VALE: JAMES LEFTWICH
Bishop in the Church of God

Bishop James Randolph Leftwich died overnight on Monday 27 January, surrounded by his family.

Bishop James was born in 1944 and studied theology at both Nungalinya College in Darwin and Wontulp-bi-Buya in Cairns.

He was ordained Deacon in 1987 and Priest in 1988, and ministered in the Cairns area throughout his ministry. He held the positions of: Assistant to the Bishop, Cairns 1987-96; Assistant Priest, Cairns 1988-92; Canon Resident Cathedral 1995-2001; Priest-in-Charge of St Luke’s Cairns and Area Dean of the Peninsula Area as well as Director of the Aboriginal/Islander Anglican Min in Cairns 1994-2010. He was consecrated to serve as Assistant Bishop NQ with responsibility to Aboriginal people in 2001. In 2004 he took on the responsibility of National Aboriginal Bishop before retiring in 2010.

Bishop James is survived by his much loved wife, Auntie Lala. We hold Auntie Lala and all his family in our prayers.

A Eucharist of the Repose of the Soul of Bishop James took place St Monica’s Roman Catholic Cathedral Cairns on Friday 14th February.

ANDREW McDonOUGH to visit NQ

Just a reminder from GFS (trading as Kidzlink NQ) that Andrew McDonough, author and illustrator of the popular Lost Sheep children’s books will be coming to the Diocese later in the year under the banner of Kidzlink:

He will conduct two sessions: 16th May at Whitsunday Anglican School, Mackay and then 23rd May at St. Peter’s Anglican Church, West End, Townsville.

At each place, Andrew will present a whole day workshop and participants will be able to choose one of the Lost Series books as part of the workshop.

A flyer with full details will be available very soon.

Make sure you set aside the date you wish to attend. It will be worthwhile.

AMUA LONG SERVICE BADGES

As part of chairing her first executive meeting of AMUA North Queensland, Diocesan President Vivienne Feltham also had the honour of presenting long service badges to three of the members of the executive.

Nancy Irwan, who at last year’s conference became a Life Vice President, was presented with a 50 year badge.

Maureen Mossman (Wet Tropics Vice President) and Kathleen Mene (Torres and Cape Vice President) both received their 25 year badges.

Also at the Executive meeting, Mrs Lala Leftwich was made a life member in recognition of the work she has done over many years as a member of AMUA.

This first meeting of the year spent some time helping Viv and Anne prepare for this year’s workshops. Following on from the great success of their tour around the Diocese, many places are already looking forward to welcoming them to their Ministry Units.

More information about these workshops will be available from your local AMUA branch or friendship group.
Dear Friends

Most of you will be aware of Novel Coronavirus, now more properly called COVID-19. It appears to spread in much the same way as influenza: that is through droplets expelled into the air by a sufferer, even if they are not yet aware of their illness. Like the flu and other respiratory illnesses, it appears that people can pick it up directly by breathing in airborne particles, or indirectly from a place where coronavirus particles have been deposited. Many (if not most) people will not even know they have; or they will have the symptoms of a mild flu or cold. However like the flu it can be fatal. The fear is that it might be caught more easily than the flu and it might have a greater death rate. So it does pay to be cautious about COVID-19 and it does pay to heed the science.

It is not yet present in the broader Australian community so there is no need to react or overreact immediately. However we do need to take precautions and to be prepared for when it does eventually arrive in Australia. Unfortunately there is no vaccine as yet so we need to work on the basis of infection control. That will mean that anyone who has symptoms of respiratory illness should not come to church until they are cleared of COVID-19 or are well again. Other things we do in church which involve close contact – such as shaking hands or hugging (such as at the greeting of the peace) or sharing a common loaf of bread or a common cup – will need to be reconsidered.

It may well be that we end up refraining from shaking hands or other body contact; and taking only the bread at communion in wafer form, or using individual cups. This matter will be raised at the Bishops’ Meeting next month in Sydney and I am hopeful that some definitive and well informed advice will be available for the national church in the near future. In that way we can still be church together but in a way that prevents transmission of COVID-19. I am sure there will be much more about this shortly.

On another note related to this: we know that COVID-19 has originated in mainland China. However we must be very careful not to vilify or fear people just because they are of Chinese origin. Our society has a bad history of vilifying the victims of disease – those of us who were around in the early 1980s will remember how HIV and AIDS was viewed as the “gay plague” and how gay men and women were vilified and victimised because of this. We must not do the same in relation to those of east Asian descent. Go and eat at your favourite Chinese restaurant – I can guarantee the food will be delicious. Go and be with your Chinese friends in and out of church. And to quote the famous British World War Two poster: Keep Calm. COVID-19 is an illness, not the end of civilisation as we know it. With calm precautions we can limit its spread and ensure that the fellowship and witness of the Church continues.

Blessings,

MORE NEWS FROM CURSILLO

Last month I was able to give North Qld Diocese the wonderful news that a Cursillo 3 day weekend is to be held on 2-5th July,2020 at Cathedral School, Townsville. I can now give you even better news that a team has been gathered for a combined Men’s/Women’s 14 and will begin training on 29th February 2020. A commissioning service is to be held at 2.30pm on the 29th. It will be held at The Church of the Ascension, 6 Mill Road, Heatley, if you wish to attend to support the team. Your prayers will be appreciated for the team throughout our training.

For those who don’t know what a Cursillo Weekend is – the atmosphere differs from that of retreats. The Cursillo 3 day programme is a series of talks and meditations with the specific purpose of presenting a vision of Christian life. These are interspersed with prayer, Eucharists, songs, laughter and times for silence and reflection. There is nothing dull about a Cursillo 3 day programme. Those who have been to Cursillo now need to prayerfully consider who they would like to see attend and approach their priest and the person they wish to attend. As mentioned last month Rhonda Windsor is our Pre-Cursillo Contact. She may be contacted on Phone: 0408 745 122 or email rhondaewin@gmail.com. Now after that commercial break some fun news. My husband Robin, myself, Rev. Greg Windsor and his wife Rhonda attended a Cursillo breakfast for the Mackay Cluster at St. Charles, West Mackay on 8th February. It was a wonderful morning of fellowship and sharing. Mackay is to be applauded for their faithfulness in continuing to meet through the years. For me this morning was special as I caught up with many friends and had the opportunity to meet Fr. Jeffrey who is visiting from the Solomon Islands. We were surely blessed during the morning with a sense of the Holy Spirit amongst us guiding us on our journey.

Sexual Abuse contact line: 1800 242 544 or 07 3835 2216
Focus on: 2020 Retreat

The annual Clergy ministry retreat was held this year at Saints College at JCU, Townsville. Ministry was definitely the focus. Dr Robyn Wrigley-Carr lead the retreat and talked about differing ways to get in touch with the source of all ministry: God.

It is he who gives us the well of renewing strength in prayer, and meditation. Drawing on the famous mystical writer’s Evelyn Underhill’s own prayer diaries, Robyn encouraged us to develop a rhythm of life to keep ourselves in a harmony with God, and not be ruled by the busyness of other peoples’ agendas.

There were 8 Lay Ministers, and 26 clergy, and there was a positive vibe of renewal and God’s spirit at work across the region. It was great to hear of the positive things happening in ministry across the state.

The air-conditioned rooms at Saints were a bonus and the food was great. The general consensus was that it was a great retreat, and people returned renewed and refreshed to their Ministry Units. We look forward to seeing the fruit of the Spirit flowing through the diocese.

Robyn met her Kiwi husband at Regent, then they both returned to Sydney to live. Robyn worked as a lecturer in Spirituality for 8 years at the Australian College of Ministries (ACOM), and has lectured at MCSI (Macquarie University), Christian Heritage College, and tutored at the Broken Bay Institute. Robyn received an ORS scholarship and additional funding from the University of St Andrews to pursue her PhD full-time at the University of St Andrews, Scotland, and also tutored in Theology at the University.

She has received ARTFinc Grants in both 2016 and 2018, an ADM Summer Research Fellowship in 2018 and an ADM Senior Research Fellowship in 2020. Robyn started as a permanent faculty member at AC in 2015.

Those who were able to attend the Retreat this year were certainly blessed to sit at the feet of someone with so much to share. It’s now time for those people to share their experience with those who were not
It’s Lent! From the last Wednesday in February, right through till Easter Day on 12th April, most of the Christian Churches throughout the world prepare for Easter. (The Orthodox Church is one week later this year.)

The traditional Lenten disciplines are “Prayer”, “Fasting” and “Almsgiving” and for many centuries have been the pillars of our Lenten disciplines. Of course these are the traditional disciplines, but not the only possibilities. Whichever way you see it, one of the purposes of our Lenten observance is discipline. It’s the question has changed for some people to “What are you taking up for Lent?”. The first Friday of March each year is set aside for the World Day of Prayer Services. Throughout the Diocese, Ministry Units join with other Christian Churches in the community to meet together in prayer and worship. World Day of Prayer is a global ecumenical movement led by Christian women who welcome you to join in prayer and action for peace and justice. In 2020 the country of focus is “Zimbabwe” with the theme: “Rise. Take up your mat and walk”. This year we also need to elect Synod representatives. In your own Ministry Unit, remember to pray for those people who have taken on positions of responsibility. Remember, if you want a better warden, pray harder for the one you have.

HINCHINBROOK

“How can we serve you, how can we help this community?”. The Hinchinbrook Ministry Unit invited the community to a meeting at the end of February where people were asked to come and share their ideas for new ways of being in the community in 2020. Of course the meeting came with morning tea.

From the editor’s desk:

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The gospel reading on Ash Wednesday (which I hope you all heard) reminds us that whatever we do, we are to do it in secret: “almsgiving” don’t let you left hand know what you right hand is doing; “prayer” go into your secret place, and don’t show off with long wordy exhortations; “fasting” clean your face and look good, so that others don’t know what you are doing.

So then, what are you giving up, or taking on, this Lent? Whatever it is, it will require lots of focus, because no matter what you have chosen, there is always temptation to deal with. I pray that your Lenten discipline will lead you to a wonderful Easter.

Kenneth