

GFS WORLD NEWSLETTER



From the



World President

Greetings to everyone as we move through the season of Lent. I hope it is a challenging and fruitful time for you all. I am using a very interesting study published by our Anglican Board of Mission Australia. It is available on our mobile phones and is good for people like me who are always travelling a lot! "Into the Desert" (prepared by Celia Kemp) particularly encourages people to draw away from the hectic society in which we live and to think and pray carefully about leaving the busy surfaces of our lives and entering the desert at our heart that we may be prepared to see God. It often includes lovely photos of our Australian deserts.

We send our prayers and thoughts to Delores Alleyne in the USA as she participates in the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) during its 61st session, 13-24 March. Delores was chosen by the Primate of the Episcopal church as a member of the official Episcopal Church delegation. She brings back to us in GFS so much information and represents GFS so well.

This is a very small newsletter as we have received so little news. Time has flown and I realise there is only one more newsletter to prepare in my term. What an exciting three years it has been and we are all looking forward to welcoming you to Australia and to witnessing Thembeke being commissioned as World President. There are 10 other South Africans coming to support Thembeke and many of these will be in Thembeke's World Team.

In the last few days we have found out that there is a possibility of a Junior Delegate coming from Sierra Leone. That is good news. There are over 50 young adults registered and that is so exciting. Tegan and Joel are working hard on their program for this group.

I hope as we come to Easter that we all experience the wonder and joy of celebrating the Resurrection of Our Lord. With prayers

Val

FROM THE WORLD CHAPLAIN

LENT AND EASTER MESSAGE

St Paul said, "If Christ has not been raised from the death, we have nothing to preach and you have nothing to believe" (1Cor 16:14)

Lent Season has once again returned to help us all to slow down from our daily activities, sit-back a little and prepare ourselves and look forward towards the Holy Week and to enter into the Easter with hope and joyful celebration of the forgiveness and salvation offered by Christ to us all mankind.

Our Christian Faith was born from Jesus's final events in life in death and resurrection proving to all believers once and for all that God's love did not end on the cross but extended beyond his grave. And so, as Christians we do not only become believers and servants but must rejoice in being the children of such a loving heavenly Father, and offer Him our continuous service and worship due to him.

Holy Week and Easter are therefore at the heart of our "faith and service", the most other important things in the Church's year. By taking part in this Christian festive season, we share in our Lord's journey from His triumphal entry into Jerusalem on the Palm Sunday to the empty tomb on the Easter morning. The more we participate and observe this festive season, the more we shall experience God's saving grace in the amazing events of Easter and also in our daily lives.

When we are too busy in this our very busy world, we don't realize both the good and the bad things we have done until we set aside a time for ourselves to sit-back and reflect on them against the teachings and the words of the Lord.

Lenten season is also a time to prepare for the great Paschal Mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus. On the other hand, it is also our personal preparation towards our own death and resurrection.

I invite you all, therefore, in the name of the Church and for our life's sake, to the observance of a holy Lent, self examination and repentance; by prayer, fasting and self denial and meditating on God's holy word.

Happy preparation, Happy journey and Happy Easter celebration

Father Isaiah Masida, Papua New Guinea



Junior delegate South Africa

Name: Tecla Kundai
Matikiti



What you do: I am currently onto my second degree bcom Law at Witwatersrand University in South Africa.

How long have you been involved in GFS? I have been involved for almost 2 years .

What do you like about GFS? I like the unity , the teachings and social events that GFS holds . I enjoy the company and i feel very educated around the leaders because we learn a lot.

What are you looking forward to about Council? I am looking forward to learning about what other people do in their countries , their cultures and behaviours .I would also like to learn a couple of songs from other countries and most importantly network with the other members of GFS.

NEWS ABOUT WORLD COUNCIL 2017

I cant say all is ready yet! But we are working hard to make sure there is a good balance of business and activities. I live 6 hours flying time from Perth so I rely so much on the World Team and Diocesan members to assist. Each GFS diocese has a role to play and members are working so well together.

225 people have registered, 55 of those have to apply for visas (everyone else can apply quickly on line) . We have been fortunate in being able to register World Council with a section of our Immigration Department and they are offering great advice whenever we ask. So we are hopefully that everyone receives their visa.

It will be winter in Australia and could be raining. But we will keep you warm and dry!!!

Full payment for Council attendance is due by 31 March so we hope everyone will pay on time. Many countries have applied for Travel grants and we are pleased to say that we have been able to fund one delegate from each applying country. Most of these countries are raising money to bring a Junior delegate as well.

There is a form regarding buddies in the newsletter as somehow we forgot to send it out to many of you. So come prepared to enter the fun of having a buddy but not knowing who it is until the end of Council. I know that some who were buddies at the last World Council in Australia in 2002 are still great friends.

VAL GRIBBLE

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World Council Buddy System

Hi Everyone

If you are coming to our next GFS World Council, to be held in Australia, when you arrive you will be given the name of someone who will be your Secret Buddy for the duration of Council. Throughout Council you should get to know your Buddy, perhaps leave small surprises for her/him outside their room, such as a bookmark or prayer card, or ask someone else to deliver a small gift to your Buddy for you. Maybe you could sit with them for a meal, or get them a cup of coffee and generally get to know them and talk to them.

At the end of Council there will be an opportunity for you to present your Buddy with a special gift that you have brought from your country, that will be a reminder to them of where you are from, and who you are.

I hope that you will enter into the spirit of this fun program and make your Buddy feel, special, without telling them until the end of Council, that you had been their Buddy.

Your gift to them doesn't need to be expensive but something that is representative of your country, or something that you have made yourself especially for your Buddy.

I hope that you'll enjoy being a Buddy to someone, and remember that someone will be doing the same for you!

See you in Australia

Lesley Briggs (Buddy Coordinator)

SOME AUSTRALIA FACTS

- Australians are a diverse lot. They are responsible for inventing the notepad, aspirin, the pacemaker, the Hills Hoist clothesline, the dual-flush toilet and long-wearing contact lenses, just to name a few.
- Australia has 19 listed World Heritage properties, including the Sydney Opera House, Kakadu National Park and Uluru.
- Australia is the world's sixth largest country (*in area*).
- Australia is an island continent. This means that it is completely surrounded by ocean.
- Only 6 per cent of Australian land is suitable for farming.
- 91 per cent of Australia is covered by native plants.
- Australia is the driest inhabited continent on Earth.
- There are over 300 mines in Australia, mining coal, zinc, silver, gold and more.
- Around 80 per cent of southern Australian marine species occur nowhere else in the world.
- During the gold rush in the 1850s, 60 per cent of all international immigrants to Australia headed straight for the Victorian goldfields.
- Native Australian food is called 'bush tucker'. Local Aboriginal knowledge of insects and the plants that could supply edible roots, nectar, fruit and greens was essential to the survival of many European settlers and explorers.

Australia's first coat of arms was granted by King Edward VII in 1908. The coat of arms has since been altered. Within the shield appear the symbols of Australia's six states. The border of the shield symbolises federation. The shield is held by two native animals, the kangaroo and emu. It is said that the animals were chosen as symbols of progress and moving forward, as neither animal is able to move backwards easily.



WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND OUR GFS WORLD?

GFS JAPAN

Greetings from Japan.

It is very cold and we have much snow here and there in Japan.

But I feel spring is coming when I find spring flowers in my garden.

For GFS Japan, we are very busy for preparing to make a report of our world project.

Mayu, junior delegate of GFS Japan has just written the agenda of the world project.

She is also preparing the power points to explain how our project has done.

As you know last April we had a big earthquake in Kumamoto , the western part of Japan. It was not bigger than the East Japan Earthquake which caused 6 years ago.

But a lot of people lost their home. Kyushu GFS went to Kumamoto to support them.

Tokyo GFS went to Ishinomaki where our sewing project was going.



Kyushu GFS leaders worked for the suffering people in Kumamoto



Please have a good Easter.

We are really looking forward to seeing you in Perth.

Haruko

Products made from Japanese Kimono

GFS SRI LANKA

Exciting News! - Visit of the World President

We are delighted that Mrs Val Gribble will be in Sri Lanka for a week in April. For the first time in its 113 year history, our GFS is getting ready to welcome an incumbent World President.

Breaking News! - Our Junior Delegate

We are happy to introduce our Junior Delegate to World Council : Michelle Mervyn.

Michelle is 20 years old and a Law student. She is a member of the *Pink Pearls* junior GFS group since its inauguration in October 2015 and has actively participated in many GFS activities. She worships at Christ Church, Mutwal and is the President of its Youth Fellowship. She is a talented singer and pianist and is a member of her church choir. She has a friendly, outgoing personality and the GFS is confident that she can contribute to the development of the Society, particularly the *Pink Pearls*. Please pray for our little group getting ready to attend WC, especially for the



visas.

Christmas Programme Dec 2016 *Spreading Christmas Cheer*

*** Visit to Girls' Home, Morawinna, Panadura - Dec. 7**

Instead of the usual Members' Christmas Party, GFS Executive Council Members and Staff visited this Home a few miles out of Colombo, run by the Department of Probation for abandoned and abused girls. We played games and had fun with the 20 girls residing there. Santa Claus (an ExCo member dressed up!) arrived with exciting gifts and chocolates and we later served them lunch and ice cream.

*** Caroling - Dec. 8**

ExCo Members, Pink Pearls and Staff - dressed in red, with Santa caps, guitar and battery operated "candles" - set out one evening, first to the home of our Chaplain Ven. Chrisantha Mendis to receive his blessings. We sang carols for him and his wife and proceeded to the Home for Elders (ladies) run by the Sisters of St. Margaret. Then on to the



homes of senior members unable to come to the GFS now. It was rewarding to see the joy in their faces and we gave them each a little gift. We ended by singing carols to retired clergy and their families who reside within the premises of our Cathedral.

After a blessing by a senior priest, we all went home joyful in our first experience as a "GFS carol group".

*** ExCo and Staff Christmas Party - Dec. 20**

Everyone had a good time, playing games and singing carols around the Christmas Tree. Staff members were given Christmas gifts.

New Year Prayers - Members and staff had the usual prayers followed by a fellowship breakfast.

Coming up

Craft Competition for Sunday School kids

GFS WALES

Greetings from Wales. Spring is on its way. The daffodils are beginning to show but there are magnificent displays of snowdrops by several of the churches in my locality.

Our branches continue their work. Plans to open a new branch in my village are slowly moving forward and I hope that by Easter everything will be in place. There is interest in starting branches in other areas too.

It is with sadness that I pass on the news of the death of our oldest member in Wales – Mrs. Rosemary Macdonald. She was 98. The tribute below is from Carole Jacob who ran the Pontnewydd branch and was Welsh President from 2005 – 2008.

‘Mrs Mac’ as she was familiarly known attended GFS from the age of seven and became enrolled at the age of nine, remaining a member throughout her life. I think this must be a record. She held office as GFS Diocesan Secretary for many years, and faithfully supported Pontnewydd branch until it folded in July 2014. Attending many World Councils paying her own way as an observer. Mrs Mac had genuine friends from across the world, some of whom she entertained as guests in her home. Her performances on Skit Night were legendary! Messages of sympathy have been received from many of these friends from Australia, Sri Lanka as well as England and Wales, paying tribute to her dedication to the Society. But it was in her week by week dedication to the girls in her care that she will be remembered most with love. There are generations of girls and young women in this Parish who have fond memories of her. I meet them constantly.

Mrs Mac received the Order of St. Woolos from the then Bishop of Monmouth, Bishop Dominic Walker, on the first occasion that he instituted the award in January 2006. In 2008 Rosemary was presented with a Civic Award from Torfaen County Borough Council as well as a Community Award from Cwmbran Community Council for her work with GFS. We have all learned at her feet and grown in Christian fellowship in the sisterhood that is GFS.

Catriona Charlesworth

So many of us around the world knew Rosemary. I first met her in Japan in 1984 and we became firm friends. She was an amazing woman full of faith and confidence. And who could forget her wonderful performances at our World Council concerts! We send our prayers and sympathy to Rosemary’s family and to GFS members in Wales. Val



GFS IRELAND

Since the last Newsletter branches in Ireland are busy in a quiet way between Craft Work, Bible Study and other activities that they may chose. Work in the office and in Oak House never decreases, some of which filters out to the Dioceses and Branches.

We have had two bereavements. On 22nd December Mrs Kathleen Linnegan MBE passed away. She was in her 99th year. Kathleen was a delegate to World Council in Australia 1972.

On 30th January Kirsty Clarke, 18 years passed away suddenly due to a heart problem. Kirsty was an active young person and had a lot to offer GFS, her Parish and others with whom she would meet. Losing a young family member has to be devastating, so I encourage prayer for her parents Sharon, and Alan, her sister Zara and her Granny Lily as they deal Kirsty's absence from their home.

Congratulations to Hazel Corrigan on her appointment with General Synod as Honary Lay Secretary for the Southern Province. Hazel is no stranger to GFS Worldwide as she was a World Secretary when Council was hosted by Ireland in 2011 and a Junior Delegate in 1990 when Council was in Sierra Leone.

Six others will accompany Tamara McKenzie; Junior Delegate and I to Perth in July. We all look forward to this experience and wish Val and her team well as they organize World Council 2017.

This year is the 140th anniversary of GFS in Ireland. We are planning a Service of Celebration in Christ Church, Bray, Co. Wicklow, (East of Dublin city). On 22nd February 1877 the first meeting of GFS in Ireland

took place in the Marine Hotel, Bray. Seventeen Working Associates were appointed with five more appointed at a later date. The first President was the Countess of Meath from the nearby Killruddery Estate (the home of the Brabazon family, Earls of Meath) and she was in office from 1878 -1894.

Once again we are on a journey of reflection through Lent and Holy Week. On Easter morning may we, as this Hymn says: *"Come, let us praise the living God, joyfully sing to our Saviour!"*

Happy Easter to all our Readers.

Sylvia Quinn



We send our prayers and sympathy to the families of Kathleen and Kirsty and to all the GFS members of Ireland. I remember Kathleen well, another person of great faith who has given so much to GFS. We particularly think of Kirsty's family as they grieve the loss of such a young, vibrant person. (Val)

Prayer thoughts for March 2017

Week beginning 6th March

We thank you our loving God for all that has been happening in our GFS worlds in each country. As we look back we can see your hand at work to guide all that we do. GFS in Ireland celebrated many enrolments in Kilmore Diocese. What a joy for Donacavey parish who could welcome 3 new leaders in December. We send our congratulations to Hazel Corrigan who has been appointed as the Lay Honary Secretary for the Church of Ireland General Synod and wish her well in this new role.

Week beginning 13th March

We thank you for the excitement of thinking of others before ourselves as the members of GFS in USA raise money through their 'souper bowl' appeals with some very generous responses. We pray for Delores, who is to be the GFS-USA representative to the UN Commission of the Status of Women and will be able to share GFS with Honduras, the Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico as she attends this conference. We remember the small in numbers but very faithful members in GFS in Canada.

Week beginning 20th March

We reflect on the joy of Christmas as witnessed by many branches in GFS England as they joined in with a new version of the 12 days of Christmas and some Christmas Tree events. We pray for our GFS friends in Wales and think of Glenys on the road to recovery. In Australia, we celebrated with Tegan and Joel as they were joined in marriage just before Christmas and pray for their continued love in God to flourish. We pray for our New Zealand GFS women going back to University in the coming weeks.

Week beginning 27th March

We join with our GFS Japan members who have been putting so much into assisting with the World Project. Haruko Mizutani reflected on the strength of the sewing machine project going strong after 6 years. We think of the many groups around the world who have raised money at morning teas, luncheon gatherings and other events through their concern to help others and helped to give such wonderful support. We pray with our Sri Lankan GFS for the Pink Pearls group and their continued growth. We give thanks for the previous GFS world Project in South Korea in their Grace Cafes.



Prayer thoughts for April 2017

Week beginning 3rd April

We look towards this Sunday when we remember Palm Sunday as our Lord entered Jerusalem with a triumphant arrival and welcome. We pray that we might welcome him into our hearts and families with this same triumphant joy and live lives that reflect this.

Week beginning 10th April

AS the week unfolds we journey with our Lord through the call to remember him in the Last Supper, being forgotten by his closest friends in the Garden of Gethsemane and the torture he endured on the Cross for us. But we know of the unfathomable mystery that happened on Easter morning as Jesus rose from the dead, taking with him our sins and bringing us salvation. This is the message of love from God that we need to share with others in our GFS groups.

Week beginning 17th April

We pray for those who are yet to know of God's love in their lives. We pray for those who will come to GFS in the coming year ready and willing to hear of God, maybe for the first time. We pray that we will have the right words to say, the love in action to share with them and for God to work within their hearts. We have many opportunities to plant this word of God, help us to be ready and willing to do this.

Week beginning 24th April

We look to the theme chosen by Val – to be "Serving through GFS". Help us to find ways to forget our own selfish needs and put others first as we use our skills, talents and work to be that servant to others as modelled in the washing of the feet. Help us to be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger as we come alongside our friends, family and colleagues this week.



Prayer thoughts for May 2017

Week beginning 1st May

Let us all pray for our leaders. We have leaders in all avenues – work, home, government, in GFS at our local level and up to the world level. We pray that they will seek to do God's will before their own, to use their leadership to guide peoples in right and just ways looking after those who are frail, sick, lonely, downtrodden, misjudged, marginalised and unwanted. We pray that we might show respect and loyalty where it is needed. We pray for Val as she leads us and that God will abundantly meet her needs. We pray for Thembeke as she is leading her GFS members and for the task they have before them starting in July.

Week beginning 8th May

We pray for those who will be journeying to Australia in July for the World Council. We pray for the travel arrangements with visa details to be organised, for bookings being made, for plans that look forward with excitement to the time to be spent with other GFS friends. We pray for those who will be at their first ever World Council and that they may quickly settle in and find some friendly faces.

Week beginning 15th May

In this coming week, we pray with our friends in Ireland for the service of Celebration for 140 years of GFS in Christ Church Bray on Sunday 21st May. We give thanks for the faithfulness of the many who have journeyed with GFS over this time, for the witness and work they have left as a legacy. We pray for the next 140 years and that they will look forward with much joy.

Week beginning 22nd May

We pray for all our members who are in some trouble, for those who are sick, those who are lonely, missing friends or family, who have had a family breakup, who are caring for older frail friends or family, for those who have financial hardships, for those looking for work, for relief from the extremes of weather, troubled by past sins, doubting their confidence or ability. Lord fill them with





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**CUT OFF DATE FOR NEXT
NEWSLETTER 14TH May 2017**

GFS World theme Prayer 2014-2017

**Gracious Lord, guide our
footsteps of faith that we might
walk in your grace and wisdom as
we act to serve you. Rekindle
afresh in us our spiritual gifts that
we might transform ourselves and
others, serving the whole body of
Christ through GFS. Make us
worthy of our calling to service,
through Jesus Christ
our Lord.
AMEN**

**Donations, Gifts or payment of fees,
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