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Praying it
forward



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church
renewal



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Bible
connections
with Lego

The Gippsland Anglican

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*The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness has not overcome it.*

Tanisha Singh during Gippsland Grammar's final Chapel
Service celebrating the graduating Year 12 cohort

John 1:5



Advent's endings and beginnings

"In the beginning ..." These opening words of the canon of Scripture (Gen 1:1) are echoed at the start of John's majestic prologue: "In the beginning was the Word ..." (John 1:1). For the author of the fourth gospel, God's creative work in bringing light out of darkness and order out of chaos continues in the Word made flesh. As Jesus says, "My Father is still working, and I also am working" (5:17).

At the ecumenical Advent Conversation at The Abbey (see page 16) those present were treated to a parallel reading of Genesis and John's gospel by Roman Catholic scholar Professor Mary Coloe. Professor Coloe drew out a series of resonances between these two biblical texts, which build a picture of Eden restored by the Creator who enters creation in Jesus the Nazarene.

Jesus is arrested in a garden, and buried in a garden where Mary Magdalene "mistakes" him for the gardener, which – in a very real sense for John – he is: the divine Gardener. Crucified "in the middle" of two criminals, Jesus' cross becomes for the community (re-)born beneath it the tree of life "in the middle" of the garden (Gen 2:9).

His last words from that tree – "it is finished" – proclaim the consummation of his Father's work in creation – work from which God rests on the seventh day, ushering in the Sabbath rest in which all creatures are re-created; just as Jesus' death in John's gospel ushers in a "great sabbath" (19:31).

This 'ending' is in fact a new beginning – not only in terms of the resurrection narrative that follows, but in the birthing of a new household at the foot of the

cross, where the Beloved disciple is made – quite literally – the brother of Jesus as a son of his own mother (19:27). Here the promise of the prologue that those who receive him would become children of God (brothers and sisters of Christ) is realised (1:12).

With his dying breath, the Spirit of God that hovered over the waters of creation in Genesis (1:2) hovers over the disciples below and the church is brought into being from the formless void of Good Friday, whose darkness cannot overcome the light that Christ came to bring (John 1:5, 8:12), just as the one he called Father first called it forth (Gen 1:3).

Identified by John Baptist as the Lamb of God from the moment he first appears in John's narrative (1:29) Jesus' death has the same liberative significance for the world God loves as does the Passover lamb for God's people Israel. The wine-soaked hyssop dabbed at the mouth of Jesus on the cross (John 19:29) evokes the blood-soaked hyssop daubed on the doorposts of the Israelites (Exod 12:21) as a precursor to their journey from slavery to freedom.

Professor Coloe invited us to see through John's eyes how Jesus' death is not so much atoning for sin as signifying God's liberating power – be it from 'Egypt' or 'Rome' or whatever form "world sin" (as she called it) happens to take; and there is no shortage of examples of its power to enslave and dehumanise in our own context.

In her commentary on the fourth gospel, Professor Coloe cited Barbara Reid's view that the artistic mapping over by John of Jesus' advent, his living and dying, with the foundational texts of Genesis and

Exodus, offers an alternative to theologies that focus on God's wrath or human sinfulness. Instead, "God's love, freely given, life-giving and productive, evokes from us a response in kind, transforming even the most hopeless of situations."

Read in the light of the end of the story (which is actually, of course, a new beginning), the divine solidarity with humankind of the Word-made-flesh in the prologue takes on a particular focus. As Professor Coloe puts it, "God is on the side of those in chains – economic, social, sexual, physical, psychological – whatever prevents the full flourishing of life."

As those who know the 'end' of story, our proclamation of its beginnings must be shaped by such an understanding of the purpose for which the Creator entered creation in the anointed one.

Those who come to hear John's prologue read at a service of Lessons and Carols in Advent, or at a Christmas service, will – like each of us – be hungry for the Good News embodied in Jesus who came to liberate, to bring life in its fullness, and thus to fulfil the vision of creation's essential goodness (Gen 1:31).

Jesus the Nazarene comes to us still as Christ of the church in our worship and sacraments; he meets us still in our fellowship and community service; and he works with us still as we advocate for the most enslaved and vulnerable.

As we celebrate the endings and beginnings this season holds, may its joys, promise and hope be yours – even, perhaps, a little foretaste of that "great sabbath" which is the goal and purpose of creation, whose final culmination has begun in the Word made flesh.

+RM

My journey with Anglicare Victoria

■ Lynne Beaty

If someone had told me that when I was heading down the road to retirement age I would join the amazing Anglicare team in Gippsland, I would not have believed it for a second, but that's exactly what happened.

Before that, I ran a small hospitality business for six years – the adventure I had to have just to prove I could do it. I was looking for something else to do to feel useful, as well as for a little extra income. I had a chance meeting in the street with another member of my local parish who, at the time, was a manager in the Morwell office of Anglicare. Having just up and left a local job in hospitality that I was not enjoying, I said I was sure I'd find something.

My husband and I had spent six months in the Diocese of Gahini in Rwanda, at the invitation of Bishop Jeffrey Driver, a year earlier. Coming back down to earth and settling back to life here I needed more of a challenge and something more outward looking. My friend at Anglicare thought there could be something where she worked and a few days later I was invited to go and have a chat with someone called Ian.

I remember feeling a little nervous. Although I could type, my computer skills were limited. Ian remarked, "I reckon if you and your husband can fly to the other side of the world having never left Australia before, to where you know no one and don't speak the language, and stay for six months, you'll manage whatever comes through here." I left the office with a casual job in reception. And so I began my journey with Anglicare Victoria.

I was trained by a very young staff member, who had such patience and was so encouraging that my confidence in this new era – one that had nothing to do with hospitality, cooking or switchboards – gradually grew.

I became part of a team of very special people whose job was to listen, to advise and help in many different ways, with patience, understanding, compassion and kindness. Kindness, that's what made it so right for me – a job where kindness and compassion are so vital! I remember thinking on more than one occasion, "I am so blessed to be doing something I really love doing: helping, and being paid to do it!"

I liked that the philosophy was that those asking for help would receive it in some way. We often contacted another organisation for information or made

an appointment (when a need was not something that Anglicare could meet), so people always left with more information or an appointment time.

Of course, there were times of sadness and the frustration of not being able to do enough, like a young man just out of prison and needing assistance. Thankfully there's now the Get Out for Good program.

So many people came to Anglicare from all walks of life in all kinds of circumstances, like the elegant lady who'd had to leave Melbourne and all her belongings in a hurry. She was explaining that she had somewhere to stay and a bed and some basics, then was stuck for words. When I asked did she need food, she became a little emotional. Her distress was eased when food was organised, along with a long chat with a staff member.

There were many times of joy and celebration, like a dad and worker laughing and hugging in the reception area, in

celebration at the outcome of a long custody case.

So many stories; some really stick and still come to mind even now.

Over the years I witnessed many changes and of course the big move into one office in Morwell. I also enjoyed working part-time for a year on two occasions in the Leongatha office, when staff went on maternity leave.

I always felt appreciated at Anglicare, and when I was invited to celebrate the 25th anniversary in Gippsland recently, I really thought that with all the changes I would be forgotten. Not so.

What a wonderful way to finish my working life. I am blessed to have had the privilege to lend a hand and to create wonderful memories over the 14 years I was part of this special organisation. I am fortunate to still have an ongoing connection with Anglicare, being on the Parish Partnerships Committee.

Anglican Communion Forest planting at Poowong

■ Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes

On 6 November Cannon Dr Bishop Richard made the first planting in Gippsland of the Anglican Communion Forest. This initiative, launched at the 15th Lambeth Conference 2022, is something lasting that makes tangible the Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission: to strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth.

The olive tree that was planted at All Saints Poowong will welcome visitors and community members to the All Saints Poowong Community Garden, which was initiated in 2020 on All Saints Day. It will be the feature of a space that has been set apart for quiet reflection and stillness.

Bishop Richard planted the tree in a service based on the service held at Lambeth.

He was assisted by Charlie Hall, the co-president of the Poowong Community Garden Committee, who as a 16 year old was the first person in town to suggest at a town meeting that a community garden would be a great way to strengthen and enhance the Poowong community.

Since the establishment of the community garden, outdoor worship services have multiplied church attendance, with a Harvest Festival and a Pet Blessing being held this year.

It is hoped that many parishes will become part of this initiative from Lambeth brought back by the Bishop, with Yarram being the next parish where the Bishop planted a tree.



Charlie Hall assists Bishop Richard to plant the first tree of the Anglican Communion Forest in Gippsland



We are Gippsland Anglicans – Committed in Christ, Connecting in Service, Creative in Spirit. We are committed to providing a safe environment for all, especially children and vulnerable people. We acknowledge the First Nations people of this region as the traditional custodians of the land on which the Diocese of Gippsland serves, and pay our respects to past, present and emerging Elders of the GunaiKurnai, Boonwurrung, Bidawal and Ngarigo/Monero peoples.



Cathedral receives grant for solar power

Site for solar: Delbridge Hall roof at St Paul's Cathedral Sale

■ Jan Down

St Paul's Cathedral is delighted to have received a Sustainability Victoria grant of over \$8000 to install solar panels on Delbridge Hall.

The grant will cover about half the cost of the system, so the Cathedral is now seeking donations to cover the remaining cost.

The 12.45 kW rooftop solar system will significantly reduce greenhouse emissions from the Cathedral buildings, as well as reducing power bills.

This project is supported by the Community Climate Change and Energy Action (CCCEA) program, delivered by Sustainability Victoria on behalf of the Victorian Government. The CCCEA program is supporting the Victorian Government's target of reaching net zero emissions by 2030.

The Cathedral is also grateful for the support of the Gippsland Power Hub, which alerted us to this grant, paid for an energy audit and provided helpful advice.

Our energy auditor, Paul Guest, having thoroughly examined the energy profile of the Cathedral complex, recommended that rooftop solar be installed on Delbridge Hall.

The installation is expected to be complete by the end of January.

The Cathedral is pleased to be acting to reduce emissions, along with other churches in Gippsland, in light of the urgent need to act on climate change. As climate scientist

Joelle Gergis says in her recent book *Humanity's Moment: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope*, "How bad we let things get is still in our hands, but fast slipping out of reach."

One place Gergis finds hope is in the

gathering momentum for change around the world. Some of that momentum was evident at Synod in June, with the decision to make action on climate change a focus for all Gippsland Anglicans over the next three years.



Christine Morris

Cathedral plant sale draws crowd

These purchases were made by one happy customer at St Paul's Cathedral Plant and Cake Sale in Sale on Saturday 15 October. Led by Jan Kewley, who was supported by a large team of willing workers, the well-organised event was a great day of outreach to the community, fun and fellowship for the parish and a very successful fundraiser for the Cathedral and local charities.



The Anchor Homes modular building is delivered at 4 Martins Parade, Clifton Waters

New modular home arrives at Clifton Waters

■ Sue Paterson

Clifton Waters Village in Wy Yung is one of the oldest retirement villages in Victoria. It began in 1953 and over the years has been a safe sanctuary for active aging retirees. As we approach the Village's 70th birthday, we are nearing completion of the first new house to be built since 2011.

The new dwelling at 4 Martins Parade

replaces one of the original cottages, built in the 1950s, which was demolished last year. It will be a showpiece for the Village, and begins what will hopefully be a steady series of new builds to progressively replace some of the oldest units facing Bullumwall Road.

Anchor Homes at Stratford has been contracted to build the house, which will be the first three-bedroom unit in the Village, featuring a 6.5-star energy rating and a large north-facing verandah for people to enjoy the sunshine.

Anchor Homes builds modular homes at their factory site in Stratford before trucking them to their final locations. We have chosen a slightly modified


version of the Homestead 2 design, with additional ramps and aids for older residents.

Several visits to the Stratford site were made during construction to lock-up stage. We were blessed with fine weather, despite an inclement forecast, on the day when Fowlers Building Transport made the journey down the highway to deliver the two modules. Watching the precision manoeuvres to get the house in place – utilising a trailer with hydraulic axles to avoid getting bogged in the soft ground – was fascinating.

The future residents of the unit already reside in Clifton Waters, having moved temporarily into a small one-bedroom cottage while the build takes place. They are very excited to watch their new home taking shape. The project has been creating quite a buzz around the whole Village and in the wider Bairnsdale community.

The professionalism of, and ease of dealing with, Anchor Homes has been a pleasure and we look forward to seeing the completion of the home towards the end of the year.

All in all it was a great day of community connection and involvement, and a fantastic way for the church to connect with locals.



Giving a gift that lasts

Bequests to Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

The Gippsland Diocese has been blessed with the generosity of Anglicans and others in support of its mission. One form of support you can offer is a bequest in your will – to the Diocese, your own parish or for a particular purpose.

To find out more, visit www.gippslandanglicans.org.au and search 'bequests', or contact Richard Connelly (03 5144 2044).

Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.

An environment for self-advocacy

■ Jan Anderson

In this edition, I'd like to share some highlights from my *Annual Report 2021–2022* and *Statement of Intent 2022–2023*.

I am pleased to inform you that the Office of the Advocate is midway through a five-year plan that intends to enable an environment for self-advocacy.

Along with other communities internationally and locally, Latrobe is a community that is transitioning to a new future. It is important for me that everyone has an opportunity to benefit from and influence our future vision.

Adjusting to changes in our lives may bring opportunity and excitement, as well as anxiety about the unknown. I acknowledge the impact these changes and that of COVID-19 have on the health and wellbeing of the Latrobe community. Supporting communities to transition in a way that protects their physical and mental wellbeing is a priority.

The Annual Report provides an update on my continuing work and highlights a number of priority areas where systems change has progressed. I will continue to advocate on behalf of Latrobe communities and encourage you to share your experiences with me.

A considerable amount of work has gone into other priority areas informed by my 2021–22 Statement of Intent, and I have continued to engage with people who may not ordinarily have their voices heard, listened to their health and wellbeing concerns and aspirations, and heard what matters most to them when it comes to engagement.

I have seen first-hand how local services are working together to improve community access to doctors and to deliver better end-of-life palliative care services for the region. Through my advocacy to service system leaders in Melbourne and the Latrobe Valley, I have observed an increased readiness to drive collaborative actions that lead to long-term improvements for local communities. I will continue this important work to ensure that the regional inequities that community members have brought to my attention are addressed.

The focus in 2022–23 is to apply the social determinants of health in Latrobe, and work is already underway to develop a Latrobe Valley social determinant of the health report card. The Advocate is doing this together with the Latrobe Health Assembly, Latrobe Valley Authority,

Department of Health and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing.

Importantly, community voice is at the centre of this report card. It will highlight the strengths and positive health trends within the Latrobe

Valley. It will also identify systems gaps and opportunities for improvement. As the Advocate, I will elevate this work and prompt discussion across several government departments to ensure that policies and systems are implemented in a way that leads to improved health outcomes for local communities.

My office is committed to continuing work with the Latrobe Health Assembly and partners of the Health Innovation Zone including Gippsland Primary Health Network, Latrobe Regional Hospital and others to develop and innovate multi-disciplinary models of care to improve community access to services.

If you, or a group you belong to, would like to share your experiences with me please get in touch with Kylie (1800 319 255) and she'll organise a time for us to catch up.

The full Annual Report can be found on our website at lhadvocate.vic.gov.au. Printed copies are also available from the office, or one can be posted to you.

If you have any questions about the report or the information provided, please contact us.

You can also keep up to date with my work through Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. I look forward to hearing from you in the coming months.





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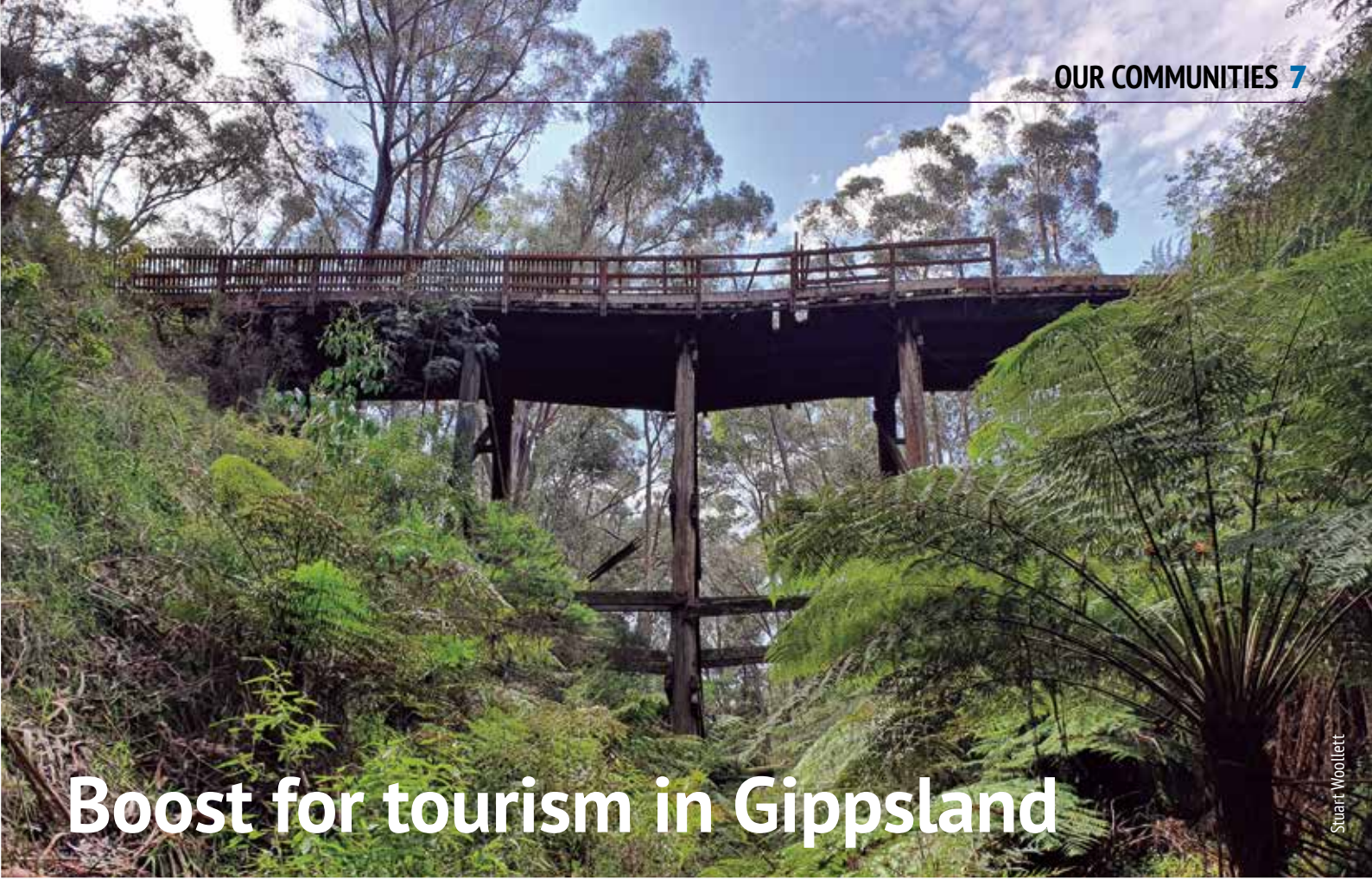
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Boost for tourism in Gippsland

The Gippsland region is set to expand its epicurean offering and walking trail experiences, after a \$3.9 million investment from the Victorian Government.

From Maffra to Toora and Woodside to Noojee, the four projects supported by the Regional Tourism Investment Fund are expected to create new jobs in construction, drive visitation and create ongoing employment in Gippsland.

Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events Steve Dimopoulos announced the investment included a \$3 million redevelopment of the popular Rokeby to Noojee Trail, creating a significant scenic tourism drawcard in the Baw Baw Shire.

Stage 1 of the Rokeby to Noojee Trail will develop a high-quality 14-kilometre walking experience, which will include upgrading the existing Rokeby Crossover trail and extending it to the Apex Lookout. This stage of the project is expected to be complete in mid-2024.

Maffco Brewery and Taphouse in Maffra will benefit from a \$400,000 investment to transform an old milk factory into a unique craft brewing experience featuring a taphouse, working brewery, dining and separate function area. This project is set to be complete in mid-2023.

The Red Pig Bakery in Toora will develop an adjoining 62-seat cafe and wine bar while the historic building and its 130-year-old scotch oven will be restored after a \$325,000 investment from the government.

Undergoing a \$170,000 expansion that will see three new luxury accommodation pods, the iconic Woodside Beach Hotel upgrade will also include an events pavilion to host one-off ticketed events.

The four projects are expected to create a total of 77 full-time construction jobs and 123 ongoing full-time positions. The investment will also provide further support to Gippsland's local businesses and economy.

Gippsland continues to be a major drawcard for visitors, attracting 6.4 million holiday-makers in the year ending December 2019, who stayed 7.2 million nights and contributed \$1.1 billion to the local economy.

"These tourism infrastructure projects are vital to encouraging more tourists to the area, ensuring our local

businesses and communities thrive stronger than ever before," said Member for Eastern Victoria Tom McIntosh.

Victorian Government

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Praying it forward at diocesan retreat

■ Sue Fordham

We are all familiar with the concept of 'paying it forward', whereby a person might leave money at a cafe, for example, to provide for someone, a stranger, who can't afford a meal or a coffee.

When 'praying it forward' (the title of this year's diocesan retreat at The Abbey Raymond Island), we pray so that we improve the future for our descendants.

At this year's retreat we were invited to 'do hope'; to step into a grace-filled future knowing that God is already there; to create a vision and devise measures to implement it, knowing that, while God is 'beside me and behind me, he is also in front of me'.

This, according to Jonas Salk, inventor of the polio vaccine, is the most important of life's works, that we might become, in effect, a 'good ancestor'.

Dr Cath Connelly led this retreat at The Abbey inspiring the 22 attendees to see themselves in a long line both of ancestors as well as descendants into the future. Past and future, she argued, passes through each of us in the present and just as we are beneficiaries of our ancestors, our lives can provide a legacy for future generations.



Cath Connelly playing her harp at this year's diocesan retreat

To achieve these things, we must engage in what she termed 'cathedral thinking'. Just as cathedrals are conceived of 300 years before they are finished, and those who plan and begin the work of raising money for their building never live to see the completed structure, so too must we think in such a long-term and selfless way.

She said that the historical record was on the side of hope, citing seed banks,

the Great Wall of China and the London Underground as examples of projects undertaken to benefit future generations. Such thinking is also described as 'deep-time thinking' and 'seventh-generation thinking'.

The secret to successful 'cathedral thinking', it seems, is to work with the willing, understand that you don't have to do it all yourself and rely on God.



Shoeboxes of happiness at Christ Church Foster

Helping to prepare Christmas Child boxes for transport: (L-R) Elsie, Fred and Pearl Baker; Helen Fulton; Becky Ray; Jeff Kennedy; and Nikki and Michael Sayah

■ Carole Williams

There were happy smiles from members of Christ Church Foster recently, as they stacked boxes of Christmas gifts for distribution to children in need around the world.

Operation Christmas Child, an annual project by Samaritan's Purse International Relief, is a hands-on way to bring Christmas joy to children around the world. Within the Pacific region it is embraced by Australians and New Zealanders, whose contributions are distributed in Asia-Pacific countries.

Coordinator Sue Dower oversaw the provision of gifts, with members of the church adding their own touches as well.

Sue reported that this year's effort at Christ Church resulted in 81 boxes of gifts packed separately for boys and girls in the shoebox-size containers supplied by Samaritan's Purse.

It's amazing the number of gifts that can be packed into a box. Items may include, for example, small toys, games, school supplies, hygiene

items, clothing and various other gifts to bring joy to the young recipients.



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■ Rev'd David Perryman

At the end of October, members of a steering group consisting of Bishop Ian Lambert, The Rev'ds Dr Tim Watson, Mark McDonald and David Perryman (with apologies from Alisha Moyle), along with Dr Lisa McDonald and Jill Lambert, met at The Abbey on Raymond Island to pray and discern the future for the Anglican Renewal Network Australia (ARNA). Having been launched at an e-gathering in February 2022, ARNA has continued to grow. During Pentecost 2022, ARNA held an online retreat consisting of daily devotions about different aspects of the Holy Spirit.

Our network:

- desires to see renewal in people from diverse backgrounds
- champions renewal in the local church through life-giving relationships
- seeks growth in intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit
- acts according to our gifts (natural and supernatural)
- values respectful relationships
- seeks to connect and build bridges between people of diverse backgrounds and ministry experiences.

The ARNA core group offers encouragement, resources (as appropriate) and support to the people of God through a network that provides events, gatherings and retreats; training and formation; and experiences of worship and prayer ministry. Local hub leaders provide communication for the network and coordination of local hub gatherings, training and ministry opportunities, as well as online events. Gippsland's local hub leaders are Alisha



ARNA – a network championing renewal

Steering group members Bishop Ian Lambert (left) and Rev'd David Perryman dressed for the ARNA retreat cabaret

Moyle, The Rev'd Dave Perryman and The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes. From a personal point of view, it's been wonderful and exciting to travel this journey with the ARNA steering group as we discern where God's Spirit is leading us. What has also been most encouraging is the diversity among the steering committee in tradition and background – something we hope continues to emerge as ARNA evolves. ARNA would love to hear from you

about what's working in your parish around renewal and the work and ministry of the Holy Spirit. Short articles, testimonies, our resource packages/programs we can put on our Exploring Resources page would be appreciated. Further information about ARNA and the online retreat is available at anglicanrenewal.network. To request ministry support or a visit, email anglicanrenewalnetwork@gmail.com.

Final service at St Thomas' Toora



The Toora congregation at the final service at St Thomas' Toora

■ Robert Paragreen

The final service of worship at St Thomas' Toora was held on Sunday 6 November. This was very well attended, with 75 people present. The Rev'ds Tim Fletcher, Neil Thompson and John Davies each spoke about their term as rector at Toora. Several people, including Toora warden Rachel Brown, added reminiscences tinged with sadness. On 10 November, Bishop Richard conducted a small but poignant service of deconsecration, ending the building's 130 years as a worship centre in Toora. However, this did not mark the end of worship in Toora; the Corner Inlet Parish is seeking to purchase an excellent new property as an op shop/drop-in/worship space in Toora's main street. A recording of the final service at St Thomas' Toora is available at cornerinletanglican.org.

End of an era for Anglican school seniors

Taking their minds off upcoming exams was the objective recently as Year 12 students at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School and Gippsland Grammar celebrated their last day of official school in style. After exams, students from both schools attended final chapel services and awards ceremonies, and relived their early learning years as part of Valedictory celebrations.

Gippsland Grammar School

Gippsland Grammar Year 12 vice captain Charlotte Runciman revisiting St Anne's Junior Campus during her final week of school. She is holding a letter she wrote to herself when she was in Year 6. It's all part of tradition at her school.

East Gippsland student Pippa Treasure is congratulated by Gippsland Grammar Principal Michele Wakeham. Pippa began at GG in 2008 in the Bairnsdale Campus ELC and received a special gift recognising 13 years of continuous education.



Blake Bourne

Year 12 student Maximus Di Corleto with his parents Anthony and Natasha at the Valedictory Service on 18 November



Some of Gippsland Grammar's leaving Year 12 students who attended the Sale Early Learning Centre with their teacher Mrs Lisa Burgess

St Paul's Anglican Grammar School

St Paul's Principal Cameron Herbert celebrating the Year 12 students' last day of school with Nikita Alexander, Amelia Crosby and Maya Irwin.

St Paul's students Rhys Galvin and the dinosaur crew.



Dressing up as the Wiggles are St Paul's teachers Bethany Thearle, Caitlin Powell, Ali Hay, Chris Brown, David Robinson and Bernard Laverty



Enjoying the sunshine are St Paul's students Renee Collis and Isabella Winnell



Racing away are St Paul's students Charlotte Fraser and Jorgia Neyland



\$170,000 boost for Aboriginal Ministry

■ Libby Willems

Prayers were answered in November when news was received that a grant application to boost Aboriginal Ministry was successful. Aboriginal Christian Ministry within the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland will be supported in part over the next three years by a \$170,000 grant.

Culturally safe and strong Aboriginal Ministry in Gippsland is delivered primarily by respected Elder, Minang and Wotjobaluk Woman The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy, and proud Taungurong and GunaiKurnai Woman The Rev'd Kathy Dalton.

The grant, facilitated by City to City Australia via an anonymous philanthropic donor, will enable better access to spiritual care for healing and growth for Aboriginal people, families and communities across Gippsland.

"Our community feel proud when they see Aboriginal people taking a service and delivering the message of God. Our Ministry in Gippsland helps to build trust and respect in Christian faith and with non-Aboriginal priests too," said Aunty Phyllis.

"This project will let us bring God's love and understanding to Aboriginal people

in a cultural and spiritual wellbeing way. We will meet more people on their life's journey and share Christ's love with them," said Kathy.

"We are committed to Aboriginal Ministry in this Diocese, which reaches across GunaiKurnai, Boonwurrung, Bidawal and Ngarigo/Monero Countries", said Bishop Richard. "This new partnership builds our capacity to support our two Aboriginal priests and to extend the vital work they do in their communities. Aunty Phyllis and Kathy encourage and challenge us all to give concrete, contextual expression to the gospel ministry of Reconciliation, and this is a great opportunity to learn more deeply from and walk together with First Nations people in Gippsland."

As a Diocese-wide ministry, Aboriginal Ministry has some unique features. The sheer distances that are travelled to be with families outstrips what most clergy need to plan for within a parish boundary. The extent of their kinships and connections within Community mean Aunty Phyllis and Kathy are often called far and wide across the Diocese and beyond.

Dr Mark Morley, Chief Operations Officer, City to City Australia said, "We are delighted to partner with the Diocese of Gippsland to plant more ministries and churches, and to reach more people with the gospel – particularly in hard-to-reach places. This partnership, including the provision of significant training, coaching and mentoring for these two First Nations ministers, will be an opportunity to share with First Nations people in Gippsland the breadth and depth of the love of God in Jesus Christ."

The future challenge for Gippsland Anglicans is to secure ongoing funds to support the extensive culturally strong work that Aunty Phyllis and Kathy currently undertake and meet the growing demand for pastoral care and spiritual growth in Community.

The Diocese warmly welcomes pledges and donations to Aboriginal Ministry. Options are included on the website or call Diocesan Development Officer, Libby Willems: 0458 265 198, gippslandanglicans.org.au/aboriginalministry.



Victorian Council of Churches (VCC) Emergencies Ministry volunteer chaplains and staff have been recognised for their unstinting service during the 2019-20 Black Summer Bushfires by being awarded the National Emergency Medal.

The devastating bushfires were declared a nationally significant emergency for the purpose of the National Emergency Medal on 2 December 2020, per the National Emergency Medal (Bushfires 2019-20) Declaration 2020.

More than 200 VCCEM Chaplains were deployed across northern and eastern Victoria into 14 relief/recovery centres at affected areas such as Sale, Bairnsdale, Corryong and Mallacoota during January-February 2020.

The National Emergency Medal is administered by the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat at Government House, which provides secretariat support to the National Emergency Medal Committee.

The Governor-General may approve an

award for sustained service, on the recommendation of the Australian Honours and Awards Secretariat. Sustained service is awarded to those who have rendered sustained service in the declared nationally significant emergency for the purpose of the Medal.

Service during this nationally significant time is recognised through the clasp 'BUSHFIRES 19-20'.

These esteemed awards were presented to more than 100 recipients in October and November.

Courtesy VCCEM




Gippsland medal recipients

The National Emergency Medals were presented in November, including at churches in Warragul and Sale. Gippsland medal recipients were:

- Lynne Beaty
- Jackie Belot
- The Rev'd Brenda Burney (pictured with her medal)
- Jill Campbell
- Deirdre Crawley
- The Rev'd Judith Lake
- Rhondra Milner
- The Rev'd Heather Toms
- The Rev'd Jenny Wicking.

Have your say in TGA!

Send your letters* of up to 350 words to editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au.



* Please include your name and suburb for publication. Letters may be edited in the interests of clarity or space.



Blessings in the Parish of Yarram

The ecumenical gathering at 'Walking the Labyrinth' in Yarram

■ Glenda Amos

October was a month of many blessings for the Parish of Yarram. We began with the traditional Blessing of the Animals at a Combined Churches gathering at St Mary's on 25 September. A Parish Blessing was held at St John's Port Albert the following Sunday, followed by a barbecue lunch. Traditional pets and some not-so-traditional creatures were blessed.

The Blessing of the Fleet was held at Port Albert on 29 September. A very wet and windy day greeted the assembled crowd. Not until the reading from Matthew, where Jesus stills the water, did the wind drop, the rain stop and the sun come out!

A variety of boats were blessed in the traditional manner and thanks given for safe passage for all those who sail on our waters.

'Walking the Labyrinth', also held at the end of the month, was a unique experience led by Peter and Jenny Batten, supported by The Rev'd Jenny Wicking. It was an ecumenical gathering of people from several churches and varying walks of life. An opening discussion led by Peter outlined the experience.

Walking the Labyrinth consists of four movements:

1. On the Threshold – pause
2. Journeying In – focus
3. The Resting Place – the heart Rest, Breathe, Be Still
4. Journeying Out – give thanks.

There were also opportunities to draw, to read, to watch or just sit and reflect and pray and give thanks. It is a meditation for healing and growth.

*Walk gently on God's Earth!
Walk with Christ as your companion!
Be open to the Spirit!*

With thanks to Peter Batten and Robyn Prior.

Baptisms a family affair at St James' Traralgon

■ Rev'd Marilyn Obersby

There was great rejoicing at St James' Church in Traralgon on 13 November, when the parish family gathered to celebrate four baptisms and four confirmations. We were delighted that Bishop Richard was able to be present to confirm Jordan, Kerry, Mary and Matilda.

Rev'd Marilyn Obersby baptised Leyna, Dakota, Octavia and Jordan. Rev'd Canon Amy Turner was the deacon of the Eucharist. What made the occasion even more special was that all four who were baptised, and two who were confirmed, were from the same family:

Mum, Dad and their three daughters. Another 20 children were present to support their Sunday School friends at their baptism.

This was the third occasion this year where we have been able to celebrate several people from one of our parish families being baptised during the morning service. Afterwards everyone sat down to lunch together with Bishop Richard and enjoyed a pleasant afternoon of fellowship.



Bishop Richard, assisted by Rev'd Canon Amy Turner, confirming candidates at St James' Traralgon



Finding real treasure – a scene from a Lego stop-motion movie of Matthew 13:44

Bible connections with Lego in Bendigo

■ Ven George Hemmings

There are few things more universal than a humble plastic brick. Almost every Australian household with children (and many without) has a collection of Lego. And almost anything can be made out of Lego. So as we were looking to engage with families across our Diocese in Bendigo, it seemed obvious to build on what was already at hand, and thus the BAD (Bendigo Anglican Diocese) Lego Competition was born. Each BAD Lego Competition invites children (or adults under supervision of a little person) to submit any form of Lego creation on a particular theme. So far there have been three Lego competitions inviting retellings of the story of Jonah, the Nativity and, most recently, any of the Parables of Jesus. The entries, all of which have been spectacular, have ranged from incredible stop-motion videos to detailed dioramas, and magnificent models and fantastic figures.

What has been even more incredible is hearing the stories of how the competition has inspired children to connect with the Bible, their faith and their families. The very first competition was launched via video during one of the COVID lockdowns last year. That evening, one parent had already emailed their child's submission, sharing

that as soon as the video came up during their parish's online service, their six-year-old son ran to his Lego sack to start creating. So too did his younger sister! Other parents shared how it gave an opportunity to open the Bible with their children and discuss the passage as they built models and filmed videos together. Subsequent competitions have seen cross-generational engagement as parishioners in one parish took the opportunity to build models with their grandchildren. The universality of Lego has also borne fruit as leaders within St Paul's Cathedral have been able to use the competitions in ministry and outreach to the Karen families who are part of the congregation and community.

As entries have come through from across our Diocese – from the

largest of parishes to the smallest, from those central to those most remote, from those who already have thriving children's and families ministries to those who only occasionally have children in the pews – the BAD Lego Competition has proved a way to remind us of the universality of the church and the many ways we are connected together in Christ.

Ven George Hemmings is Archdeacon of Bendigo and the Goldfields, and Youth and Children's Ministry.



Our commitment to a Safe Church

The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland does not tolerate abuse, misconduct and harm in its Christian community.

We are committed to ensuring all people in contact with the Church can participate in a safe and responsible environment.

If you have been harmed by a church worker, or you know someone who has, please contact Angela Cannon, Director of Professional Standards, for a confidential discussion.

Contact: 0457 813 500, ps.office.gippsland@gmail.com

To find out more about Safe Church, and about Safe Ministry resources, visit gippslandanglicans.org.au/safe-church.



Generous optimism at the heart

Advent Conversation at The Abbey

(L-R) Fr Francis Otabo, Bishop Richard Treloar, Prof. Mary Coloe, Catholic Bishop Greg Bennet, Dr Fergus King and organiser Robert Fordham

■ Sue Fordham

The fourth annual Ecumenical Conversation at The Abbey attracted 85 participants. 'Narratives of Becoming and Birth' was the theme of the presentations by Catholic theologian Professor Mary Coloe and Anglican theologian Dr Fergus King.

Bishop Richard Treloar and Sale's Catholic Bishop, Greg Bennet, provided responses that drew together elements of the talks and suggested possible pathways for Christian action.

Professor Mary Coloe, described as "a guru in the Gospel of John" by the moderator, Fr Francis Otabo, Dean of Sale, first focused on the early part of John's gospel as a birth narrative that Advent anticipates, one paralleled by the first creation story of Genesis.

Unlike Genesis, however, creation in John's Gospel is ongoing, culminating in a sabbath, and creation's completion, with 'It is finished', as Jesus dies on the cross.

Jesus, in declaring Mary John's new mother, makes brothers of him and the disciples and, by extension, we become sons and daughters of God. This is the new dispensation.

These insights were carefully developed in the context of language. The meaning of words, such as *incarnation, life, birthing, gift, temple* and *tabernacle*, were explored in their richness, and sloppy translations that ignored precision were excoriated for obscuring the resonance that particular words have in other scriptural settings.

Dr Fergus King chose to speak on 'Matthew for the 21st Century', noting the similarity between first- and 21st-century worlds. He asserted that an ancient text can speak to a modern world if we understand that Christian writings are not so much about 'what' as 'how'.

He reached into philosophy and economic theory to expose what, for early Christians and for us today, has become an 'economy of scarcity'. That is, if I prosper, it has to be at your expense; if I win, you have to lose.

The honour-shame dichotomy of Matthew's time reflects these same competitive, zero-sum underpinnings. But Matthew's gospel and Jesus' way turns this on its head. So-called common sense is rejected, love and redemption are available

to all and righteousness based on God's character is the paradigm of forgiveness and love.

The Christmas story in Matthew is a story of trust and reliance on God as Joseph marries the already-pregnant Mary, the Kings or Magi come in spite of Herod's threat and while Judea silently assents to the killing of the innocents, it is Egypt, land of the Jews' early oppression, that embraces and protects the Christ child. Generosity and trust overcome the win-lose mentality in Matthew.

Professor Coloe invited us to consider that, while knowledge about God is vital, experience of God is what births our faith.

Dr King encouraged us to think about the situation of refugees and their reception. In 1993, he told us, Tanzania, one of the poorest countries on earth, took in hundreds of thousands of refugees while Australia, one of the richest, took in a tiny number. Generosity trumps the 'economy of scarcity'.

Sue Fordham is a Lay Reader at the Parish of Paynesville.



Bishop Richard with some of Gippsland's wonderful women in ministry. (front L-R) Edie Ashley, Sue Jacka, Jo White, Keren Terpstra, Judith Lake, Jenny Wicking. (back L-R) Brenda Burney, Lyndon Phillips, Heather Toms, Amy Turner, Belinda Seabrook.

Celebrating Gippsland's women in ministry

■ Christine Morris

A celebration of the 30th anniversary of the ordination of women as priests in the Anglican Church of Australia was held at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale on 13 November. We especially celebrated the ministry of women in the Diocese of Gippsland. Women across a range of ministries in Gippsland offered reflections on their time in ministry.

In her congratulatory message to the Diocese, The Most Rev'd

Kay Goldsworthy, AO (Archbishop of Perth; former Bishop of Gippsland) said:

This year we celebrate both individual women and all women and ministries, which each has offered us a lifegiving expression of the teaching, leading, sacramental and missional life of Anglicans gathered in parishes, schools and agencies.

... In Gippsland with its quiet but wonderful story of a Bishop who ordained women, known as Deaconesses, using the BCP order for the ordaining of Deacons, the Diocese was always going to be at the forefront of welcoming the ministry of women as priests.

The service recording is available at youtu.be/Z2UchbJFzQQ

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The Gippsland Anglican

Supporting homegrown ministers



I thoroughly enjoy all that I am learning. The highlights for me so far have been developing my pastoral care skills so that I can confidently support people within my church and my community. I have also enjoyed learning in depth about baptism, and being able to practically learn how to baptise an infant has made me really excited about the possibility to be a part of baptising more children in the future.

Stacey Williamson (pictured with MDP participant Brigid Kennedy (right))

■ Rev'd Belinda Seabrook

The Ministry Development Program (MDP) is an initiative of the parishes of Mirboo North and Leongatha. This two-year course provides an opportunity for participants to develop vocational skills for church leadership and ordained ministry. Currently, six participants are enrolled in the program, all in different stages of testing their sense of calling. Four of the six participants have already completed a year of discernment and feel a strong call to ordained ministry.

This program essentially mimics a curacy or an apprenticeship and brings forward important training to prepare for job readiness before ordination. The program is aimed at supporting homegrown ministers

and leaders for Gippsland in a ministry climate that sometimes struggles to afford traditional curacies.

Participants have six contact hours per week for face-to-face learning, which occurs across both parishes. Half of the contact hours involve discussion-based learning about the challenges and intricacies of leadership within a parish. Topics have included interpersonal skills, leadership styles, stress management, planning for ministry and conflict resolution. There is also a practical component each week. The first year focuses on practical training on all upfront ministry roles and thoroughly explores church liturgy. The current

participants are seven months through the first year of the program and have just completed units on sermon writing, public speaking skills, facilitating a service of baptism and intercessory prayer.

Half of the participants are receiving a training allowance to complete the program, enabled by generous donations from the parishes of Mirboo North and Leongatha, as well as a legacy from much-loved former members of the Mirboo North parish, the late Jimmy and Annie Atkins. Because of this selfless generosity and the support of the wider Anglican community, future applicants to this program are able to apply for financial support while enrolled in the program. There will be a Diocese-wide launch of the Ministry Development Program at the 2023 Synod, at which more information will become available.

The next intake for the MDP will occur in February 2024. For further information, or to make a donation to the Atkins Ministry Training Fund to support the ongoing development of future leaders in ministry within the Anglican Church, contact The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook (belindaseabrookrevd@gmail.com) or The Ven Graham Knott (rectorleongatha@gmail.com).

The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook is Priest-in-Charge at St Mary's Mirboo North.



The teaching in this pioneering program has helped me to understand some of the practical challenges of ministry in a church environment and gain a deeper understanding of the privilege it is to work in Christian ministry...The passion and training provided by Graham and Belinda offer participants valuable insights from lived ministry experiences and I feel blessed to be part of a group that is growing and learning together in this setting.

Damien King

Activism against gender-based violence

Is your church taking part?

■ Rev'd Tracy Lauersen

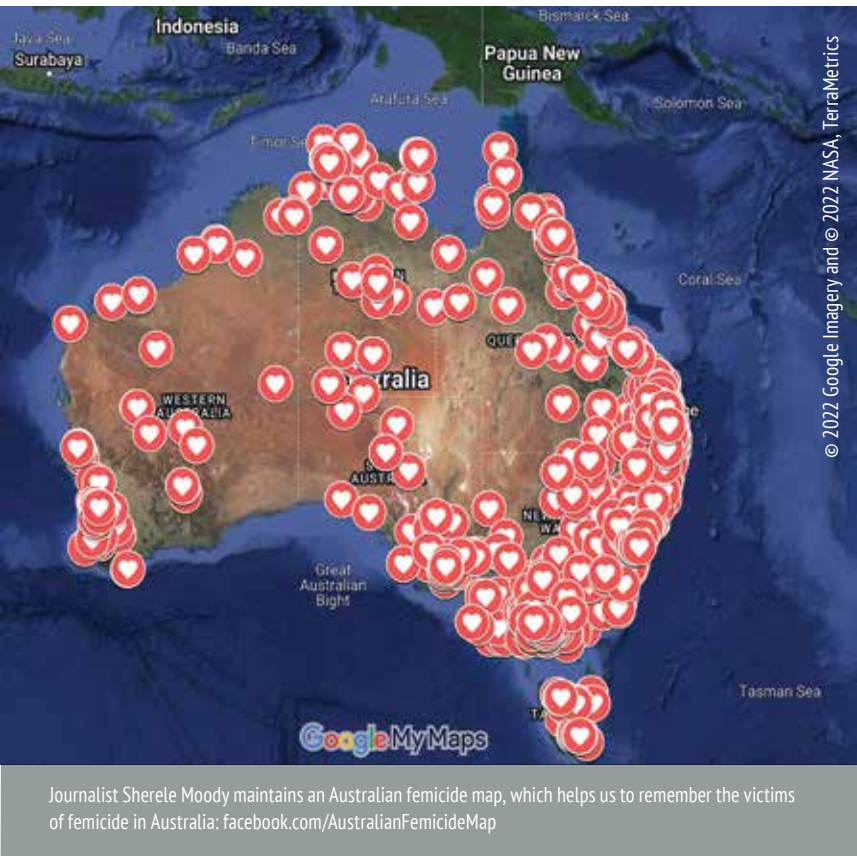
The United Nations Global 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a campaign run annually between 25 November, the International Day Against Violence Against Women, and 10 December, International Human Rights Day. This year, the theme of the activism campaign is taking action to prevent femicide against women.

Femicide is generally understood as the killing of a female person on the basis of their gender. It can happen in the context of domestic and intimate partner relationships, including former relationships. It can happen outside that context and can also be perpetrated or tolerated by the state and its agents.

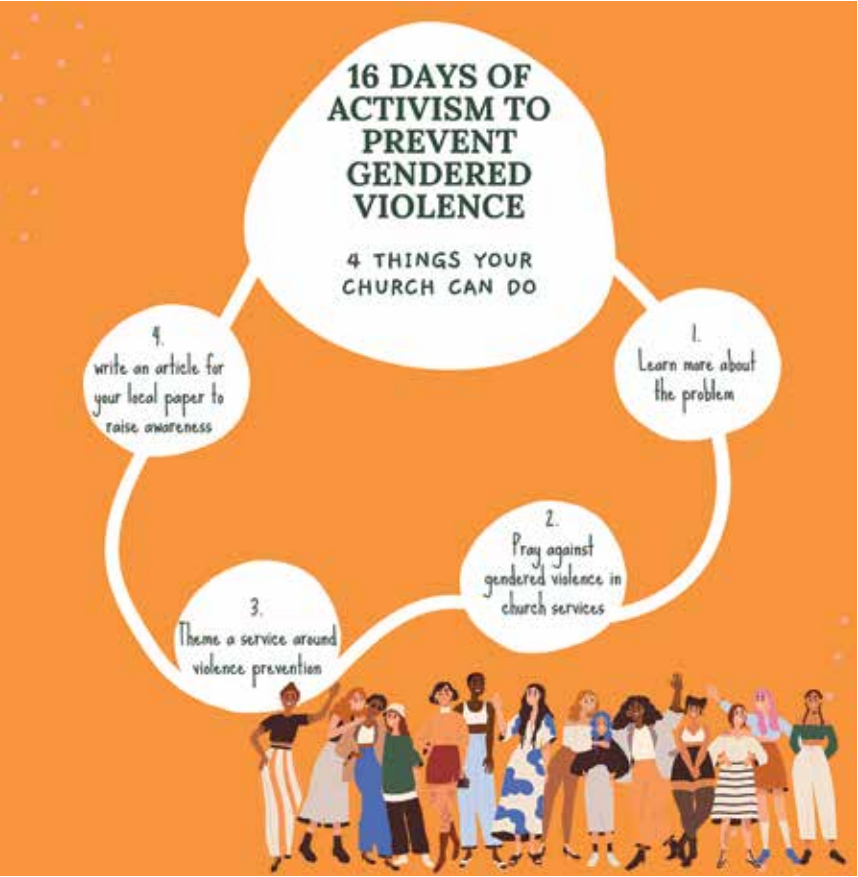
According to the Australian Institute of Criminology:

On average, 125 females of all ages are murdered each year in Australia, with the greatest risk of homicide victimisation for females being between the ages of 21 and 23 years. Overwhelmingly, it is men who kill women ... the likelihood of a woman being killed by a male stranger is very slight ... Nearly three in five of all femicides [killing of women aged 15 years and over] occur between intimate partners ... When a woman is killed, she is most likely to be killed in a private residence.

Around the world, femicide statistics are shocking. The most recent data on global femicide, from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is from just before the COVID pandemic:



Journalist Sherele Moody maintains an Australian femicide map, which helps us to remember the victims of femicide in Australia: facebook.com/AustralianFemicideMap



Some 47,000 women and girls worldwide were killed by their intimate partners or other family members in 2020. This means that, on average, a woman or girl is killed by someone in her own family every 11 minutes. Where trends can be calculated, they show that the magnitude of such gender-related killings remains largely unchanged, however, with only marginal increases and decreases over the past decade.

Femicide is often preceded by other forms of gender-based violence or abuse, threats, harassment and coercive control, which we can prevent. We can help to stop femicide before it happens by becoming aware and by recognising signs of abuse and responding appropriately. The 16 Days of Activism campaign is an opportunity for church-goers to educate themselves and to advocate for greater awareness and recognition of gender-based violence, particularly in relationships. It is an opportunity for you to advocate for ways we can prevent and respond to gender-based violence. Importantly, it is an opportunity for us to pray for prevention, for victims of gender-based violence and its perpetrators.

The Rev'd Tracy Lauersen is Rector at St Paul's Warragul. If this article has raised issues for you and you'd like to talk to someone, please call 1800RESPECT (1800 737 732) – the Australian national sexual assault, domestic and family violence counselling service.



The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra performing a baptism

Godparents – offering a glimpse of God's love

■ Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra

The phone rings, and I pick it up. It's a request: "I'd like to have my child christened." We talk about dates, and the particular pattern of the way the parish handles baptisms – whether during a regular Sunday service, or at another time – and then I ask for an email address to send the form for the parents to complete.

"How many godparents do we need?" my inquirer asks. "At least one, with the usual being two, or three (the tradition being two women and a man for a girl, two men and a woman for a boy). And they need to be baptised themselves," I say. "Oh," my inquirer responds. "What if they're not christened?"

Behind that question, which often bamboozles and confuses baptism inquirers, lies a long answer. We'll leave aside for now the question about language (baptism versus christening), and the other questions about when we should do baptisms, about the reasons for which people seek baptism (cultural memory, family tradition, school entry, less often genuine desire and understanding of what it means), and, indeed, about what baptism is and means. Instead, we'll focus on godparents: their role and function.

Godparents originated at the time in the early church when children began to be baptised. The role was considered deeply significant, the godparent, or sponsor, being a "spiritual parent" to the child baptised – to the point that there were rules forbidding godparents from marrying their godchildren! The sponsor or godparent was, in the first place, to make the promises of baptism on behalf of the child, and then later to ensure that the child understood and was

catechised in Christian faith. They were to act as a mentor or guide for Christian living, helping the growing young person to know the basics of faith – the creed, how to pray, the Lord's Prayer. In later years, as confirmation emerged as a separate rite, godparents were to bring the child, when they were old enough to own the promises of baptism for themselves, to be confirmed.

The intention in our prayer book and formularies remains the same: godparents and sponsors are asked if they will answer for the child, raise them with an understanding of faith, and then bring them back for confirmation. This goes way beyond any kind of symbolic nicety – an honour for a day, which is left at the church door when the family and friends leave at the end of the baptism. It goes beyond being the effectively chosen next of kin for the child, should the parents happen upon accident that prevents them from caring for the child. In fact, the role godparents play in baptism functions at a different level from any kind of legal status a godparent might be accorded by agreement with the parents – although certainly one would hope that any godparent who takes their role seriously would, because of those bonds of affection, be willing to take on such a role as being *in loco parentis*.

Because being a godparent for a baptism involves ideally being able to impart to their godchildren the beauty and depth of what it means to follow Jesus, it's not just a nicety that godparents themselves should be people of Christian faith. Godparents, in the way the role is intended, should be able to share with their godchild their own

sense of God's all-embracing love, and their own experience of what it is to walk with Jesus. Through the godparents' own love for God, the child ideally glimpses something of God's love for them – and so responds as they are able to at each point in their life.

That's the ideal, at least. There are all sorts of reasons why the reality is most often otherwise, godparents at best being chosen for their "moral values" and, at worst, because they're the only people in the circle of family and friends who are themselves baptised.

This is one of the reasons that godparents don't take up their role in isolation from the rest of the Christian community. The stewardship of the grace of baptism is the responsibility of all the baptised; in other words, "it takes a village to raise a child", and a community of Christians to accompany them on the road.

If you are a godparent, when was the last time you had contact with your godchild? How are you sharing your faith with them? Here are some ideas: gift them a book of simple prayers, or a Bible. Sit down and read the Bible with them, so they understand it. Every year, on the anniversary of their baptism, light their baptism candle and tell them about the event. Teach them to pray the Lord's Prayer and, more than that, introduce them to the God who loves them tenderly, and with whom they can talk anytime, and who will hear and hold them gently, whatever they encounter in life.

The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra is Dean of Sale.



'Back to Thorpdale' Sunday

■ Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding and Rev'd Canon Philip Muston

Fifth Sundays in the Parish of Trafalgar mean that the whole parish travels to one of our two smaller congregational centres, and this October it was Thorpdale's turn. We chose to mark the occasion with a 'Back to Thorpdale' event at St Mark's – 'back' in terms of geography but looking back to some of the amazing spiritual heritage of Thorpdale. Specifically, we recalled the narratives surrounding two 'sons of Thorpdale': two elders of the Australian church who were nurtured as childhood friends in Thorpdale. We did this in the light of a verse from Revelation: "the testimony to Jesus is the spirit of prophecy" (Rev 19:10), the idea that as we testify to amazing things that God has done through Christ in the past, often in very small congregations, we encourage the church's hope-filled expectation of God's work in the present and future.

One son, Gilbert (Gil) Cann, many may know as an evangelist, pastor, writer and leadership trainer. Gil was a pastor of Truth and Liberation Concern (TLC) in Bayswater, a church widely known for discipling people of unchurched backgrounds. Gil is also known to the Diocese of Gippsland for his book *Red Alert: Does the Future Have a Church?*, which was studied by our diocesan Lay Readers at training days in 2019.

Life in Thorpdale in the fifties was not uneventful. In his first year in Thorpdale, Gil (aged 9) survived the rolling of his school

bus between Thorpdale and Mirboo North Primary when a boy distracted the bus driver. Gil's mother, Ethel, survived the birth of triplets at the Warragul Hospital, partly due to her husband rounding up the patrons of Thorpdale's pub (The Traveller's Rest) in his truck and rushing them to the hospital to donate blood when the much-needed supplies were unavailable. Ethel was a Sunday School teacher at the local Methodist church and prayed for the deeper spiritual commitment of her children and husband. After five years in Thorpdale, the Cann family continued to move from farm to farm throughout Gippsland.

By the time Gil was 19, he and his family had settled in Woolamai (near Bass) where the tiny Methodist church was visited one weekend by a student minister from Queens College, Dallas Clarnette, who came to conduct an evangelical rally. Gil and his brother Graham responded to the call to come forward, which also prompted their father, Stanley, to respond and together they gave their hearts and lives to the service of Christ.

Years later another student minister, Gil's childhood friend from Thorpdale, John Smith, was appointed by the Melbourne Bible Institute as a student minister to that tiny Methodist church in Woolamai. John went on to establish God's Squad, and together Gil and John would establish

TLC. Both God's Squad and the TLC church celebrated 50th anniversaries this year.

After a life of radical and prophetic Christian ministry John Smith died in 2019. Gil Cann currently lives in Ringwood, not far from his beloved TLC. As part of a video greeting to the 'Back to Thorpdale' event he said:

I really think that the stories involving Woolamai and Thorpdale are a wonderful example of the fact that God uses the small churches.... He uses the leaders and the members of small churches to further his Kingdom around the world. So we must never ever forget that. Never underestimate how wonderfully God does that.

... the important thing is not how many people 'come' on Sunday, but how many 'go out' on Monday, equipped for their Christian witness and service in a range of worldly settings... It is our having been mutually encouraged and built up by our gathering on Sunday that we go out and do our more important work and worship from Monday to Saturday.

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding is Rector of Trafalgar (including Thorpdale and Yarragon) and spoke about Gilbert Cann at 'Back to Thorpdale'. The Rev'd Canon Philip Muston is an Archdeacon Emeritus of the Diocese and spoke about John Smith (the subject of Phil's Masters thesis).

Your parcel is arriving soon!

■ Rev'd Daniel Lowe

Have you ever tracked a parcel on a delivery app? I'm sure I'm not the only one who became a little addicted to the thrill and excitement (and sometimes frustration) of watching the progress of my latest purchase during lockdowns. I think it is that feeling of anticipation that energises me. But of course, the reality of purchasing online is that the arrival of the parcel may not always match our expectations. Incorrect sizing, poor product descriptions and sometimes just poor judgement can leave us feeling disappointed by the very thing we have looked forward to with such enthusiasm.

There is a feeling of anticipation around many schools as students transition into next year's classes and subjects as part of their early commencement program. There is something rather delightful about the enthusiasm and optimistic diligence displayed by many students during this part of the school year.

Of course, starting the new year a month before Christmas is not a new idea and is not unique to schools. The season of Advent marks the beginning of the Church year for most churches in the western tradition. The advent or arrival that Christians celebrate at Christmas time is of course the birth of Jesus.

But, just like some of our online purchases, that arrival did not match the expectations of those who most eagerly anticipated it. The people of Israel anticipated a conquering king who would lead them into freedom from Roman oppression; a great warrior and majestic figurehead. Instead, they got a young carpenter lad

God does not pander to our expectations of how things should be done.

So, what might we take away from this as we find ourselves once again sewing names on new socks and labelling new textbooks? First, there is a reminder that the anticipation of new things is a feeling to be embraced. It might be the excitement and challenge of a new year at school, the promise of summer holidays and a chance to take a break, or the deeper hope that many celebrate at Christmas time – the anticipation that God has acted and continues to act to restore all that is broken in our world. Second, we can be reassured that, even if our anticipation culminates in the arrival of something unexpected, disappointing, or even challenging, that doesn't mean all is lost. For students, what looks like a class with very few friends may turn out to be the catalyst for some wonderful new friendships. For families, holiday plans that go awry may lead to adventures we would never have expected.

God has a tendency to challenge our expectations, to take what looks like a complete disaster and turn it into a thing of beauty and joy. And nowhere is this more evident than in the advent of Jesus, who "... was humble. He obeyed God and even died on a cross. Then God gave Christ the

highest place and honored his name above all others." (Philippians 2:8-9).

So welcome to the season of Advent. Think of it as Early Commencement for Christians. May you enjoy the anticipation of everything that is new and the promise of good things to come. May you experience the hope that lays in God's promise to us:

*See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland.*

(Isaiah 43:19)

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

Letter to the editor

Richard Gijbbers correctly cautions against "solutionism" whereby it can be assumed that our climate crisis can be solved simply by just one path (November issue, p. 9). I can assure the readers of TGA that this is far from the intention of Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland (ACTinG).

Rather, the exciting thing about ACTinG is that it is providing the very vehicle needed for the "dynamic and active dialogue" to support each other in our actions to combat climate change.

Further, ACTinG is enabling each of us to do while we talk. It is able to provide the tools and ideas needed to implement action on climate change on both community and individual levels, and also to advocate for action on a broader societal level.

Michael Down, Sale

Leone Venter/Unsplash

The Aims of Jesus

(Princeton Theological Monograph Series)

Ben F. Meyer

Pickwick Publications, 2002

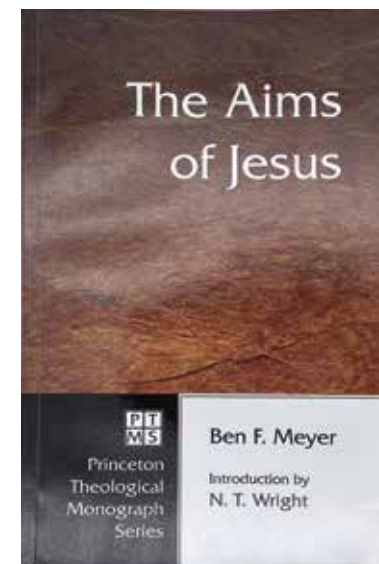
■ Richard Prideaux

N.T. Wright regards American Catholic Ben Meyer's book on the aims of Jesus as one of the best books written about Jesus in the past 30 years. Meyer, who died in 1995, was a remarkable theologian and linguist who could write confidently in German, French, Hebrew and Greek as well as English. Meyer's theological thinking and method has been particularly influenced by Canadian philosopher and theologian Bernard Lonergan especially his book *Method in Theology*.

The title of Meyer's book is interesting as it focuses on Jesus himself and endeavours to clarify Jesus' purpose by exploring his actions and words from the gospels, in particular Matthew and Mark. Meyer's book is in two sections, the first being hermeneutical issues and his attack on Enlightenment rationalism; the second and much larger section is his study of the aims of Jesus.

Part 1 of the book provides a helpful analysis of the research on the gospels since the Enlightenment. Meyer is strongly critical of the rationalist Enlightenment 18th- and 19th-century attack on the gospel narratives found originally in Reimarus, followed by Strauss, Holtzmann, Feuerbach and Wrede. Albert Schweitzer created a spirited attack on the German theology of his time but his own treatment of Jesus' aim and purpose fell into the same anti-historical trap. German theology in the 20th century continued the Continental sceptical view of the life of Christ and made deep inroads into British theology, especially the work of Rudolf Bultmann and his influential book *Jesus Christ and Mythology*. Bultmann gave little credibility to the authenticity and historicity of the life of Jesus and comes under heavy fire by Meyer. Meyer's robust, vigorous and carefully documented and explained demolition of two centuries of liberal criticism is well grounded and persuasive, preparing the way for a far more sympathetic understanding of the teaching of Jesus in part 2.

Meyer's work focuses on three major areas: the historicity of John the Baptist and Jesus' relationship with him; Jesus'



own public proclamation and teaching, including the historicity of the miracles; and Jesus' private and esoteric teaching of his close disciples. This material is treated with clarity, energy, common sense

and careful technical support. (There are over 70 pages of detailed notes defending his key ideas but these need not distract the reader!) What is required when reading Meyer is a Bible, because his frequent references – especially to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark – give the reader a jolt when read in the light of Meyer's careful analysis.

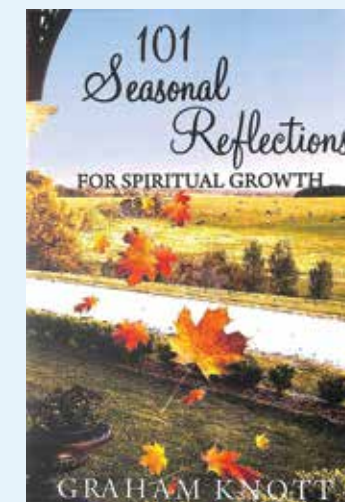
Although parts of this book are heavy going I believe that a thinking Christian whose faith has been battered by the scepticism of much theological analysis of Jesus' life and work will be strongly encouraged by Meyer's book. I warmly recommend it.

A gift of seasonal reflections

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The Gippsland Anglican



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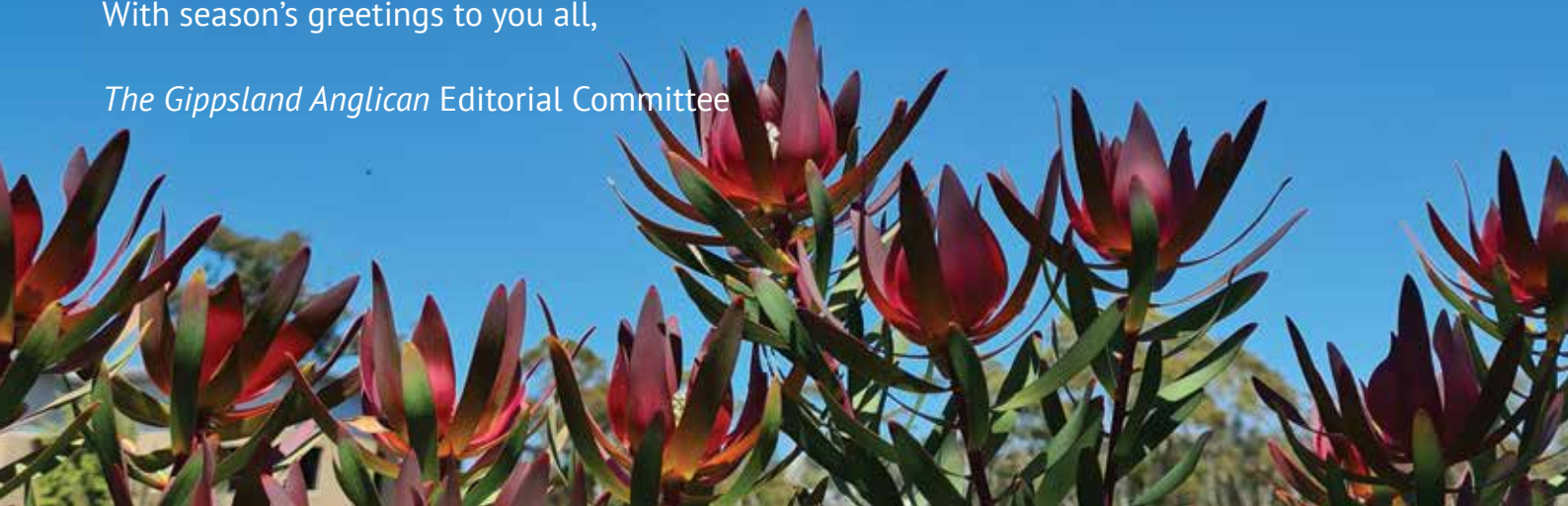
To our valued contributors, readers and supporters,

We send our warmest thanks to you for the many ways in which you have been part of *The Gippsland Anglican* in 2022.

We look forward to seeking and sharing many more stories next year, as we nurture our new magazine in 2023.

With season's greetings to you all,

The Gippsland Anglican Editorial Committee



Coming up

Travelling carollers' minibus mission

Saturday 17 December, from 5 pm
Taking carols to local seniors
in and around Trafalgar.
Prospective carollers can enquire
with Dean: 0493 088 370.

Nine lessons and carols service

Sunday 18 December, 5 pm
St Thomas' Bunyip
A reflective liturgy with traditional
carols and refreshments to follow.

Service of Nine Lessons and Carols

Sunday 18 December, 7 pm
St Paul's Cathedral Sale
A reflective service with readings and
prayers with a contemporary edge.

Carols service

Sunday 18 December, 11 am
St Mark's Thorpdale
Christmas lunch at the Traveller's
Rest afterwards.

Children's and families' nativity pre-Christmas celebration

Wednesday 21 December, 5.30–7.30 pm
St Mary's Trafalgar
Includes a barbecue dinner,
nativity play and carols.

St Paul's Cathedral giant book fair

7–21 January 2023, 9 am – 4 pm
Huge selection of theology books
and over 10,000 books!
Contact Christine: 0438 595 056.

120th anniversary of St Thomas' Bunyip

Sunday 22 January 2023, 3 pm
Bishop Richard Treloar will rededicate
the a'Beckett altar.

Chamber Philharmonia Cologne concert

Sunday 29 January, 2 pm
St Paul's Cathedral Sale
Contact: 03 5144 2020.

Lenten pilgrimage

20–24 March 2023
The Abbey Raymond Island
Bookings: (03) 5156 6580,
info@theabbey.org.au.

The ^{Gippsland} **Anglican**

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