

# Joy to the World

Christmas Appeal 2022



Includes  
Abundance  
magazine





# Joy to the World

Christmas is a season where the media portrays a life of perfection - lots of laughter, stress-free Christmas shopping, happy families enjoying each other's company over a large meal and sharing gifts around a tree. Yet if we allow ourselves to view Christmas through this artificial lens, many of us can feel disappointed, lonely and stressed.

The Scriptures tell us that the birth of Jesus is good news for all people (Luke 2:10), that God loved the world so much he gave his only Son, so that if we trust in him we will have life that lasts forever (John 3:16). Jesus himself reminds us that he came "that all may have life, and have it abundantly" (John 10:10).

Keeping Christ in Christmas is more than just a cliché. It enables us to focus on the love of God, which came in the form of a baby, that all might have the opportunity for life eternal and that all may experience the fullness of life. Today, the news of great joy that heralded the birth of Christ, calls us to continue to share this joy and love with those in need.



**"But the angel said to them,  
"Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you  
good news of great joy for all people."  
Luke 2:10**

In Kenya the Imarisha Maisha program is transforming lives and bringing joy to the Masai communities.

*"As soon as I finished primary school," says 26-year-old Feli, "my father decided I should be married. I was mistreated by my husband and beaten. Participating in Imarisha Maisha has changed my life. I see a brighter future because now my views in the home are considered by my husband."*

*"Participating in Imarisha Maisha has changed my life."*

Feli continues, *"I am now the secretary of a Masai women's group with 21 members. It's through the Imarisha Maisha training that we learnt about the benefits of forming groups and now we see a lot of benefits in cooperating with other tribes, rather than just as a Masai group."*

*"We set up a traditional house to attract buyers for our livestock and beads. We now make beads that we sell to support our families. Many things have changed in Masai land all because of Imarisha Maisha trainings."*

*"I can make decisions for my family and my husband listens, so we are doing well. My children will succeed in their education and not be affected by harmful cultural practices because I have a say."*

Feli is a wonderful example of how empowering women and focusing on gender equality can transform the lives of a family and a community.

*"I thank the program because it has made my life better."*

*However, I would like to ask for continued support of this program because it is changing the lives of the Masai community. A lot of work still has to be done and programs like Imarisha Maisha can help to reach as many people as possible."*



# Christmas Appeal 2022

Anglican Overseas Aid partners with the Anglican Church of Kenya Mt Kenya West Diocese in the Imarisha Maisha program.

The program seeks to build safer communities by identifying and working through the link between power, inequality and violence against women and children. This includes training clergy in the role they can play in reducing gender-based violence and protecting children.

The program aims to strengthen community groups so they can improve the way children and other vulnerable groups are protected from harm. The Anglican Church of Kenya is also supporting community members such as Feli to improve the sustainability and productivity of their agricultural efforts to increase their income.

With your help, the program aims to broaden its work of promoting gender equality, protecting children and the inclusion of vulnerable groups. The goal is to improve the lives of more than 38,000 people.

Critical initiatives for this year include:

- Create 3 new support groups for teenage mothers
- Conduct workshops for 400 youth on self-esteem, substance abuse, gender equality and child protection
- Conduct family training (as completed by Feli and her husband) for 120 new couples
- Promote accountability of local officials for child protection and gender equality
- Conduct paralegal training on rights
- Conduct community education forums for 2,600 people on gender-based violence and child protection
- Train 80 Early Childhood Development and Education Teachers in child counselling
- Establish 15 new groups (450 people) that include income-generation activities



Can you help bring joy to communities in Kenya this Christmas?

However, many challenges remain. Many communities are yet to be reached and much of Kenya is now experiencing the worst drought in 40 years, which has wiped out livestock and crops.

The last four rainy seasons have failed to produce the expected rains across Kenya and in recent weeks the drought has spread further south, with much of the program area now defined as in "crisis". Many of the development gains are now at risk.

A recent emergency call with Millicent, the Program Manager, highlighted there is no water and food is scarce. Those people who are able, have started to migrate to other areas to survive, with the aged, young, disabled and vulnerable left behind.

In addition to the planned program activities, the Anglican Church of Kenya Mt Kenya West Diocese, is also hoping for our support to:

- Provide food to 900 households for three months.
- Provide an emergency feeding program to 77 primary schools to minimise malnutrition and keep children in school where they are safer.

For the people of Laikipia and Nyeri in Kenya, these are desperate times.

Your support for Kenya this Christmas is more critical than ever.

Please donate so that thousands can receive emergency food supplies and the program can continue.

Information on how to donate is on the back cover.



# Abundance

THE MAGAZINE OF ANGLICAN OVERSEAS AID | CHRISTMAS 2022

## Jo Knight

CEO, Anglican Overseas Aid

"For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, 'Fear not, I am the one who helps you'".  
Isaiah 41:13



As I write people are experiencing life-threatening hunger in the Horn of Africa. The fear felt by people in such circumstance is unfathomable and the magnitude of the situation can make our own response detached.

Scripture teaches that God is with us and present in all our circumstances. We are called to be like Christ, to also be with others when there seems to be no words to ease overwhelming burdens.

Often, we will gravitate towards practical ways of support when someone has lost a loved one, we will buy flowers or cook a meal. We endeavor to find some way to show them that we care and that they are not alone.

Let us not be overwhelmed by the global hunger crisis. Let us instead continue to be like Christ supporting our neighbours no matter how far or large their load is to bear. Our support can be life-saving.

In this edition of *Abundance*, we explore how our partners and supporters continue to bring hope and joy to the world.

On page two, we highlight some of the significant work that has occurred for the team in Australia, as we moved office and embarked on a six-month strategic review. I am grateful for the many supporters who provided valuable input into the strategy by completing the supporter survey.

With numerous emergencies in 2022, page three provides an update on our work in Ukraine and Sri Lanka.

It is pleasing to report that Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA) has rejoined Micah Australia, participating in the *Help Fight Famine* advocacy campaign, which provided the opportunity to meet with Members of Parliament together with Anglican clergy in September. As the Horn of Africa edges to being formally declared in famine, the work of the Micah coalition is critical and more information can be found on page four.

AOA is blessed with amazingly faithful supporters who partner in our collective mission. Without you, our work would not exist. We recently sent a small thank you card to over 400 supporters who have been with AOA for more than 20 years. Communicating our appreciation and thankfulness to you while adhering to our values of good stewardship can be a challenge, however we hope this modest thank you communicates our heartfelt appreciation.

We were delighted that the Archbishop of Melbourne graciously hosted a thank-you event at Bishops Court for these long-term supporters. While we were only able to hold this in one location, it was wonderful to meet and thank many of our supporters and served as an opportunity to give thanks for all our supporters across Australia. Photos of the event can be found on page seven and eight.

Over the last six months Valerie Browning and the Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA) have undertaken a major health and vaccination program reaching more than 5,000 children. More details can be found on page nine.

This year AOA was proud to partner in a month of prayer and action with Season of Creation, a united response by churches around the world to the growing environmental crisis. On page six we highlight the work of St John's Anglican Church in Heidelberg which has created a flourishing community garden, demonstrating how a church can both steward God's creation and bring a community together.

Our prayer is that as you read these stories of change and hope, you will be inspired to be like Christ, caring for those in whatever capacity God calls you.

AOA is accredited by and registered with:



AOA works in coalition with:







## ▲ Strategic Review

Thank you to the more than 100 supporters who provided input into AOA's strategic review by completing the supporter survey in August. Together with 35 submissions from both overseas partners and local agencies, and 19 in-depth interviews with Christian and sector experts, a Research and Analysis Report was submitted to the AOA Board.

In late August, invited sector experts, Board members and AOA staff participated in a one-day workshop to celebrate AOA's past and to review the organisation's Vision and Mission.

The strategic review is scheduled to be completed by the end of this year.



## ▲ We've Moved

The sale of the building in Victoria Parade, where AOA rented its office, provided an opportunity to review the type of space needed. With the majority of AOA's small team working part-time, our office tended to be full early in the week but underutilised as the week progressed.

After an extensive review, we have now moved into *The Circle*, a co-working space a few blocks away in Abbotsford. Our small 7m x 5m private office provides the necessary space along with the flexibility to use common workspaces in the building.

Importantly, the new office reduces AOA's costs, but also provides the ability to hold events such as our recent strategy workshop without the need to find an external venue.

Above top: Participants at AOA's strategic review workshop.  
Above: AOA's new office location at 4 Bloomburg St, Abbotsford, Victoria.  
Right: Bishop Paul Barker and Bishop Manuel Ernesto at Lambeth.

## ▼ Lambeth Conference

The Lambeth Conference provided opportunities for both Archbishop Philip Freier and Bishop Paul Barker to connect with Anglican leaders from across the world and gain valuable insights, which they then shared with AOA on their return.

During the conference AOA, with the great support of the Anglican Alliance, conducted a survey to explore how we can engage more young people in global justice.

Below: The Revd Canon Rachel Carnegie, Executive Director of the Anglican Alliance and the Right Revd Dr Paul Barker, Deputy Board Chair of Anglican Overseas Aid hand out AOA surveys to Conference attendees.



Bishop Paul also met with Bishop Manuel Ernesto from the Anglican Diocese of Nampula in Mozambique to hear an update on the Towards Abundant Life for All program.

Bishop Manuel expressed his gratitude for AOA's supporters who continue to partner in this program, most recently through the end of financial year appeal.

The program continues to make strong progress, despite COVID-19, cyclones and the continued arrival of displaced people fleeing the civil unrest in Cabo Delgado.

We are grateful to the Australian Government Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade which also supports this program through the Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP).

AOA's end of financial appeal for Mozambique unfortunately fell short of our plan, so there remains an opportunity for supporters to contribute to this program by donating online or calling AOA on 1800 249 880.









# Emergencies

## Ukraine Update

Tragically the war in Ukraine continues. The United Nations has estimated the latest human impact to be:

- 7.5m** Ukrainian refugees dispersed across Europe
- 6.9m** Internally displaced people remaining in Ukraine
- 6,000** Civilians Killed
- 8,787** Civilians Injured

Amidst this horror AOA's ACT Alliance partner, Lutheran World Service (LWS) is providing relief and support in Ukraine, Hungary, Romania, Poland and Slovakia. Together with support from AOA and other ACT Alliance Agencies, the key areas of activity have included:

-  More than three metric tonnes of food delivered to border crossings.
-  Food delivered to western Ukrainian cities
-  11,500 women and children provided with safe spaces to live.
-  Volunteer training conducted on psychosocial support.

AOA's supporters have donated \$69,076 to date and a further \$50,000 has been secured through our partnership in the Emergency Action Alliance (EAA). Thank you to all supporters who contributed to this appeal.

Anglican Overseas Aid is a member of the **EMERGENCY ACTION ALLIANCE**

## Sri Lanka Update

In April the collapse of the Sri Lankan economy resulted in major shortages in food, fuel, health care and forced the closure of many schools. Earlier this year AOA began a new partnership with the Lanka Evangelical Alliance Development Service (LEADS) in Sri Lanka. With the poor most impacted, LEADS' response has focused on providing emergency food supplies to vulnerable families and supporting child protection programs since many children are now left unattended as their parents travel to find work.

To date AOA has been able to fund food hampers for 260 families through the Spring Appeal.

### Easter Appeal Report Back

Through this appeal, your support enabled 150 women to join a two-year self-help group program, sustainably improving their lives and those of their families. The women will receive training in leadership, administration and income generation.

Self-help groups have proven effective in enhancing women's leadership, decision-making power and engagement in community activities.

Below: A woman serves food at a soup kitchen for refugees from Ukraine, at the Vysne Nemecke border crossing between Slovakia and Ukraine. Credit: LWF/Albin Hillert





# Advocating for a better world

The Micah Women Leaders Network brings together established and emerging Christian leaders from across Australia who have a heart for biblical justice and the world's poor. The network is a point of connection, training and action, equipping women to be engaged in global justice advocacy through high-level meetings with Australia's federal politicians both in local electorates and Canberra.

AOA's CEO Jo Knight a network leader, joined the delegation of 40 leaders to Canberra recently, meeting with senior government ministers, key opposition figures, crossbench MPs and minor party representatives.

The group called on the Australian Government to commit \$150 million in emergency relief to help fight famine in the Horn of Africa, Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen. Delegates asked the government to tackle the root cause of the global hunger crisis by investing long-term in a targeted Global Food Security Strategy, and to increase Australia's developmental assistance to the Asia Pacific in order to strengthen the region's resilience to climate change, disasters and economic shocks.

Conflict, COVID, climate shocks and the war in Ukraine have provided the perfect storm for an unparalleled global hunger crisis. With 928 million people (1 in 8 of the world's population) struggling to find food, the hunger crisis will, without urgent action, kill more people annually than the entire COVID-19 Pandemic.

History has taught us that it is critical that the world acts fast when it comes to extreme hunger and with 50 million people currently on the brink of famine it is vital that we act quickly.

Part of the called for famine package, \$15 million, has been announced by the Federal Government, which has been welcomed by Micah as an important first step.

**"Anglican Overseas Aid has been partnering with communities in the Horn of Africa for many years and we are hearing firsthand the accounts of hunger. The good news is that Australia can help save lives if we act now." - Jo Knight**

To take action you can write to your local MP at [www.fightfamine.com.au](http://www.fightfamine.com.au).



Above: AOA staff taking part in the digital campaign.  
Centre Photo: Members of the Micah Women Leaders Network at Parliament House.  
Bottom Right: Jo Knight, Revd. Lorna Green, Sam Lim MP and the Venerable Angela Webb meeting to discuss the need to fight famine.



# Program Update

## A Healthy Start for Newborns in Mozambique

Isabel, Paula and Sheila stand proudly - they are matrons serving their communities in Mozambique with the program Towards Abundant Life for All. The role of a matron in Mozambique is to ensure pregnant women attend all prenatal appointments and continue to bring their child to medical appointments every month until their second birthday. They work tirelessly and acknowledge that it can be difficult.

'There are still women who follow traditional habits, who do not value medical services,' they report. Yet despite the difficulties, they celebrate seeing many other women's lives transformed.

While maternal, neonatal and infant mortality rates have improved, there is still a long way to go and a dire need for matrons such as Isabel, Paula and Sheila to raise awareness. AOA's partner in Mozambique, The Diocese of Nampula, is working hard to improve the lives of children and families with a myriad of community supports.

One such program is bringing important health information to communities all over Nampula and parts of Cabo Delgado through 'Life Team' members who have been trained in health issues relevant to their geographical and social context.

The Towards Abundant Life for All program in Mozambique is partly supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Co-operation Program (ANCP).



Many children face preventable diseases such as malaria and diarrhea which can be fatal. This year Life Team members reached 90 communities visiting homes and handing out health pamphlets at markets. Their recent visits saw a focus on COVID-19 and malaria and where they found malnourished children, they would provide education on children's health issues and referrals to health clinics. While there are still myths impacting upon people's capacity to access appropriate health services, advocates have noticed a positive shift in the attitude of families doing so, and they are more receptive to receiving the COVID-19 vaccination.

Towards Abundant Life also ensures families are receiving nutritional food and sustainable income through small-scale conservation farming. Fruit trees and agricultural conservation skills have been provided to 280 families living in communities who have been welcoming displaced people. Children have been taking a keen interest in caring for their trees, and with successful propagation another 387 families have been able to receive trees of their own ensuring that children are receiving vital nutrients and families have a sustainable income.

From neonatal care to vital health promotion and sustainable farming, Towards Abundant Life for All is ensuring that children in Mozambique can start life healthy and with hope.

Below: A mother takes her young child for a health check-up in Mozambique.





# The Generosity of Creation



This year AOA was proud to partner in a month of prayer and action with Season of Creation, a movement uniting churches around the world to celebrate, listen and respond together to protect our common home.

We were excited to learn how a disused carpark at St John's Anglican Church in Heidelberg has been turned into a flourishing community garden, demonstrating how a church can steward God's creation and bring a community together.

"One of our members had seen a cathedral overseas with vegetables growing around the building and the produce was used to supply food for those in need," explains Katrina Philip, Coordinator of the community garden. "We thought it would be a lovely idea if we could use the church grounds to grow food and share it with the surrounding community."

Since its inception in 2014, the garden has become much more than a place to grow food.

"The carpark area is now full of garden beds and fruit trees and we have spilt over onto one of the adjacent tennis courts," adds Katrina. "It now includes a team making compost using ShareWaste (food scraps) from nearby residents, a hot house for plant propagation, gardening workshops and The Beekeepers Club."

The Beekeeper's Club, which has its training hives on site at St John's, is one of the largest recreational beekeeping clubs in Australia and complements the garden perfectly. The bees enjoy the pollen and nectar from the plants and in the process pollinate the fruit and vegetables, ensuring they are better quality and have more variety.

The club has also ensured that the surrounds are a restful space for anyone who cares to drop in, with hundreds of visitors each day walking through the gardens during COVID lockdowns. "There are small outdoor table settings scattered around (acquired from discards on nature strips) where people can relax and chat with their friends, as well as various art installations to enjoy." Within the gardens also sits a gazebo with a piano for anyone to play, something Katrina delights in hearing when she is working there.

St John's Anglican Church resides on the edge of Salt Creek, a dynamic wildlife corridor that joins the nearby Yarra River and is close to an ancient meeting place of the Wurundjeri people. Katrina explains that in establishing the community garden they consulted with Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung representatives, who affirmed their plans to remove all woody weeds and undertake an extensive indigenous revegetation planting project.

When asked why it is important as followers of Christ to care for creation, Katrina responds: "God exhorts us to cultivate and care for the environment and be good stewards of it. This is a way of respecting God and the beautiful world he has given us."

"God's peace and blessing is very evident in the garden. I always leave feeling I have been given more than I came with - a quiet generosity of creation," concludes Katrina.

Katrina and her team show no signs of slowing down, and in 2022 they received a Queen's Jubilee Tree Canopy Grant to plant trees that grow to more than two metres.

Suggestions for churches wanting to begin a community garden:

- Work as a team. It's been great partnering with the local community
- Take a caring interest in members who join the garden - we have been there for many as they have faced terminal illnesses or stressful situations
- Encourage people to try new gardening skills
- Have a garden charter written and available.
- Make the most of local government gardening/sustainability sponsored lessons.





# Bishopscourt: supporter thank you event



The first day of October was a delightful spring day, the perfect occasion to honour supporters who have faithfully given to AOA for more than 20 years. Archbishop Philip Freier and his wife Joy Freier generously welcomed supporters, providing tea and scones for a celebration at their home, Bishopscourt, in East Melbourne.

During his speech Archbishop Philip Freier reflected on what a wonderful outworking of faith it was to give so generously for so long. Many of those who attended were humble about their generosity, with one reflecting that "there's no need to be thanked, I'm not just a supporter but a part of Anglican Overseas Aid".

During her speech our CEO, Jo Knight added that since it began 34 years ago, "AOA has impacted the lives of 3 million people because of the faithful stewardship of people in this room and beyond who have tirelessly, faithfully, and sacrificially given".

The impact of faithful years of giving is witnessed in the development of partnerships made in the Pacific Islands, Middle East, Africa and South Asia. People in these countries have the resources to respond to issues including disasters, gender-based violence, trauma and provide lifesaving healthcare and build self-reliance through small businesses and food gardens.

AOA staff and Board members were delighted to meet long-serving supporters and understand more about who they are and why they give. We acknowledge that it is because of their sacrificial giving and dedication that we can continue doing this work.



Above and Left: AOA supporters enjoying time at Bishopscourt.





*"We have impacted the lives of 3 million people because of the faithful stewardship of people in this room and beyond."*





# Program Updates

## Spafford Children's Center

Summer brings opportunity for children at Spafford

Despite continued conflict in Occupied Palestinian Territories, the Spafford Children's Center remains an outlet of healing and hope for children whose development has been impacted by high levels of violence, displacement and poverty.

The Center recently held its annual Summer Camp for 50 children. For four weeks, five days a week, they participated in a variety of activities including art, drama, puppet theatre, water games and field trips.

Many students missed completing schoolwork because of extended pandemic lockdowns, a problem exacerbated by large class sizes when they returned to on-site learning. To help this situation summer courses were offered, where students were able to work individually with teachers who specialise in the impacts of trauma on learning. In addition, speech and occupational therapy were provided for students with developmental issues. These activities ensured students made remarkable gains in their learning and that barriers to their education were reduced.

This year Spafford Children's Center has already worked with 56 mothers to ensure they understand how to support their children's education at home. The center also works directly with schools to ensure they are implementing appropriate strategies for their clients while in the classroom. This increases the likelihood that progress made by children while at the center will have a long-lasting impact on their lives.

Below: A boy in a speech therapy session at Spafford Children's Center. Credit: SCC  
Right: The AFAR team vaccinate a child against measles. Credit AFAR



## Ethiopia

Afar Pastoralist Development Association (APDA)

AOA funded a program that worked to curb extreme malnutrition and disease in Gala'alu, a relatively isolated district of the Afar Region where drought, conflict and contaminated water have exacerbated deteriorating health conditions.

Over six months 23 health workers covered the many communities scattered over a vast area, taking camels to carry supplies and then walking from house to house.

In the first two months, the program focused on nutrition screening along with treatment of acute illnesses. The remaining four months focused on measles vaccinations and hygiene and sanitation awareness. The following outcomes were achieved:

- 5,776 children under five years old were vaccinated for measles
- 5,100 children on average were screened every month for 6 months to identify cases of malnutrition
- 59,033 educational messages were given throughout the six months and soap was distributed to 2,500 households
- Water purification was taught to 2,000 households and the chemical sachets supplied.
- 10,799 cases of illness were treated, of which 24.5% were diarrhoea, 11.7% pneumonia and 4.49% malaria.





# Program Update

## Savings bring security for women in Solomon Islands

Sarah is imparting vital skills and knowledge to her village, despite the gender inequality faced by women in the Solomon Islands. Through the Safe Strong Communities Program, she has been trained in Financial Literacy and has undertaken Gender Equality Theology training, which teaches gender relations from a Christian-values-based perspective. Sarah describes herself not only as a wife, mother of five and grandmother, but adds the titles of Savings Group Leader and a Mothers Union Leader.

According to the Australian Government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Solomon Islands is one of the most aid-dependent countries in the world, with only 15% of school leavers able to find jobs. Financial literacy and business training are vital to ensure people can support themselves and their families. To date there are 3,152 members in Savings groups across the Solomon Islands.

While there have been many challenges impacting programs, including extended lockdowns and social unrest in Honiara, in May 2022 the ANZ Financial Literacy Program and Money Minded Training was able to take place. Twenty Savings Group leaders from seven parishes in Honiara undertook this training. Of the twenty participants, ten who own small businesses were selected to participate in further Business Basics training. One of these, a Mothers' Union President who is a talented seamstress already making wedding dresses, was inspired to register her business with a view to expanding it. All members are now equipped with new skills, ensuring they can effectively train other members of their community interested in saving money for their families.

Sarah describes the vital training as 'a miracle' that equips her to teach people the importance of saving money. She explains that for most of their lives, women, men, children and those living with a disability have not seen much money in their own hands.

"It was exciting. The happiest moment was when I saw everyone who joined our community savings group express joy at having the money and using it for the purpose it was intended".

The Safe, Strong Communities program in Solomon Islands is partly supported by the Australian Government through the Australian NGO Co-operation Program (ANCP).



Right: Members of the Mothers Union play an intrinsic role in the Solomon Islands program supporting ACOM. Credit: ACOM

COVID-19 has impacted many of the programs taking place in the Solomon Islands, with lockdowns and inter-island travel subsequently banned for an extended period.

Anglican Church of Melanesia (ACOM) were able to pivot their activities and provide hand sanitisers, face masks and information, education and communication materials to dioceses and schools, ensuring communities were staying informed and educated with updated home care measures.

With domestic violence a major issue for women and girls in the Solomon Islands, information on the topic and services available were broadcast over the radio twice a day for three months, ensuring a strong and consistent message was maintained despite lockdowns.

Seedlings and other items were distributed to Savings Groups to make sure communities were able to grow food in their home gardens and hence still generate an income during lockdown.





# Program Updates

## South Sudan - Cash transfers bring urgent relief

Akuol lives in South Sudan, in an area constantly under threat of inter-border communal violence. When conflict erupted in January, many people were killed or injured and others were forced to flee leaving their livelihoods behind.

For Akuol, a mother of six, finding basic medical care has been problematic. She has lived with an abscess in her finger for more than a year but because of the violence, lack of funding in her area and exorbitant costs of drugs and treatment, she is unable to receive the medical care she requires.

AOA has provided emergency response funds to the Episcopal Church of South Sudan-South Sudanese Development and Relief Agency (SSUDRA) which, through the Cash Transfers Program, is responding to the needs of some of the most vulnerable people impacted by the inter-border conflict.

The program supported 948 vulnerable people, ensuring that people were able to purchase food, send their children to school, pay for primary health care services and have access to relevant education including child healthcare.

Akuol was finally able to receive medical support with money from the Cash Transfer Program.

"Aweil East County is one of the most challenging counties in South Sudan," she maintains, "but now with this treatment I can continue to build my health."



Right: Akulo was able to pay for much needed medical care. Credit SSUDRA

## Available resources

Anglican Overseas Aid (AOA) has a range of free resources for use by individuals or groups.

*Leaving a Legacy for Life* provides valuable insights and information for those making or reviewing their will.

*Remembering The Poor* is a four-part bible study resource that encourages us to understanding caring for the poor as an outworking of our faith.

Each year AOA produces Advent and Lent reflection booklets to assist with personal or group reflection during these important seasons.

If you or your church would like to receive any of these resources, please contact us at [aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au](mailto:aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au)





# Bible Study

## Joy to the world

*The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people."  
– Luke 2:10*

Joy to the world. It is a common and encouraging refrain at Christmas, and it is needed more than ever at a time when the world is still experiencing the impacts of COVID-19 and climate crisis and global poverty continue, affecting millions the world over.

The phrase: "Do not be afraid" is said to occur 365 times throughout the Bible; once for every day of the year. It seems God is in the business of building us up. The exhortation to "not be afraid" is something we need regular reminding of, seemingly even daily! It is based on having our identity and security in something beyond ourselves, namely the God who came to us as a vulnerable baby that first Christmas more than 2,000 years ago.

The New Testament regularly talks about joy in the midst of suffering. This is based on the great Christian hope that, despite the suffering in the world, the victory of God's love is assured. And it is assured because of the coming of God into the world. That is something no suffering can remove.

In Kenya, many women suffer as victims of domestic violence. They have little or no say in how they live their lives. Their inherent rights as people are not respected.

### REFLECTION

Joy is something that is not dependent on circumstances. St Paul said he had learned to be content whatever the situation (Philippians 4:11). Jesus spoke to his disciples of his own joy the night before he was crucified (John 15:11).

Mary would have likely had mixed emotions when she was told she would bear the Son of God in her womb. It was a scandal of the highest proportions. An unmarried teenager, pregnant with the Son of God. Who would believe such a story? Additionally, Mary lived in an area occupied by a foreign military power. And she faced inherent disadvantage. Being a woman in that culture meant you were a second-class citizen. Your testimony was not valid in a court of law, simply because of your gender.

Into this context, the angel cries out to Mary a message of great joy for all people. It is a revolutionary message that was probably hard for her to take in. And what of Joseph, her betrothed? We are told he was a righteous man, unwilling to expose her to public disgrace (Matthew 1:19).

The responses of Mary and Joseph, and of Jesus to women as a whole, reflect what we see in the Imarisha Maisha project in Kenya today, as relationships between husbands and wives are restored after the trauma of domestic violence. Many men are no longer committing violence against their wives, and many women are being treated with the dignity they have always deserved.

What we see in the Christmas story, and in the lives of women and men in Kenya, is joy in the midst of suffering and difficulty. It is joy to a world in need of it more than ever. For this joy, we can be thankful.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- How would you define joy? Can you give examples from your own life?
- Think of the context in which Mary lived. What other feelings besides joy would she have experienced when told she would bear the Son of God himself in her womb?

### IDEA FOR REFLECTION

Think about the times that have brought the most joy to your life. What have those times included?



*Joy to the World*  
*Kenya Christmas Appeal*



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Anglican Overseas Aid is a member of **actalliance**

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☐ My cheque/money order is enclosed, made payable to Anglican Overseas Aid (Addressed to us at PO Box 389, Abbotsford VIC, 3067)

Our Bank details are: BSB: 703-122 Account number: 05000470  
Account name: Anglican Overseas Aid

\*(Please email [aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au](mailto:aoa@anglicanoverseasaid.org.au) with your name, postal address, project/campaign/ where most needed you wish to support, and the amount you deposited so we can send you a tax-deductible receipt).

Donations of \$2 and over are tax-deductible.

Appeal closes 31/01/2023. Your donation will be directed to a general fund that allows us to support our projects that are funded by the Australian Government. If donations exceed the amount required, any excess funds will be used for work where most needed.

Please consider a regular monthly donation to support this important work - call us on 1800 249 880 to organise a regular automatic deduction from your credit card or bank account.

We comply with the Australian Privacy Principles and respect your privacy. You can unsubscribe from our mailing list at any time by calling 03 9495 6100 or ticking the box on this form. We do not disclose your details to any third party, other than for mail and bank processing.

Anglicord: ABN 39 116 072 050

- ☐ I don't require a receipt for tax purposes to be sent to me.
- ☐ AOA respects your privacy. Please tick if you do not want to receive further mailings from us.
- ☐ I would like information about leaving a bequest to AOA through the David Penman Fund.