

# The Gippsland Anglican

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*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...*

John 1:14

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ABOUT THE COVER

This Christmas mural was painted by the Yarragon Jaffas Kids' Church under the guidance of local artist Ross Jacka.

# Expecting the unexpected

It doesn't get much of a run in the lectionary table of readings, even during Advent when we might expect it, yet I love the genealogy that opens Matthew's gospel leading into the story of Jesus' birth. Matthew is our primary 'gospel diet' at the Eucharist in Year A of our three-year liturgical cycle, which ticks over on the First Sunday of Advent. If you happen to attend a Eucharist somewhere on Tuesday 17 December you'll get to hear it; otherwise, you may like to take some time to read it for yourself.

We can think of it functioning a bit like John's prologue, which we're more familiar with perhaps, and more likely to hear in church this Christmas: an opening passage that sets out some of the key themes of the great sweep of narrative to follow.

There are several twists in what first appears to be your typical biblical account of ancestry, of which there are dozens of examples between Old and New Testaments. I'm woefully ignorant about my own family tree, but Matthew expects his first audience to be fully conversant with their Abrahamic heritage, as the opening verse of his gospel

suggests. There are many things in Matt 1:1-17 that they would expect to hear or read.

What those readers who had all the great stories of the patriarchs and kings and priests in their cultural stockpile would not expect, however, is that the genealogy would be designated as that of the person whose name appears last – Jesus the Christ – rather than of the person whose name appears first in the line-up – in this case Abraham. Is this an early indicator of the 'upside down' values of the kingdom that Matthew's Jesus will proclaim, in which the last will be first and first will be last (Matt 20:16)?

Nor would they expect the inclusion of four women in an otherwise all-male list – and not Sarah, Rebekah, Rachel and Leah either, the four standard matriarchs, although there are some twists and turns in their stories as well. The women Matthew quite deliberately and skilfully weaves into the early verses of his genealogy are Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and (referred to but not directly named) Bathsheba. Each carries a descriptor, an identity marker that points us to the heart of Matthew's message, and indeed the promise of this great season in the life of the Church.

As the mother of Perez, Tamar's inclusion references the family dysfunction of Genesis 38. As the mother of Boaz, Rahab is both prostitute and foreigner. As the mother of Obed, Ruth extends the 'outsider' motif, referred to seven times in the short story that bears her name as 'Ruth the Moabite' – an ethnic 'tag' that excludes her from the Lord's assembly (see Deut 23:3). And as wife of Uriah the Hittite, the mother of Solomon (Bathsheba) brings the skeleton in that royal closet right into the foreground. King David, whose troubled and morally ambiguous lineage Jesus inherits in a theological sense if not a strictly biological one, as Matthew's birth narrative goes on to make clear, had Uriah the Hittite murdered on the battle field to cover up his treachery.

The message for Matthew's community – and for us – is one of hope: God has been in the business of 'raising up children to Abraham' with the help of this mixed bag of progenitors, and also in spite of them. And with the birth of this 'son of David', Matthew differentiates being a child of Abraham from being of the seed of Abraham. As John the Baptist will go on to warn those who presume



Bishop Richard Treloar

upon this inheritance on the basis of bloodline in the gospel set for the second Sunday in Advent, 'God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham' (Matt 3:9).

As, with Ruth the perennial 'outsider' brought 'inside', we prepare to turn once more to Bethlehem, let us bring before that manger-throne of grace our stories – in all of their glory and dysfunction – our identity markers – which we and others have used to define us, for good and for ill – and offer them up as the means by which God might continue to raise up children for Abraham, including ourselves.

This Christmas, may we be open to the unexpected; for it was in challenging all the expectations of what it meant and means to be a child of Abraham that Matthew's Jesus fulfils the law and the prophets (5:17). Even so, come thou long-expected Jesus.

+RM

## The Gippsland Anglican

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## Prayer Diary: beyond the parishes

"That we may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith..." (ROMANS 1:12)

### 123 CAFE

Pray that our community of Sale will find refuge, acceptance and a place of comfort here at 123; for continual wisdom in our communication with those we work alongside; thanks to the Lord for wonderful volunteers and young people who add value while working at 123; thank God for the prayer support and financial support of our community; and we ask the Lord for direction and continued support.

### THE ABBEY

The Abbey, a Centre for Spirituality and the Environment on Raymond Island, asks that we give thanks for the gift and sacred wonder of The Abbey and its environment; for The Abbey Chapter, staff, supporters and volunteers. God has blessed us richly.

Pray for the year ahead and those who visit in 2020; for the surrounding fragile bushland and lakes; for the wildlife who look for food. Pray for rain.

### THE ANAM CARA COMMUNITY

The Anam Cara Community has a small group of servant leaders who facilitate Quiet Days in Gippsland. The fortnightly email newsletter, *Waterholes*, aims to provide spiritual nourishment, communication and encouragement.

Pray for our servant leaders in their planning for 2020 and for those who connect with the Community at Quiet Days or through *Waterholes*, particularly those who find themselves on the margins of the church.

### ANGLICAN MOTHERS' UNION

Anglican Mothers' Union Australia is part of the

worldwide Mothers' Union showing Christian care for families, with eight branches in Gippsland. Praise God for the many ways that Mothers' Union members interact and become involved with their communities.

Praise God for the variety of practical support, financial giving and prayer support that members undertake. Please pray that members will be encouraged to talk about their involvement with Mothers' Union to others in the congregation.

### ANGLICARE VICTORIA

Please pray for the work of Anglicare Victoria in Gippsland as we seek to resource and empower children, young people and families. Pray for mothers and children who have survived abusive families as they are supported in rebuilding their lives.

Thank God for the commitment of volunteers in the Get Out for Good program working with those being released from prison. Pray for more in our parishes to seek to be involved with people who may be marginalised in our communities, particularly those leaving prison, the homeless, jobless and those with mental illness.

Please pray for those involved in Foster and Kinship Care and for more volunteers to care for vulnerable children. Pray for families who are in conflict and struggling to make ends meet, particularly at Christmas.

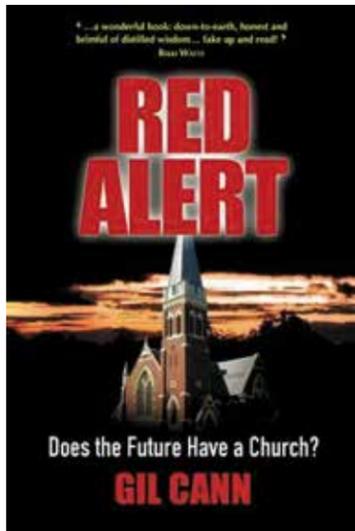
Please also pray for St Paul's Anglican Grammar School and Gippsland Grammar School, the Aboriginal Ministry of the Rev'd Phyllis Andy and the Rev'd Kathy Dalton, the Registry staff, and Gippsland Anglican Retirement Living Ltd.

# Re-imagining church at lay readers' conference

Tony Wicking

In a world that is constantly changing, often at a rapid pace, how do we as a church continue to have an influence? We know we do not hold the privileged position we once had. Many of us lament the decline, and wonder what we can do. How can we re-imagine church so that it can continue to have an effective place in our local community and the wider world?

With this in mind, a conference entitled Re-imagining Church was held at the cathedral in Sale on 26 October. The original idea for this came from the lay reader training days held in June this year. The lay readers wanted some information on Matthew, the gospel for 2020, so that they could better prepare sermons they were to preach. To make a day of it for those travelling long distances, we decided that linking Matthew with Gil Cann's book *Red Alert: Does the Future have a Church?* would be appropriate. Both speak to a church in crisis.



*Gil Cann's Red Alert: Does the Future Have a Church? was frequently referenced in Bishop Richard's presidential address at this year's Synod. It was also the focus of this year's lay readers' conference. Copies are available from [gilcann.com](http://gilcann.com).*

## GIPPSLAND DIOCESE VACANCIES

Mirboo North  
Yarram  
Wonthaggi / Inverloch  
Paynesville



Photo: Merri Spalding

*Lay reader May Kyne received her certificate acknowledging more than 25 years of service from Bishop Richard at the conference in October*

The day began with a welcome by Bishop Richard, who linked the two presentations. Both topics address a time of upheaval and controversy in the church. We then broke off into two groups for the presentations.

The Rev'd Dean Spalding spoke about Matthew's gospel. This gospel was written at a time when the church was facing great dissension as it debated the inclusion of gentiles into its midst. We find that Matthew constantly questions the old interpretation of scripture in the light of Jesus' presence in the world, for example the Sermon on the Mount and his constant debates with the religious leaders. In these debates Jesus challenges them to re-look at their tradition and hold it up to what God desires.

Gil Cann was unable to address the conference so Rev'ds Jenny Ramage and Tony Wicking spoke to *Red Alert*. In his book, Gil Cann encourages us to ask the same hard questions. He says that if we are prepared to ask and honestly answer often unasked questions, the church will be in a better place to continue to have an influence in the world. Like the religious leaders of Jesus' times, we often hang on to a wrong traditionalism rather than living a faith tradition.

One of the points Gil makes is that worship is everything we do every day. He asks how can we bring our Monday to Saturday into what we do on Sunday.

After the presentations, we went into the cathedral for a time of worship. This service was led by Denise Martin, a lay reader from Mirboo North. Music was led by the Operation Christ Kids youth band from Drouin parish. David Chambers delivered a message from Romans 12: 1-8, and Bishop Richard presented certificates to lay readers who have served more than 25 years.

*The Rev'd Tony Wicking is one of the Lay Reader Chaplains and Locum at Mirboo North.*



## From conference attendees

*“ Thank you so much for yesterday's thought-provoking and enjoyable lay readers' conference.*

*Such events take not just time but a lot of work to prepare and the input of many to make it a success.*

*It was a good day of learning, meeting new people and fellowship, the Matthew talk was great.*

*It was good to have the opportunity to explore Matthew's Gospel, and see the similarities the early church faced in relation to what Gil Cann is suggesting for us to acknowledge.*

*The Red Alert seminar was an extremely interesting discussion and hopefully will bear fruit that will encourage Christ's new life into the His Body, the church.* ”

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### Sharing the bipolar path

I refer to the Ven Sue Jacka's article 'Bipolar warrior's path to better mental health', about Trafalgar parishioner Jason Rantall (November TGA, p. 12). This is something I share with Jason (not the running and exercising), but living with bipolar disorder, a most debilitating illness that often results in low self-esteem, misunderstanding and alienation by those around you, including family and friends.

As a priest in Holy Orders for more than 34 years, my life changed for the worse in 1997 when I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder. Mood swings – from deep, deep periods of depression to sudden uncontrollable highs – persisted, but gradually subsided. Last year, I was discharged from my psychiatrist, and now instead I see my local doctor for the occasional lithium test (the drug used to stabilise mood swings).

Like Jason, at times I was unbearable to live with or to be associated with. My behaviour was often unacceptable and mildly offensive, and although people were caring and understood the nature of my illness, many were offended and reacted very negatively toward me. This was very hurtful as I knew I was not this person and it was the illness controlling my emotions, thoughts and even the expression of faith in Jesus.

After I was first diagnosed with bipolar disorder, my bishop, the late Right Rev'd Dr John Wilson, kindly paid for me to return to Ridley College to complete a Bachelor of Ministry. As part of my course, I was offered the opportunity to undertake a research project, so I chose 'Christian pastoral care of people living with bipolar disorder'.

Essentially, pastoral care to people living with bipolar disorder centres around the community of faith and how Christians support each other in love, patience and kindness, and it is so good to see that this has been and continues to be at the heart of the pastoral ministry afforded Jason by members of the Trafalgar parish. Should you ask Jason why he feels so much better, he may simply suggest it is the love of the Christian community gathered around him. Well done, Jason – you are moving in leaps and bounds toward good mental health!

The Rev'd Canon Jeff Richardson, Traralgon



Ross Tucker (centre) receives a candle from Archdeacon Edie Ashley after his baptism: "Shine as a light in the world to the glory of God."

# Edie Ashley retires as rector of Paynesville

Sue Fordham  
Paynesville

On 27 October, the date of Archdeacon Edie Ashley's 70th birthday, the people of St Peter's in Paynesville gathered to say happy birthday and a fond farewell to their priest of 13 years.

It wasn't a sad affair, with Bishop Richard presiding, a baptism and two confirmations within a Eucharist supported by excellent music. The bishop's sermon was relaxed and

witty, incorporating Edie's handover of her resignation and the bishop's appointment of her as Abbey Priest for a renewable 12 months duration.

The bishop reminded us that the ministry required of us by virtue of our baptism knows no retirement date. He emphasised the importance of the day's readings to Edie's ongoing ministry. Both psalm and Old Testament reading concerned God's care for the environment, an activity central to her Abbey work.

The New Testament reading was about faithful commitment and the gospel, putting God before all material things.

Following the sermon, the baptism of Ross Tucker, then the confirmation of Ross Tucker and Mary Loreman, took place. Ross and Mary are two faithful adults who have been important parts of the parish family for a number of years, and their commitment occasioned quite a few tears in the congregation.

Following the Eucharist and prior to the dismissal, speeches were made to farewell Edie. Judy Rennick gave a witty and engaging account of Edie's appointment, ordination and induction at St Peter's in 2007, all within the context of floods and an unpredictable ferry service.

Anne Tucker, the present Rector's Warden, spoke of Edie's impact in the parish and at the Abbey, applauding her capacity for hard work, multi-tasking, persistence and stamina. She referred particularly to Edie's support of Indigenous relationships, refugees, her focus on prayer and immense

knowledge of scripture.

In reply, Edie described St Peter's as her family and a significant part of her faith journey, noting that the vagaries of the ferry service between Raymond Island and Paynesville, a service on which she relies, were in some ways symbolic of the way we experience God: sometimes accessible, sometimes not, but a constant nevertheless.

June Treadwell presented Edie with flowers, a prayer book and an offering.

The service was followed by drinks and music in the Quiet Garden and delicious finger food in Church House, provided by parishioners and by Deb and David Chambers.

## Students explore global injustice issues



St Paul's Year 11 students Alexander Grigoleit, Luke Ibbotson and Sophie Kovac making other students aware of the Fred Hollows Foundation

Year 11 students at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School recently hosted an Ethics Expo to promote non-government organisations (NGOs) that address issues of global injustice.

After researching their chosen NGO, year 11 students presented to year 7 students how these NGOs deal with global injustice issues and developed activities for the younger students to demonstrate how they themselves can assist these organisations in the future.

Year 11 student Bellamy O'Callaghan said, "For our group, looking into the organisation Oxfam, we alongside other students gained more knowledge about how Oxfam Australia assists families of those working in large mining companies, as well as providing assistance to the communities around

these large corporations. Hopefully this allowed for students to have a greater insight into how organisations like Oxfam can assist those working across Australia, as well as assisting communities and families impacted by mining in Australia."

Year 7 students, who are also completing a research task on the question of justice, were able to gain an understanding of how people put their beliefs into action and develop an empathy for what other people in the world may need to deal with.

NGOs promoted included Doctors Without Borders, United Nations, Water Aid, World Fair Trade Organization, Oxfam, The Fred Hollows Foundation, TEAR Australia, Thankyou, Operation Christmas Child, the Child Labour Coalition and the Oaktree Foundation.

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# Meet Gippsland's new ordination candidate

**K**athleen (Kate) Campbell is to be ordained to the Distinctive (or Permanent) Diaconate after attending a Provincial Selection Conference in Melbourne in September. She tells us more about herself here.

I grew up in Sydney, was baptised as a baby, attended Sunday School and was confirmed in a church my paternal grandfather helped to build.

I enjoyed Inter School Christian Fellowship throughout high school and after leaving school and beginning work with the Bank of New South Wales I attended worship spasmodically as athletics became my focus. I was a gifted hurdler and middle distance runner and had the opportunity to represent New South Wales – as a consequence waratahs are special to me.



Kate Campbell

When my daughter Amy was born I had a sense of 'something missing' and her baptism was a significant experience, as was the baptism of my sons Matthew and Ian. Following Amy's baptism I attended worship and participated in parish life wherever we were, as we moved around country New South Wales.

I will always be grateful for the gift of becoming a mother and, these days, a grandmother of five beautiful grandchildren.

Over 20 years ago, as someone who was constantly on the move with a strong sense of doing, I learnt to be still and 'listen' for God in communal silence. It was through that experience I recognised that my love of textiles and stitching is often prayer.

I can now easily get on with things that need attention as well as take and make opportunities to sit still and 'be'.

Not long after I moved to Sale in 2003, I was asked to make a stole for an ordination candidate. That marked the beginning of a special way of prayer with many other vestments, worship visuals and more recently art exhibits. It is a great joy to hear people's stories and create a response in textiles – it is

a privileged time of deep reflection and prayer; all are unique and personal.

Cursillo was a significant experience and I have appreciated ecumenical worship, especially in small communities, although being an Anglican lies at the heart of my faith – I think because of the inclusiveness.

Life in my home parish at St Paul's is full and varied. I am a lay reader and have facilitated contemplative groups since 2004, value pastoral administration, lead in traditional and contemplative worship, visit those who are housebound, host a home group, attend and lead

Christian meditation and enjoy the experiences of InterPlay. I am one of the founding servant leaders of the Gippsland Anam Cara Community. Many rich opportunities!

I completed Education for Ministry in 2003 and while I continue as a medical secretary, I look forward to further theological study next year through the University of Divinity, Trinity College.

I joined the Diocesan Discernment Group in August last year not knowing clearly what the discernment process would be, and I am still part of the group. After attending Selection Conference in September I now look forward to the ministry path before me in the Distinctive Diaconate.

## Drouin parish to farewell Dean Spalding

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding, Rector at Christ Church Parish in Drouin, will lay up his stole in December in preparation to commence as a teacher of mathematics and Christian studies at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School in Warragul next year. He will also become licensed as an Assistant Chaplain to St Paul's.

In a recent *Ad Clerum*, Bishop Richard reflected, "Dean looks back on his first Incumbency as a fruitful season of ministry at Drouin and Jindivick, Lyrebird Village and Amberlea, and a time of significant personal growth and professional development. He has especially enjoyed the

Parish's engagement with the wider community in a number of events involving collaboration with the Baw Baw Singers, the RSL, the CWA, the Gunai Kurnai peoples, The Ice Meltdown Project (TIMP) and other local groups and organisations."

Two of Dean's personal highlights are a collaboration between the parish youth group Operation Christ Kids and Mothers' Union, just before Palm Sunday this year, to make palm crosses, and the blessing of six commemorative golden elms, planted in front of Christ Church Drouin with the permission of the local RSL sub-branch for the 100th anniversary of the

1918 Armistice. Activities like these have "been encouraging a culture of Gospel-focused inclusion, community engagement, welcome and intergeneration collaboration," says Dean.

Paul Davine, Rector's Warden at Drouin parish, said, "We have been the beneficiaries of Dean's energy, commitment, gentle nature, humility and warm and friendly personality, to which we must add his profound love of God and God's people, be they churched or unchurched. Dean has also been a most inspirational preacher and teacher of God's Holy Word and has brought the readings set for each Service to life with his scholarly, vivid and entertaining presentation of the historical background and his theological insights."



The Rev'd Dean Spalding with Drouin parishioners at the blessing of six commemorative golden elms for the 1918 Armistice centenary

## At home but out of reach

Ken Parker  
Bunyip

A friend gave me a copy of a most interesting photo the other day. Taken a century ago, it shows a large and earnest group of Gippsland clergy gathered with their bishop at Bunyip for a retreat. Clearly the tradition of clergy retreats goes back a long way around here.

About the same time, I read an article in *The Weekend Australian* by Susan Kurosawa called 'Out of reach'. She talked about the push for us all be on call for 24 hours a day:

*In Japan, where I worked for several years, a common reply from an office operator was that so-and-so was 'out of space'. Another buoyant expression, 'out of reach', was popular too, and I liked its sense of vagueness, which suggested the person I was seeking was not much more than an arm's length away, but inaccessible all the same.*

Kurosawa concludes, "Of course, we could all be reckless and go OTM. Off the map, that is. Yes, please."

To be 'out of reach' is key to an annual retreat. As a young priest, I would go each year to the Retreat House at Cheltenham for a time 'out of reach' with my colleagues. I try still to maintain that practice. Give thanks for the ministry of The Abbey at Raymond Island and for the regular retreats offered there.

An alternative to a retreat is the practice of Quiet Days, which offer time out for a day at a time. The usual pattern of a Quiet Day is the offering of three teaching sessions, interspersed with times of silence and prayer. Such will be the Quiet Day soon to happen in Bunyip. As this issue goes to press, Bishop Richard will lead a day called 'Ruminating with Ruth'. He will teach us something of the power of that great Old Testament story and encourage us to make connection with our own lives.

In Gippsland, we are blessed by the ministry of the Anam Cara community ([www.anamcaragippsland.org](http://www.anamcaragippsland.org)), which offers three Quiet Days across the year, generally at Stratford, Sale and Morwell.

In Bunyip too we offer some Quiet Days. Next year, we have two special experiences lined up. Carol O'Connor from St Peter's Eastern Hill will visit on 30 May and share the remarkable insights of Evelyn Underhill, a 20th-century spiritual teacher. On 24 October, John Stewart, an accomplished retreat leader, will teach about the provocative medieval mystic Meister Eckhart.

*The Rev'd Ken Parker is locum priest at St Thomas' Bunyip. To find out more about the forthcoming Quiet Days, contact [anglicanbunyip@dcsi.net.au](mailto:anglicanbunyip@dcsi.net.au).*

# A Gippsland Carol, four years on

Jim Connelly

In 2015, I wrote a Christmas reflection for TGA, in which I lamented the local Bethlehem-based theme of most of our Christmas carols. I included in the article a poem, which I offered as an illustration of the cosmic aspect of Christ's birth. Even here, in these far-off, virginal southern parts of what was to become Gippsland, surely the creation was stirred to its depths!

I suggested that the poem be sung as a Christmas carol to the tune of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* from his Ninth Symphony, being cast in the same metre as Schiller's original German poem. I also approached concert pianist Brian Chapman to see if he thought he might be able to compose a new tune to the same metre.

Brian immediately saw that the structure of the verses readily lent itself to be matched with a tune that started off darkly in a minor key (F minor) with fairly

A Gippsland Carol

Words by Rev'd Jim Connelly      Brian Chapman

1 What is this that moves the hair - ens? Morn-ing brim - es make us re-joice!

Coo - pe - em - bra's peaks are stir - ring; Winds of life and love and joy;

Now the bus - si - ness are pur - sue - ing; hush! the air is soon - der - some!

All cre - a - tion hails the morn - ing; Christ has come in - to the world.

What is this that stirs the waters?  
Patterns dance on Tambo's tide;  
Rock to rock the message passes,  
He who was to come is born.  
Hills in chains break the silence,  
Drosgas dance, the bell birds chime.  
All creation hails the morning;  
Christ has come into the world.

What is stirring in this forest?  
Ancient branches bending low;  
Orchids tremble, tree-fans quiver,  
Nature's hidden litany.  
Now the waves are calmed in homage,  
Cease their surge on Woollamai.  
All creation hails the morning;  
Christ has come into the world.

Who are these that hail the sunrise?  
Speaking to their spirit world?  
Sillyly trending Baw Baw's summit,  
People of this limitless land.  
Those of every race and culture,  
Now conjoined in Spirit's fold.  
All creation hails the morning;  
Christ has come into the world.

static four-part harmony, then migrating to the relative major (A flat major) with a more decorated harmonic style – a 'darkness to light' transition of the kind frequently encountered in Beethoven's music – and culminating with the final two bars (last line of each verse) being melodically identical to the last two bars of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy* theme, underpinning the *Gippsland*

*Carol's* recurring 'punchline' for each of its four verses – "Christ has come into the world."

I was very happy with what Brian sent back to me, so the full score was submitted to the West Gippsland Chorale, who kindly decided to include it in their 2016 Christmas concert. Soon after they began rehearsal, it was felt that it would be nice to have a descant part added for the first sopranos to use for the final verse, which Brian very happily supplied on request. Brian has named his tune *Brolga* in recognition of one of the Gippsland bird species mentioned in the text.

The first airing of *A Gippsland Carol* (sung to the tune of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*) was at St Paul's in Sale, in 2016, while the first airing of the lyrics with Brian's tune

was as a duet by Walter and Kath Willems at St James' in Jindivick, on Christmas Eve in the same year, and later the same evening sung as a congregational hymn at Christ Church Drouin's Midnight Mass.

*A Gippsland Carol* has since developed a life of its own, having been sung in many Gippsland Anglican and Uniting churches and at gatherings such as Probus clubs. The compilers of *The Australian Hymn Book/Together in Song* have accepted

it for possible inclusion in the next revision of that hymn book. A recording of the West Gippsland Chorale's performance can be seen by searching for *A Gippsland Carol* on YouTube.

*The Rev'd Jim Connelly is an Honorary Canon. He prepared this article in collaboration with Brian Chapman, who composed the music for A Gippsland Carol. For a full-size copy of the musical score, please email [ajcon@dcsi.net.au](mailto:ajcon@dcsi.net.au)*

## No trick ... but what a treat!

Peter Finlayson  
Leongatha

Approximately 90 children descended on St Peter's Leongatha on 31 October for lots of fun without the scary stuff.

The name for the event was Light the Night, St Peter's alternative to the other event called Halloween.

On arrival, each child was booked in with name tag and showbag. The children were

so excited and had a great time, with many activities conducted in the church and hall.

The event was brilliantly led by Jackie and Jonathan Bowman, ably supported by a busy band of helpers, ensuring the children had enough refreshments to keep them happy.

This activity has been running for three years and will get bigger as the word spreads around.



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# Helping Gippsland families get on TRAK

Family violence can take you a long way off the track you want for yourself and your children. So Regional Director for Anglicare Victoria in Gippsland, Tim Pedlow, was pleased to announce recently that it has obtained funding to deliver a new program for survivors of family violence.

Therapeutic Recovery for Adults and Kids (TRAK) Forward will support victims of family violence and their children through a range of therapeutic interventions and will be delivered with a number of partners such as the Salvation Army and Windermere across inner and outer Gippsland.

TRAK Forward will be able to tailor programs to suit the unique needs of

individual members of family violence victim-survivors. Key workers will support victim-survivors to access both individual and group therapies. This may include group programs such as Children and Mothers in Mind, or individual counselling and peer support groups. The model recognises that there is no 'one size fits all' approach to effective recovery from family violence with the focus on therapeutic interventions and supports that promote healing for individuals as well as parent-child relationships. It is also aimed at meeting the varied needs of victim-survivors who are culturally and linguistically diverse, who have disabilities and/or are of diverse sex, sexuality and gender.



Regional Director of Anglicare in Gippsland, Tim Pedlow, with Rebecca Virtue, Program Manager for TRAK Forward in the region

TRAK Forward has already been running with great success in Anglicare's Southern

Region of Melbourne where evaluations have found that parents who participated had significantly greater levels of confidence in their parenting as well as improved attachment and bonding with their children.

Empowering parents and children to find their way back on track and looking forward to better tomorrows is the core business of Anglicare Victoria and vital for building stronger and safer communities. Practically speaking, this will also mean that Anglicare is recruiting new staff in both Morwell and Bairnsdale to build the TRAK Forward team.

For more information on the TRAK Forward program, contact Rebecca Virtue or Sam Massey at the Morwell office (5135 9555).

# New licence for Life Changing Radio

Since its inception, radio has been a unique and important communication vehicle – from transmitting coded messages in military combat, to shaping the culture of a nation through entertainment, to delivering political messages and declarations.

At Life FM we take our own place in the airwaves, with our message of hope and counter-culture programming, as we reach out to people's hearts and minds within Gippsland.

This year, Life FM successfully re-applied for another five-year community broadcasting licence to the Australian Communications

& Media Authority. This enables us to build on the foundation and vision we have established over the last several years as a board for the station.

Our vision is to:

- reach people with the message of hope through the gospel of Jesus Christ
- connect people with their Creator God and His church in the local community
- restore faith in the future and God's purpose
- enrich and build our community through

positive radio content and reporting on local events.

This translates practically to our broadcast content, with a focus on testimonies of changed lives of people in your community, and encouraging, inspiring messages from local church pastors and leaders. We broadcast positive, uplifting music, as well as discussion and insights on current trends and political events from a God and bible-based perspective.

We cannot become stagnant in our interpretation of God and how we communicate Jesus to society; this is the exciting challenge ahead for Life FM. The potential to offer a positive alternative to the contemporary culture leading this generation into moral and social decline is huge.

We are so appreciative of our supporters and volunteers, without which the station would not operate.

*Michael Rowell is CEO at Life FM. To join the team, you can become a financial member, donor or advertising sponsor at [www.lifefm.com.au](http://www.lifefm.com.au). To volunteer, contact [michaelr@lifefm.com.au](mailto:michaelr@lifefm.com.au).*

# New Archdeacon for Eastern Region

The Rev'd Brenda Burney, Rector of Bairnsdale, recently commenced the role of Archdeacon of the Eastern Region of Gippsland Diocese. She has also become an ex officio member of Bishop-in-Council.

Brenda is a member of the Safe Ministry Authority and facilitates Safe Ministry workshops. In accepting

her position as Archdeacon, she reflected, "I have always had a special passion for youth and children's ministry – probably because my own faith was nurtured so well as a young person. Another of my passions is helping the people in our parishes to understand what it means to be a safe church."

Brenda's Collation will take place on 1 February.



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# Making your funeral plans: cathedral workshop

Cynthia Grove  
Sale

Twenty-two people attended a workshop in November at St Paul's in Sale on planning your own funeral. Dean Susanna led us through the *Medical Treatment and Planning Act 2019*, which takes full effect in March next year. We heard about the importance of choosing a medical treatment decision maker, who can make medical decisions if we are not able to. This person should make decisions consistent with our beliefs and wishes. It was suggested

we go to a solicitor to formalise this, and to make a will.

After this, we looked at the Anglicare booklet *Ensuring Peace of Mind: My Personal Wishes for Remembrance* (courtesy of Cathrine Muston). Some of the questions in the Anglicare booklet were both necessary and quite challenging. How well do those who are left know you? Will they be able to provide enough information to allow mourners to honour the real you? Two other interesting points to consider were "Some of the proudest moments in my life are ..." and "Something that most



people don't know about me is ..." I thoroughly recommend this booklet and congratulate those who put it together; thank you.

The booklet includes places to record your wishes about who is to be contacted, who to invite to the funeral, where important papers are kept and how you wish to be remembered (symbols of your life (for example medals, art or craftwork) – whatever is appropriate for you).

The third journey was through the funeral service described in *A Prayer Book for Australia* with its variations. We talked about funerals we had attended or planned, both the good aspects and those not so good; it was an emotional time as we each recalled previous losses.

We moved on to discuss

the issues that concerned each of us. How many hymns or other music? Hymns or popular music that might be important to you? Readings – how many, how long or short? Eulogy or tributes? Cremation or burial? Full church funeral service, Eucharist or graveside committal? There were many questions and many different ideas.

This is just a brief overview of the session and I do hope that another session will follow soon for those who could not make this one. So much needs to be thought about and it is easier to do it well before there is a need. Thank you, Susanna.

## Solace and peace on All Souls' Day

The All Souls' Day service at St Paul's in Sale on 2 November was a deeply moving time of prayer and remembrance. Dean Susanna spoke of All Souls' Day, and the South American 'day of the dead'.

She spoke of the importance of honouring our ancestors and reflecting on life and death.

A list of those who people knew who have died in this past year, and of those they wanted to remember,

was read out, and candles were lit in remembrance. Cathedral organist Anthony Hahn played some beautiful, quiet music. The Rev'd Lyn Williams put together the liturgy.

The service meant a lot to those who are grieving, providing solace and peace. After the service, a wonderful supper was shared.

*A place of solace at St Paul's in Sale during the All Souls' Day service*



## Recognising the value of volunteers

Alice Weatherall  
Moe-Newborough

On a very wet and blustery day in November, we had the pleasure of the company of Bishop Richard at our parish council morning tea to thank volunteers, held at the Newborough Bowling Club.

The Rev'd Sathi Anthony introduced Bishop Richard to our volunteers and thanked him for taking the time out of his busy schedule to visit and share time with us.

Bishop Richard spoke about the value of opportunity shops, not only in raising much-needed funds to resource local ministry and community projects, but also as gathering places themselves where people can experience a sense of community, reminding us that 'assembly' – coming together – is at the heart of the meaning of the word 'church'. Bishop Richard thanked all of our volunteers for their vital role in our community.

We are most fortunate to have a fabulous band of volunteers from our three opportunity shops, which run five days a week; and Trinity House, which has a garage sale bi-weekly. Our volunteers run everything smoothly, from sorting out the enormous pile of donations that come through the door and donation bin, ensuring we are only selling the best quality stock, to keeping the shops stocked with rotated items.

We are very blessed with the quantity and quality of all the donations. We are more than just opportunity shops. We are a family for each other and an outreach to the community, with a listening ear for people who are lonely or in need; we

provide a welcoming face to everyone.

People often visit op shops as a social outlet. Those of us who work in op shops also seek friendship through this work. It's a matter of extending this sense of friendliness further where we can. When we take the time to listen to others, we recognise their value as people as we are also the medium for our ministry, an extension of our church.



*Bishop Richard and volunteers at the thank you morning tea held in Newborough in November*

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# A marvellous universe or just a Marvel universe?

Daniel Lowe

Was Captain America worthy of wielding Thor's hammer? Who is better, PewDiePie or T-Series? Is Luke the biggest threat on *Survivor*? Ask most groups of young people these questions and chances are you will get an animated response from at least one of them. When it comes to matters of entertainment and popular culture, young people are very informed and more than willing to debate and discuss the merits of their views.

On the one hand, this is good news. Critical thinking skills are one of the top skills employers say they want in their employees. On the other hand, could this be a hint of the great mask of distraction we have built around ourselves to avoid confronting

the difficult questions of real life? In his book *Advance Australia...Where?*, social researcher Hugh Mackay tells of attending a dinner party where he found himself "seated beside a charming, articulate, professional woman who spent most of the evening telling me about her home renovations, including her new bathroom." He goes on to say, "It struck me that our endless quest for the perfect bathroom tile might have become a way of distracting ourselves from some other, larger question."

Look around any public space and you will see people immersed in their screens with the ubiquitous earphones as permanent fixtures on most ears. It is no wonder we are well versed in the concerns of popular culture, but is it all a big avoidance strategy?

Perhaps our constant consumption of entertainment and social media is in part an anaesthetic to numb the fear of discovering that life is ultimately without meaning or purpose? Perhaps the loss of trust in so many of the institutions that have given security to past generations (such as banks, churches and parliaments) has left young people so unanchored and adrift that they simply aren't equipped to face the deeper questions of life? Author Mark Sayers puts it this way: "With religion off the agenda, our culture finds new avenues of devotion and distraction ... Millions of hours in the twenty-first century will be spent working through DVD TV series, scanning social network sites, gorging on celebrity gossip, downloading music ... Things will take

precedence over people. Meaningless activities will overtake our lives." A year 10 student expressed this feeling more bluntly in a recent written piece on the topic of purpose: "I often try to avoid thinking about deep questions as I believe that I should not spend the entirety of my life dreading over useless thoughts."

But all is not lost. While we do find many young people retreating into the distractions of the entertainment world, we also see young people bravely stepping up and grappling with life's tough issues head-on. Some find themselves on the world stage, such as climate activist Greta Thunberg or champion of women's education Malala Yousafzai. Others are quietly doing amazing things in their own neighbourhoods.

Our role as parents and educators is to nurture these young people; to put boundaries on the distractions (yes, the screen time battle continues); to reassure them that life is not without purpose or meaning; to put



Daniel Lowe

before them a vision of hope; and, in the Apostle Paul's words, to help them "not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of their minds" (Romans 12:2). And where do we start? Perhaps with this piece of advice from the writing of another year 10 student:

*Take each day, as a blessing  
An opportunity to spread  
the love that's within  
Let's not take each other's  
company for granted  
And start appreciating  
life more than our feeds.*

*The Rev'd Daniel Lowe is  
Senior Chaplain at St Paul's  
Anglican Grammar School.*

board games, Lego and gift vouchers to the value of \$15. Food required must be non-perishable and within its 'best before' date by six months. We ask that donated toys are new and unwrapped. Please also note that we do not require any donations of teddy bears.

If your parish or community group would like to contribute to the appeal, donations can be picked up from your area. For further information on donations, please contact either Susan Hughes at Anglicare's Morwell office (5135 9584) or Cathrine Muston (0458 450 370) in Warragul.

## Anglicare Fare

# Toys and food for families at Christmas

Cathrine Muston, Anglicare Development Officer, Parish Partnerships



Gippsland Grammar year 7 coordinator Glen Dihood, Chaplain Rev'd Jackie Belot, Anglicare Development Officer Cathrine Muston and year 7 class captains with the donated goods collected so far for the Anglicare Victoria Toy and Food Appeal

Every year, Anglicare Victoria makes sure that every child we work with receives a gift at Christmas, and every family receives a food hamper to help them to celebrate.

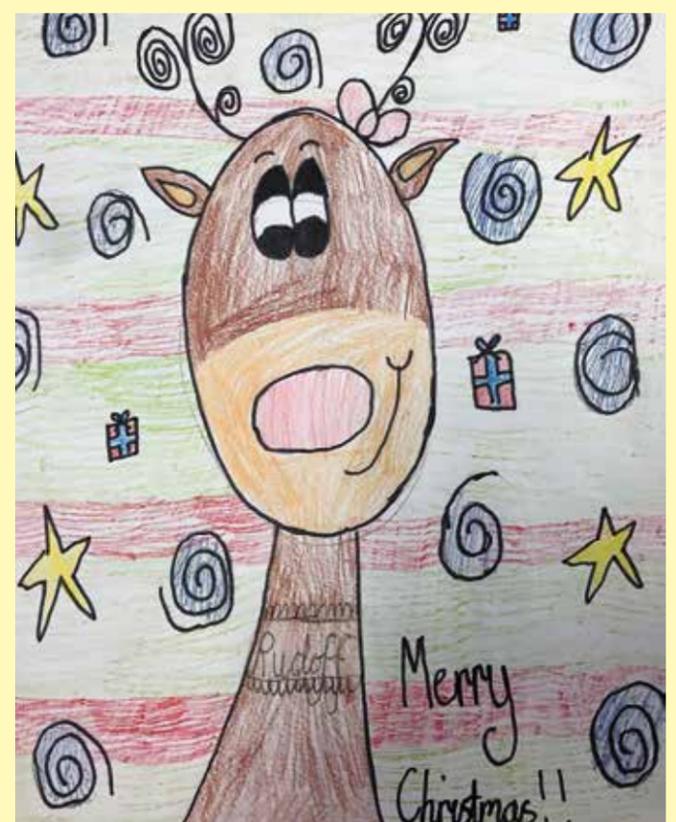
Last year in Gippsland, we were able to provide nearly 500 families with gifts for their children and hampers for their tables. This was made possible in part because of

the generous donations from the local community. Our Anglican schools – St Paul's Anglican Grammar School and Gippsland Grammar – contribute a significant amount of food and toys, which we are always happy to receive, along with help in sorting and packing the hampers.

Many faithful people

and businesses throughout Gippsland also support the appeal. As the demand for hampers grows year on year, we are in constant need of more donations, especially in the area of gifts for teenagers.

If you would like to donate to the Toy and Food Appeal for 2019, some suggestions for toys are soccer balls, footballs and other sports equipment,



Year 3 students at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School are getting creative about Christmas in the art room. Anson Law at the Traralgon campus was particularly excited to know that his reindeer artwork would appear in the newspaper

# The gift of years

Marilyn Obersby

Having recently turned 70, it suddenly dawned on me that I had reached the age of three score years and ten, that age in the Old Testament deemed to be generally our human life span, if things went well! Up to this point, I had taken life more or less for granted but now I realise I am actually old! In some ways, that is a scary thought, because I have no idea what lies ahead in my future.

I am grateful for my life, and becoming aware of how many years and days I have been privileged to spend on this amazing planet, I began to reflect on the gift of my years, to look back and see how God has been in my life's journey up to now and to wonder where I might be going from this point on in my pilgrimage.

It would take a book to go through the significant events of 70 years but my spiritual journey has been influenced at some important points by some verses of scripture and some wise writings. So I hope that sharing a couple of those insights and their impact on me might speak to others' spiritual journeys as well.

The first occasion on which I was aware of a verse from scripture, I was only six years old, in church for the first time at a special Sunday school

service at my local parish church, St Anne's Ryde, in Sydney. It was part of the Old Testament reading for the day, and had a profound effect on me. I discovered later that it was a very well known verse and was often regarded as being connected to God's call to ministry of some kind, especially ordained ministry. It was Isaiah 6:8 – "Also I heard the voice of the Lord saying: 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' then said I, 'Here am I. Send me.'" Isaiah was volunteering to serve God.

I remember feeling very excited by the words, and saying inside myself, "Send me, send me!" The next meaningful step for me was discovering Christian community in the early seventies in Sydney via the House of the New World for seven years, then as part of the House of the Gentle Bunyip for nine years in Melbourne, before I came to Gippsland. It was then I completed a Bachelor of Divinity through the Melbourne College of Divinity.

Although I was certainly unaware of the significance of the Isaiah verse as a six year old, I know that God took me at my word even then, and guided my steps through the years, through my school days on to university and into teaching French, English, German and Biblical Studies in Sydney and Melbourne and into school chaplaincy in Gippsland.

Once, while on retreat as a school chaplain, I experienced God telling me, with great joy, how much He loved me. My head had never had any problem accepting that, but deep down I never felt I could be worthy of God's love. From that day on, I have known in the deepest part of me that I (along with everyone else) am loved by God, just as I am. So when I was offered ordination a few years later, I knew that God had opened that pathway to me, and I was worthy to take that path, wherever God led me. The next part of my journey brought ordination to the diaconate in Gippsland on St Luke's Day in 1996, followed by my priesting on St Barnabas' Day in 1998.

Since then, I have been privileged to minister in the Diocese of Gippsland in various parishes and capacities as a deacon, then priest. With the Reverend Caroline Nancarrow, I organised and led two groups of people on a Celtic Christian Pilgrimage to the UK and Ireland, in 2004 and 2008, as well as acting as chaplain to the community at

St Deiniol's Library in North Wales in 2009. My spirituality is very Celtic and mystical, and I identify deeply with my Anglican roots. As I said at the beginning, my future is an unknown path, but seeing how God has been guiding my journey so far, I am content to go wherever God may take me in the future. I am content, because I know who I am and Whose I am.

Two sayings sum up how my life as a follower of Jesus Christ has been and will continue to be. One is by American journalist and Catholic convert Dorothy Day: "One of the disconcerting facts about the spiritual life is that God takes you at your word." The other is by British author and theologian Ian Bradley: "Taking risks, letting go, casting off, trusting to God – all these are suggested by the metaphor of pilgrimage." I pray that I will continue to be a pilgrim, whatever that may entail.

*The Rev'd Marilyn Obersby  
is Associate Priest at Traralgon.*

## EDITORIAL

### Music and silence

Across the road from St Paul's Cathedral in Sale is the recently opened historic water tower in Victoria Park, designed by John Grainger, father of musician and composer Percy Grainger. John had fond memories of attending the opera with his uncle, whom he lived with in England before coming to Australia, and listening to "discussions of the world's affairs" between his uncle and theologian Cardinal Newman. Grainger arranged the first string quartet in Adelaide and, among many projects, designed Dame Nellie Melba's Coombe Cottage, in Coldstream.

My visit to east Gippsland coincided with a rainy respite from the very dry spell in the region. The amphibious residents were as elated as the human ones, and during the evenings I listened to a symphony of calls and responses. It was a loud and persistent chorus, and so the lulls, however brief, were always noticeable.

Those who are musically minded will know that music is as much about silences as it is about sounds – not only where and how long they are, but what they represent. Is a silence a pause for breath, a chance to rest, or a collective waiting? Is it tense and charged, or does it bring a sense of release? After listening to a St Paul's Anglican Grammar School student play *The Last Post* on 11 November, I reflected on the power of silence as a collective mark of respect.

As a member of the West Gippsland Chorale, I am fortunate to be able to perform in the acoustic space of Wesley of Warragul. Powerful choral music such as *Faure's Requiem* continues to resonate in my mind long after it has ceased to resonate on stage.

The acoustic qualities of the space are a tribute to the original designer, says architect Audun Pedersen, who was involved in the extension and restoration of the building. The Warragul Heritage Preservation Association bought the former Methodist Church in Victoria St from the Uniting Church of Australia in 2002.

The relatively long reverberation time is particularly suited to choral performances, Audun tells me. "I am not sure if ecclesiastical music derived out of the acoustic properties of ecclesiastical architecture, or if ecclesiastical architecture developed in part to reflect ecclesiastical music," he says, "but the two go together, giving voice to the richness and depth associated with choral music and organ music." The result is very evocative, we both agree.

On page 11, choral enthusiast and former member of West Gippsland Chorale Lisa Campbell writes of the therapeutic and joyful aspects of singing, and on page 5 the Rev'd Ken Parker of Bunyip reminds us of the benefits of silence, among other musically themed contributions this month. I hope you have time to appreciate or express these siblings of music – sound and silence – at this busy but special time of year.

Sally Woollett

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# Singing, with joy, to the world

Lisa Campbell

**W**ow! New music distributed at choir! Excited, I join the group to see which choral pieces are familiar and which are new. Are there any in French, German, Latin or Italian, perhaps even Spanish? People are milling around, laughing and sharing the week's news. Choristers are greeted with smiles, laughs and nods. Updates about births, sickness, promotions, moving to a new house and holidays are shared.

The conductor takes the podium, and warm-ups begin. We stretch to release our muscles; we breathe and begin focusing our minds on the vibrations that begin deep inside our bodies. Humming, vowel sounds, consonant exercises, gradual increases in volume from pianissimo to forte. Our ears and the rest of our bodies tune into the swell of the sound enveloping the entire choir. Harmony is created as soprano voices soar into the heavens, basses anchor from below, and altos and tenors add spice in between. Nothing quite describes the beauty of being immersed in a sea of different voices. We are united in sound, working together to achieve the conductor's vision of the composer's music.

To be part of a choir requires patience, kindness and dedication. As choristers, we explore challenging new musical horizons during rehearsal to give our best performances. In return, audiences (or the conductor!) may smile, sigh, clap, get teary, or stand to cheer. We can voice human emotions including love, joy, anger and excitement through music – a primal and wonderful experience.

The health benefits of group singing are many. Physical benefits include a boost in immunity; exercise for the lungs, diaphragm and intercostal muscles; stimulation of the circulatory system; and improved posture and sleep. During some types of group singing, the heart rate fluctuations of participants reach synchronicity. Björn Vickhoff, at the Centre for Brain Repair and Rehabilitation at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden, found this to be true during his research. Singing together is often an act of collective will, he says: "One need only think of football stadiums, work songs, hymn singing at school, festival processions, religious choirs or military parades. Research shows that synchronised rites contribute to group solidarity."

Björn Vickhoff's research demonstrates that heart rate

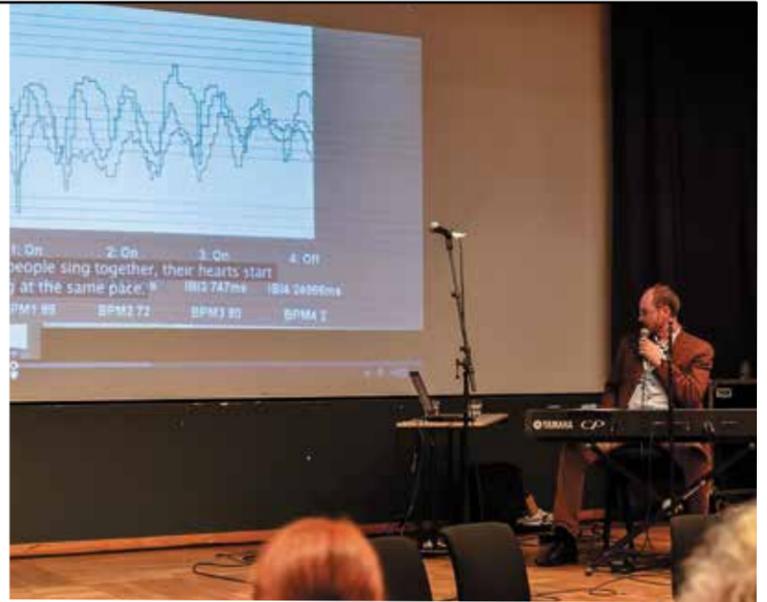
fluctuations can synchronise during group singing.

Emotional and psychological wellbeing increase through the release of endorphins, which lift mood, reduce muscular tension and reduce stress by lowering cortisol levels in the bloodstream. Anxiety, depression and anger can all decrease as singing provides a constructive outlet for exploration of feelings. Mental alertness and concentration increase partly because of increased oxygen to the brain but also because you must produce sound while simultaneously listening and blending with other choristers.

To imagine a sound, make it emanate from your body and know that it is totally unique to you is creative and incredibly empowering. Choral singing also reduces isolation. It fosters friendship through a sense of belonging, and through cooperation, trust, care, respect and support for other singers. Confidence, empathy and self-esteem increase as choristers learn new songs and texts.

From a spiritual perspective, there is something universally appealing about group singing. It is part of cultures worldwide. Sound memories are special. Just like certain smells evoke memories, feelings and images, so does singing music. You always remember the music you have played or sung.

Christmas music is a touchstone of the inner spirit. It enables us to relive the



Björn Vickhoff and Rickard Åström's research demonstrates that heart rate fluctuations can synchronise during group singing



nativity in our hearts and minds. It can strengthen our faith, if we reflect on the words and allow them to permeate our spirits and deepen our convictions. Hymns such as *While Shepherds Watched Their Flocks By Night* and *We Three Kings* recall the birth of Jesus as being for all people. Just as these people followed the star, we learn that the journey of faith requires commitment to following the teachings of the Saviour and that, from humble beginnings, spiritual growth occurs.

The sheer beauty and simplicity of the hymn *Silent Night* stirs within us a sympathetic replication of the feelings of Mary and Joseph. It suggests that faith is a simple and uncomplicated matter, needing great love and devotion, like that required of parents and carers towards children. "All is calm, all is

bright" is a metaphorical reminder that within each of us is a bright vibrant spirit that can radiate gentleness, care and compassion if we continue to fan these flames within ourselves.

*In Joy to the World*, the lines "the Lord has come, let earth receive her King, let every heart prepare Him room, And heaven and nature sing" ask us to contemplate the birth of Christ, and his place in our lives; to learn to recognise that inner guiding voice and, when nudged, lend a helping hand, a listening ear or a caring smile. These are practical manifestations of faith for the world to witness.

So, this year during Advent, join a choir, sing in church, sing with recorded music, listen to beautiful choirs performing Christmas music, and allow the words to infuse your spirit with hope, love, peace and joy.

*Lisa Campbell is a qualified music teacher who is currently having classical voice lessons and enjoys singing in choirs. She lives in West Gippsland.*



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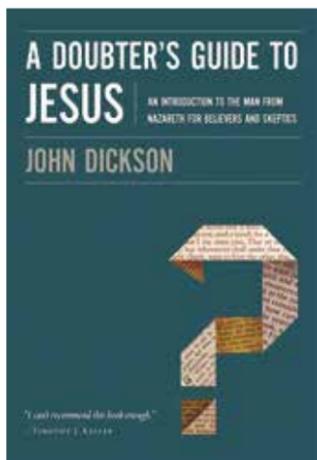
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# Theology, love and a community divided

Richard Prideaux

So many folk are in book clubs these days that it is difficult to come up with a good read that hasn't already been widely read. So I will bypass Michele Obama's *Becoming*, Anh Do's *The Happiest Refugee*, Leigh Sales' *Any Ordinary Day*, Sarah Krasnostein's *The Trauma Cleaner* and Tara Westover's *Educated*. These are all compulsory!

Here, I will review three books I really enjoyed reading this year.

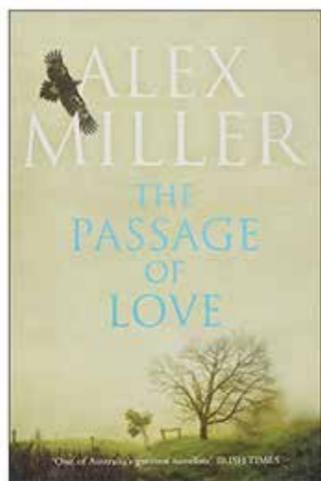


***A Doubter's Guide to Jesus***  
by John Dickson

John Dickson is a popular and articulate Christian communicator and his *A Doubter's Guide to Jesus: An Introduction to the Man from Nazareth for Believers and Skeptics* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 2018) speaks directly to a now entrenched anti-Christian Western intellectual community. In his introduction, Dickson describes Jesus as a "complex, multi-layered and at times contradictory figure." This is not the Jesus we usually encounter in weekly sermons. He is deliberately not writing an apologetic book, full of the latest 'Christian' responses to the new atheist challenge. Instead he focuses on the scholarly literature about Jesus, using pagan, Roman and Jewish historical data and New Testament sources as they are used by mainstream secular historians today.

Major chapter headings include the Christian story as

Israel's story (p. 101: "Jesus was a Jew ... he longed for the renewal of Israel not its extinction!"), Jesus as judge – such an unpopular notion in Western society today, and Jesus as a friend in spite of his scandalous social life! Dickson's treatment is relevant and surprising. This is quirky, bouncy, hard-to-put-down theology that will undoubtedly alter the way you think about your Christian faith.



***The Passage of Love***  
by Alex Miller

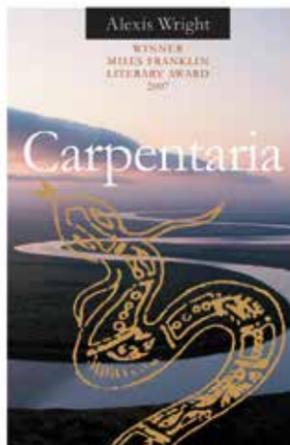
My favourite Australian author is Alex Miller, all of whose 12 novels I have greedily devoured, including the entrancing *The Ancestor Game*, and the riveting *Autumn Laing*, which, in places, tracks the extraordinary and outrageous career of Sydney Nolan. Miller's most recent novel is *The Passage of Love* (Melbourne, Allen & Unwin, 2017), which is his own extensive autobiography before his marriage.

I think I enjoyed this work so much because I found it curious to think through how this young, unhappily schooled Englishman who emigrated to Australia in early adulthood and spent a considerable amount of time in the Australian outback somehow managed to become a world-renowned, sophisticated, learned and deeply sensitive analyst of human behaviour who simply captures readers and takes them to places within themselves they would not have thought possible.

Miller is the writer of dreams becoming reality and about love that really matters. He writes about moments

and events that are part of our lives at our deepest level and in a way that we find we really care about. Two Miles Franklins and being an overall winner of the Commonwealth Writer's Prize can only come with enduring hard work and genius. Miller has both in spades.

My best way to encourage readers to take up *The Passage of Love* is to use his own words: "Every one of us betrays something. Everyone who is compelled to search for meaning and purpose in his life is forced by circumstances to betray his finest hopes. We all founder in our struggle to find our way. Our way to our own truth. Success in the end is to survive these repeated failures" (p. 358).



***Carpentaria***  
by Alexis Wright

Alexis Wright's demanding Miles Franklin winning *Carpentaria* (Artarmon, Giramondo, 2006) is a powerful and consuming novel about her northern Australian homeland surrounding the Gulf of Carpentaria. The setting of the novel is the fictional mining town of Desperance, a remote community divided by an upwardly socially mobile white community (Uptown) led by the racist and violently corrupt mayor Stan Bruiser and the ineffectual and sleazy policeman Truthful. Uptown is supported by the mine, and its politely racist families would prefer the Indigenous community to either come over to their side or just go away. The dispossessed Indigenous community is also divided within itself by ancient family feuds between families who live on different sides of the town

## Diocesan calendar

### December

- 13, 15 West Gippsland Chorale Christmas concert. 8:00 pm Friday and 2:00 pm Sunday. Tickets at the door or trybooking/573709
- 15 Yarram Scripture Union family mission (Kids' Bible Club). Holy Trinity Church, Cnr Gipps St and Commercial Rd, Yarram. [www.suvic.org.au/program-information](http://www.suvic.org.au/program-information)
- 22 8:00 pm: Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. The Bunyip Singers help present this beautiful traditional carol celebration. St Thomas' Bunyip, 16 A'Beckett Rd, Bunyip
- 22 8:00 pm: Ecumenical carol service. St Paul's Cathedral, Cunninghame St, Sale
- 28 Lakes Entrance Theos (until 3 January). Location TBC. [www.suvic.org.au/program-information](http://www.suvic.org.au/program-information)
- 29 Mallacoota Theos and Scripture Union family mission (until 9 January). Mudbrick Pavillion, Mallacoota Camping Ground (Theos) and Mallacoota Oval, 20 Greer St (SUFM), Mallacoota. [www.suvic.org.au/program-information](http://www.suvic.org.au/program-information)
- 29 Tidal River Theos and Scripture Union family mission (until 9 January). Tidal River Campground, 23rd Avenue, Tidal River, Wilson's Promontory. [www.suvic.org.au/program-information](http://www.suvic.org.au/program-information)

### January

- Various dates  
Scripture Union family camps, Camp Coolamatong, 38 Cranswick Rd, Banksia Peninsula. [www.suvic.org.au/camps](http://www.suvic.org.au/camps)
- 5 9:30 am: Epiphany celebration. Come reflect on the wisdom of the Magi and on your own journey. St Thomas' Bunyip, 16 A'Beckett Rd, Bunyip

### February

- 1 11:00 am: Ordination of Belinda Seabrook to the Diaconate, and Collation of the Ven Brenda Burney as Archdeacon of the Eastern Region. St Paul's Cathedral, Cunninghame St, Sale
- 2 9:30 am: Candlemass. St Thomas' Bunyip, 16 A'Beckett Rd, Bunyip
- 2 10:30 am: St Philip's Cowes combined service. Service of Holy Communion, guest preacher the Dean of Melbourne, the Very Rev'd Dr Andreas Loewe, St Philip's Cowes, 102 Thompson Ave, Cowes. 0490 831 299, [revjobpi@gmail.com](mailto:revjobpi@gmail.com)

– Norm Phantom's mob in Pricklebush on one side and every other Indigenous family on the other (the Westsiders).

The writing has elements of magic realism intertwined with ancient Aboriginal lore of the bush and 20th-century realities. Key figures include the anti-mine terrorist Will Phantom, the sexy and sleazy Angel Day, the prophetic cult leader Mozzie Shipman, the tragic fisherman Elias, the old man who knew every-

thing Joseph Midnight, the Bohemian priest Danny with his souped up black Valiant, and many others. Wright's deft touch includes mystery, wonder, humour, spirituality, pathos and hope all mixed up in a kaleidoscope of colour and mixed emotions. A novel that requires staying power but rewards deeply.

*Richard Prideaux is a licensed lay reader at Bass/Phillip Island.*