

# BIND US

May we be bound Oh God  
not with ropes that restrict,  
segregate,  
divide.

Not with ropes that  
discriminate  
race  
or disability.

Not with ropes  
that limit difference  
or gender  
or age.

Not with  
in or out.

Not with ropes  
that neatly tie up  
class

or wealth  
or privilege.

Nor with cords  
that bind us to  
fear.

May we be bound Oh God  
with ropes that  
splice us to your  
current of  
compassion.

Like a conduit  
may we be  
conductors  
of grace

and encouragement  
and equity.

May we seek harmony  
even within our discord.

And may our cords loop  
around again and again  
binding hope to suffering.

May every  
exchange  
uplift and energise  
and promote peace.

Bind us to the heart of  
Christ's boundless  
love.

Hold us tight God.

Lift us up God.

Let us glimpse your perspective.

Let us see what you see.

Anne Bonnefin

# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

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## Draw us close

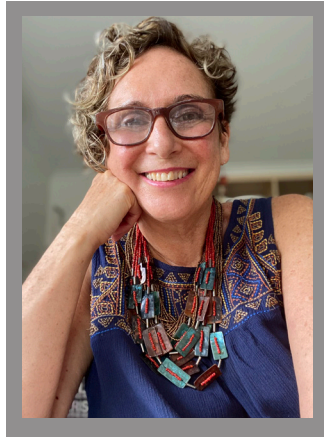
There is a place where you and God can meet. Not a physical place, but a liminal one. A place of invitation and acceptance. A place where just for a moment if you 'draw close' you can see the world as it could be. You can see the world through Christ's eyes and it can change you. In this edition we are reminded that this place is ever present.

In lockdown I purchased a trampoline for my grandchildren. It becomes our world - we play Peter Rabbit and the children run around the edges being chased by 'Mr McGreagor'. Sometimes we make up games like Cook the Pancake where the pancake (usually an adult) lies in the middle of the trampoline while the children jump around the edges and call "Are you cooked yet?" to which the adult usually replies "No not yet." and gets to lie there doing nothing for another few minutes. Other times we all lie on the mat and looking up at clouds try to pick out animals or other shapes we recognise. But for Jude, who is one and a half, the favourite game of all is when we jump together. It takes a lot of trust to jump like this. Trust in my ability to hold him in my arms and jump. Trust in his ability to hold on tight. Sometimes I think about what this must be like for him. When he jumps on the trampoline alone his small frame doesn't make much of a dent in the mat. But together, holding each other tight we can jump high and he gets to see just for a moment his world from a new perspective. The joy in his face is priceless. It's almost like we are bound together and the tighter we hold on to each other, the higher we can jump. (You can see us here in this photo). I imagine that this is what it is like between God and us. For God can only hold us as tight as we choose to hold on also. Even more, our jumping is super charged when another person jumps on the other side of the mat with us and we bounce in unison.

The stories in this edition are about drawing close to God and the change that is possible in our lives and our communities as we hold tight to Jesus, the Peaceful One.

Shandra Newcom in *Building a Covenant Community* shares about what it means to journey with an intentional, openhearted, Christ-centered covenant community that invites people into living authentic and loving lives of justice, peace, joy, love, and hope.

In *One Step at a Time* Tammy Lindle Lewis takes us on



a journey from the personal struggles that challenge her patience to a place where she deliberately is choosing to listen, read, pray and live out the peace of Jesus Christ. Here she finds wholeness and healthy relationships.

*Pathways for Advocacy* by Val Walker challenges us to discover what it means to live out Christ's great commandment to 'love thy neighbour'.

Katie Harmon-McLaughlin in *Return* has us contemplating 'the deep desires of our hearts and the integrity of our callings'. Her message is about taking what we have learnt this past year and facing the future from this deeper awareness of God's grace. It's a message that invites us to ask the Holy Spirit to go with us into our future.

In *Sacred Spaces* and Emma Gray Pitt and Stassi Cramm remind us that sacred spaces are any place or moments where we intentionally turn our thoughts and hearts towards God and Jesus, the Peaceful One. Katie Harmon-McLaughlin reminds us in *God is Present* that we are 'formed physically, psychologically, and spiritually by the landscapes of our lives' but that 'Everywhere we go, the Spirit is already present and our souls are part of that sacred creation too.'

I finish with these beautiful words of Dan Gregory in *Know God*. "God is constantly working to bring about restoration, healing, and new possibility in the world. It's a movement of love, emanating from the heartbeat of the universe—a pulse, a dance, a song that literally changes everything. To know God is to be swept up in this movement.'

My prayer is that as you read the stories in this edition you have an awareness of knowing and being known by God, of being connected to the heartbeat of the universe, of being held, embraced and uplifted by God's grace and swept up in this movement of love.

*Anne Bonnefin*

Editorial Team Member