



inside: Celebrating 170 years of service, supporting seafarers in the Strait of Hormuz and more

SEA SUNDAY



Please join us on **SEA SUNDAY** 12 July 2026

Join churches worldwide to pray for and support the 1.9 million seafarers who face isolation, danger, and hardship every day. Help us be Harbours of Hope this Sea Sunday. Just as a harbour offers safety, provision, and hope to ships in distress, the church is a spiritual and practical harbour for those in need.



Find out more at missiontoseafarers.org/sea-sunday



Welcome to the latest edition of FAN!

The second Sunday of July is marked each year by Christian communities around the world as Sea Sunday. It is a striking reminder that, however maritime welfare organisations have developed over time, much of the support available to seafarers today has its roots in Christian ministry.

Sea Sunday offers an opportunity to pause – to give thanks for the dedication of seafarers, to hold them in prayer amid the challenges of life at sea, and to support organisations such as The Mission to Seafarers that exist for their care and wellbeing.

As I write this introduction to the latest issue of FAN, the situation in the Strait of Hormuz remains exceptionally difficult. A significant number of vessels, and the crews who serve aboard them, are currently unable to leave the Gulf of Arabia.

In this edition, you will find coverage of that unfolding situation, alongside insight into the ongoing work of The Mission to Seafarers in the region. We also bring updates from across our global network, highlighting both established work and new and developing services responding to emerging needs.

This issue also marks an important moment in the life of the Mission. Tom Boardley concludes his service as Chair after nine years, the maximum term, and he does so with our deep gratitude.

His leadership, alongside colleagues across the organisation, has helped

guide the Mission through a number of challenging and complex periods. We are pleased to welcome Guy Platten as the new Chair.



Whether or not you mark Sea Sunday formally this year, this issue of FAN offers a similar invitation: to pause, reflect, and respond. You may choose to pray, share the realities of seafarers' lives with others, or support the Mission's work in practical ways.

To all who already support this work, we offer our sincere thanks. Your commitment makes our work possible and is deeply valued.

The Ven. Dr Peter Rouch
Secretary General

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Supporting Stranded Seafarers Amid the Gulf Conflict



As conflict in the Middle East disrupts key shipping routes, The Mission to Seafarers is stepping in to provide critical support to thousands of seafarers who remain stranded.

The Strait of Hormuz has dominated headlines in recent months. Yet amid persistent coverage of geopolitical tensions, the plight of tens of thousands of seafarers in the region has gone unreported.

According to the International Maritime Organization (IMO), the effective closure of key transit routes has already impacted more than 20,000 seafarers, although the true figure may be significantly higher. Around 3,000 vessels are delayed or unable to pass through the Strait.

MOUNTING RISKS

For those on board, the risks are stark.

“Closure of key transit routes has already impacted more than 20,000 seafarers.”

One of the Mission’s team managers in the region describes an impossible reality, “Many have no choice but to enter the area, fully aware they may be putting their lives at risk.”

As one seafarer recounted, “Just this morning, two fighter jets passed close while we were still working. There’s no specific hiding place on the ship for this, and we just had to run inside.”

A combination of heightened security

“Showing up consistently and without condition becomes a powerful act of solidarity”

threats and operational restrictions has created a perfect storm. Extended deployments, the suspension of shore leave, and the near-total breakdown of crew changes are leaving seafarers exhausted, isolated, and increasingly vulnerable.

“Once again, men and women who set out simply to do their jobs – sustaining global trade and supporting daily life around the world – find themselves in harm’s way,” said Secretary General Peter Rouch. He echoed calls from IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez, urging vessels to avoid the Strait while conditions remain unsafe.

FILLING CRITICAL GAPS

As the crisis continues, frontline welfare teams are working to fill critical gaps in support. Across the UAE, Bahrain, Aqaba (Jordan), and Cyprus, personnel are delivering emergency assistance, welfare checks, and emotional support. Seafarers are also reaching out via WhatsApp, phone calls, and the Happy@Sea app.

Although the Strait of Hormuz remains the focal point, the consequences are being felt far beyond the Gulf.

Recent maritime incidents, including the sinking of the Iranian naval vessel IRIS Dena off Sri Lanka’s southern coast, underscore the broader risks facing

We are grateful for the generosity of all our supporters, which is helping to fund this vital work. You can support our work at missiontoseafarers.org/donate

crews operating in an increasingly volatile environment.

CONNECTION AND PRACTICAL INTERVENTION

Efforts to maintain human connection have also been stepped up. Teams are expanding both in-person ship visits and virtual outreach, focusing on what one chaplain in Sri Lanka describes as “intentional moments of connection where trust is built.”

“In times of conflict, our mission is both simple and profound: to be present,” the chaplain said. “Showing up consistently and without condition becomes a powerful act of solidarity.”



CHAPLAIN PROVIDES READING MATERIAL TO A SEAFARER

**Representative image, not an actual depiction of support provided in the Strait of Hormuz.*

“Intentional moments of connection where trust is built.”

Celebrating 170 Years of Service

For 170 years, the Mission to Seafarers has stood beside the men and women who keep the world moving.



Looking through the Mission's vast archives, which stretch across almost every chapter of modern maritime history, you step into a very different age. Before containers, satellite navigation and megaships it was an age of steam launches, handwritten ledgers and crowded dockside mission halls.

But look a little closer at the grainy photographs and something striking emerges. Across wars, disasters, revolutions in trade and extraordinary technological change, the Mission's purpose has remained remarkably constant: to support those working at sea when they need us most.

Ships may have changed beyond recognition since 1856, but the needs of seafarers – for kindness, connection, rest and compassion – remain strikingly familiar.

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

The Mission was founded after Revd. John Ashley, standing on the cliffs near Bristol, was asked by a child how the sailors anchored out in the bay went to church. Ashley's response was simple: he hired a boat and took church to them.

From that moment grew a global movement dedicated to the spiritual, physical and emotional welfare of seafarers.

Again and again throughout its history, the Mission has adapted to whatever challenge the world placed before it without ever losing sight of the individual sailor.

REBUILDING THROUGH DISASTER

Even during wartime occupation, natural disasters and catastrophic accidents, the work continued. After the San Francisco earthquake and fire of 1906, the Mission operated from an 18-by-12-foot shack on wheels in the street.

In Yokohama, after the earthquake of 1923 destroyed the Mission's club, workers erected a tent over the ruins and carried on serving seafarers.

During the Second World War, Swansea's Mission building was devastated by bombing. Yet within three days, the Flying Angel flag was flying once more above temporary premises, and support for crews had resumed.

A MINISTRY SHAPED BY REMARKABLE PEOPLE

Behind every chapter are people whose quiet acts of service shaped the Mission's story. There are many such characters, including Madam Ooi Siok Khin in Singapore, who devoted 43 years to the Mission and was remembered for having "a smile for every seafarer". In 1989, she met HRH The Princess Royal, and in 2002 she was awarded an MBE for her services.

On the other side of the world, Revd. Jacob Brinton served as Assistant Priest

“Behind every chapter are people whose quiet acts of service shaped the Mission's story”

“The Mission has adapted to whatever challenge the world placed before it”

in Newfoundland from 1907 to 1949, scarcely missing a meeting in four decades of ministry. We're sure he would be proud to see the opening of our seafarers' centre in the Port of St. John's earlier this year.

Of course, none of this work would be possible without the support of our remarkable volunteers, like Jack Porter in Bahia Blanca, Argentina. Jack worked as a secretary at the Southern Railway by day and volunteered after hours at the Mission for more than 16 years. His dedication was described as "a splendid record of voluntary service."

“The Mission's purpose has remained remarkably constant”

COLLABORATION AND GROWTH

Today, the Mission serves seafarers in more than 200 ports worldwide, strengthened through collaboration with fellow welfare organisations and maritime authorities.

This network of support stretches much further to the shipping companies, international bodies, insurers, marine colleges and other charities who recognise the vital contribution made by seafarers.

But however large the machine behind the Mission, what matters most is that moment of human interaction: the conversation in a seafarers' centre, the hug on a gangway, the Christmas care package, the simple reassurance that someone cares. For 170 years, that unwavering commitment has never changed.



Supporting Women in a Changing Maritime Industry

As the number of women in the maritime industry rises, the Mission is stepping up its efforts to ensure welfare services keep pace.

Women currently make up about 1% of the global seafaring workforce, but this number is steadily rising. In Brazil, 13% of the maritime workforce is female, while recruitment drives from Maersk and CMA CGM Group have doubled female representation.

This is encouraging for all women. As one second cook reported, “Recently, there are more opportunities for women at sea than before. It has shaped my career, motivating me to work harder and excel.”

GROWTH COMES WITH SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES.

However, barriers to healthcare, inadequate facilities, and isolation within predominantly male crews remain. For example, 40% of women report having no access to sanitary bins.

Perhaps most alarming is research showing that one in three women seafarers has experienced sexual harassment. Only 6% of welfare staff are trained to respond, highlighting a critical



One in three women seafarers has experienced sexual harassment at sea”

gap the Mission is addressing through its Inclusion at Sea programme.

INCLUSION AT SEA

“This is not about giving women special treatment, but recognising that they face different challenges that require specific support,” explains Ruth Campbell, The Mission’s Chaplaincy Development Manager.

“It may be a listening ear, helping women stock up on hygiene supplies, or access to Wi-Fi. But it could also involve addressing bullying or sexual harassment, where our role is to show them the options available.”

THREEFOLD APPROACH

In response, the Mission is recruiting female welfare officers to support seafarers, with a particular focus on female crew, in key cruise ports.

It is also reviewing centres to ensure gender-appropriate facilities are in place, alongside developing an online platform with resources for female crew and targeted communications highlighting available services.

FREE, COMPREHENSIVE TRAINING

Central to this initiative is a comprehensive online training course informed by global research and frontline work, designed for welfare staff, volunteers, and maritime professionals.



In Brazil, women now make up 13% of the maritime workforce”



RUTH CAMPBELL WITH FEMALE SEAFARERS

“The resources are grounded in the lived experiences of female seafarers and welfare staff, so we know they are meeting real needs,” Ruth adds.

Each module equips teams to confidently and sensitively manage issues such as harassment, mental health, trauma, and access to care.

WELFARE TEAMS ARE VITAL

For many women working at sea, a welfare officer may be the first, and sometimes only, person they can turn to.

As one female seafarer, Manjila, confirms, “The Mission to Seafarers is our family, someone we can connect with at any time.”

As the industry continues to evolve, programmes like Inclusion at Sea represent an important step to build a safer, more supportive environment where women can thrive in careers they love.

SOURCES: imo.org, lloydslist.com, itfseafarers.org, safety4sea.com

Building Chaplaincy Across Distance and Diversity

Across Central and South America and the Caribbean, The Mission to Seafarers is developing a network of vocationally driven chaplains committed to providing consistent, compassionate care.

There are currently just seven port chaplains working across the region, serving in Panama, Trinidad and Tobago, Costa Rica, Brazil and Argentina.

"We're often working on a knife edge," says Father Ian Hutchinson Cervantes, the Mission's Regional Director for Latin America and the Caribbean. "When governments change, port administrations can change too. Personnel move on, and we're building relationships from scratch again."

MORE THAN A PAYCHEQUE

That reality is being felt right now in Vila do Conde, a remote river port in



GABRIEL SOUZA E SILVA, CHAPLAIN IN VILA DO CONDE AND FR. IAN

“How do we make sure they're not forgotten?”

northern Brazil, where chaplain Gabriel Souza is working to regain access following changes in port administration.

In locations like this, bulk carriers can remain offshore for up to two weeks, with strict security restrictions limiting visits.

When crews do reach shore, they often face high costs, exploitation by unscrupulous taxi drivers, and even physical danger, so chaplains work hard to protect and support exhausted crews.

"This is not something you do for the paycheck," Fr. Ian says.



FR. MARCELO CENTURIÓN, NEW CHAPLAIN IN BUENOS AIRES

“We're often working on a knife edge”

CONTINUITY OF CARE

In response, a new generation of chaplains is emerging, marked by a deep sense of calling.

"I take all new chaplains to the NAMMA (North American Maritime Ministry Association) conference in Houston," Ian explains. "Then bring them back to Panama, where we train together – working alongside our German Seaman's Mission partners so they can see the ministry in action."

At the heart of this collaborative approach is a commitment to "continuity of care". Chaplains no longer see their role as ending when a ship leaves port. Instead, they work together across the region, and beyond, to ensure seafarers continue to receive support throughout their journey.

"If a ship leaves our port, we're asking: who will see them next? How do we make sure they're not forgotten?" Ian confirms.

INCREASING OPPORTUNITY

This vision is supported by regional collaboration and strong links with local churches.

With growing visibility and increased levels of trust in the Mission, ship visiting is increasing, as are opportunities to expand in new locations, particularly along the Pacific coast.

“This is not something you do for the paycheck”



FR. IAN HAS BEEN A REGIONAL DIRECTOR SINCE 2018



REV. DILCE SHIP VISITING IN THE PORT OF AÇU

"If you look at the Pacific seaboard, there is only Panama at present," Ian explains. "A lot of maritime traffic goes south from there, with final ports of call in Chile."

Plans are being explored to establish chaplaincy in Valparaíso and Quintero in Chile, as well as in Rosario, Argentina's key inland port for grain exports.

With vocationally motivated chaplains, supported and connected, there is real potential to build a ministry that ensures no seafarer is ever left without care.

Port Reports

Our Chaplains around the world continue to work tirelessly to improve the lives of seafarers, whether through improving infrastructure, building partnerships, fostering personal connections, or advocacy.



1 JOSHUA MESSICK, BALTIMORE, USA

We are strengthening sustainability by replacing our ageing vehicle fleet with greener options. With grant support, we have just purchased an electric van and plan to expand with hybrid models in the future. Looking ahead, we aim to expand outreach to cruise ships, particularly in supporting female seafarers, and to strengthen relationships with local agents to better assist vessels at anchorage or in transit to Baltimore.

2 HELEN GLENN, HALIFAX, CANADA



The team joined colleagues in St John's, Newfoundland, for the opening of the new seafarers' centre, as well as for the opportunity to support one another in this important ministry.

As we develop our cruise ship ministry, we are delighted that marine agencies LOLA and F. K. Warren have agreed to share details of our services with all cruise ships docking at the Port of Halifax. This presents a valuable opportunity to reach more seafarers travelling through the port.

3 RUFUS NOY, SOUTH WALES



New port fees are pushing smaller vessels to remain at anchorage and dock for only 24 hours, significantly limiting seafarers' shore leave. In response, the Mission is urging port authorities to allow smaller vessels to berth at no extra cost in order to protect crew welfare.

We are also planning to expand support as a number of ports undergo redevelopment, including a £40m upgrade at the Port of Newport, offshore wind developments in Port Talbot and Swansea, and more.



4 GEORGE KO KO GYI, YANGON, MYANMAR



The centre continues to grow as a vibrant hub for seafarers and their families, offering far more than pastoral care. Across January and February, strong participation was seen in English classes, computer training, job knowledge sessions, and ship simulation courses for helmsmen, supporting both personal and professional development.

Family engagement has also increased steadily. Particularly notable were the Aged Seafarers' "Sea Dogs" fellowship gatherings, which rose from 85 to 120 participants. The centre is becoming a vital place of learning, connection, and community support.

5 REVD PAUL TOLHURST, KOBE, JAPAN



During February, we welcomed the same two crew members: one a more experienced Russian seafarer and the other a younger Ukrainian. It was truly heartwarming to see the pair, who looked like father and son, enjoying Japanese food and culture. These precious moments remind us that, despite troubles throughout the world, at the end of the day we are all human – part of the family of man and the family of God.

“Despite troubles throughout the world, at the end of the day we are all human”



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How you can support us

There are many ways in which you can support our work with seafarers around the world.

Find out more about getting involved

Please tick the box below and fill out the contact details panel overleaf to find out more about:

- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Remembering The Mission in your Will
- ☐ Volunteering
- ☐ Involving your company
- ☐ Giving in memory of a friend or loved one

We will send you regular updates about the work, needs and impact of The Mission to Seafarers.

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The Mission to Seafarers launches **Shore-based Happiness Index**

The Mission to Seafarers has launched a new report to provide an industry-wide perspective by highlighting the experiences of those in shore-based roles within the maritime sector.

It has been more than a decade since the Seafarers Happiness Index (SHI) was introduced to spotlight what matters most to those serving at sea.

However, of the 1.89 million-strong maritime workforce, many are shore-based workers whose views have largely gone unheard, until now.

In April, the Mission launched the Shore-based Happiness Index (ShoreHI), a new measure of wellbeing and job satisfaction for maritime professionals working ashore.

The ShoreHI is based on the methodology of the internationally recognised SHI and uses a 10-question, 1-to-10 scale survey. It covers roles in ship management, port operations, maritime law, insurance, logistics, finance, and technology.

COMPLETING THE PICTURE

Through the SHI, it has become clear that many pressures experienced at sea originate ashore. This new tool provides a more complete picture of industry stress, enabling meaningful change.

As Ben Bailey, the Mission's Director of Programme, explains, "ShoreHI is the



next step, connecting both sides of the sector so we can move from anecdote to evidence and target changes that will have the greatest impact on wellbeing across the maritime workforce."

Together, the two indices create the first comprehensive view of happiness across the maritime ecosystem, enabling comparison between life at sea and ashore.

As the industry works toward a better working environment, Steven Jones, Founder of the SHI and ShoreHI, reflects, "If we want happier, safer, and more supported seafarers, we need to understand the pressures on both sides of the ship-shore divide."

"We need to understand the pressures and realities on both sides of the ship-shore divide."

Visit www.shorebasedhappinessindex.org to take a look at the survey.

Seafarers Happiness Index

The latest Seafarers Happiness Index shows how seafarers must navigate a constant tension between resilience and vulnerability.



Survey responses for Q1 2026 tell two stories. Early in the quarter, overall seafarer happiness was rising, reaching 7.35/10. However, the onset of conflict in the Arabian Gulf caused a rapid decline. Within five weeks of hostilities beginning, the index fell to 7.01/10. The overall score of 7.18/10 reflects the average across the quarter.

"Nobody can be happy and relax in this situation"

BACKDROP OF UNCERTAINTY

The backdrop of uncertainty has intensified challenges familiar to seafarers. Even for those outside the impact zone, stress, fear, and worry have become widespread.

The largest declines in shore leave, welfare, and workload directly reflect the realities of vessels affected by the conflict.

Navigation and communications disruption has added a severe dimension to the crisis. As one captain explained, "Since the war began, GNSS interference has occurred intermittently, but it has become much worse now."

You can read the latest Seafarers Happiness Index in full on the website www.seafarershappinessindex.org.

LACK OF NECESSITIES

Seafarers continue to show professionalism and adaptability, but the data indicates this resilience has limits.

As vessels remain stranded, crews report growing difficulties accessing food and water, with some describing rationing that would be unthinkable in normal operations.

One seafarer noted, "Nobody can be happy or relax in this situation. We keep busy with daily routines, drills, safety, and security training."

FRONTLINE WORKERS

The report reinforces a critical point: seafarers are on the front line of global events.

When conflict emerges, its impact is not limited to trade or freight rates; it is felt directly in morale, lived experience, and future intentions of those who keep global shipping moving.

A Sanctuary from the Sea in the North East



Away from the ship, a captain will sit down with an oiler and complete a jigsaw over beers."

Amid storage tanks, cargo vessels, and chemical silos, the Seafarers' Centre for North Tees and Hartlepool is a quiet refuge, welcoming thousands each year.

For the last 16 years, Centre Manager Aidan Webster has worked hard to build a team of volunteers with a deep, intuitive understanding of the intensity of life at sea.

"Shift patterns that are at odds with the circadian rhythm," he explains. "Being stuck within the workplace when off duty is not healthy for anyone."

Aidan becomes emotional as he watches a group of seafarers making their way towards the Centre. He reflects, "The pressures placed upon some of these hard-working 'knights of the sea' have become so unbearable that they have taken their own lives."

SUPPORT AROUND THE CLOCK

Supporting crews through such tragedies is perhaps one of the most important and most challenging roles that chaplains have to play. Disaster can strike at any moment, so simply being available whenever and wherever they are needed is crucial.

As Aidan explains, "They know me. They have my number. They know where to find me. This is why The Mission to Seafarers invests in Seafarers' Centres – because it knows what it means for seafarers to have a place where they can relax and unwind, and where they know they can get help and advice."

If you are in the Teesside area and would like to volunteer for the Mission to Seafarers, and be part of the safe, caring, relaxing support network to our visiting seafarers, please contact the Centre Manager at ntees@mtsmail.org



SEAFARERS ENJOYING SOME DOWNTIME

THE LUXURY OF TIME AND SPACE

The pressure of turnaround times makes it impossible for crews to make the hour-and-a-half round trip from the port into town, so the welfare centre provides a crucial service. With the help of an army of volunteers, it is open for 300 hours each month.

With a small chapel for private prayer, a pool table, a library, soft seating, a large-screen TV, a conservatory, and outdoor seating for those balmy summer evenings, the space is often filled with the joy and laughter of seafarers.

Away from the ship, a captain will sit down with an oiler and complete a jigsaw over beers. Crews will sing together, enjoy a takeaway, or laugh over a silly movie. In these moments of release, humanity is restored.

"It means everything to me because I know that what I strive to achieve at the Centre is working, and when they return to their vessels, it is with lighter hearts."

Mission Launches Welfare Services in Greece

We marked an exciting new chapter in May with the launch of welfare services for the Greek shipping community.

Greece has long been at the heart of global shipping, overseeing more than 20 per cent of the world's oceangoing cargo fleet. The launch marked an important step in strengthening support for seafarers and maritime professionals across the region.

Held at the Yacht Club of Greece in Athens, the event brought together dignitaries, including HRH The Princess Royal as the guest of honour, shipping leaders, welfare specialists and maritime professionals.

Dimitris Patrikios, Vice Chairman at V.Ships, remarked, "Bringing the Greek shipping community together in this way reinforces our shared responsibility to keep the human element at the heart of shipping."

DISCUSSION, TRAINING AND COLLABORATION

Senior leaders took part in roundtable discussions hosted by Jan Webber, the Mission's Director of Development, to explore topics, including Women at Sea and Supporting Mental Wellbeing.



HRH THE PRINCESS ROYAL ADDRESSES GUESTS AT THE DRINKS RECEPTION

“Greece has long been at the heart of global shipping”

Tom O'Hare, the Mission's Programme Manager, also delivered a SafeTALK suicide-alertness training at NorthStandard's offices in Piraeus. The session attracted 40 crewing managers with more training already planned for the autumn.

With a permanent presence now established in Greece, we are excited to strengthen relationships with local shipping companies, listen to the needs of seafarers, and develop welfare programmes that truly reflect life at sea in the region.

“Bringing the Greek shipping community together in this way reinforces our shared responsibility”



Stranded: The Seafarers Living Through the Gulf Crisis

More than 20,000 seafarers are estimated to be stranded in the Arabian Gulf as conflict disrupts passage through the Strait of Hormuz. From fears of falling missiles to worries about jobs and family separation, crews reveal the realities of life on board.



"I have seen Iranian drones and missiles flying at low altitude. I also hear the sound of fighter jets. What scares me the most is the thought of an intercepted drone or missile falling on us."



"Just this morning, two fighter jets passed close while we were still working. There's no specific hiding place on the ship for this, and we just had to run inside."



"Nobody can be happy and relax in this situation. We keep ourselves busy in daily routine jobs. Drills, safety and lots of security training."



"I don't allow myself to become desperate because I am in charge of 20 other crew members. I told my team how to run, where to jump from and what to carry if something happens. We prepare for the worst."



"I want very much to go home but am worried I may not get more work. So, I feel trapped and have to stay."



"We have learned nothing from COVID. This all feels the same. I cannot go home, and no one can come here."

A New Era of Welfare Support in St John's, Newfoundland

The opening of a brand-new Seafarers' Centre in St John's, Newfoundland and Labrador, heralds a new era in welfare support for a region where life is shaped by the sea.

Around 40 stakeholders from across the maritime community and beyond gathered to open the centre in office space shared with the Longshoremen Protective Union.

"There was a level of engagement I've not seen elsewhere," says Regional Director Eric Phinney. "People here understand the sea; it's part of who they are. They didn't just want to learn – they wanted to help."

A DIFFERENT MODEL

The St John's centre is designed to reach beyond its walls, supporting crews in remote locations and exploring new ways to connect with seafarers and their families.

The team is already exploring opportunities in other remote ports, including the Port of Kitimat in northern British Columbia and the Port of Churchill, Manitoba.

With strong ties to Memorial University and ongoing research into seafarer wellbeing, the centre is also well positioned to contribute to global conversations about maritime welfare.



There's real potential to build a family network ministry"



EARLY SUCCESS

While a formal opening is planned for September, the centre is already up and running and recently supported a vessel in crisis that was too far away to visit in person.

Drawing on support from the wider Port Welfare Committee, Centre Manager, Morgane Sheppard rallied a team to visit the crew on board.

"What stood out most was the importance of collaboration," Morgane reflected. "Even without physically attending the vessel myself, the network we have built allowed us to respond quickly and meaningfully."

The challenges facing seafarers are constantly shifting, so having the anchor of consistent, unwavering support from Morgane and the team is a huge reassurance.

The Mission to Seafarers Appoints New Chair

We are delighted to welcome Guy Platten, an acclaimed maritime leader and Chartered Master Mariner, as the Mission's newly appointed Chair of Trustees.

Named in Lloyd's List's top 20 most influential figures in the industry, Guy brings more than four decades of senior leadership experience to the role.

During this time, he has held senior executive and board-level positions across the industry. Most recently, he served as Secretary General and CEO of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), where he led the industry's global response to COVID-19.

His advocacy was instrumental in securing 'key worker' status for seafarers worldwide, for which he was recognised with the Merchant Navy Medal.

STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Reflecting on his appointment, Guy said, "I am deeply honoured to take on the role of Chair of The Mission to Seafarers. Having spent years at sea myself, I know firsthand the loneliness, danger, and sacrifice that seafarers face every day."

Guy succeeds Tom Boardley, who steps down after nearly a decade of dedication, which has helped strengthen the Mission's work.

"It has been a privilege to serve as Chair of the Mission, and I am delighted that



"I know firsthand the loneliness, danger, and sacrifice that seafarers face every day."

Guy will be taking on this role," said Tom. "Guy will join a diligent and highly engaged Board of Trustees, working with a very experienced leadership team, and I'm confident the organisation is in good hands."

The Mission works in over 200 ports in 50 countries caring for seafarers of all ranks, nationalities and beliefs.

PAUSE FOR REFLECTION

Understanding the dynamics of victimhood and vulnerability is vital if we are to respond effectively to the changing challenges facing our seafarers.

By Secretary General, The Ven. Dr Peter Rouch

Lord God, this Sea Sunday,
as we remember the trials
faced by seafarers across our world
remind us that you stand with us
and with them in all things
and help us to reflect a similar
compassion
and care in all that we do.
Amen.



Why is it that we are so much more at ease responding to victims than to those who are simply vulnerable?

It is an uncomfortable question, but an important one – not least for those who care about the lives of seafarers and the quiet, persistent work of The Mission to Seafarers.

Vulnerability is something we all recognise, even if we rarely name it. It can arrive suddenly – through illness, grief, or shock – or settle more gradually, shaped by the risks within the lives we lead and the work we do. It is often temporary, sometimes invisible, and almost always complex.

LOOKING TO PLACE BLAME

A victim, by contrast, is easier to understand. Victimhood tends to be immediate, defined by harm that has already occurred and, crucially, by the actions of someone else.

That distinction matters. A vulnerable person becomes a victim when their fragility is exploited or overlooked. And where there is a victim, there is usually someone to blame.

In a world shaped by headlines and timelines, we are drawn to what can be seen, shared, and condemned. Social media, in particular, thrives on this dynamic.

Because blame, for all its seriousness, can be comforting. It offers a clear moral landscape: a way to align ourselves with the “right” side of a story. It allows us to feel engaged, even virtuous, without necessarily requiring deeper involvement.

If harm has been done, then someone else must stop doing it. The responsibility lies elsewhere.

VULNERABILITY IS COMPLEX

But vulnerability resists such simplicity. It does not always come with a culprit. It asks more of us: attention, patience, and a willingness to remain present even when there is no obvious solution.

For seafarers, this is not an abstract idea. There are, of course, times when seafarers are victims – and when that happens, it demands a careful response. Yet the deeper truth is that all who go to sea live with a degree of vulnerability that cannot be engineered away.

It is there in the long separations from home, in the missed moments and distant crises. It is there in the isolation, the risks, and the unpredictability of global events – as starkly illustrated in recent tensions around the Strait of Hormuz. Even the most responsible employers cannot eliminate these realities.

A RESPONSIVE APPROACH

And so the work required is different. It means fostering relationships that can sustain change over time, rather than seeking the quick satisfaction of calling something out.

This is where The Mission to Seafarers stands: not only in moments of crisis, but in the long stretches in between.

And for those who choose to stand with seafarers, there is an opportunity not just to respond to harm, but to accompany, to strengthen, and quietly, steadily, to make life at sea more humane.



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