

# FLOURISHING IN FAITH

The Official Newsletter of St Barnabas College

## THEOLOGY FOR BUSY PEOPLE!

How do we provide meaningful theological education for people who are time poor?



The idea of theological education commonly conjures up images of spending hours of academic study engrossed in dusty, old, esoteric tomes. Too often it's seen as something inaccessible, locked inside an ivory tower pursued only by those "set aside" Christians who dedicate their lives to becoming clergy. This image needs to be challenged!

Yes, theological education can be an academic pursuit but it shouldn't only be that because, for various reasons, not everyone can undertake a full academic degree. What if instead of thinking of theological learning in the framework of study or education, we reframed it as growing in our knowledge and love of God? This small change is hugely significant because we are now talking in terms that are much more personal, relevant and important for all people.

Through its 'Personal Enrichment Places' (PEPS) SBC offers opportunities to lay people (in particular, though clergy are not excluded) to grow in their knowledge and love of God by participating in selected undergraduate subjects. PEPS are one of the ways SBC is seeking to support the Adelaide Diocese's Vision 2020:

*"We will be a Diocese of flourishing Anglican communities, united and connected, whose members are confident and competent to live as disciples of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit"*

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The philosophy behind PEPS is to give an accessible and affordable option for lay people to grow in their understanding of faith without needing to meet the academic demands placed on regular undergraduate students. Whilst PEP students are expected to purchase textbooks or borrow them from the SBC library and to participate in class discussion, they are not expected to submit assignments. For PEP students the key incentive to keep up with their reading and engage in class discussion is not the attainment of an academic qualification but their own desire to learn and understand.

A couple of SBC's PEP students shared their thoughts about their time here at the college. George Abrams, a veteran PEP attendee responded: "I love it and don't miss being 1/50th of a way through a degree. I object to Uni fees and I think the lowering of the costs from \$250.00 per subject to \$100.00 is sensible."

"I think audit [PEP] students will come to be a vital part of the life and mental energy at SBC... I very much appreciate the community aspect of learning. I really enjoy mixing with people who have a living faith and are doing something about it. I feel very blessed because I am studying with others and I can do the subjects which actually interest me. I like to see where other people are coming from and how being at St Barnabas fits into their lives and their expectations for the future."



Likewise, Silke Sitzler, another PEP student, noted, "so far I have done: Introduction to New Testament Studies; Introduction to Old Testament Studies and History and Narrative. And this semester I have begun Introduction to Christian Theology." She continued, "the classes and the lecturers have all been warm and welcoming, I really enjoy it. That's why I keep coming back."

If you are interested in a Personal Enrichment Place in one of our classes please call Damian Szepessy On 83059380. Enrolments are now open for places in second semester (beginning 15th July 2019).



# WHAT'S HAPPENING AT SBC?

A look at our upcoming learning opportunities

## SKILLS FOR RESILIENCE IN CHRISTIAN MINISTRY 2019

A four session short course on managing stress, compassion fatigue and burnout, suitable for all those in people-helping professions



Vanessa Daughtry is lead counsellor of Heart-Gardener and host of Skills for Resilience

<b>WHEN:</b>	Tuesday June 4th, 11th, 15th and 25th, 5:30 - 7:30pm
<b>WHERE:</b>	St Barnabas College, 18 King William Road, North Adelaide
<b>COST:</b>	Standard: \$295 Concession (Student or Clergy <5 years): \$195
<b>RSVP:</b>	Email at <a href="mailto:events@sbc.edu.au">events@sbc.edu.au</a> for more info or Sign up at <a href="https://sbcrestilience2019.eventbrite.com.au">sbcrestilience2019.eventbrite.com.au</a>

## THE BISHOPS' CERTIFICATE

### WHAT IS THE BISHOPS' CERTIFICATE?

In response to Vision 2022, SBC works with the Diocesan Education and Formation Ministry Unit to help build capacity through lay learning in parishes and area clusters.

We realize that there are specific needs in parishes and are offering to support you in meeting those. Several parishes engaged in this way in 2018 by negotiating and hosting full or half day seminars. We have been active over several years in running seminars on Pastoral and Spiritual Care, particularly in the Aged Care context. Other 2018 seminars focused on *Getting to Grips with the Gospels* and *Leading Small Groups*.

Future seminars include:

*Exploring the Mission of God,  
Growing into Ministry,  
Reflective Practice for Ministry,  
Worship and Liturgy: Unexplained Riches.*

For more information about Bishops' Certificate seminars, contact Ann Nadge at [anadge@sbc.edu.au](mailto:anadge@sbc.edu.au) or on 8305 9380



Ann Nadge is SBC'S Learning Pathways Co-ordinator

# INTERVIEWING NIC DENNY-DIMITRIOU

## Meet SBC's New Director of Discernment and Formation



*The following interview is a series of excerpts of an email exchange between SBC's Digital Media Coordinator and Nic Denny-Dimitriou, our recently appointed Director of Formation and Discernment. We hope you enjoy getting to know Nic.*

### **So Nic, how did a born and bred South African with a Greek surname come to be an Anglican Priest here in Adelaide?**

I grew up in Johannesburg, son of a strongly Roman Catholic mother born in South Africa of English and Irish descendants, and a nominally Greek Orthodox father raised in Alexandria, Egypt. In my late teens my family were strongly influenced by the RC Charismatic Renewal, I also found a spiritual home in an Anglican youth group whilst remaining RC and also attending a Pentecostal Church with friends – some eclectic spiritual influences. On sensing a call to ordained ministry in my university years, I was most “at home” in the Anglican Church (there were many considerations) and pursued that after finishing a 4-year Social Work /Psychology degree and doing my then-compulsory 2-year military service as a non-combatant Medic/Social Worker. For faith reasons I later became a conscientious objector to service in the apartheid military forces and faced potential jail time, but thankfully just in time, apartheid was being dismantled!

In my mid-20s, married to Julia, we spent 3 years at a residential Theological College not unlike the earlier St Barnabas residential experience of many here in Adelaide, and was ordained priest in 1988. I've served in 3 diverse parishes in Johannesburg, and following the birth of our twins in 2001, had over 11 years in a parish in the Diocese of Natal inland from the port-city of Durban before we left South Africa 5 years ago. The reasons for leaving are too many for a short note, but include trauma related to high rates of violent crime. We were invited to an Anglican parish in Cyprus, part of the Anglican Church in the Middle East. However, for various reasons it was not possible for us to remain there long, and after 16 months there received the all-clear to come to Australia – albeit with a 9-month Visa application process. Having checked out various possibilities, we chose Adelaide for numerous good reasons despite never having been here before, and the then-Archbishop Jeffrey and Dean Frank Nelson (whom we knew well from our days in theological college) were very helpful in enabling us to arrive here in late 2015.

### **What is the extent of your parish ministry experience?**

Having detailed some points above, my parish experience has included enabling a new parish church to considerably grow in size and ministry opportunities and also to establish 2 further new congregations in Johannesburg. I have worked considerably in team ministry, both as a team leader and a team member. The latter was one of my best experiences – not bearing responsibility for overall parish management of a large city church, I could focus on specific areas of competence and passion. I have also always been involved in mentoring people in ministry, ordained and lay, and consider that a highlight.

### **How have you found being a parish priest here compared to your time in South Africa and Cyprus? Have there been unique challenges in transitioning from one to the other?**

There are many similarities, especially in a predominantly English-language Anglican setting, and many differences, some of which have taken time to adapt to. The church in South Africa plays a larger role in the daily lives of many communities, and the rising secularism prevalent in Australia is not entrenched. I'm also astounded at the levels of animosity directed at churches and people of faith here; the sex abuse issues rife in Australia, whilst not absent in South Africa, are just as likely to be associated with politicians, civil servants and teachers, and churches and clergy still enjoy a relatively high level of community support and trust.

I frequently tell people that the constructs widely used in some countries to describe people's theology or preferred worship styles are not immediately translatable in all South African churches. “Evangelical” and “Anglo-Catholic” mean different things to different people, and evangelical churches were amongst those who strongly supported apartheid (Dutch Reformed Church amongst the white Afrikaaner community, or the Baptist Union of South Africa and some others). Non-denominational churches are quite common, especially African Independent Churches which are vast in number.

Attending a large Anglican church in a predominantly black urban neighbourhood, you might experience several hundred people of all ages in a Eucharist for over 2 hours, with processions and incense, sung liturgy without printed words or notes and no electronic screens, a sermon of half an hour at least with simultaneous translation into another language, hymns sung to the same tune but with people using several different languages, and a call to come forward to recommit your life to Jesus. You can't put that in a neat “box”!

**If you wish to know more about the ordination programme, or about spiritual formation and discernment, feel free to contact Nic via email at [ndennydimitriou@sbc.edu.au](mailto:ndennydimitriou@sbc.edu.au) or on 8305 9310**