

Community is a Verb

by ALICIA TURNER

Working with young people used to be a piece of cake, I used to be 'with it' and up to date with the current jokes, memes and trends (like 'yeeting it'). I often like to think I'm only a couple of years older than the youth and there really isn't a big age gap between us. When lockdown began in March, we all hopped on to an online gathering and I likened lockdown to the 9/11 bombings in 2001 because EVERYBODY REMEMBERED what they were doing when they found out about it.. to which all of the youth laughed and said "Ahh, Leish... we weren't born then", or "I was only 2 years old, so no.. I don't remember". Of course, 99% of the jokes around Community Plus are about 'how old I am' now. However, I have found beauty in growing older and wiser and working with this age group as I see how society is changing and I hear stories from the youth of what school and other community groups are like.

These stories are at the core of my ministry for finding a safe space to be in community where people know they are loved and they are worthy. A major issue kids and youth are facing at the moment is cyber bullying – social media was only just becoming mainstream towards the end of my schooling so if there was any bullying it would only happen at school but now these kids can be reached 24/7 through their phones & laptops and the bullying can be relentless and non-stop because it comes home with them. 1 in 5 Australian young people have reported being socially excluded, threatened or abused online*

I am blessed to be able to help create a Christ-centred community and safe space for youth and young adults around Australia. I'm talking about the type of community that can't be bought, packaged or manufactured. It unfolds in conversation, around tables and zoom rooms. It's intimate, its where people have joint ownership, everyone is an investor and creator to the space. Its where people have the initiative to engage, the drive to lead and the heart to help. It becomes part of who we are as we are brought closer by triumphs and tragedies. This community is not a noun, but rather a verb set in action everyday.

It's a place where hope lives, people matter and love wins.

Sure, being older may mean it's a little harder to tie up my shoes, or to get up off the floor but being older also allows me to be a mentor and spiritual guide for the youth and young adults as they try and navigate their way through this period of their life.

Alicia Turner is Youth & Young Adult Minister for Community of Christ Australia she lives in Bendigo and has 14 beehives in her backyard which produced 172kg of honey last season.

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*Statistic from <https://www.esafety.gov.au/key-issues/cyberbullying>



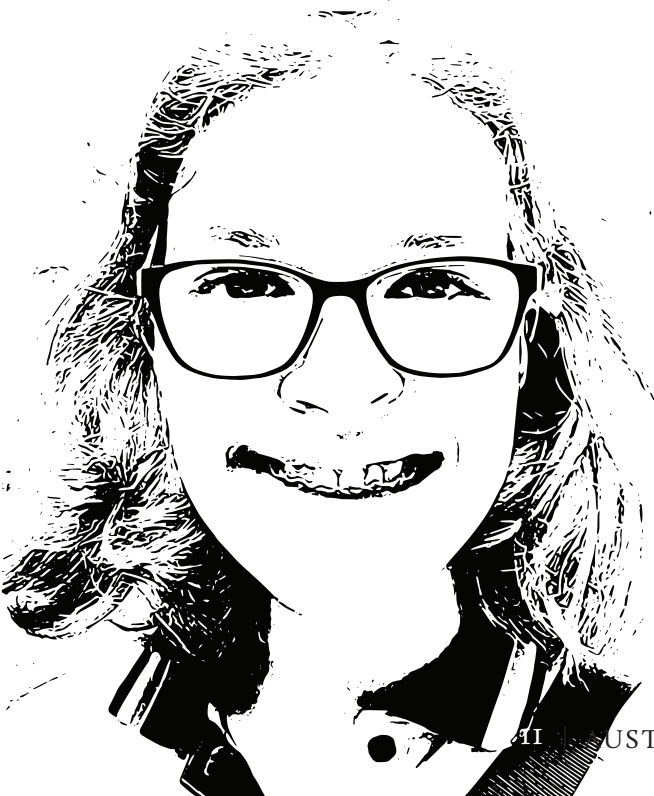
**'Belonging
and feeling
accepted
and loved'**

**We asked +
What is community to you?**

**'Knowing there are people
that I can turn to when I
need support.'**

**'Being
surrounded
by that
'warm fuzzy
feeling.'**

**'People who love you when
your heart is tired, and
your emotions frayed.
When you feel down but
cant put it into words.
Words are not needed. A
hug and a prayer is given
anyway.'**



We asked C+ which social issues are they most passionate about?

'Each issue has/could have an impact on the people I love and myself if not changed.'



Action taken on climate change

A good education

An Honest and responsive government

Affordable food

Support for people who can't work

Protecting forests, rivers and oceans

Equality between men and women

Poverty / Homelessness

Renewable energy

Fair treatment of refugees

Religious freedom

Peace and justice

Gun control

Human rights

Global warming

Human trafficking/
child labour/ prostitution

Animal welfare

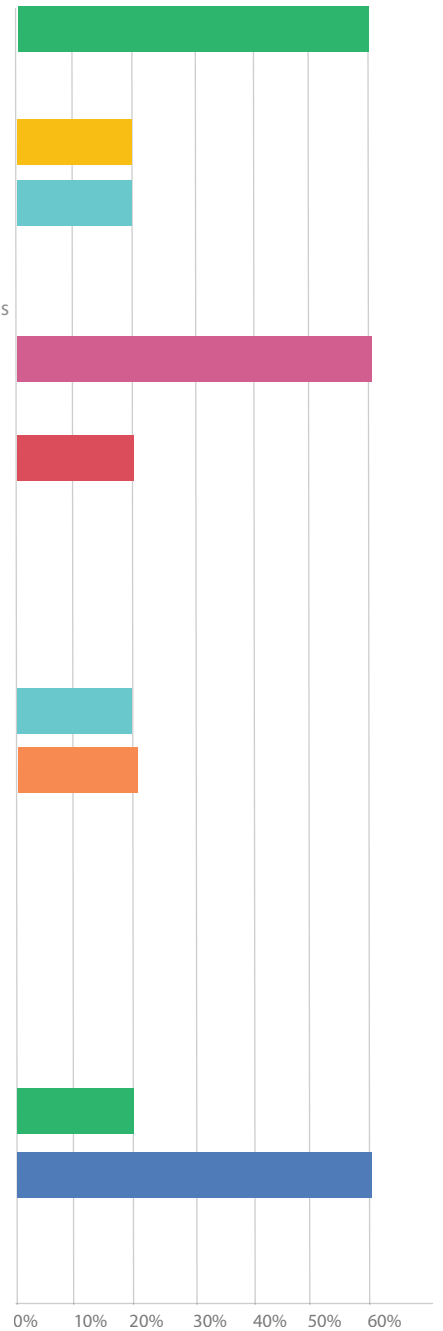
Bullying

Violence against women

Arts and culture

Racial/ ethnic discrimination/
violence

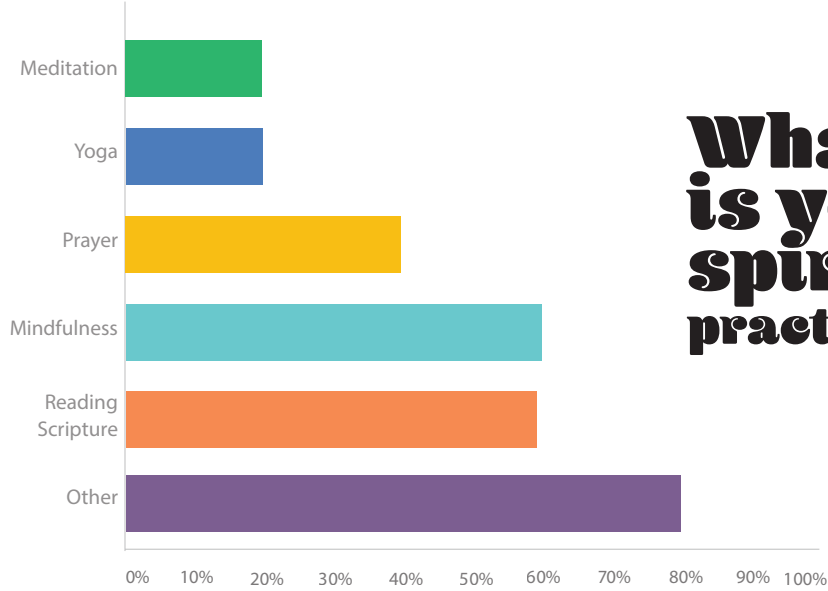
LGBTQIA/Equality



What would you choose?

'Racial injustice, racism, sexism and homophobia are all really serious issues that should not occur. I have friends a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and want to make sure they never feel alone. No one should be discriminated against for their gender, race or sexuality.'

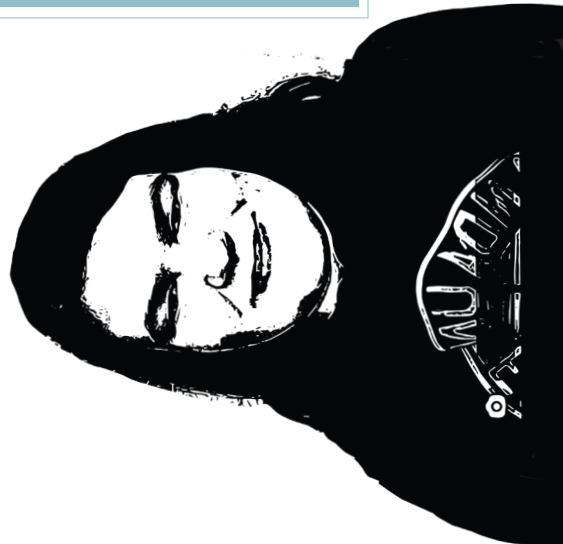
We asked C+
Do you take time in your
week for **Spiritual**
practice?



**What
is your
spiritual
practice?**

**'Community is that
group of people
where the real YOU
can shine through.'**

CARLA LONG, EAGLE MOUNTAIN, UTAH, USA





We asked **Community of Christ youth members across the world ...What is community?**

To me, community means acceptance (never judged)

CHARLOTTE, NUNEATON, ENGLAND

'To be in community is to live in perfect harmony with everyone.'



What is community to you?

STEVEN, KINSHASA, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

'Community means sharing love!'

DANIEL, BERLIN, GERMANY

