

# The Connelllys in Cowra

with Ben & Alissa Connelly • June 2026



**We are so grateful to the team from St Michael's Wollongong who helped us with our first-ever stall at the Festival of International Understanding on Saturday 28 March. This Festival has sprung up from the history of Cowra pursuing peace, since Cowra was the location for a POW camp in World War II.**

The Australian Peace Bell is also housed in Cowra, and from this came a recognition that it was beneficial to promote understanding between nations. From the mid 1960's, the festival has celebrated one host nation each year. The primary schools and pre-schools teach the students about the host country in the lead up to the festival, in an effort to promote understanding. The Festival includes a street march supported by Cowra schools and clubs.

This year the host nation was the United Kingdom, so it was quite fitting that it would be St John's stall debut! We decorated the stall with British flags to make it colourful (see photos).

During the festival the team from St Mick's, as well as some of our parishioners and our own family, were able to have conversations with festival goers and invite them to church. We also gave out freebies to the kids and had free colouring-in at our stall. This was a good opportunity to promote not just our Easter services the weekend before Easter, but also our 'Someday Sunday' and our Holiday Kids' Club. It was such a

blessing to serve alongside the team from St Mick's, and we thank them tremendously for their time and energies, as we certainly couldn't have done it without all their help. On Sunday at church, the team led the music and one of the team members was interviewed about how he became a Christian. Thank you also to our parishioners who were able to billet the team over the weekend.

**Praise God for the opportunity to participate in the annual Festival of International Understanding and for the team from St Mick's who came out to help.**



Two of our helpers from St Mick's

Banner Image: Cowra

Circle Image: The Connelllys

Middle Image: Ben with the team from St Mick's

Bottom Image: Our Festival stall



Our first Holiday Kids' club

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### Holiday Kids' Club

On Monday 20 April we ran our first holiday kids' club at St John's with the help of the Wood family from one of our partner churches, St Nicholas' Goulburn. We had eighteen kids, which was terrific for our first event, and some of these kids were from non-church families! The day included formal times of singing, puppet sketches and a memory verse, and more informal times of games. There was also plenty of craft and time for eating. The day ended at 3:15pm. Our pirate theme was well-received, and lessons for the day included that we can use God's map (the Bible) to search for our treasure (Peace with God), which the Bible says we can have through Jesus. The kids absolutely loved the music, and by the end of the day were all able to sing the John 3:16 memory verse song confidently. We were so pleased that the kids were able to remember this song to take home with them. **Please pray that God planted seeds in these kids' hearts that will grow and produce fruit in their lives, whether now or in the future.**

A big thank you to the Wood family, without whom we wouldn't have been able to run this day. Two members of the Wood family participated in the program, and the other five were leaders for the Kids' Club. They put a lot of time and energy into

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preparing for the day, practicing songs, skits and preparing craft. Thank you so much Woods and thank you St Nicholas Anglican for generously sending the Woods to us to support this event. Thank you also to the St John's parishioners who helped in the kitchen, preparing food for all the children. It was such a successful day that we certainly hope to continue running one-day events in the future.

### Someday Sunday

One of the events advertised at our festival stall was the 'Someday Sunday' initiative on Sunday 3 May 2026 (for people who always said they'd come to church someday). This event happened just after our bi-annual book fair as well, so we were also able to advertise there, and on Facebook. It was terrific seeing congregants

use this opportunity to invite friends and family members who don't always go to church, and to see these friends/family members attending. **Please pray that seeds were planted during the service, and that this would bear fruit in these people's lives.**

**Please pray for creativity for us as we continue to inspire evangelism efforts for St John's and pray that people in Cowra would respond to advertising and personal invitations and would come along to church.**

**And praise God for the marvellous ways that He is at work. In neighbouring Grenfell on the same Sunday in May, they had a 'back to church Sunday!'**



Rocket the puppet at our first Holiday Kids' Club

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### Family/Diocese News

We were thankful to be able to take a short break in Canberra as a family just after Easter, to replenish us before the big month that included the Holiday Kids' Club, Book Fair and 'Someday Sunday' events at church. We enjoyed visiting the National Zoo and Aquarium and checking out lots of parks. However, we are starting to once again feel tired after lots of sickness in our household. **Please pray for energy for us in the remaining weeks before holidays, which we will take in the lead up to the BCA Field Staff Conference in Queensland. Please also pray for protection from sickness, so that we will be able to attend this conference and be encouraged and equipped.**

**Praise God for the BCA staff who work tirelessly in putting this conference on every second year, and please pray for safety in travel for all those attending from across the nation.**

The Bishop of the Bathurst Diocese, Mark Calder, and his wife Susan, are preparing for Mark's retirement in mid-September. **Please praise God with us for Bishop Mark, and Susan, and their ministry in the Bathurst**

**Diocese over many years. Please pray for a godly replacement for Bishop Mark, and for the committee tasked with finding his replacement.**

We are very thankful for all the people who pray for us, thank you for upholding us in prayer.

### Coming Up

- 6–10 July: BCA Field Staff Conference, Alexandra Headland, Queensland
- 27–30 July: Bathurst Diocese Clergy Retreat
- 7–9 August: Bathurst Diocesan Camp Ridgecrest
- 18–19 September: Bathurst Diocese Synod and 19 September: Service at All Saints Cathedral, Bathurst to mark the end of Bishop Mark's episcopacy
- 24 October: Diocese Women's Conference



Josiah, Vivienne and Ezekiel at the National Zoo and Aquarium playground during the April School Holidays

**Blessings,**

*Ben, Alissa, Josiah, Vivienne & Ezekiel*

**Pray for**

**our work in  
Cowra**

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