

GFS WORLD NEWSLETTER



From the World President

It is spring in the southern hemisphere, which of course means many different things in Australia. In the far north the temperatures are already rising, in my part of the country – the eastern central part we had our coldest day in the year last weekend. But the flowers are starting to bloom, particularly many of our lovely native trees. In the south it is still cold and even snow in Tasmania. What a wonderful world we live in and each day brings something new and surprising. My hope is that we all value the seasons of the year and what each season brings and do our very best to protect our damaged environment.

There are many emails following the sending out of the registration forms for World Council and the Application forms for both a Travel Grant and the Pat Franklin Foundation. Sadly there will not be enough money in the Travel Grant to cover the full travel costs of everyone who is applying. So please send them to me quickly so we can have discussions about it. And if your country is holding any money for the Travel Fund please send it to us as soon as possible.

We have a GFS world email address now – gfsworld@bigpond.com. Please use this in relation to anything to do with World Council so that it is picked up by various members of the world team who have separate roles in the registration process. We have included the Registration form and Information sheet in this newsletter.

Since the last newsletter I have visited the USA, Bonavista in Canada and Japan and there is an article for you to read in this edition. Such valuable and interesting visits. It was so good to see GFS in action in these three countries, each so different, but each serving others through GFS. I would like to say again how valuable these visits have been and it will be an agenda item to see how we might fund travel for a World President.

I look forward to hearing from many of you who will be registering for the next World Council.

Val

New GFS email address: gfsworld@bigpond.com

FROM THE WORLD CHAPLAIN

Last year, a young girl of thirteen was preparing to sit for her Gr 8 National Examination. After dinner on the evening before the exam, her parents gave her some advice regarding the exam and her future.

After a lengthy advice, the parents concluded "Melanie, you must do well in this coming exam. If you fail, you must bear in mind that you will have no home in our house. This includes our parental financial support and love for you. You will have to somehow and somewhere begin your own living."

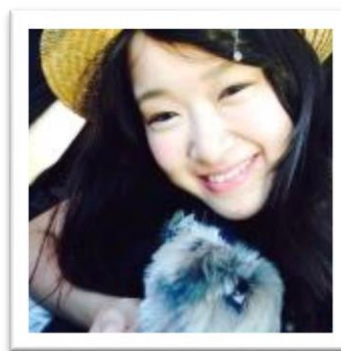
That night Melanie could not swallow down her parent's concluding words of their advice. Melanie was the first born in the family and the tone in which her parents presented the advice for her was unbearable.

Wrestling with this in mind, she did well in her exam and became a boarding student at a Secondary School this year. For Melanie, to live away from home and parents was a very new experience. However, the bottom line of her thought was very different. For her, it was like her parents expelling her from their love and family home.

Homesickness crept in slowly as she failed to receive the parental love and their presence. Few months later, she also began to have high blood pressure. Eventually just two weeks ago, she passed away on the hospital bed after being admitted in the ward for three weeks. Her doctor explained that "Melanie was a very worried child. Her heart could not pump properly to circulate blood to all parts of her body. Her mind cells were deeply filled with blood that eventually caused her death", said the doctor.

In any family homes and likewise in any Church Community, the sense of belonging and the sense of being loved is equally important to all people, especially children and youths as we minister (serve) with and to them. In all circumstances, may we who serve through the GFS ministry do or say nothing that may and will destroy other people's sense of being loved and belonging. We must always try through GFS ministry to give a helping hand in this our challenging world. For anything we do or say either saves or destroys a person.

Father Isaiah Masida
(Chaplain)



Name: Emiri Nakamura (GFS Japan)

Age: 23

1. What do you do with yourself?

I am busy job hunting at the moment and attending summer school. I'm currently studying for my graduation thesis.

2. How did you first become involved with GFS?

My mother often attended GFS, so I came with her.

3. What is your current involvement with GFS?

My study is busy these days and so attendance is hard.

4. What does GFS mean to you and why are you still so involved?

GFS gives me a lot of opportunities to know a different world, culture and inspire me to study more about society.\

5. How did World Council in Wales impact you?

I began to think about how the women take an important role in society with dignity. Through the discussion with youth members, I learned that we can cooperate beyond the border.

6. If you could give one piece of encouragement to other GFS members across the world, what would it be?

Exchange each country's present situation.

It's been great to get to know the Junior delegates from World Council in Wales (2014), as we head towards World Council in Australia next year, we are going to start getting to know those young people that will be representing their GFS countries in Perth.

Further wanderings of the World President!

The last few months have been such valuable and exciting times for me, visiting so many different places and meeting so many interesting people, both within and outside GFS.

In late June I set off for Connecticut in the USA to attend the GFS National Assembly. What a privilege it was to be part of this vibrant gathering. I was so impressed with the number of young members in attendance. I was told that some have been coming for many years, firstly as rather bored very young members but now often part of the executive or youth leaders and totally committed to GFS. There were some interesting decisions made – one in particular was the introduction of GFS Ambassadors who are young women between the ages of 18 and 30. The rationale for this was very encouraging and something

that many of us could think about – *The title GFS/US Ambassadors was chosen because these young women would be chosen to promote pride in belonging to GFS and strengthening our identity within the Episcopal Church and beyond. They would be God's servant for God's service bearing one another's burdens and so fulfil the law of*



Service Morning

Christ. These young women would be representing GFS/USA nationally and internationally telling our story. This would also allow this age group to participate in the GFS World Exchange Program. They would be required to stay in touch with their branch advisor or Diocesan President at least twice a year to remain active.

We read the reports of so much activity in the last three years under Delores's great leadership

We worshipped together in the beautiful chapel at the Roman Catholic Monastery where the Assembly was held. We had fun together, particularly on our day out – the oldies for a lunch on a train, then a cruise on the lovely Connecticut River, the young ones off to a water theme park. I am always impressed with the USA's Service month (October) and this flowed over to a Service morning when everyone, young and old participated in one of a many projects to help others, domestic projects as well as international ones. And Independence Day was another first celebration for me.



Val with Bishop Suffragan of Connecticut, Bishop Laura Ahrens and the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA, The Most Revd Michael B Curry

It was a joy to meet Mayra Brown from Dominican Republic. Sadly Connie Sanchez from Honduras was not able to come at the last minute. Mayra was able to update us with the exciting beginnings of GFS in her country.

The Presiding Bishop of ECUSA (Episcopal Church of USA) The Most Revd Michael Curry came for the Closing Service and to commission the new Board. Lois Frankforter, so well known to many of us, was commissioned as the new National President.

Thank you USA for inviting me. It was an inspiring week, I learnt so much, and I enjoyed meeting new friends and renewing many old friendships.

And then it was off to Canada.

What a joy and a privilege as well as an exciting experience to meet the members of GFS in Bonavista in Newfoundland. It was my first visit to



Canada and I guess if I had planned to visit that country as a tourist I may never have thought of going to Newfoundland. It was such a fascinating journey. I was met at St John's by Linda Cullum, the Professor who is researching GFS history in Newfoundland. The three hour drive to Bonavista was an opportunity to see talk and to view the beautiful landscape. I got used to looking out for Moose instead of Kangaroos! I stayed with The Revd Shaun and Sandra O'Connor and they with their two sons were such wonderful hosts. Bonavista is

such a unique town, so full of history. I thank Sandra for her article in the three Newfoundland dioceses newspaper and hope she doesn't mind my copying it as it really says it all –

The Bonavista Girls' Friendly Society had the honour and blessing of hosting their World President (Lay) Canon Val Gribble, for a weekend of fellowship and worship from July 8 to 11. The meeting was jokingly dubbed the "GFS Canadian Convention", since the Bonavista Chapter is the only one remaining in the country. Canon Gribble of Australia was a first-time visitor to Canada and enjoyed a day of sightseeing and trying traditional Newfoundland dishes. During worship services, The Revd Shaun O'Connor interviewed Canon Gribble who had much to share about the work of GFS internationally. The organisation is active in twenty-six countries as diverse as Japan, Mozambique, Ireland and Sri Lanka and it is growing rapidly in developing countries where it has been a great vehicle for social change.

A key issue that many GFS chapters address is gender-based violence. In South Africa, for example, the GFS has become the Girls and Boys Friendly Society; it is believed that what is taught to girls must also be taught



to boys if a solution is to be found.

In Bonavista, the members live out the GFS motto to “Bear One Another’s burdens (Galatians 6:2) by regularly meeting and worshipping together; contribution to Christ Church and the Hospital; making quilts for Ronald McDonald House; sewing dresses, skirts and shorts for women and children in Haiti and Uganda; and knitting blankets for Cara Transition House and socks for the Women’s Correctional Centre.

Canon Gribble said that as long as groups are working towards the fulfilment of their mission to bring others to Christ and to service by following their motto, there are few limits on how they choose to do that.

The GFS has existed in Bonavista since 1894, which is 19 years after it was introduced in Britain, and has had a presence at Christ Church ever since. Canon Gribble noted that this group was represented at the very first international council in 1956. She was also impressed with the records maintained by the local group, particularly by Mrs Frances Sweetland, and remarked on their importance as historical artefacts. Canon Gribble’s visit was encouraging and inspiring to the Bonavista members. As Elizabeth Fleming exclaimed, “We thought the GFS was going down, but it’s going up” !!!!!

Thank you Bonavista members for your kindness, your dedication to service, and your hospitality.

And finally at the end of July off to Japan again, this time for the 100th celebrations of the establishment of GFS in Japan. So much hard work in preparing for this great occasion. I spent two days in Tokyo, with

Haruko and Yuka taking me to such interesting places and as always I learnt so much. We went to beautiful Hakone to see Mt Fuji – but it was hiding in the clouds as is often the case! We went on a cruise on the River in Tokyo and saw some of the places which will be made ready for the 2020 Olympics, visited the wonderful Edo Museum and then had such a happy gathering at Fr Kanzaki’s parish to meet Tokyo members.

And then off on the wonderful Shinkansen (Bullet train) to Osaka to meet with Ayumi, the National President at her delightful Café Famille and then back to Kyoto



Tokyo members

where GFS began and where the celebrations were held. We

stayed at The Palace Side Hotel, a Hotel with a cross on the roof – it is owned by the Nippon Si Ko Kei (Anglican Church) – so we were made very welcome. Each of the eight GFS Dioceses was represented and friends from Korea with their Chaplain also attended. The formal luncheon was magnificent and we then walked to St Agnes’s Church, just a block away, for the Celebratory Eucharist. Japan has sent the



Yuka, Val, Haruko and Mayu, porcelain painting at Café Family

photo of Mrs Tsuji and me at this service. Mrs Tsuji's name comes up so often in the World Minutes and she has also been a World President. It was such a joy to meet her. She is an amazing person.

Members had stalls of handmade items from their branches and much of the fundraising will go to Kyushu diocese which suffered from an earthquake earlier this year.

We had fun dining together in different groups, an especially happy night with our Korean friends, sampling different foods. I went shopping with Yuka and her daughter Mayu (the Japanese Junior delegate chosen during the weekend) to a shop that specialises in kimonos and all the accessories. Such fun.



We had time to look around Kyoto and then had a day in Nara, another very traditional city. So much to see, so many experiences. My final night was spent with Haruko and her husband who live in Yokohama. What a delightful evening as we chatted together and shared our experiences.

I have been so blessed by these visits. I am always interested in church governance and have had such enlightening conversations with bishops, clergy and laity in many countries. Travelling for GFS means experiences that normal tourists never have and I have been privileged to stay in the homes of so many people and to receive such heart-warming hospitality. And above all these experiences have helped me as I prepare for World Council, to have a much deeper understanding of the joys and challenges of GFS in different parts of the world. Thank you again to all who have made me so welcome in 2015 and 2016.



Dinner with Ayumi and friends



Val with Okinawa GFS members

Here is a copy of the Registration form for World Council and an Information Sheet. You can either register on line or send a paper based registration to gfsworld@bigpond.com



GFS WORLD COUNCIL

11-21 JULY 2017

PERTH, AUSTRALIA

REGISTRATION FORM

Please place a ring around the word where there is a choice

FAMILY NAME: GIVEN NAME:

FEMALE MALE PREFERRED NAME FOR NAME TAG:

TITLE: ADDRESS:

.....

MOBILE/CELL PHONE NO: (include country code)

DATE OF BIRTH: EMAIL ADDRESS:

Please indicate your role during council –

SENIOR DELEGATE JUNIOR DELEGATE CHAPLAIN OBSERVER

LANGUAGES SPOKEN: LANGUAGES READ:

LIST ANY RELEVANT HEALTH OR MOBILITY MATTERS: (e.g. use of stairs, use of a top bunk bed, allergies, mobility aids, other mobility, hearing or visual considerations use of stairs, use of top bunk bed)

.....

LIST ANY DIETARY REQUIREMENTS:

.....

YOUR INVOLVEMENT IN GFS IN YOUR COUNTRY? Eg Executive member, Leader of group Please Give a short statement regarding your GFS involvement.

.....

.....

Registrations close on 30 November 2016

Cost of Council: \$AUD1400 for those living at Swanleigh
\$AUD1130 for those living out at Van Parks at their own expense
Deposit of \$AUD400 to be paid by 30 November 2016
Remaining \$AUD1000 (or balance for those living out) to be paid by
31 March 2017

Payment details:

Account Name: GFS World Account

ANZ Bank,

Shop 67, Whitfords City, Cnr Marmion & Whitford Aves

Hillarys WA 6025

BSB 016 494

Account Number 392526836

Swift Number: ANZBAU3M

SIGNATURES: Those registering to sign part 1, country leader to sign part 2, Parent/Guardian of applicant under 18 years of age to sign part 3.

1. **Signature of Applicant:** (My signature also gives/does not give permission for any photo of me to be used for any promotion or media coverage relating to GFS world wide and for my name to be used/not to be used.

2. **Signature of Country President/Coordinator/Leader**

I.....country leader of GFS in

agrees that this applicant is a member of GFS in the country of

3. **Signature of Parent/Guardian:** (for applicants under 18 years of age as at 10 July 2017)

I,..... Parent/Guardian of

give my permission for to attend the 2017 World Council of GFS in Perth, Australia, and nominateas the adult responsible for the care of my child during this event.

and give/do not give permission for a photo of my child to be used and named for any promotion or media coverage relating to GFS Worldwide.

This form to be forwarded to the World President - gfsworld@bigpond.com by 30 November 2016

Please carefully read the Information Sheet which accompanies this registration form.



GFS WORLD COUNCIL

11-21 JULY 2017

INFORMATION SHEET

If you intend to register to attend World Council in Perth you should read this Information sheet carefully.

REGISTRATIONS CLOSE ON 30 NOVEMBER 2016

Registration form: You can either apply online at the GFS Australia website

Go to www.gfsaustralia.org.au

Click on home, click on GFS World, click on GFS World Council Registration form

or complete the paper based form and return to gfsworld@bigpond.com

Cost: Total cost of Council is \$AUD1400. Deposit must be paid before registration is accepted. Final payment of \$AUD1000 due by 31 March 2017. For people who elect to stay outside Swanleigh the cost is \$AUD1130.

Approval from your Country leader: Your country leader has been sent a master copy of a letter which must accompany your registration. It states that you are an active member of GFS and eligible to attend World Council. Please request the signed letter from your Country leader. If you are applying on line it must be saved to pdf format and attached at the respective field. If you are sending a hard copy registration form, the form from your country leader should be attached to the return email.

If you are under 18 as well as requiring the approval of your country leader your parent/guardian is also required to sign the form and provide the details of the person who will be responsible for your care while you are at World Council.

We apologise that at the moment the online registration form requires that everyone signs the Under 18 para. I suggest those over 18 just fill in this part of the form as N/A including the signature field.

If you are applying online use your mouse for your signature.

No applications will be processed and you will not be registered unless all requirements are fulfilled.

Deposit: You are required to pay a deposit of \$AUD400 and again your registration will not be processed until the deposit is paid. You can pay in either of the following ways:

Online registrations: Will only accept \$400 deposit at this stage. You will be directed to PayPal where you can pay with a PayPal account or use your credit card.

Hardcopy registrations: The GFS World Account details are on the form and you can organise a bank transfer. Make sure that you describe your payment as **NAME WC2017**. It is important your name comes first as often banks truncate this information.

Refund policy:

- | | | |
|---|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Deposit paid only – Cancel by 31 March 2017 | Refund of deposit less \$AUD50 |
| 2 | Full payment made – Cancel before 30 April 2017 | Refund whole less \$AUD50 |
| 3 | Full payment made – Cancel before 30 May 2017 | Refund of 75% of full payment. |
| 4 | Full payment made – Cancel up to commencement
Of Council | Refund of 50% of full payment |

There will be opportunity to discuss other options in difficult circumstances, particularly in relation to visas.

Travel Insurance:

Everyone is expected to have travel insurance.

Medical Information:

Once your registration is processed you will be sent a Medical Information Sheet. This must be completed in full, placed in a sealed envelope with your name and country on the front (in large letters) and brought to Council. It will be kept sealed and in a secure place during Council. It will only be opened in an emergency and will be returned to you at the completion of council.

Travel Form:

Once your registration is processed you will be sent a Travel Form. This should be completed as soon as you have made your travel arrangements.

Other matters:

Accommodation at Swanleigh: There are no twin or double facilities. Males attending will be housed in a separate cottage. Accommodation is in a variety of cottages. You can look at Swanleigh on <http://www.swanleigh.org.au/>

The area with bunks will be used mainly for our youth members.

External accommodation: Some have elected to stay outside Swanleigh. The two suggested Holiday Parks are

Midlands Tourist Park – www.midlandtouristpark.com.au

Discovery Holiday Park Caversham – www.discoveryholidayparks.com.au

These are the only two places where we will supply transport to and from Swanleigh. If you elect to stay anywhere else you will be required to pay your own travel to and from Swanleigh.

Any queries should be directed to Val Gribble at gfsworld@bigpond.com

WORLD FUNDS

These are the World Funds to which countries are invited to contribute. **DON'T FORGET THAT THE OFFERTORY FROM THE WORLD DAY OF PRAYER SERVICES** goes to the World Project. I am happy to receive those funds at World Council when you arrive next year. Some are also holding monies from last year. But I would be pleased to be advised of the amounts raised so that Japan can budget for future activities.

- 1 **World Project – to support the people displaced by the 2011 Tsunami in Japan**
- 2 **World Travel Fund – which assists one delegate from a developing country with the cost of their air travel.**
- 3 **World Emergency Fund – to assist anyone in the GFS World when there is an emergency. The application must come through the Bishop of the relevant diocese**

The discussion on our various funds will be a major discussion at World Council as the World Travel Fund in particular is highly unlikely to be able to continue to fund all delegates who do not have financial support from their own countries.

Please pray about this and how GFS Worldwide will manage its funds into the future, for the benefit of all GFS members.



WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND OUR GFS WORLD?

GFS SRI LANKA

New Hostel Project

This has been our focus these past months, with meetings and discussions Deliberating, deciding. Now we have taken the first few steps.



Kraft Korner

Our weekly Embroidery Class continues to be conducted by an enthusiastic member, Irene Fernando and is attended by a faithful group of members. Occasionally, Irene gives the class a lesson on paper flower making, jewellery making etc.

Pink Pearls

Girls' Movie Night - "Angry Birds" was screened at the GFS Hall on June 18 at 4.30 pm. The *Pink Pearls* enjoyed the movie while munching popcorn.

GFS Hall

Our Hall celebrated its 93rd Birthday on June 23!

Invitation from the Society of St. Margaret

The Sisters of St. Margaret (Anglican religious order of women) invited our President as the chief guest to open their Annual Sale of Work on July 23. This was a great honour

bestowed on our GFS as the Sale is a prestigious event in the life of the Anglican Church. The President, Jeanne Withanage, in her address emphasized the strong links that exist between the GFS and the Sisters. According to an old GFS Newsletter, the GFS ran St Agnes' Home for unwanted babies but in 1930 it was closed and the babies were handed to St Margaret's Home.

The GFS makes regular visits to St. John's Home for Girls run by the Sisters.

A special Christmas visit was arranged when Tegan and Sarah were in Sri Lanka last year.

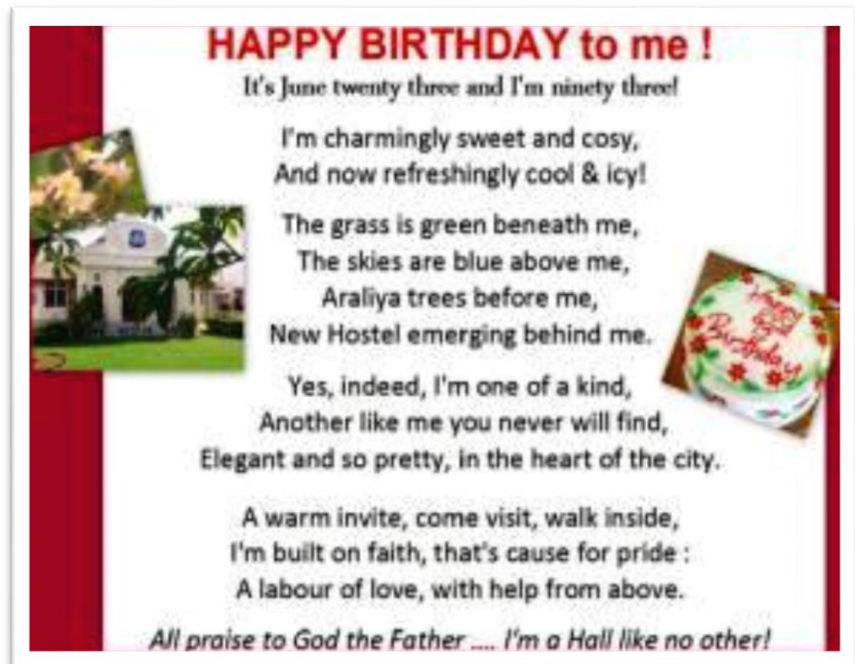
Coming event! Fundraiser

A "Sing Along" has been planned for the evening of 29th October in our Hall to raise funds for the new hostel. Mariazelle, a well-known singer has agreed to lead the singing, with plenty of golden oldies and some new songs too!

Your Prayers

Please pray that as our GFS develops, we too will grow in wisdom to understand what the Lord wants us to do in every sphere of activity. We are excited about our plans for a new Hostel (a little anxious too) and look to the Lord for guidance. Also hoping that our *Sing Along* will be a success and bring in some funds. Please pray for the members of our youth group the *Pink Pearls*, that in spite of their other interests, jobs and studies, they will make a commitment to the GFS.

Thank you! God Bless us all! Jeanne



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GFS GHANA



Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and from Ghana members. We are getting more membership because of our new activities like performing choreography and our traditional dance in some of our parishes and opening

programmes at conferences. We are praying that we get some sponsorship to send some of them to world council if not next year at least the next one to entertain the council. God bless you. This time, I am praying that I can get some of the leaders to come with me.

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GFS JAPAN

From 31th July to 2nd August, Japan GFS had a national meeting in Kyoto. We also celebrated our 100th anniversary this time. We had a special service at St. Agnes chapel at Kyoto where Japan GFS has started. We have held our service with over 100 members. Our world president Val and Korea GFS friends came to celebrate with us.



Mrs. Tsuji with Val The first president of GFS Japan, she is now 102 years old and she came to 100th anniversary to cheer up all GFS members

Ayumi and Mayu (she is our junior delegate) with Korea GFS members. The Rev. Nak-Hyon Joseph Joo Ms. Martha Sung-Ran Ahn Ms. Agatha In-Soon Kim Ms. Yang-Soon Ruth Choi



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GFS AUSTRALIA

Midterm conference in Bel Air South Australia.

Over the June long weekend GFS members from around Australia gathered together for a weekend of fun, fellowship & training. What a wonderful time we had & a big thank you to the ladies of Adelaide who found such a lovely venue in a lovely



Australian Chairman Gail Orchard and some of the Diocesan chairs



Friends spending valuable time together

National Park. We had time to catch up with each other, renew friendships and learn from one another. The presenters gave us wonderful food for thought & challenged us to think about how we could take our GFS

ministry into the local community. We have to thank everyone who shared time with us over the weekend. We held workshops, were brought up to date with events in our local GFS branches around Australia, worked further on our plans for World Council and of course worshipped together.

Gail Orchard National Chair, Australia



The World President Val and
Assistant World Chaplain Cheryl
catching up!

GFS Australia has also farewelled one of their very faithful servants, Maree Barnes. Maree lived in Gippsland Diocese, near Melbourne and has been very active at state and diocesan level and well known at our national gatherings. Maree died in August after a lengthy illness. A lovely description of Maree's work with children included - *What a joy to see the sparkle in the eye and hear her empathy, compassion and love as she would describe a child's delighted reaction to a new challenge and*

achievement. Likewise how proud she was to learn of family celebrations, goal attainments of past GFS youth members, many of whom she had mentored along with other team members. We send our sincere sympathy to her family.



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GFS ENGLAND AND WALES

We are enjoying having a few quiet weeks in England. Usually our Branches don't meet between July and September, so as Leaders, we get some time to relax! However, quite a few of our Branches and Projects have organised summer camps and fun activities.

The people who haven't had chance to relax are our new members of staff. As many of you know, we have a new Interim Director, Paul Rompani and even though he has been with us for quite a while now, he is still busy meeting with people working in Youth Work and Charity Sectors.

For example, he met with Julie Bentley, the CEO of Girl guiding and found that our two organisations are facing similar challenges attracting volunteers, engaging girls and young women and making operations more efficient.

We have also welcomed our new Marketing and Communication Manager, Kat and new Finance Controller, Manish.

Many of you may have seen the survey posted on our Facebook page, asking members in England and Wales to get involved in developing a new strategic plan for GFS. By doing the survey we can gather the feelings and the opinions of everyone involved in the organisation. We understand that if you have had a look at the survey, you may have been surprised by the questions, but rest assured that any strategic decisions made using the survey results, will be thoroughly thought through by the Trustees and membership of England & Wales.

We are looking forward to getting together volunteers and staff for our annual training weekend of learning, sharing and meeting new friends across GFS, on the 23rd-25th September 2016.

Our Branch Development Workers have been working really hard to set up new Branches. In July a 'School Branch' of GFS was set up and a show of interest, in this way of working across the country, has been expressed.

We are planning to hold our Junior Delegate selection day during the school holidays in October and plans are beginning to be made for World Council.

Margaret Winks English President

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GFS NEW ZEALAND

Greetings from New Zealand. It is winter here in New Zealand and like most countries during winter it is cold, wet and miserable. Spring isn't far away though and we are looking forward to some warmer days and more sunshine.

Our AGM will be held in August and this is a time when we get together with our trustees, former and current members of GFS and reflect and report on the past year and look positively for the next year.

In this contribution to the newsletter I have included a report I received from one of our Scholarship recipients describing in her words what GFS means to her.

Ziming Lui is from China.

Ziming's Girls' Friendly Story

When I applied for the GFS scholarship, I had known it as a hardship scholarship for girls with a passion for learning, and while I am extremely grateful for its aid in alleviating the monetary stress of university, it has meant so much more to me than just that.

Although I had graduated high school with academic accolades, I was painfully shy with friends and terrified of the responsibilities I had to suddenly undertake, and at the same time, I also felt the weight of loneliness. None of my friends had decided to join me at Victoria University, and my anxiety set in when I saw the hundreds of unfamiliar faces. Nothing felt right. It was with these emotions that I set foot in Kelburn Cafe to have my first GFS catch up. With every email from and meeting with the GFS, my confidence grew, and as I settled into the groove of university, I found myself able to give advice to the



other girls who received the scholarship after me. To have become a part of this community was a truly special experience.

Needless to say, I am so extremely thankful for everything that the GFS has done for me. The scholarship itself was the tip of the mountain, with the rest being a lush green forest cultivated by the hours of support, respect, learning, love, and coffee I shared with these amazing women. I see Jennifer, Janet, Gillian, Jigna, and Flora as much needed role models during a formative time in my life, and I aspire to continue my passion for learning, so that one day I may inspire other young women in the same way and with the same



kindness. I treasure the friendships I have made through the GFS during these past three years, and I am certain that they will continue well into the future.

As for where I am now, I perceive myself as I always have - a slightly awkward girl with huge ambitions. Although I have abandoned my high school dream of becoming a world class debater, I have discovered my passion for Classical Studies. With my three years of undergraduate studies, I have earned majors in Classics, History, and Political Science with a minor in English. Having completed this officially over the summer of 2015, I have gone straight into my study towards an Honours degree in Classics, doing so part time in order to pick up the ancient languages of Greek and Latin, which I hope to continue into a Masters, and eventually a PhD at a prestigious school overseas. Alongside my studies, I have also devoted my time to working with other students and teaching, and my fondest memories of university come from my time as both a Peer Assisted Study Support leader, and a Classics tutor. I hope to combine my love for learning and teaching in a career as an academic going on to lecture in later life. Although there is a lot of work ahead of me, the strong foundation which the GFS scholarship has built for me means that instead of the dread I once felt, I now anticipate what the future holds for me.

Thank you once again for helping me find my feet.

Si valetis, valeo. (If you are well, I am well)

Ziming Liu

News through emails:

Veronica Matua from Kenya is now up and walking again and getting back into GFS activities and hoping to come to World Council.

Albert Bindi from Sierra Leone and all members are busy planning their 50th celebrations in October. Please remember them in your prayers.

Georgiana Williams from Liberia and her members are very active and have lots of photos on Facebook. They are also working hard to attend World Council.

Delores Alleyne, the Past President of GFS USA, is keeping in touch with the Latin American countries and there is hope that Puerto Rico will be the next country to introduce GFS.

Keep the emails coming so we can share the good and sometimes difficult life of GFS in your country.

Prayer thoughts for September 2016

For the week beginning September 5th

We pray for our world and for all those places where war, fear and natural disasters turn people out from their place of safety and familiarity. Be with them all and may we too respond with compassion and generosity to help as we can. We look to the friendships modelled through the Olympic Games and ask that this might be the way politics might also want to be.

For the week beginning September 12th

We pray for our World President, Val Gribble and give thanks for the recent travels to be with GFS in USA and in Japan. We thank you for their welcoming hospitality and for all the conversations to encourage and inspire each other. We thank you for Val's enthusiasm to be with so many parts of the GFS family. We pray for continued strength and wisdom as she visits PNG soon.

For the week beginning September 19th

We pray for the world team who are preparing for the World Council. We pray for those members of GFS who are now making preparations to come and attend the council, for those who financially support them and for their commitment to share their GFS journeys together. We ask for generosity of giving to help boost the funds available in the World Travel fund to be able to give many, the opportunity to be part of this world gathering.

For the week beginning September 26th

We celebrate our day to remember and reflect on our World wide spread of GFS. We remember the vision of Mary Elizabeth Townsend to share the gospel with young women. We thank you that we can pray for each other, wherever we are in this wide world and know that we are united through Christ to share each other's burdens. We remember Sierra Leone as we share the service for World Day of Prayer and ask that we might all be inspired to "seek the Lord while we can".



Prayer thoughts for October 2016

For the week beginning October 3rd

As we look around the world, we remember those countries who are our neighbours. We pray for Sri Lanka, Philippines, Japan and South Korea. We pray especially for the camp for the children arranged through the World Project. We thank you for those who work to make it happen and we pray for the children who will experience a week of loving and a release from their worries.

For the week beginning October 10th

We pray for PNG, the Solomon Islands, New Zealand and Australia. We thank you for the visit by Val and her team to share with PNG. We give thanks for their hospitality and all those who were able to gather with the team. We pray for the leadership of GFS in the Solomon Islands as they work to further GFS with the help of MU.

For the week beginning October 17th

As we move across the oceans to our friends in GFS in USA, Canada and Honduras we give thanks for the recent gathering. We pray especially for Lois Frankforter as she was commissioned as their National GFS President. We pray for wisdom, compassion, energy and vision as she undertakes this role to serve GFS. We give thanks for our newly discovered group of faithful members meeting in Canada and their inspiration in service as they met with Val Gribble.

For the week beginning October 24th

We think of our many GFS friends in the many African nations who are embracing GFS and ministering to girls and boys through their work. We pray for Thembeke as she continues to inspire and motivate many to understand the possibilities offered through GFS. We pray for those who support and encourage her as she prepares to undertake the World President role.

For the week beginning October 31st

We pray for Glenys Payne, our Vice President as she continues to oversee the World Project. We pray for the GFS members in Wales, Ireland and England and for their preparations as a new GFS year begins. We pray for the work amongst young people who are growing up in a world that constantly tries to deny God and belittle those who want to serve Him. We pray for strength and a spirit of willingness to be strong before those who would try to silence them.



Prayer thoughts for November 2016

For the week beginning November 7th youth members – as youth delegates are chosen, the youth networks set up already (USA support)

We are one body through Christ but we come in many different parts to be that body. We pray for our younger members, those who are beginning their Christ journey through GFS. We pray for these young fragile plants who are just blooming. We pray for nourishment from older members, for daily growth nutrients as they read from your word and hear it in their lives. We give thanks for the beauty of their enthusiasm to encourage us all and to enrich other's lives. We give thanks for the recent initiative to support youth from the USA.

For the week beginning November 14th for branch leaders who prepare to meet regularly with girls and women

Each week there are many who are preparing and faithfully building strong foundations for their members. We give you thanks for their faithfulness and their willingness to see opportunities to develop relationships that reflect Christ's love in action as they serve their local community. We give thanks that our own beginnings were touched by someone who served in this way and that we are the fruits of that small beginning.

For the week beginning November 21st

We look to the older members of our organisation. There are many who lend their wisdom and experiences to guide and develop those just setting out on their journey in life. We remember many who have gone before us and were role models of women strong in their faith. We recall the delight for Val Gribble to meet with a lovely woman aged 102 in Japan. For a long life, we give you thanks Lord and for those who inspire us we give thanks.

For the week beginning November 28th

As USA remembered Thanksgiving in this past week, so we too can give thanks for everything that GFS means to us. For those of us who have the privilege of knowing many friends throughout the world through GFS, we give you thanks. For the newest member we pray for a long life lived serving her Lord in GFS. For inspirational times, for helping hands, for laughter and love, for being pointed in the right direction we give you thanks our Lord and Saviour.



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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, etc., can be made by telegraphic transfer to:

Account Name: GFS World Account
ANZ Bank,
Shop 67
Whitfords City
Cnr Marmion & Whitford Aves
Hillarys WA 6025
BSB 016 494
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