"I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." (Genesis 12:2-3)

God made this promise to Abram thousands of years ago. It is a promise that Christians hold to today - that we are blessed by God in order that we might be a blessing to others. This great nation that was formed eventually became the nation of Israel, through which the whole world has been blessed through Jesus Christ.

This promise is one that comes with a responsibility to share that blessing with those around us. This blessing takes many forms. We live our lives in obedience to God, showing those around us a different way to live, a way that values and respects others. We share the good news of Jesus, telling people about him. We help them with their physical needs, whether it is working alongside them or helping them out financially. We can provide a blessing in many ways, each as important as the other.

We don’t often think of our local community when we think about people in need. I was discussing this recently with Sue West from Anglicare. Sue told me about three families who had approached them for help in the past week. One was a family from Bathurst who had no money left to buy food after they paid their rent and utilities. They were looking for food to be able to feed their family until their next pay day. Another family approached Anglicare for assistance with blankets, swags, or any other bedding. They had little furniture and had already been to other support agencies in town. The third was a lady from Mudgee who had approached the local Parish. She had been off work due to sickness and had used up her sick leave. She had no money to pay her rent, utilities, or to buy food.

When we think about people in need we usually think of them as being somewhere else - either in a big city where they have been used up her sick leave. She had no money to pay her rent, utilities, or to buy food.

When we think about people in need we usually think of them as being somewhere else - either in a big city where they have been impacted by alcohol or drug abuse, or in an overseas country ravaged by famine or war. We will often dig deep to help, especially when we see children affected overseas. We should do this, but we should not lose sight of the fact that we have many people in need in our own local communities.

It is people like these that the Anglicare Pantry Appeal is designed to help. They are our neighbours. They are those whom we are asked to bless. As we enter the last week of term we have collected just over $350 at our chapel services to give to this appeal. It is good that we can do this, but it is well short of our modest target of $2,000, (it is less that $4 for every student at the school). If you are able to give to this cause then I encourage you to give generously. The person you are helping may live closer than you think.

God bless you,
Rev. Tony Card.

Thought for the week: “And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds...” (Hebrews 10:24, NRSV)
The NEXT Class Parents’ Meeting to discuss the Spring Fair arrangements will take place Wednesday, 24th July, at 5.30 pm in the Year 4 Classroom. We hope you can be there.
Our Agriculture students have recently had the benefit of attending a number of sessions on wool classing and wool valuation delivered by Mr John Dwyer of the Institute of TAFE (Western). The sessions have included discussions on describing and analysing wool, the Australian Wool Index system and wool appraisal and valuation. The junior Agriculture students have also learned about some basic wool handling skills such as throwing a fleece and examining a staple of wool.

For senior students the sessions are invaluable for the upcoming National Merino Challenge hosted by Australian Wool Innovation to be held in Dubbo in August this year. During the Challenge students are invited to be a part of a series of lectures and practical activities about merino health, nutrition, breeding and wool management, culminating in a number of challenges in which students compete against each other.

For junior students the practical activity supports the theory of the sheep unit they have been studying this term.

It is hoped that we will be able to offer some components of the wool classing certificate at school before too long so that students will be able to earn real qualifications in the industry leading up to the Wool Classing certificate.

All students in Years 7 and 8 now complete an 11-week Agriculture programme as one of three components of the Technology syllabus at All Saints’ College.

For 2013 the Agriculture programme is focused on the rearing of laying hens. As a part of the programme, students are given a day-old chicken which they help to raise to about three months of age. They are free to take her home at this stage or else she finds a home at the school farm.

During the programme students learn about animal welfare, monitor and plot the growth and development of the animal, design principles of chicken enclosures, the basic theory of raising chickens, incubation and egg management.

Students also contribute to the daily routines on the school farm which have mainly centred on cattle and pigs so far this year. The concept seems pretty popular and has provided students with a learning opportunity that is unique and gives them a small taste of Agriculture for consideration as an elective in Years 9 and 10.

Mark Whitfeld