothing really that could have prepared anyone for what we actually went through.

Hurricane Dorian rushed through the islands of Abaco and Grand Bahama like a freight train. I remember watching weather bulletins and seeing that the hurricane continued to strengthen as it moved closer and closer to The Northern Bahamas and feeling as if I was being punched in the gut. As Dorian crept across Abaco, and images and videos of the damage being wrought there began circulating, I became so nervous, thinking that I needed to expect the same. I wasn't far off.

Throughout the entire ordeal, for almost three days, I wondered when it would be my time to leave, like thousands of other people who had to leave their homes when they became compromised. Fortunately, this was not the case for me and my family in our home. However, my grandmother was not as fortunate, and she had to leave her home in the middle of the worst of Hurricane Dorian when several feet of water from the ocean inundated her neighbourhood. We



wouldn't be able to get to her for several days after Dorian passed and this was also the case for the other family members who lived in severely impacted areas. Flood waters took days to recede and the roads that remained dry were impassable due to fallen trees, lamp poles or even rubble from buildings that were damaged or destroyed.

The Bahamas, like most countries in the Caribbean, is susceptible to hurricanes. On average, The Bahamas has been hit by a hurricane every two years and by a major hurricane every four years. But over the past ten years, The Bahamas has been hit by a hurricane almost every year. This change is believed to be a result of global climate change, which is also resulting in rising sea levels.

Together, intense tropical cyclones and rising sea levels wreak havoc and leave families distraught and fractured in a myriad ways. Very often, families - regardless of their composition or social class - lose all of their physical possessions. All physical mementos of the lives they have created with the people they loved are lost within a moment. Financially, these storms continue to be an immense burden. Many persons have to undertake the cost of replacing valuables like cars, repairing their homes and even completely rebuilding them. With rising sea levels a constant threat, many persons opt to leave the place of their homes for decades in favour of an area believed to be safer, or perhaps even another island.

Climate change at this point seems irreversible. However, its effects can be mitigated. I imagine that my children will grow up in a country and region very different from where I grew up, if it is even safe for them to do so. I say that because if we do not work arduously to slow down the effects of climate change, hurricanes will be more frequent and even stronger than what we experience now. In a country like The Bahamas, it may simply prove to be unsafe to raise a family. This thought is one that saddens me, but one that I may have to become comfortable with as it may be my reality and the reality for millions of other people around the world who live in island states and are impacted by tropical storms.

The Church has played an interesting role in The Bahamas as it relates to hurricane preparation and relief efforts. Throughout each island, the overwhelming majority of designated hurricane shelters are churches fulfilling their purpose of not only being a place of spiritual refuge and salvation, but also physical. In the case of Hurricane Dorian, churches like the Anglican Pro-Cathedral of Christ the King and the Anglican Church of the Ascension became centres of food and clothing distribution despite, in the case of Christ the King, also sustaining damage from the hurricane.

I do believe that the Church should be more vocal about the damage that climate change is causing throughout the entire earth. Christianity, across all its traditions, attracts the most followers throughout the world. Over a billion people, collectively, believe that the earth and everything therein was created by God. Thus, the earth and all of its life forms should be treated as gifts from God. To destroy them purposely should be treated as an act of ungratefulness towards God,

<https://www.facebook.com/AnglicanFamilies>

the creator of heaven and earth. It should be the duty of humankind to maintain the earth in a state that is pleasing to God, and the Church should be at the forefront of conversations about climate change and mitigating it.

While the church is present in the aftermath of natural disasters as it relates to relief efforts, the church should also be present trying to prevent many of the disasters from being as detrimental to human life as they are becoming due to the effects of climate change.

IAFN's November 2019 newsletter looked at [‘The Church as Family: Helping people and communities to move towards hope and abundant life’](#).

In his Editorial for the newsletter, the Bishop of St Asaph, Church in Wales, the Rt Revd Gregory Cameron, wrote:

‘Calling yourselves a family has deep implications. It is more than holding cosy feelings for one another. It means being loyal to keeping space open for one another, and admitting that there is a bond between us which runs deeper than emotions, success or failure – or even happiness with one another. Nor should the Church’s members forget that we are family, not because we choose to be, but because we are called and (re)born as the family of God by his grace, and his choice.’

Open doors and open eyes

Diana Hall, Rector of St Anne’s Scottish Episcopal & Methodist Church in Dunbar, Scotland, describes how the church family has become ‘family’ to the wider community:

Our High Street church in the growing Scottish harbour town of Dunbar is 130 years old. But seven years ago it was in dire straits: inward-looking, with a dwindling Sunday gathering, and struggling to support a quarter-time priest. However, in a remarkable season, God has led this small community on a transformational journey of re-imagining what it means to be the Good News in our town.

We raised significant funds to adapt a neglected church building to create a versatile worship and community hub. Now our church is becoming known as a place open daily to all as a haven for peace and contemplation, and as a welcoming venue for community groups, activities and events for people of all ages and walks of life. Sunday gatherings have doubled in numbers, and we are supporting a full-time priest.

Somehow, the more open we have been to the Spirit, the more she has led us into spiritual growth through service of our neighbours. With our doors and our eyes open, the opportunities and challenges people face in our town are becoming increasingly visible to us, and people seem to sense in us the invitation into friendship and relationship.

We provided a base, part-funding and volunteers to help ensure continuation of the Harbour Lights youth groups when the town’s Methodist Chapel and hall closed. Focussed on the needs of youngsters from the area of multiple deprivation around the harbour and adjacent to the church, this has already spawned a Homework Club and, unexpectedly, seen a

number of parents begin to enjoy informal hospitality, friendship and support as the children enjoy recreation.

We have supported Mercy, a homeless African mum with three young children who appeared at our service one Sunday. The family was originally granted asylum status elsewhere in Europe before being forced to flee to Scotland to escape domestic violence. A couple in the congregation provided shelter for them for three months, while they were helped to access the state benefits system and to find temporary, and then permanent accommodation. Specialist healthcare support was accessed for the child most adversely affected by the abuse he had experienced. The whole congregation learnt much from loving the family. They gained a new appreciation of the challenges faced by immigrants and single parents as they helped the family find essentials to enable them to set up a new home. We grew in humility as we journeyed with a determined and resilient mother as she fought for, and found, good, permanent employment. Spiritually, their vibrancy and freedom in worship, their intimacy in prayer and their absolute confidence in the God who provides for all of our needs helped release us into deeper worship also.



Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper for local children

As we have prayed for and wondered how we might serve our small town and surrounding local community, we became aware of the likelihood of hidden financial hardship, and a lack of support to enable people to tackle it. Those needs align with gifts God has given us—people gifted in hospitality, listening, and financial stewardship. So, we are responding by working with the Salvation Army to establish a debt advice service. We plan to offer a weekly ‘drop-in’ café in the church to foster supportive community, offering gentle pastoral support and discrete provision of professional debt advice.

As people begin to identify the church as a place of welcome, we are re-finding our place as a hub for friendship and community in the town. People’s God-given stories are being shared and valued. We hope this openness will enable people to share and receive support to overcome their burdens. It is a beautiful thing to see how God is leading our small church to reach out to be family to others. As we learn to serve our neighbours, we are rediscovering our common humanity. People outside the traditional church community are encountering God’s love through our actions, and as we

encounter people 'different' to us, we are meeting Christ too - noticing beauty, dignity and value in new ways. By God's grace we receive at least as much as we give.

Te Whare Ruruhou o Meri Trust: **responding to an intergenerational crisis**

This Maori Anglican social service agency was named by the late Reverend Puti Hopaea Murray, a legendary pioneer here in the Maori Anglican Church in the Province of Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia. It translates into English as 'Mary's Sanctuary'. She named this church ministry unit in honour of Mary the mother of Jesus, Messiah - Saviour of humanity.

Te Whare Ruruhou o Meri is the social services arm of Te Pihopatanga o Te Tai Tokerau, the northern-most Maori diocese in New Zealand. As an organisation it has positioned itself to undertake the mission of the church in this province, to respond to human need by loving service, to transform unjust structures of society, to challenge violence of every kind, and to pursue peace and reconciliation.

Many Maori families suffer each day from the scourge of physical and sexual violence. This abuse is generations-long and is intensifying. Alcohol and substance abuse ravage these families resulting in pain, suffering, grief and hopelessness. Maori, as the indigenous peoples of New Zealand, are at a crisis point with over 60 per cent of children in state care of Maori descent; over 60 per cent of the prison population of Maori descent; and Maori having the highest suicide rates in the country despite being only 16 per cent of the population.

We exist to combat these forces of evil that damage and destroy the hearts, spirits and minds of our family. We exist

also to eliminate violence in our homes so that our children will not see what our eyes have seen and that they will not feel the fear and trembling that we have felt from those who are supposed to be there to love and protect us.

For the hundreds of families that come to our organisation each year seeking help, love, compassion and a sanctuary, we immerse them into the values and beliefs of the Maori culture as tools to bring about healing and restoration. The wisdoms and traditional knowledge base of our Maori culture has the transformative power to assist families build violence-free lives. We know this to be true, and we witness this; for this is where we find joy and thanksgiving.

The traditional proverb 'ko te kai a te rangatira, he korero' – 'the food of chiefs is discussion' highlights the importance of discussion required for the transference of knowledge to the people. The programmes undertaken by families in our services relate to discussions around cultural icons and an immersion into the Maori worldview and Maori identity. The programmes take the family on a spiritual journey of rediscovery of their cultural heritage, and in this learning, they find the strength and courage to journey to wellbeing and creating better lives for themselves and their children.

For many people, participating in a therapeutic group can be more powerful than having individual support. Many of our families enter our groups with the notion that they are unique



Indigenous Social Workers of Te Whare Ruruhou o Meri Trust alongside the Prime Minister of New Zealand the Right Hon Jacinda Adern and the Minister for Police, the Right Hon Stuart Nash at the opening of the Family Harm Team buildings, Auckland, June 2019.

in their struggles, that they alone have had negative experiences, thoughts and impulses. While it is true that every one of our families is unique and may be dealing with different circumstances, it is important for them to know that no one is alone in their struggles. Our therapeutic groups provide a safe space for people to talk, share stories and gain a better understanding of their own situations, while supporting others to do the same. In a world where individualism is the norm, bringing people together as part of a village environment is key to having those robust and honest discussions because you really cannot have a discussion by yourself.

The men's programme requires the participant to carve a tokotoko, a traditional walking stick that is used in ceremonial speeches. The tokotoko is a prized possession in traditional Maori society. The participant is taken through the process of going in to the bush to select a stick using prayers of thanksgiving to Creator God for the gifts of the forest for our life and purpose. Each etching in the stick is representative of that person's story and identity and aspects of the traditional knowledge of their forebears. It acts as a symbol and a reminder of their identity and obligation to protect, sustain and love their families and the environment as opposed to terrorising, abusing and harming them.

An evaluation given by a partner of a past participant in the tokotoko programme shared how she had seen a 180 degree change in her partner's behaviour and character. She noticed that when things got heated, rather than arguing to the point of physical violence, her partner would take his tokotoko and leave the house to calm down. She was also quite shocked when he asked her if she wanted to go somewhere, because previously she was told what to do, never asked. She shared that their family has changed for the better and she was excited for her, her partner and their children's future.

We thank God our guide and shepherd who leads us and our Maori people towards peace and truth. In a secular world, we hold fast to the values of the Maori world that places God high above all else for it is through God and in God that we have our being and are sustained.

Share your stories: iafn@anglicancommunion.org

The poor helping the poor

Parish priest Revda Inamar Corrêa de Souza writes:

Our parish, St Paul the Apostle, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is located in the historic district of Santa Teresa, named after Saint Teresa of Avila, when the Carmelite monastery was built in the neighbourhood. The district is visited a lot by tourists because of a feature which is unique in Brazil: it still maintains the tram as a means of transport for local residents and visitors.

The parish was set up in the early 20th century as an initiative of wealthy families in the region to provide assistance to the poor, distributing food to the hungry and providing temporary shelter, especially during the Spanish flu season. In 1915 the 'Assistance of St Teresa' was founded and the Anglican church was charged with spiritual and pastoral leadership.

There has always been an Anglican vocation in the region to serve underprivileged families and collaborate in neighbourhood struggles to maintain their historical and cultural values. We are a small congregation with very little revenue. But we never feel so poor that we cannot help and give, specially sharing our physical space, our time, or fostering small projects and initiatives.

The parish supports the survival of families living in the slums on local hills (there are more than 23 communities growing on the slopes of the neighbourhood), especially in Morro da Coroa and Morro dos Prazeres. In 2006, we created the Community Gardens Project transforming vacant lots and some slabs of slum houses into artisanal and organic gardens. The City Hall of Rio recently ended the project, passing tractors over the gardens to build squares with exercise equipment for seniors. The government did not listen to the population, because they had made a millionaire contract with a private company with the objective of deploying equipment around the city, regardless of the need of the needy population to have affordable food. We are still thinking of resuming the project in smaller places that do not depend on the interference of the City Hall.

The initiatives we carry out for local families are a two-way street, because these families also care about us and recognise the value of the church in their lives. When we held the diocesan council in the parish for four days, with four daily meals made on sit, local families supported the event by bringing food - fresh, organic, breads, cakes, pastries, coffee, juices, desserts and more. This was a way of contributing back to the church that helps the neighbourhood so much. Families



also hosted visitors from other cities, demonstrating that despite some precarious situations, there is solidarity among the poor.

Today there are no more rich families attending the parish church. But we consider ourselves poor helping other poor. Poor people being helped by the poorest. It is possible, as long as Christ is at the centre of our speaking and praying, of our being and acting. We have heard many testimonials from people who say they have known God by knowing Christians like us, and who say their faith in the church has been restored because we are not just working for Anglicans. We work for them all.

IAFN pays tribute to Archbishop Desmond Tutu



Archbishop Tutu was a dear friend to IAFN and served as a patron to the network until his death in 2021.

In his introduction to our Easter 2020 newsletter '[Reconciliation and the Family](#)', he wrote:

'We humans learn mainly through imitating, copying examples; we learn by aping others. That is why Jesus assumed our human nature, to be as one of us, this Pioneer, as Hebrews puts it, to show us how to be truly human, and so he described himself as 'the Way'. He washed the feet of his somewhat dim disciples, carrying out the task of the most menial slave – He did it to set them an example.'

We continue to miss Archbishop Tutu and mourn his loss. We give great thanks to God for the example he himself set, as a disciple of Christ and a prophetic voice in the church and in the world.

Holy and loving God

We praise you for your love in Christ, that breaks open our hearts to new meanings of sisterhood, brotherhood and family.

How astonishing it is to see you in Christ, weak and vulnerable, hungry and cold, pierced through by the pain of the world.

Help us always to be ready to give of ourselves, to take the risk of walking with others who struggle, who feel alone, but who are your precious children.

Help us to walk the extra mile, sharing joy and sorrow, and being as Christ to those who need to know that they belong, and that they matter to you, always. Amen.



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