



EMBRACING  
MINISTRIES

# Annual Report

2024-2025



## FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN & INTERIM DIRECTOR

The last 12 months has enabled Embracing Ministries (EM) to reconsider its mission and purpose and to express this in its new Diocesan Ordinance. Previously EM had focussed on providing benevolent relief through supporting young people with disability and their families and carers. Our new Ordinance is much more aligned to the Diocesan mission and explicitly states our purpose is to provide opportunities for people with disability and their families to

hear the Christian story and participate in worship. It also purposes EM to be an agent of change in respect of the church's attitude to disability and how churches can become places of welcome, inclusion and participation for people with disability and their families. EM is no longer a chaplaincy unit but a ministry unit of the Diocese

In December 2024 Dr Kia Wallwork resigned as Director. I wish to thank Kia for her commitment; competence and capability all informed by a deep Christian commitment. Her strategic vision for the work of Embracing Ministries is deeply appreciated. Following Kia's departure, the Board asked me to take on the role of Director on an interim basis. I moved immediately to engage 4 paid staff and a number of key portfolio management volunteers. Kelly Wood has done a wonderful job as programs coordinator and Assistant Director. Brianna Hays Evans is our very capable administrator and communications officer, Lyndal Rogers our pastoral carer and educator and Hannah Newcombe our sibling's activities manager and art therapist. Additionally, Brent Smith looks after our fathers and Men's Groups and Andy Gordan and Richardson Gordon look after our Easter and Christmas Family Gatherings. Having a team has made a huge difference. The EM team meets regularly to share experiences and conceive better ways to deliver our programs. We still have the same emphasis on holistic service and ministry recognising that family units are impacted by disability. This contrasts with the NDIS where the focus is on the individual with disability.

At Synod 2024 a Taskforce was established to examine and report on disability ministry and inclusion in the Diocese and particularly how our Diocese and its agencies can become an exemplar of welcoming, hospitable ministry for people with disability. The Taskforce comprises Roger Beale AO as Chair with other members being Emeritus Archdeacon Anne Ranse, Rev Philip Rademaker, Dalanglin Dkhar and Clive Rodger. Dr Winifred Lamb is an associate Member. Linda Pascal is the secretariat to the Taskforce. Dr Amy Erickson from St Marks served for a period of time. Synod will receive a separate report of the work of the Taskforce. Rev Dr Andrew Carson has recently agreed to become a theological advocate for EM.

The message of Paul in 1 Corinthians 12 is paramount in the direction of EM. It makes clear there is tension in the unity of a single body and its diversity of parts. Each part has its own role, but the body cannot be described by any one of them. The body is composed of diverse differences and becomes more than the sum of its parts. Applying this to the church requires those with disability to be part of its community. Diversity needs to be honoured and those with diversity welcomed.

Embracing Ministries is increasingly wanting to work alongside churches to encourage them to be places of welcome, acceptance, inclusion and participation not only for those with disability but also to their families and carers. It believes by including people with disability and their families a church's life will be enriched.

Over 21% of Australians have a disability. Over 10% of young children are within NDIS with a neurodivergence diagnosis. These are huge figures and represent a challenge to the church. To assist parishes and agencies EM has commissioned and printed *EVERYONE WELCOME* by disability expert and theologian Dr Louise Gosbell. It is a wonderful and practical resource for parishes to use. We are also working with those in training to better understand the theology of disability and how to effectively pastor to this community.

I am most grateful to many people who have served on our Board and stood down this year. Archdeacon Emma Street was Deputy Chair and stood down early this year. Thank you, Emma, for the significant contribution made. Our longest serving Board member and Assistant Director Deb Horscroft stood down last year. Deb was made Patron. Dr Louise Gosbell has served the Board so capably over many years also stood down, Thank you Louise for your huge contribution in understanding disability and its theology. Rev Paul Cohen also stood down. Thank you, Paul, for your wisdom and huge experience which you shared so readily. The Board also lost the experience of Dalanglin Dkhar as she completed her PHD and joined the Disability Taskforce. I am most grateful for the support and contributions of Chris Wood our highly competent and engaged Treasurer and Andy Gordon Foundation Principal of Mt Stromlo Forest School. New Board members are Rev Dr Wayne Brighton and Rev Dr Bili Malek. Rev Phil Rademaker has already made a significant contribution to the Board.

The work of EM is sustained primarily through the generous contribution of the Stening Trust. Without its financial support we could not exist. We are also dependent on so many wonderful volunteers who feel called to work alongside people with disability and support their families I am most grateful to all who contribute to our life and community understanding that God has a special preference for people with disability.

Clive Rodger Board Chair and Interim Director

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# ABOUT EMBRACING MINISTRIES

## Vision

Embracing Ministries vision is to see young people with disability and their families and carers flourish, grow in their spiritual journey, connect with others and become part of Christian communities which are enriched by their presence.

## Mission

Embracing Ministries provides supportive safe, and relevant programs and activities for young people with disability, their families including siblings.

Embracing Ministries also exists to empower, encourage and equip churches to be places of belonging, welcome, acceptance and spiritual nurturing for people with disability and their families.

## Basis

Embracing Ministries exists for and welcomes all in our community irrespective of faith, religious affiliation, or financial capacity. It is part of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn. It is open to all.

## Functions as set out in the new Ordinance 2025

1. Embracing Ministries is established with the Diocese under that name.
2. Embracing Ministries is responsible to Bishop-in-Council for developing, managing and implementing activities in the Diocese which promote and facilitate the ministry of working with young people with disability, their families, and carers.
3. Embracing Ministries is responsible for such other functions as may from time to time be conferred on it by Bishop-in-Council to further its functions.
4. Embracing Ministries may collaborate with agencies with similar goals in other Dioceses of the Anglican Church of Australia, other churches and agencies who provide services to people with disability.

## Objects as set out in the new Ordinance 2025

The Objects for which Embracing Ministries is established are to:

1. provide, in the name of the Diocese ministry to young people with disability through programs and activities such as:
  - Autumn and Spring holiday programs for young people with disability and their siblings;
  - Programs, activities and camps for Siblings of young people with disability;
  - Easter and Christmas events for families of people with disability;

- Respite, nourishment, care and refreshment for mothers, fathers, and carers caring for people with disability;
  - Building communities of support for families of young people with disability; and
  - Provide pastoral and practical support for families of people with disability.
2. To educate, equip, empower and resource churches to be places of welcome, acceptance, engagement, and participation of young people with disability and their families and carers.
  3. To educate young leaders in schools and educational institutions to be equipped to be appropriate partners with people with disability.
  4. Undertake other activities consistent with the Objects.

The services provided by Embracing Ministries will be available to the public without regard to religious affiliation or financial capacity.

The services provided by Embracing Ministries are provided in ways which:

- Afford and protect human dignity;
- demonstrate care and respect; and
- Endeavor to reflect high standards of service delivery to people with a disability without discrimination and in ways which support inclusion and encourages their participation in the life of the church and wider community.

# EMBRACING MINISTRIES BOARD MEMBERS



## Chair: Clive Rodger

Clive Rodger has been Chair of the Board of Embracing Ministries for the last 4 years and is currently its Interim Director. Clive has a deep passion for the work of EM having lost a brother to mental health issues.

He is an economist by training heading a large Australia wide economic consultancy. He has held senior Board positions in both public and private companies as well as serving on many Boards of church organisations. He holds a BA (Honors) University of Sydney, BEC, BTH from St Marks, a ThM, Litt M organisational health and conflict resolution. Clive undertook post graduate theological studies at Princeton in the mid-1990s with particular interest in the disadvantaged in society. He has lectured at St Mark's in leadership, management and mission. Clive has been married to Lynlea for 54 years and has two boys and 4 grandchildren.



## Treasurer: Mr Christopher Wood

Christopher Wood is a double degree (accounting and law, UNE) CPA Accountant. Christopher has extensive experience in NFP and Charity management and governance. As the longest serving Director Christopher uses his finance gifting as the Embracing Ministries Treasurer and Compliance Officer. Christopher currently works in the APS, has been married for 25 years and has two neurodivergent children.



## Parish representative: Wayne Brighton

Rev Dr Wayne Brighton has had a long experience with Embracing Ministries having been the Archdeacon overseeing its work when Andrea was Director. Wayne is Rector of Holy Covenant Jamison and from 2015 to 2021 was Archdeacon for Chaplaincy. He has led Basement Ministries, lectured at St Marks and been a member of General Synod Commission on Ministry and Mission. Wayne Chairs the Public Issues Commission of the Diocese and is currently a member of Bishop in Council. Wayne holds an BA Hons a Master in Theology from Regent College and a PhD from CSU. Wayne is strongly committed to the vision of Embracing Ministries.



### Parish Representative: Bili Malek

Rev Dr Bili Malek is Assistant Priest at Holy Covenant and Visiting Medical Officer at Queanbeyan Hospital. Bili has extensive experience specializing in aged care and palliative medicine. She retains membership of the Royal College of Physicians and fellowship of the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners. Bili holds a Honorary Senior Lecturer position at ANU Medical School within the Rural Clinical School. She holds an MA in Theology with Distinction from St Marks through CSU as well as an Associate Fellowship of Higher Education. Bili was ordained a priest in 2024. She and her husband have an adult daughter with disability.



### Parish Representative: Phil Rademaker

Phil is on the board as an ordinary member and joined late 2024. Phil has lifelong experience with disability and has an interest in seeing the church become a more inclusive place for people with disabilities. In particular, Phil wants to encourage the church to see people with disabilities not just as those who need care, but also as fellow ministers. Phil loves how Embracing Ministries brings together different parts of the church and opens up new conversations. Phil is the Rector of Christ Church Hawker. He is married to Laura and they have 3 children. In his spare time, Phil likes to read Australian fiction and play Dad Rock in a band full of Dads.



### Education Representative: Mr Andy Gordon

Andy Gordon is the Foundation Principal of Stromlo Forest Anglican College and a passionate advocate for education as an apprenticeship for life. With extensive leadership experience in schools like Radford College and John Paul College, he is committed to creating inclusive opportunities for children and families from early learning through to post-school transitions.

A graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, Andy serves on the boards of Embracing Ministries and Abilities Unlimited Australia, two not-for-profits dedicated to supporting young people and their families. His recent MBA further enhances his leadership and vision for fostering meaningful community connections.

With his passion for inclusion, fun, and faith, Andy is well-suited to lead Embracing Ministries' Family Gatherings. He is dedicated to creating welcoming spaces where families especially those with children with disabilities can come together in a joyful, Messy Church-style environment filled with petting zoos, magicians, bubbles, and more. A devoted husband, father, and active member of Gungahlin Anglican Church, Andy believes that the ultimate human experience and expression of Christian faith is striving to become as close as possible to love.

## Board Departures

With much thanks for their service to the ministry of Embracing Ministries

- Deb Horscroft (now Patron)
- Dr Kia Wallwork (former Director)
- Archdeacon Emma Street (Archdeacon for Chaplaincy)
- Danaglin Dkar (currently serving on the Taskforce on Disability & Inclusion)
- Rev Paul Cohen
- Dr Louise Gosbell

A huge thank you to all who have served so faithfully and thoughtfully. Kia initiated new programs coming from Sydney to take up her role as Embracing Ministries Director. Louise has left a lasting and important legacy in her wisdom, understanding of disability, training courses and of course *Everyone Welcome*. Deb is an Embracing Ministries Patron and Trustee of the Stening Trust which produces the bulk of funding for Embracing Ministries.



## EMBRACING MINISTRIES STAFF MEMBERS



### Clive Rodger – Interim Director

Clive Rodger has been Chair of the Board of Embracing Ministries for the last 4 years and is currently its Interim Director. Clive has a deep passion for the work of EM having lost a brother to mental health issues.

He is an economist by training heading a large Australia wide economic consultancy. He has held senior Board positions in both public and private companies as well as serving on many Boards of church

organisations. He holds a BA (Honors) University of Sydney, BEC, BTH from St Marks, a ThM, Litt M organisational health and conflict resolution. Clive undertook post graduate theological studies at Princeton in the mid-1990s with particular interest in the disadvantaged in society. He has lectured at St Mark's in leadership, management and mission. Clive has been married to Lynlea for 54 years and has two boys and 4 grandchildren.



### Kelly Wood – Assistant Director

Kelly has had extensive lived experience as well as many years of supporting families impacted by disability. Being a lifelong carer herself, she identifies with the families that we look after and has a real drive to make a difference.

Kelly has management experience from her time in Banking where she was the Assistant Branch Manager for a smaller building society, as well as supporting other business owners through her own company. She also supports other Mums who have complex needs families get things sorted out, so life is not so overwhelming. Kelly is taking on the role of our Assistant Director – including the Programs Coordinator - managing the women's events and overseeing the team putting together Little Treasures.

When Kelly is not hanging out with us at Embracing Ministries, she loves helping other businesses find their sweet spot, a good rerun of Grey's Anatomy or having tea with friends.

## Brianna Hayes Evans – Administration



Brianna is back in 2025 to support Embracing Ministries behind the scenes, bringing her skills and passion to all things administration and social media. She has been part of the ministry for two years, dedicating herself to fostering connection, inclusion, and support for families.

As a mother of three, including one child with additional needs, Brianna understands firsthand the importance of creating welcoming spaces.

With a heart for the Embracing Ministries community and a keen eye for detail, she helps keep everything running smoothly, ensuring the ministry's message of love and belonging reaches far and wide.

## Lyndal Rogers – Pastoral Carer



Lyndal Rogers is privileged to work for Embracing Ministries as a pastoral carer one day per week. She has been a long-term volunteer at the Little Treasures program and family events.

Lyndal is available every Tuesday afternoon (and at various other times) for a chat. Her goal is to support parents, carers, and young people through deep listening and holistic care.

She can be reached by phone on 0481 003 105, where messages can be left to let her know how she can offer support. On other days of the week, Lyndal works as a registered counsellor, CEIS teacher, and volunteer at Lanyon Valley Anglican Church.

## Hannah Newcombe – Youth Programs and Art Therapist



Hannah is an Art Therapist by trade and a Youth Programs creator by passion. She is deeply passionate about mental health, ensuring kids have fun, and most of all, her faith in Jesus. Hannah feels blessed to be joining the Embracing Ministries team, where she can use both her skills and passions to support and bring fun to the community.

If Art Therapy or Youth Programs sound like something for you or your family, stay connected with Embracing Ministries, reach out, and look for Hannah at EM events and on EM socials to see what's happening and available to you and your family.



## Brent Smith – Men’s Programs

Brent has been married for 20 years and has two wonderful daughters. He is a pastor who loves music, cooking, sports, and spending time with family and friends.

Twelve years ago, Brent and his family experienced a major life shift when their youngest daughter was born with cerebral palsy. Navigating this journey brought many tough days and seasons, and while the adjustments weren’t easy, they have shaped his deep passion for supporting other fathers in similar situations.

For the past year, Brent has been running CHECKPOINT with Embracing Ministries, creating a space for dads to connect, share, and walk the rugged and adventurous road of fatherhood with children who have additional needs. Through CHECKPOINT, he hopes to offer friendly support, encouragement, and a sense of brotherhood to other men on this journey.



## Andy Gordon & Corinne Richardson – Family Gatherings

Andy and Corinne, along with their two children, Isabel and Flynn, are dedicated volunteers with Embracing Ministries Family Gatherings. Both teaching in Canberra schools, Andy and Corinne are passionate about helping families connect and feel supported in every aspect of life. They understand that each family is unique, with its own strengths, personalities, and abilities. Through their involvement, Andy and Corinne strive to offer glimpses of hope, unconditional love, and practical support—believing that this is one of the most gospel-centred ways the church can serve its community.



# OUR PROGRAMS & SERVICES



# MEN'S PROGRAMS

## CHECKPOINT

CHECKPOINT is a supportive community designed for men who play a vital role in the lives of children with disabilities. Whether you're a father, brother, uncle, grandfather, or guardian, CHECKPOINT provides a space where you can connect with others who truly understand the unique challenges and joys of caregiving.

### **A Place to Recharge and Connect**

Embracing Ministries believes in the power of peer support. Through in-person gatherings, casual coffee catchups, and a private chat group, CHECKPOINT offers a place to refuel, both emotionally and spiritually. Here, real conversations happen, encouragement is shared, and lifelong connections are built.

### **Walking the Journey Together**

Our mission is simple: to support and uplift fathers and caregivers, recognising that this journey is best travelled with mates who understand.

Led by men who value their faith in Christ and genuine relationships, CHECKPOINT is more than a support group, it's a brotherhood.

## Men's Retreat

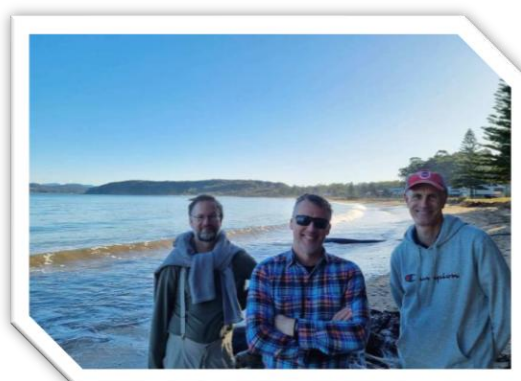
### **Recharge & Refresh: Men's Retreat at Long Beach, NSW**

Twice a year, we take up to 5 men away to a comfortable home in Long Beach, New South Wales, offering a peaceful setting where you can unwind and find true refreshment, rest and recharge.

This retreat is all about relaxation and renewal – enjoy delicious meals without the hassle of cooking, and the comfort of private rooms for ultimate rest. Unwind by the pool, take in the fresh air with easy access to the beach, or catch your favourite sports on the big TVs available throughout the home.

Leave behind the demands of daily life and reconnect with yourself in a tranquil, no-pressure environment. Whether you're looking for solitude, some quiet reflection, or just the opportunity to rest and reset, this retreat offers everything needed to recharge.

We thank Bishop George (RT Rev Dr George Browning) for taking the April Men's retreat. Thank you, Brent, for running CHECKPOINT so effectively and to Andy Flemming for his assistance.



# WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

## Soul Sisters

### Soul Sisters: A Gathering for Women, Faith, and Connection

Soul Sisters is a monthly gathering where women come together over coffee to chat, reflect, and dive into God's word. This special space is designed for women who have families with disabilities – a place to share life's joys, challenges, and everything in between.

Every first Friday of the month (mostly), from 10 AM to 12 PM, Soul Sisters meet at **Cafe Stepping Stone, Strathnairn** in the cozy sunroom at the front of the building. It's a welcoming and safe space where you can be yourself, find support, and grow in faith with others who truly understand.

In 2024 Kia Wallwork utilised Adele Calhoun spiritual disciplines handbook leaving many of the participants feeling spiritually refreshed and in 2025 Kelly Wood has rejuvenated Soul Sisters with the group now meeting every month at Strathnairn alongside many Embracing Ministries staff to support the event.

The Canberra Chinese Christian Church proudly helped to support Soul Sisters

## Women's Oasis

### What happens at Oasis?

- **Warm Welcome:** Start the day with a cozy cup of tea or coffee as you settle in.
- **Nourishing Meals:** Enjoy a light morning tea and a delicious lunch, all thoughtfully prepared to fuel your day.
- **Relaxation & Rejuvenation:** Unwind with a relaxing massage to soothe body and mind.
- **Creative Activities:** Engage in fun, hands-on activities like plate writing, sewing, cookie decorating, and more! Each session is designed to help you unwind, express yourself, and have a little fun.
- **Connection:** Share moments with others who understand, and build a community of support in a compassionate, welcoming environment.



Oasis is held **four times a year**, creating a consistent, caring space for you to come back to, recharge, and nurture your creativity and spirit. unwind, explore a new hobby, or simply take a break, this retreat is your time to recharge in a supportive and relaxed atmosphere.

## Women's Retreats

The Women's Retreats provide an opportunity to Escape the everyday and to immerse yourself in a peaceful place. Four times a year, we take up to 5 women away to a beautiful home in **Long Beach, New South Wales**, offering a peaceful environment where you can truly rest and refresh.

This retreat is an opportunity to unwind, recharge, and enjoy some well-deserved time for participants. With delicious meals provided, no cooking required, and the luxury of **private rooms**, retreaters experience true relaxation and comfort.

Leave behind the pressures of daily life and take time to reconnect with yourself in a calm, supportive environment. Whether you're looking for solitude, rest, or a peaceful getaway to restore your energy, this retreat is a space to find renewal. The retreat is an opportunity to share experiences with others and make connections.

We are most grateful to Shirley for generously sharing her magnificent house for our men's and women's retreats.



Our wonderful team of Kelly Wood, Lyndal Rogers, Hannah Newcombe, Brianna Hayes Evans, and Dierdre Herrmann have done a fantastic job of growing and sustaining these programs.

# CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS

## Little Treasures

Little Treasures is a Christian holiday program designed for school-aged children with disability and their siblings. Inspired by the love of Christ, this unique program creates a joyful, inclusive, and faith-filled environment where all children can grow in their faith, build friendships, and have fun.

### Embracing Ministries offer two special programs each year:

- Little Treasures Easter – A three-day program in the Autumn school holidays that takes children on a journey through the Easter story, sharing a different part each day through worship, storytelling, and hands-on activities.
- Little Treasures Spring – A three-day holiday program in the spring school holidays filled with Bible stories, prayer, music, creative workshops, and sensory-friendly activities.

### What to Expect at Little Treasures:

- Sensory-Friendly Group Time – Worship, prayer, engaging Bible stories, and interactive games.
- Small Group Activities – Tailored programs that meet each child's abilities, including sensory-friendly and hands-on learning experiences.
- Recreational Play – Fun, accessible games and creative activities that encourage inclusion and connection.
- Creative Activities – Crafts, singing, and dancing that encourage expression and joy.
- Special Workshops – Exciting sessions led by external providers, including:
  - 🎵 Dance and drumming workshops
  - 🌸 Flower arranging
  - 🎨 Creative crafts
  - 🐾 Animal encounters
- Closing Group Time – A retelling of the day's Bible story in a fresh way, worship, a blessing, and a joyful send-off.

### Encouraging Faith & Participation

At Little Treasures, children aren't just passive listeners—they are active participants in their faith journey. We encourage each child, whether they have a disability or not, to share their gifts, encourage others, and express their faith in ways that are meaningful to them.

### A Place Where Every Child Belongs

We believe that every child is a treasure in God's kingdom. Little Treasures is more than just a holiday program—it's a safe, secure & welcoming space where children feel valued, supported, and included no matter their abilities.

All program leaders and Mentors have completed Disability Awareness and Safe Ministries Training to ensure a supportive and secure environment, and each child is paired with their own mentor who is a student in Years 9-12. This Mentor provides guidance, encouragement, and companionship throughout the program.

In September 2024 we had to cancel Little Treasures as there were insufficient leaders. The program only runs if we are positive of safety. The program in April 2025 was an answer to our prayers and there was very positive feedback. Thank you to Kelly Wood and to all the leaders, mentors, and supporters of our April Little Treasures



## Siblings

The Embracing Ministries Siblings Program is dedicated to children and teens who have a sibling with a disability or additional needs. We recognise that being a sibling in this unique role comes with both joys and challenges, and Embracing Ministries offers support, fun, and connection which focuses on the sibling. Embracing Ministries always recognises the systematic impact of disability on family units. Unlike NDIS, Embracing Ministries focus is on the whole family that is impacted by disability.


We are most grateful to the Canberra Chinese Christian Church for supporting Embracing Ministries Sibling Programs. This year Hannah Newcombe who leads the Sibling Program has taken Siblings to the Zoo, Inflatable World, Bowling, Flip out, and will be running a day camp in July 2025.


# FAMILY EVENTS


## Family Gatherings

The **Embracing Ministries Family Gathering** is a welcoming and inclusive space where families can come together, share a meal, and build meaningful connections. Each gathering provides an opportunity to **pause, reflect, and celebrate** through engaging activities, storytelling, and faith-filled conversations.

### What to Expect:


 **Scripture & Reflection** – A short time of faith-based discussion and encouragement.

 **Messy Church Activities** – Interactive storytelling, crafts, and hands-on learning for children.

 **Themed Celebrations** – Special Easter, Mid-Year, and Christmas gatherings filled with fun and community spirit.

### Exciting Activities for the Whole Family:

 **Petting Zoo** – Meet and interact with friendly animals.

 **Magician** – Be amazed by fun and engaging magic tricks.


 **Balloon Fun** – Enjoy creative balloon twisting.


 **Face Painting** – Let the kids express themselves with colourful designs.

 **Inclusive Games & Sports** – Fun, modified games for all abilities.

 **Craft Activities** – Hands-on creative fun for kids.

 **Playdough & Kinetic Sand** – Sensory-friendly activities for all ages.

 **Easter Egg Hunt** – Includes a non-chocolate trade-in option.

 **Story through Drama & Songs** – Bringing the Easter message to life.

 **Worship & Sing-Along Easter Songs** – Joyful praise and music for all.

 **Live Music & Performances** – Uplifting entertainment throughout the event.

 **BBQ & Food Service** – A delicious meal to enjoy together.

At its heart, **Family Gathering** is a place where **Christ's love is made real** in the lives of our Embracing Ministries community. Whether you're coming to connect, serve, or simply enjoy a peaceful afternoon with loved ones, **all are welcome**.

We thank Andy Gordan and Corinne Richardson for their amazing efforts in organising the Easter Family Gathering held at Malkara Specialist School. It was indeed a wonderful event.



# PASTORAL CARE

## Walk and Talk

The last Tuesday afternoon of the month, from 1-2 pm, a group of 2-4 women meet at the Arboretum for Walk and Talk. I chose the Arboretum because it is beautiful, centrally located and we choose the carparks with free parking. Some women focus on the chance to exercise and enjoy the beautiful scenery. Others come mostly because of the upbuilding chat with people who understand them and their family situations. Everyone feels a strong sense of care and support by meeting together.



## Online Bible Study during June “How does Jesus help with anxiety”

Over 4 Wednesdays mornings in June, we met for 90 minutes on ZOOM to study passages from Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. The four topics we looked at were

1. how Jesus had radical views on what a blessed life is.
2. how Jesus taught us to approach God in prayer.
3. what Jesus taught about worry
4. God gives good gifts.

Lyndal learnt that these women’s lives were complex, and it was hard for them to plan to be present for studies. She thoroughly enjoyed the time with the women, especially as they worked through the practical application of what Jesus taught.



## Pastoral Carer Lyndal Rogers

For the sake of confidentiality, this role, which is the role in my job description, is the hardest to explain. Each week I ring women, invite them to functions, catch up over the phone or over coffee. Almost every time it is me who initiates the contact. I have been visiting Christian groups who work with people with disability and trying to understand how local churches welcome people with disability. We have been building a spreadsheet of helpful contacts and groups. I am part of the Christian Education in Schools team at Malkara and Cranleigh and would love to see that grow to other schools e.g. Black Mountain and Woden schools.

## Seasons of Growth

In conjunction with Nations Heart Church, Belconnen, Lyndal has run the 4-week Seasons for Growth program for adults and youth 16 years and up. It is a small group program that helps people navigate their journey through change and loss.



## Grow Conference

GROW Conference is a half day conference for 120 children's and youth workers from Canberra and the region. Canberra Christian Conventions ran it on 2 August. Kelly and Hannah will help Lyndal present an elective called "Heart Tune-Up: How Inclusive of Disability Is Your Program?" and Embracing Ministries will also run an advertising stall.



## ESTABLISHMENT OF TASKFORCE ON DISABILITY AND PARTICIPATION IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

In September 2024 the Synod of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn (the Diocese) agreed to establish a taskforce to undertake an assessment of how the Diocese can become an exemplar of welcoming and hospitable ministry for people with disability and to report back to Synod in 2025.

The Taskforce for Participation of People with Disability in the Life of the Church (the Taskforce) is now established and focussed on delivering Output 1 in its Terms of Reference:

1. Consult with Parishes, Ministry Units and Diocesan Agencies to provide an assessment of the current state of disability-inclusive practices, thereby identifying strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and regarding increased accessibility and inclusion for people with disability and report back to Synod 2025. *(See below: Strengths Assessment for indicative areas of assessment.)*
2. Assess the use and uptake of *Everyone Welcome: accessible church for all* by Dr Louise Gosbell (hereafter, *Everyone Welcome*) and provide feedback for the augmentation of the Canberra and Goulburn version.
3. Collate and communicate best practice and associated resources for improvement of accessibility to the gospel and inclusion of people with disabilities in the worshipping community.
4. Include a report on the interim progress of inclusive ministry pilot projects being undertaken in parishes during the consultation period. A final report on the progress of the pilot parishes will be collated and provided at Synod in 2026.

There is a separate report for the Taskforce.

# MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASKFORCE



## Roger Beale AO

### Task Force Chair

Roger has lived with paralysis of the legs since 1948 as a result of polio and has been an advocate for people with disabilities particularly those over 65 who are unable to access NDIS and don't get adequate support through Aged Care. He uses a wheelchair.

As a young man and even more recently he has had bruising relationships with the Church over physical access, the linking of disability with sin and inappropriate offers of healing through faith – he never wants anyone else to go through that. For Roger Embracing Ministries is about ensuring that doesn't happen to the current generation of people with disability or their carers.

Roger had a long career as a senior public servant, consultant and company director. He is an artist and lives in a loving relationship with his wife of 55 years, Venetia. They have two boys in their 40s who are married and live in Canberra, with two young grandchildren.

## Clive Rodger

### Task Force Executive

Clive Rodger has been Chair of the Board of Embracing Ministries for the last 4 years and is currently its Interim Director.

Clive has a deep passion for the work of EM. He is an economist by training heading a large Australia wide economic consultancy. He has held senior Board positions in both public and private companies as well as serving on many Boards of church organisations.

Clive undertook post graduate theological studies at Princeton in the mid 1990s with particular interest in the disadvantaged in society. He has lectured at St Mark's. Clive has been married to Lynlea for 54 years and has two boys and 4 grandchildren all living in Canberra.

## Rev Phil Rademaker

### Task Force Executive

Phil is on the board as an ordinary member and joined late 2024.

Phil has lifelong experience with disability and has an interest in seeing the church become a more inclusive place for people with disabilities. In particular, Phil wants to encourage the church to see people with disabilities not just as those who need care, but also as fellow ministers.

Phil loves how Embracing Ministries brings together different parts of the church and opens

up new conversations. Phil is the Rector of Christ Church Hawker. He is married to Laura and they have 3 children. In his spare time, Phil likes to read Australian fiction and play Dad Rock in a band full of Dads.

## Archdeacon Emeritus Anne Ranse OAM



### Task Force

Archdeacon Anne Ranse OAM has dedicated her life to ministry and community service since her ordination in 1998 at St Saviour's Cathedral, Goulburn. Coming from a family with a long line of clergy, Anne has a particular passion for supporting the elderly and isolated. Early in her ministry, she became chaplain at Ginninderra Gardens Nursing Home, where she successfully advocated for the creation of an on-site chapel, the "Chapel of the Good Shepherd."

In 2001, Anne was appointed Archdeacon to the Diaconate, nurturing and encouraging the ministry of deacons across the diocese. She also contributed to the Episcopal Task Force for Older People, shaping church policy on elder care. At Holy Covenant, Jamison, she currently leads holistic day-hospice programs for people with life-limiting illnesses and facilitates inclusive ministries such as Noah's Ark Pet Ministry and Colours of God. Anne continues to offer pastoral care and weekly reflections, and was awarded an OAM for her outstanding service.

## Dalanglin Dkhar



### Parent Representative

Dalang has been the parent representative on the board of Embracing Ministries since 2021. She is fully immersed in the disability community as a full-time carer and disability advocate for her son since 2012. She is currently completing her PhD research on the lived experience of carers. Carer advocacy is something she is passionate about and speaks at academic and community events on the topics. Prior to being her

son's carer, Dalang was employed as Producer of Wesley Mission Television & Corporate Communications in Sydney.

Dalang is passionate about Embracing Ministries because it supports the community of families living with disabilities in a holistic way with programs and services for young people with disabilities, their siblings as well as their mum and dad. She is also a fervent believer that inclusion is not about bringing people with disabilities and their families to the table, but to build a new table together. Hailing from Northeast India, Dalang presently lives in Canberra with her son, her husband, Patrick, and Sheldon – the English Cocker Spaniel that rules the house.



## Dr Winifred Lamb

### Associate Member (as available)

Winifred is an associate member of the Taskforce committee. She is married to John who was diagnosed with Alzheimer's nearly 3 years ago. Her own father was similarly diagnosed also later in his life. As John's carer, Winifred's experience of the condition has enabled her to identify closely with the purpose of the Taskforce, as well as with the challenge of paradigmatic shifts necessary in the practice and mindset

of the diocese in "engaging a world of difference with the love and truth of Jesus"

Embracing Ministries represents for her the commitment to that paradigmatic shift for all persons with disability.

Where dementia is concerned, given our 'hypercognitive' view of the human capacity for learning, Winifred believes that we need to appreciate what spiritual sustenance and 'discipleship' could mean for those with the condition. This is especially the case, given its progressive and terminal nature.

Winifred is a retired teacher of Philosophy and English. She was born in Hong Kong and has taught in Hong Kong, the UK and Australia. She & John are members of St John the Baptist in Reid.

## Linda Pascal

### Secretariat

I attend St Alban's Anglican church. I believe that all people are made in the image of God with the same responsibilities to praise God, care for each other and the planet. With Christ as our head, we meet together as the church to worship him, and serve and encourage each other through our various gifts. I am happy to support a taskforce whose aim is assist churches to become inclusive and hospitable places of

belonging and discipleship for people with disability.

My career has focussed on equality and social justice. Before joining the public service, I managed recreation and employment programs for young people with developmental disabilities and autism. In the public service I was mainly a director of social policy and research and worked in museum and heritage policy. In retirement I am a volunteer archivist and social historian, researching and writing about Australian women artists and women in church history.

## Dr Amy Erikson

Dr Amy Erikson resigned from the Taskforce in May 2025. The Taskforce thanks Amy for her significant contribution.

## EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES

At Embracing Ministries, we are passionate about helping churches become more inclusive and welcoming to individuals with disability. Our mission is to support congregations in creating environments where everyone, regardless of ability, can experience the love of Christ and fully participate in the life of the church.

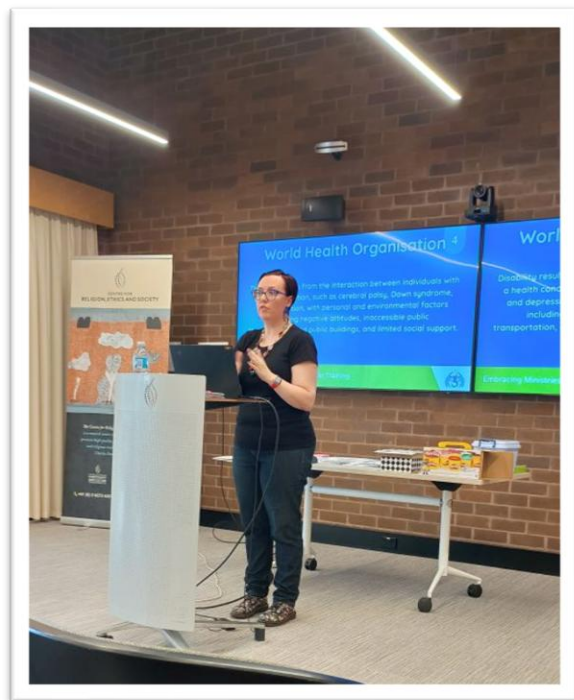
We offer guidance, resources, and training for churches looking to enhance their accessibility and foster a culture of inclusion. From physical space adaptations to developing programs and ministries for people with disabilities, we equip churches with the tools they need to ensure that all members feel valued and embraced.

Whether you're just beginning to explore ways to improve inclusivity or are seeking to refine current efforts, Embracing Ministries is here to partner with you every step of the way. Through our services, churches can learn how to offer meaningful worship experiences, create accessible communication, and build community in ways that honour the diversity of God's creation.

We believe that every person is uniquely designed by God and deserves the opportunity to belong. Let us help you make your church a place where all are welcomed and included, as we work together to build a more inclusive body of Christ.

*Everyone Welcome* is a marvellous resource. Embracing Ministries decided to print 300 copies for distribution to parishes and other agencies. A Government grant helped defray the printing costs.

Additionally, Dr Louise Gosbell prepared material for presentation in schools and churches about disability and Christian theology. Presentations have also been made in to training material for Mentors and Volunteers for Little Treasures. Embracing Ministries has presented at Radford, Marist and Canberra Girls Grammar School. A number of Churches are interested in hearing about the works of Embracing Ministries. The Canberra Christian Chinese Church have welcomed a presentation at the end of June 2025.



## CHRISTMAS APPEAL

Embracing Ministries capped off 2024 with the Christmas appeal. Brianna contacted all ACT specialist schools and was able to compile a list of families needing assistance. Radford College, Canberra Girls Grammar School, and Burgmann College were engaged to provide the gifts for families, and Holy Cross Hackett sourced value-for-money food hampers. The Canberra Chinese Christian Church also contributed gifts to the appeal. We also promoted the appeal across the diocese, leading to significant food donations from St Matthew's Wanniasa (thanks to Mary-Ann Kal), and financial donations of about \$340. We also appealed for volunteers to assist in wrapping and delivering the gifts which brought in new partners and friend of EM



## ANGLICARE

This chaplaincy function specifically related to a formal relationship with Anglicare which saw chaplaincy offered with the disability day program run at Holt.

The provision of chaplaincy largely ended with Andrea's departure, however, a day program continued to be run, with the leadership of Deirdre Herrmann, and assistance of Hannah Newcombe, until 5<sup>th</sup> June 2024.

The MOU and subsequent informal arrangement with Anglicare ended at the end of FY24 and the relationship has not been able to be re-established.

## COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

Embracing Ministries established a Community of Practice in 2024 to bring people in other dioceses and churches together. It has been helpful to share information about the important work of working alongside people with disability. The Community of Practice has been re-established in 2025 and not only shares information but to advocate change to the churches understanding of disability.

## STRATEGIC PLANNING

In June and August 2024, the Board held two strategic planning afternoons. Those helped clarify the need for a new Ordinance. This was enacted in April 2025 when Bishop in Council approved a new Ordinance for Embracing Ministries.

## MINISTRY TRAINING

Embracing Ministries is working with St Marks and those in formation to develop a better understanding of Disability. Embracing Ministries see this as an important part of its mission.

## GRANTS

In the last year Embracing Ministries has received \$15,000 from the Pelican Foundation to support our Youth Ministry and sibling's programs and \$15,399 from Safe and Responsible Communities (SARC) Volunteering ACT for training of volunteers and the production of resources such as *Everyone Welcome* to assist volunteers.

## NEW WEBSITE

During 2025 Embracing Ministries has engaged Little Biz to completely re design our website. Please visit our website to look at the huge range of activities and events offered by Embracing Ministries.

## APPRECIATION DINNER

In September 2024, Embracing Ministries hosted an Appreciation Dinner to recognise and thank the many individuals who contribute to the life of the ministry. Held at St John's Anglican Church in Reid, the evening brought together volunteers, supporters, staff, and ministry partners for a time of celebration, connection, and gratitude.

This event acknowledged the vital role that volunteers and community supporters play across all Embracing Ministries programs. From children's and youth initiatives to pastoral care, family support, and inclusive church engagement. Guests were treated to a shared meal, stories from the year, and reflections on the impact of our collective work.

We extend our sincere thanks to St John's Reid for generously providing the venue, and to all who make the ministry possible. The Appreciation Dinner served as a reminder that Embracing Ministries is sustained by a deeply committed and compassionate community, united in the vision of inclusion and hope for all.



# WITH THANKS

The work of Embracing Ministries is made possible through partnership and community support, and we gratefully acknowledge the contribution of the following donors and partners.



## Anglican Diocese of Canberra & Goulburn

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