



December 2023

Bishop Michael's

# Christmas Message

Dear all in our CatholicCare family, I send my greetings to all of you.

Christmas is a good time for gathering family and friends and has become known for being with those important to you. For those travelling to reach destinations, please take care.

We sit with sadness this year, where war has disrupted the lives of many. We pray the Prince of Peace brings peace to troubled parts of our world and consolation to those who have suffered the effects of war.

Closer to home we have those who have lost a loved one. In recent times bushfires have caused devastation in our Diocese and continue to threaten property. We also have the impact of the cost of living and housing shortages.

In all these situations and disruptions though we find people ministering and working in our lives. Their Christian presence brings joy and hope. It may be a neighbour who assists others, being with those who suffer, or giving someone in need a helping hand. This really brings close that message of Christ.

To our Diocesan family and beyond, may we remember the Christ who came into our world, to be a beacon of peace, love, joy and hope. This Christmas I ask you to be that beacon in your community.

For all who are part of our Diocesan ministry of CatholicCare, my gratitude goes to you as you go about your apostolic work, bringing peace, love, joy and hope every day.

May Christ's richest blessing be with you all and your families.

Merry Christmas & God bless you all.



Most Rev Michael McCarthy  
Bishop of Rockhampton



# Staff in focus...

# Mike

## Application Software Developer



### Q. How long have you been working at CatholicCare and what does your job look like?

I joined CatholicCare in March 2016. As part of our IT team, I do a lot of work with our data and I develop applications and tools that help our staff to run reports and perform data analysis. All of these things help to improve our services.

### Q. What aspects of your job bring you the most fulfillment?

I love computer programming and have worked for clients all around the world in developing software.

In 2018, there were really bad fires burning in the Rockhampton region. Things were so bad that the entire township of Gracemere had evacuation orders issued at one point.

I was asked to develop an application (app) that would allow us to see all of our client and worker locations on a large scrollable map, and then circle certain areas so that we could quickly identify and contact people within them. I worked through the night and had a working app by morning. Our CatholicCare team monitored the fire situation closely day and night and used this app to communicate with affected people, whether it was to coordinate evacuations, provide up-to-date information or simply to reassure people that help was available.

To know that my little app helped people to stay informed, remain calm, and where necessary evacuate during that time, is a wonderful feeling. I may have even helped to save some lives!

### Q. How do you like to spend your time outside of work?

I live on land that used to be a pineapple farm, but 20 years later, is now full of trees. There is lots of wildlife slowly returning and I'm hoping to see more return in the future. I intend to establish a nature and animal reserve that I can set up to continue for at least 100 years, even after I am gone.

I feel a super strong connection to my land and I'm currently working on a book of poetry (*and more*) to try to explain and document that.

Oh, and I'm also an active volunteer in the Rural Fire Brigade and am in the process of joining the Coast Guard (*as a volunteer*) too.

### Q. What are some of your favourite ways to relax and unwind?

Walking around my land and computer programming (*yes! I even like to do this to unwind after a long day*). I like doing crosswords, sudoku, and any other puzzles I can find. I love to explore and learn new things - YouTube is a wonderful resource for learning!

I'm still also big kid at heart. I love riding motorbikes, trail bikes, quad bikes, tractors, and anything else with a motor.

### Q. Are there any special places you like to visit or travel to?

I have travelled through much of Asia, Europe and the UK. Two of my favourite places are Lake Mary, and Upper Stoney Creek.

*Continued >*

*Continued from over page...*

### Q. Are you currently reading, watching, or listening to anything that you would recommend to others?

I'm currently re-listening to Richard Feynman lectures, a famous physicist from the 1950's, 60's and 70's, who among many achievements, was also a core part of Oppenheimer's team to develop the atomic bomb.

### Q. Do you have any favourite quotes or sayings that provide you with inspiration and motivation?

John F Kennedy's famous "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country" is one of my core mottos.

My parents instilled in my brothers and I that they didn't care what we chose to do in life for work, they just asked that we tried to find what we really loved doing and strive to do it as best as we possible could. They taught me that when you do this in a job you love, you never really 'work' a day in your life.

### Q. What are some interesting facts about you?

I once had a hang glider accident. I was caught in a sudden squall with violent winds and rain and low cloud everywhere. I could not see the ground for about 20 minutes. My friends and hang gliding buddies on the mountain top could hear me yelling out, but I could not hear or see them. I ended up crash landing and spending a few days in hospital with concussion.

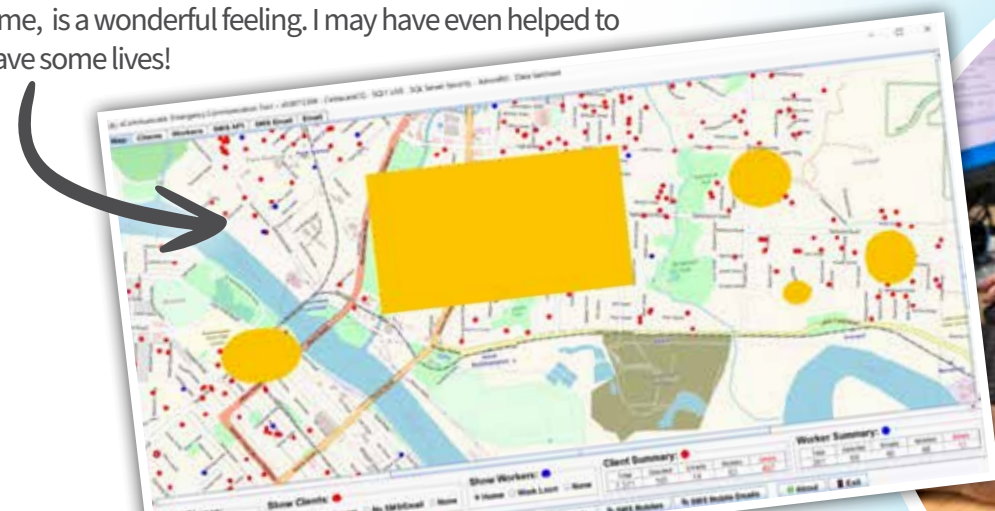
### Q. Describe a time when you witnessed the positive influence of CatholicCare services on someone's life?

I see the feedback our staff receive from clients, and this has been extremely positive and highlights the amazing job my colleagues do. And, it's not just the staff providing services in person to our clients either; the amazing feedback comes in for many teams like Scheduling, and Client Contact, among others. To me, they are the *true* heroes.

**Our Staff in Focus series has been so popular and we love hearing your feedback!**

To share your thoughts,

Email us at:  
communications@catholiccarecq.com



# STAYING SAFE THIS SUMMER

Now that it is **officially** summer, we thought it would be a great time to provide you with some tips for how to make the most of summer days safely.

- Stay Hydrated:** In a tropical climate, the heat and humidity can be particularly taxing, so it's essential to stay hydrated. Make an effort to drink plenty of water and avoid excessive alcohol and caffeine too, as interestingly, they can both contribute to dehydration.
- Protect Against the Sun:** Our Australian sun can be intense, and protecting your skin is crucial. Use sunscreen with a high SPF, wear sun glasses and a wide-brimmed hat, and lightweight, long-sleeved clothing to shield yourself from harmful UV rays.
- Stay Cool:** Ensure your home is well-ventilated and equipped with fans or air conditioning to beat the heat. If your home is not adequately cooled, consider spending time in air-conditioned public places, during the hottest hours.
- Plan Outdoor Activities Carefully:** Enjoy outdoor activities during the cooler parts of the day, typically in the early morning or late afternoon. Avoid strenuous activities during the middle of the day when the heat is at its highest levels.
- Prevent Heat-Related Illness:** Know the signs of heat-related illnesses like heat exhaustion and heatstroke that can become serious very quickly. If you or someone you know experiences symptoms like heavy sweating, weakness, dizziness, nausea, or confusion, move to a cooler place, hydrate, and seek medical attention if necessary.
- Stay Informed:** The beauty of our country is sometimes only matched by it's wrath, with the summer months bringing the potential for natural disasters like bushfires, flooding and cyclones. Regularly check local news, radio, or Facebook pages during summer, as situations can develop and change quickly.

**Remember that everyone's health and tolerance for heat can vary, so it's crucial to be proactive in taking care of yourself during our hot Queensland summer.**





## RECIPE

# Chocolate Brownie Santa Hats

These cute little treats make the perfect addition to any Christmas table spread!

### Ingredients...

- 150 g dark chocolate
- 125 g unsalted butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 cup plain flour
- 3/4 cup milk chocolate chips
- 16 fresh strawberries
- 300 ml thickened cream
- 3 tbs caster sugar

Source: [kidspot.com.au](http://kidspot.com.au)

### Just six simple steps...

1. Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Grease and line a 18cm x 28cm slice tray with baking paper. Place the butter and chocolate into a microwave-safe bowl. Heat in 30 second bursts for 3-4 minutes (until melted), stirring with a dry metal spoon between each burst. Add the brown sugar and mix until combined. Allow the chocolate mixture to cool slightly.
2. Beat the eggs in a separate bowl until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla extract to the chocolate mixture and whisk together well. Add the plain flour and the milk chocolate chips and fold through gently. Pour the mixture into the prepared tin and bake for 25 minutes or until a skewer inserted into the middle comes out clean. Set the brownie aside to cool and then place into the fridge for at least 3 hours (preferably overnight).
3. Remove the brownie from the fridge and use a round shaped cutter to cut out circles.
4. Wash, dry and hull the strawberries and add one to the top of each brownie circle.
5. Whip the thickened cream and caster sugar with beaters on high until stiff peaks form. Place the whipped cream into a piping bag (or a Ziploc bag with the end snipped off), and pipe around the edges. Then pipe a small dot on top of each strawberry.
6. Place the Santa brownie hats into an airtight container in the fridge until required. **Enjoy!**



## WONDERWORD

# Nativity Words

Can you follow the 'star' and 'shepherd' all the words in this month's nativity themed puzzle?

NATIVITY	SHEEP	MANGER	GIFT
DONKEY	JESUS	STRAW	INN
BETHLEHEM	SHEPHERD	ANIMALS	JOSEPH
WISE MEN	MYRRH	MARY	GOD
SON	STAR	GOLD	STABLE



**Need a hint or looking for the solution?**

Scan the QR code or visit:

[www.catholiccarecq.com/wonderword](http://www.catholiccarecq.com/wonderword)

W	I	E	O	D	E	I	E	O	S	L	S	T	I
E	H	P	E	S	O	J	D	G	M	D	E	F	S
A	E	M	N	M	I	G	E	D	H	A	G	I	H
D	B	E	T	H	L	E	H	E	M	I	R	G	E
Y	S	N	R	R	H	S	T	H	N	N	Y	Y	P
A	L	A	A	M	Y	R	R	H	G	J	E	S	H
Y	A	T	T	N	W	N	R	S	O	E	K	T	E
P	M	I	S	E	E	I	R	A	L	S	N	R	R
E	I	V	M	L	I	E	S	M	D	U	O	A	D
E	N	I	A	B	Y	Y	H	E	S	S	D	W	R
H	A	T	N	A	H	H	S	G	M	S	I	M	E
S	R	Y	G	T	N	N	I	O	S	E	H	S	A
N	L	N	E	S	T	I	E	D	N	A	N	P	A
A	H	M	R	T	E	L	A	E	E	T	R	B	E

Source: [thewordsearch.com](http://thewordsearch.com)