



## GFS World President's Christmas Message

### The Sun is Rising : The GFS Light Shines

Dear GFS World family and friends around the World

I write this on the first Sunday of Advent, a new year for the Church, a time of love, peace, joy and hope for a different future in the birth of Jesus Christ. And yet the world seduces us to embrace fake joy that is momentary and fleeting.

Christmas is a sign to us of God's commitment, compassion, and sacrificial love. Our prayer at this time should be Maranatha – **Come O Lord**. This is a gift of perfect unity with God, and may we not turn our backs to this greatest gift.

In embracing and sharing these virtues of love, peace, and joy, we fill the world with God's presence among us. His Word tells us in Proverbs 8 : 17-21 - *"I love them that love me and those that seek me early shall find me ... and I will fill their treasures."* He comes to heal the brokenness within us and the world. Scripture tells us that Jesus comes to the world so that those who receive Him and call themselves by His name can bring hope to especially those who live in the shadows of life.

As I travelled around the different countries this passing year, in the face of 'events, floods, pandemics and earthquakes' that shook the very foundations of our faith and gave rise to perennial anxiety, it was gratifying to see encouraging signs of rejuvenation, revival, renewal and commitment. The levels of motivation and enthusiasm among the people – both young and not so young - were inspiring.

I want to thank all the GFS branches that hosted me, the people who worked hard behind the scenes to facilitate the visits and their 'special guests' I managed to meet. We did not only fellowship together, but we also left GFS footprints of witness and shared God's goodness towards us.

May you all have a blessed Christmas and a happy new year.

We look forward to hosting you at the World Council 2023 in August in South Africa. May your preparations and plans be blessed and fruitful.

Let us continue to fly the flag of God's presence in our world.

**Thembeke Pama**

### World Executive Team

**President:**

Ms Thembeke Pama

**Vice President:**

Lay Canon Val Gribble ML

**Treasurer:**

Ms Nokwanda Benya

**Secretaries:**

Ms Lois Frankforter  
(Immediate Past President  
GFS USA)

Ms Pumeza Magona  
(GFS World Secretary)

**World Organizer:**

Ms Bekiwe Gijana

**Youth Officer:**

Ms Kundai Matikiti

**Incoming World President /  
World Newsletter  
Coordinator**

Ms Jeanne Withanage  
(President GFS Sri Lanka)

**Contact Details:**

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**Website:**

[www.gfsworld.org](http://www.gfsworld.org)

**Facebook:** GFS Worldwide



## GFS Australia

# GFS News from around the World!

We wish all our wonderful members around the world a truly Holy and Blessed Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.

Several members will attend the **GFS World Council in South Africa**. We are especially pleased to have chosen Ms Hannah de Soysa as our new Junior Delegate who will be commissioned during our National Annual meeting in January. She leads a GFS group and a holiday programme in Melbourne. Hannah gives a wonderful account of her current and past ministries with girls and university students and looks forward to attending the World Council. Also in Africa, Congratulations to GFS Cameroon for their amazing World Project.

The Australian Annual Meeting, for January 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> 2023 will be held in Brisbane. We are excited to once again be meeting in person after so many Zoom only meetings. During our time we will be holding an Open Spaces session to sharpen our vision and explore how to share this with the wider community. We have invited a local Bishop to share about GFS's place in the Anglican communion.



Hannah our new Junior Delegate (with her university degrees – two, no less)



Stephanie decorating the GFS Christmas tree with many of the hand sewn felt hearts to share God's love at Christmas in their Parish Christmas tree display.

GFS Australia has continued with **projects to help others in need**. Our ministries to reach out to those in need included: special awareness programmes, gifts of rugs, scarves and beanies made by members and given to Seafarers Mission, flood victims and clothing for premature baby's needs. Bags of toiletries are offered by other groups to assist those fleeing domestic violence.

The ministry of hospitality is continuing in Sydney in Arundel House, a boarding house for university students, with a Pen Pal service of encouragement for their student residents.

I thank our Executive for their untiring service to GFS Australia and GFS World and look forward to next year and our World Council.

Suzanne Claire

President, GFS Australia



**FOR GIRLS  
FOR FRIENDSHIP  
FOR SOCIETY**

## GFS England and Wales

After visa delays pushed back a much-anticipated visit from our GFS World President, Thembeke joined us for a whirlwind trip at the end of September.

GFS England and Wales CEO, Laura, met Thembeke at London Heathrow Airport to whisk her away on the two-hour drive to Birmingham to start her action-packed agenda. Sharon, the Leader of GFS Atherstone, took Thembeke to meet local dignitaries, visit the Atherstone Groups and GFS Bearwood.

Thembeke travelled from the Midlands in England to South Wales, visiting GFS Dunvant, and one of our newest thriving groups, GFS Neath. Thembeke met Welsh President, Catriona, and other community members.

Her next stop took her to GFS Layton in the North of England. She was greeted by Leader Barbara and Chair of Trustees, Leanne. Plus, time with the girls and a classic parachute game! The next day, she went to Lady Chapel in Liverpool, a place full of GFS history, stained glass and a long-time legacy of work to champion women.



But this hasn't just been a time of reuniting with our friends from GFS World. It's been a time of bringing our girls together too. Because of the Pandemic, many had never met girls from other groups or had a trip out. At long last, groups have started taking camping trips and visits to Sea houses. Thanks to the support we received for our International Women's Day fundraiser, we held Regional Fun Days for 145 GFS girls.

While it has been a time of hello's, it's also been a time of goodbyes. After many years of service, our much beloved England President, Margaret Winks, stepped down from her role. Luckily, Margaret's daughter Poppy Winks, and the outstanding leader of GFS Eldon, Pam Hutchinson, stepped in.

Together, President Pam and Vice President Poppy will work alongside Welsh President Catriona in support of our wonderful girls and volunteers.

Laura Sercombe  
Chief Executive



# GFS Guyana

May the spirit of Christmas infuse your life and that of your family members in hope, positivity & joy!

During the period under review, GFS Guyana has a lot to be thankful for. We were able to successfully celebrate our World Day of Prayer and celebrated our 1<sup>st</sup> anniversary after resuscitation, admitting five (5) members to our society.

We continue to pray for God's mercy & blessings over our Society as we continue to do His work.

May 2023 be a year where all your dreams turn into reality and all your efforts into achievements my GFS sisters.

Happy New Year from GFS Guyana!



Admission of  
new members



New members  
with Executive

World Day  
of Prayer



Trinette Cosbert  
President, GFS Guyana



# GFS Japan

Japan GFS has a few branches and each holds the World Day of Prayer Service 2022. We need the process of translations for service scripts which are sent in September into Japanese and to be confirmed at the head office. The Okinawa branch has a part of this translation role.

In this news letter, we would like to report on the World Day of Prayer Service in the Okinawa Diocese and Hokkaido Diocese which is located in the northernmost part of Okinawa. The Mihara Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul held the World Day of Prayer Service on October 16.

Everyone in the chapel prayed for Cameroon and held a mini-bazaar so that love and prayers from Okinawa could reach children and women in Cameroon.

Also, we served as Choir and Bible readers during the ordination of a Deacon in the Okinawa Diocese on November 3.

Hokkaido had the World Day of Prayer Service on October 26. Ms. Haruko Amemiya, Japan GFS President joined remotely and prayed with 12 members in total. The Rev. Yuko Kimura, the Chaplain of Hokkaido GFS, talked about the situation in Sri Lanka and sent our thoughts there.

Japan GFS is preparing for next year’s World Council, including junior selection.



The fireplace has been lit in Hokkaido



With Japan GFS president who joined remotely and leader of Hokkaido

Grace Haruko Amemiya  
President, GFS Japan



## GFS Liberia

GFS World Day of Prayer was observed on October 16, 2022. 101 GFSers and Sponsors were present. Of this, 60 girls and women were admitted to GFS.

GFS Liberia extended an invitation to our World President and she arrived in Liberia on Nov. 21. This is the first time in 69 years since the establishment of GFS Liberia that we had a World President visit us.

She paid a courtesy visit to our Bishop, Rt. Revd. James Bombo Sallee, PhD, visited the South African Embassy and also went to the Sierra Leone Embassy to obtain a visa. She then headed for Bo, Sierra Leone to visit the GFS at the Anglican Diocese and met the Bishop of Bo and his wife, Rt. Revd. Solomon and Mot. Marriama Scoot-Manga and GFS members. The National GFS President of Sierra Leone could not join because of an earlier commitment. We were taken to a center of about 70 partially and total blind children and were blessed by the singing and interaction.



We returned to Liberia and the World President along with National President Thelma E. Duncan Sawyer attended a UN Women function in observance of the 16 day of activism.

The President also had a fruitful meeting with GFS Executive Officers, Branch leaders, Sponsors and GFSers, representative of the Diocesan Altar Guild and the Diocesan Administrator, the Revd. Fr. Wozeyan Bazzie who represented the Bishop. She also attended the wedding of the daughter of our immediate past Archbishop.

Sunday, Nov. 27 was a great day for GFS Liberia and the Episcopal Church of Liberia as we worshipped with the World President and a representative of S.A. Embassy in Liberia.

The President's visit has increased the total number of registered persons for World Council to 20. We pray for financial breakthrough for all of our registered members to be able to complete payment and attend WC. We are also looking at the possibility of establishing BFS.

Georgiana Tucker Williams  
Coordinator & Adviser  
On behalf of GFS, Liberia



## GFS Melanesia

Greetings from Melanesia in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ! Grace and peace to you all. GFS Melanesia happy to share few updates on what is been happening in this part of the world.

GFS committee was able to carry out its first awareness session in Tasimboko village in the Diocese of Guadalcanal. This session was part of a two days mission program organized by the Provincial Mothers Union Head office in Honiara, which mainly targets the elderly, those with special needs (disability) and young girls. The outreach program was a success - many lives were blessed and encouraged with the love of God.

This was also a valuable opportunity to meet and share GFS information with young girls and women. Many who attended the awareness session have shown great interest to join the society. Plans are currently underway for appointment of new GFS leaders in the diocese and to have them undergo leadership training.



Young girls of Tasimboko, Diocese of Guadalcanal after awareness session



Young girls of the Diocese of Temotu, Malu District after their admission

Furthermore, we also give thanks to God for new members joining the society from the Diocese of Temotu. A total of 17 young girls were admitted from the age of 13 to 18years. These girls are living in the remote parts of the diocese and coming together is always a challenge, but by the grace of God it was possible.

GFS Melanesia will continue to work on the priority areas to do awareness and reaching out to at least one more diocese before the year closes. Please pray for the work of GFS in this part of the world

Minnie Kiriau

Coordinator, GFS Melanesia



# GFS New Zealand

Hello every one,

I hope this report finds you all well and looking forward to the Christmas festivities and holiday break.

This year, 7 of our GFS Scholarship students successfully completed their tertiary education and graduation ceremonies were held in the presence of family and friends. The first time for almost 3 years that ceremonies have included family and friends.

Council members have attended several college prize giving ceremonies where GFS Scholarships were awarded. It is always a challenge to choose an appropriate student and Council members seek the advice of the teachers to achieve a suitable outcome.

A Wellington GFS tertiary scholarship recipient recently graduated in Wellington with a Bachelor of Health Science (Paramedic) and is commencing a career as a paramedic with the local ambulance service. GFS first granted her the scholarship in 2013; however, she found tertiary study was not for her at that time and took a break for some years. Council agreed to defer her scholarship and she resumed study in 2019 and enthusiastically and successfully completed her degree this year. She wrote to GFS, saying: "A big thank you to GFS for allowing me to pick my scholarship up and supporting me through it, it has been greatly appreciated".

We continue to support 16 girls at Tertiary institutions and 4 high school students girls at Outward Bound, an outdoor pursuits centre. The students learn through various activities to understand their full potential by challenging themselves physically, mentally, and emotionally. The students return to their schools to share what they have learned and to be of service to others.

GFS New Zealand wish GFS countries around the world a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

God Bless

Helen Allen

President, GFS New Zealand



## GFS & BFS South Africa

Warm greetings from GFS South Africa

On the 1<sup>st</sup> of October 2022 the GFS was closing its National Conference on the high note of "Christ in you is the hope of glory" Col 1:27. Thanks to the presenters of Climate Change Curbing, Gender Based Violence, Boys and Girls Indaba (News) and substance abuse.



South Africa is a diverse country and there are more than 20 different cultures, 12 official languages. Heritage day is observed and celebrated on the 24<sup>th</sup> September of every year.

GFS members celebrating  
Heritage day

Closing the 2022 GFS National Conference



We are ending the year 2022 on a sad note as one of the leaders in the Diocese of Mzimvubu, a dedicated parent to the young ones, a loving mother and a good teacher went to be with the Lord. May her soul rest in peace.

We are grateful to the Lord that the doors of World Council are now opened after a long period of missing physical fellowship due to COVID 19. South Africa is looking forward and ready to host the World.

We appreciate the priests who respond to the calling of pastoring the GBFS family in the entire world, their commitment and sacrifice won't go unnoticed.

Zanele Ntenetyana

President, GFS & BFS South Africa



The Leader RIP



## GFS South Korea

GFS South Korea made plum syrup to be used at Cafe Grace after the national monthly meeting on June 14th. After reopening in April, the hardworking staff and employers had dinner together at Seongbuk-dong. After dinner, we had a good time in the open area such as the Octagonal Pavilion Drive. It is a place to comfort the depressed minds who were suffering from the corona virus.

From July 16th to 18th, the GFS 2021 World Council was held over Zoom, hosted by the World President Thembeke Pama.

You-SeonSeok (Fides) and Wonkyung Choi (Theresa), participated as Senior and Junior D delegates. Yang-Soon Choi (Lucia), who is the President of the World Championships attended as an observer.



On the 27<sup>th</sup> of August, I asked for financial support for the Café Grace from the Seoul Bishop's Cathedral. GFS sent an official letter asking for help, notifying that the Café Grace is struggling to help North Korean refugee women.

In addition, GFS Seoul Department (Chairman : Myung-sook Yoon) donated 1 million won and National GFS (Chairman : You-Seon Seok) donated 3 million won to help North Korean refugees.

On the 16<sup>th</sup> of October, a regular general meeting of the GFS Federation was held at the Francis Hall of the Cathedral of the Bishop in Seoul, to elect the new president of the Seoul Diocese. Jin-Hye Min (Hilda) was elected as the new president.

Youseon Seok (Fides)

President, GFS South Korea



# GFS Sri Lanka

**We thank God** for being able to conduct public Programmes in Colombo after many years. The economic crisis, food shortage and power cuts persist.

**Home gardens** - We continued to promote the concept of growing one's own vegetables by distributing plants to 20 members in the Galle Archdeaconry

**Community Project** - Vegetables, fruits and spices purchased from the outstations are made available to families in Colombo at reasonable rates.

**Pre-Christmas Sale** - Held in the GFS Hall after a lapse of 2 years

**Choir** - Formed with the *Pink Pearls*.

**World Day of Prayer** - Observed by several branches :

Colombo - Service in the GFS Hall.

Archdeaconry of Galle - Galle, Deniyaya, Hambantota, Baddegama

Archdeaconry of NuwaraEliya - Maskeliya, Dickoya, Bogawantalawa

**Climate Justice** - Zoom meeting held with GFS Ireland

**WDP 2022** - Our GFS prepared the Order of Service

**Sewing Class** - Successfully conducted at the Hambantota branch. Exhibition of the work was held and Certificates distributed. Some ladies began sewing clothes and rugs to earn an income.

Hambantota branch : The girls of the sewing class with their certificates



Colombo : The GFS *Pink Pearls* Choir singing at the WDP Service

## "Grow GFS" concept of the World Project

Teams from GFS Headquarters, Colombo visited churches in three Archdeaconries :

New branch established - Church of the Transfiguration, Buona Vista

Introductory programmes conducted - Ingiriya, Liyanwala, NuwaraEliya, Ragala

Programmes to encourage existing branches - PundaluOya, Bogawantalawa, Dickoya , Hambantota, Baddegama

Branches continue to organize prayer meetings, craft days, small sales.

**Bearing burdens** - Dry rations distributed to :

The National Ayurvedic hospital      5 families affected by floods in Bogawantalawa  
1 family in Maskeliya.

Exercise books donated to 2 children affected by the heavy rains in Dickoya.

Commenced providing lunch for Sunday School Children at All Saints' Church, Maskeliya.

We record the sudden passing of our Consultant Mr. Lal Withanage and thank God for his significant voluntary role in the development of our GFS.

Jeanne Withanage  
President, GFS Sri Lanka

**Update**

## **World Project 2021 to 2023**

*GFS Cameroon remains grateful to God for granting them the opportunity to host the GFS World Project and are looking forward to how this project will make a positive impact to the girls in our community and as well make GFS and the Anglican brand well known. Many thanks to GFS family worldwide for the opportunity.*

Estelle Elango Dibo  
President, GFS Cameroon

Moves have been made to follow the government procedures in establishing a training centre. Rental of a suitable building is the only way, at present, that a training centre can be established. Government officials would then need to inspect the centre and give the necessary authorisation for it to commence.

This, of course, requires project money to begin to flow to Cameroon. So far only two countries have sent money and it is imperative that the project is promoted in each country and monies sent as soon as they are available. Monies from our World Day of Prayer are expected to be for the World Project. We only have two years to complete this project. The banking details to send money to Cameroon are again in this newsletter.

Cameroon GFS is taking every advantage and gatherings to alert the community of the project. The response has been very positive and as plans become more settled they will produce flyers for more advertisement.

**IT IS NOW UP TO US, EVERY MEMBER OF GFS WORLDWIDE TO SUPPORT THIS PROJECT IN PRAYER AND GIVING.**

Canon Val Gribble  
GFS World Vice President

## **Skills Acquisition for Disadvantaged Girls**

### **Banking Details**

Please make note of the banking details for the Cameroon World Project. Any gifts should be made direct to Cameroon with an email to the World President and World Treasurer advising that a transfer has been made. Would you also email me ([valgribble1@bigpond.com](mailto:valgribble1@bigpond.com)) when you send gifts to Cameroon.

The Bank in Cameroon has given three account numbers depending on the currency which is the easiest for you to use.

The name of the account will be the same – ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF CAMEROON GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY (GFS)

Union Bank Cameroon PLC - Bonamoussadi Branch,  
opposite Immeuble Socar

Account Number: 01100016709

SWIFT NO – UCMACMCX

#### **US Dollars**

Standard Chartered Bank, New York – USA

Account Number: 3582026768001

SWIFT NO – SCBLUS33

#### **Euros**

Standard Chartered Bank, Frankfurt

AM Main DE – Germany

Account Number: 18303503

SWIFT NO – SCBLDEFX

IBAN – DE 81512305000018303503

**Would Treasurers who are sending money to Cameroon please be aware that it is preferable to send to the New York or Germany account – that seems to be working if somewhat slow. PLEASE SEND A COPY OF YOUR BANK TRANSFER FORM TO ESTELLE IN CAMEROON AND TO THE WORLD TREASURER WHENEVER PAYMENT IS MADE.**

Email: CAMEROON - [gfsdiocameroon@yahoo.com](mailto:gfsdiocameroon@yahoo.com)

Email: WORLD TREASURER - Nokwanda Benya  
[nokwanda.benya@coega.co.za](mailto:nokwanda.benya@coega.co.za)

Thank you  
Canon Val Gribble, GFS World Vice President

## WORLD FEES

### World Fees are still due from some countries

Please send your World Fees to GFS **South Africa**.

Account details :

Account Name : GFS World Council  
Bank : First National Bank  
Branch : Balfour Park  
Branch Code : 250655  
Account Number : 62720797953  
Swift Code : FIRNZAJJ  
Branch Address: Shop 229 Balfour Park Shopping Centre,  
Highlands North, 2192

## GIFTS & DONATIONS

for

### WORLD TRAVEL, WORLD PRESIDENT'S TRAVEL etc

Please send to GFS **South Africa**, to the above bank account

## WORLD EMERGENCY FUND

For any gifts to this Fund, please send to GFS **Australia**  
which holds the funds this term.

Account details :

Account Name : GFS World Account  
Banking Institution : ANZ Bank  
Address : Shop 67, Whitford City,  
Cnr Marmion & Whitford Avenues  
Hillarys – WA 6025  
Code : BSB 016 494  
Account Number : 392526836  
Swift Number : ANZBAU3M

Cut off date for next Newsletter : March 1, 2023

Please send your news (max 300 words) in Word format and 2 separate pics (jpg) to :

[gfsworldnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:gfsworldnewsletter@gmail.com)

# IN LOVING MEMORY



## Lal Withanage

We, in GFS Australia, would like to offer a tribute in memory of Mr Lal Withanage, beloved husband of our incoming World President, Jeanne.

Val Gribble met Lal on two visits, and found out how much he was devoted to GFS in Sri Lanka. Val particularly remembers her first visit in 2017 to assist GFS Sri Lanka to prepare their application to be considered for a World Project. It was Lal's expertise, his wisdom, his confidence and faith in God which helped to put together the successful application and then to see it carried through.

He was responsible for renovating the famous GFS Hall in 2010 even when there was little money. And then on the spare land organised a car parking facility so GFS could have a regular income. As GFS Hall is in the heart of Columbo the car park was always booked out.

Lal had a vision for GFS. He spent many an hour talking and advising staff and the executive about finances, planning, programs, image building and as the project progressed did so much to start new branches and grow GFS. He gave so generously and sacrificially over so many years.

His most recent project was to supervise the remodelling of the back of GFS Hall so that there is now a small meeting area and two guest rooms which can be an income for GFS. It was almost completed when Lal left this world.

Always Lal and Jeanne were conscious of the need to work on a new Hostel but although the plans were started it was not to be Lal's project. But his ideas will be there and used.

Val also mentions that each Sunday an Interdenominational International service would arrive in her inbox, prepared by Lal (assisted by Jeanne) and Lal's deep faith and commitment to Our Lord was so very evident.

Lal was so proud of Jeanne and her accomplishments, and it would have been the highlight of his life to see Jeanne commissioned as World President. We know he will be there in spirit.

We thank you Lal on behalf of GFS members worldwide for all you have given to GFS.

# WORLD WEB PAGE

[www.gfsworld.org](http://www.gfsworld.org)

**How often do you read the world webpage?**

**Do you check that your country information is up to date?**

Our web page is our window to the world – it is the way we promote GFS - it needs to be UpToDate. I can only keep it up to date with information that is given to me. Despite many requests much of the country information is very outdated. And most of the new countries which were admitted at the last World Council have not provided any information.

**Please consider this a priority.**

You can read so much history on our web page. Did you know that you can read the minutes of the world councils from 1955 to 2014. I will shortly have the minutes from 2017, 2020 and 2021 to add. There is so much of interest as the minutes trace the growth of GFS throughout the world.

The reports of the countries as at July 2017 are also recorded. Very soon we will have the 2021 reports to add. Look for these reports under “About Us” and then “Historical Documents”

Any comments or suggestions for change are welcome. Send to me at :

[valgribble1@bigpond.com](mailto:valgribble1@bigpond.com)

(Canon) Val Gribble

GFS World Vice-President and Webmaster

## Love in a manger

Christmas is about the birth of God's son, Jesus.  
It is about how He came to give us love, hope, joy & peace.



The birth  
that changed  
the history of mankind

We wish all our members,  
family, friends and clergy  
worldwide

A blessed Christmas!  
May the love, hope, joy  
& peace of Christmas  
be with you  
all through the new year

**World Executive**  
**Girls' Friendly Society**