

The Gippsland Anglican

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Care throughout challenge

Vulnerability and resilience at heart of 40th Synod



Rev'd Bruce Charles



Maryann Ashton, Mothers' Union



Richard Prideaux, lay member



Mark Woods, Chair of Committees

Sally Woollett
Photos: Les Ridge

Themes of vulnerability and resilience permeated the proceedings of the 40th Synod of the Diocese of Gippsland, held in Sale in mid-June.

The First Session had joyful beginnings, with the installation of the new Dean of the Cathedral Parish of Sale, The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra (see page 3). A Saturday evening service celebrated 120 years of the Diocese.

Throughout the Synod business – from Aboriginal Ministry, youth, families and older people to the work of Anglicare, bushfire recovery, the environment, safe ministry, the blessing of same-sex marriages and ministry wellbeing – was a sense of collective care for people who find they must ask for help.

The hard work and respectful collaboration of those serving through ministry – including in legal, administrative, pastoral, financial, management and voluntary roles – was evident and all the more impressive in the context of Gippsland's challenges in 2021/22. Balancing temporal and missional aims was acknowledged as challenging but vital.

Marion Dewar thanked Bishop Richard for his Presidential Address (see page 2), using an analogy of "... seven songs Mother Church

teaches us, for our journey through the 40th Synod", to describe how the address touched on the importance of history, promise and problem, vision, service, tradition, wider church discussion and unity in diversity.

In explaining what Marion described as the "seventh song," Bishop Richard used language from the Diocesan Vision to articulate his sense of the culture of Gippsland Anglicans as "a church as broad as the communities we belong to, receiving diversity as a gift of creation." During his Presidential Address, he urged caution in taking an approach that may create an adversarial dynamic in relation to the blessing of same-sex marriages following on from the debate at the recent General Synod. Bishop Richard said "Rather, let us test the mind of the church in this time and this place by living use of the carefully circumscribed freedoms that our polity affords: to bless, and not to bless."

During the main proceedings, several bills adopted by General Synod and motions brought by Gippsland Synod members were considered and adopted. These covered safe ministry, climate change, addressing family violence, and ministry wellbeing and development.

The Rev'd Tracy Lauerson brought two motions to Synod: to adopt and enact the Ten

Commitments for Preventing and Responding to Domestic and Family Violence and to commend a new nationally endorsed template for ministry wellbeing and development. Tracy outlined new guidelines and resources, adopted by the General Synod in May, encompassing mandatory professional development, ministry reviews and professional supervision of those in religious or pastoral ministry. "Everyone is vulnerable at some stage," said Val Jones, Chair of Gippsland's Safe Ministry Authority, in seconding Tracy's Safe Ministry motion. The aim of ministry wellbeing and development changes is to help ensure the wellbeing and safety of everyone, whether they are offering ministry or receiving pastoral care.

Pressurised and complex environments in which clergy operate make them time poor to undertake professional development, but this makes professional development all the more important, said The Rev'd Graham Knott, in seconding Tracy's latter motion.

In delivering her first Aboriginal Ministry report since being made Canon of the Cathedral Aunty Phyllis Andy spoke of her and The Rev'd Kathy Dalton's varied ministry in Aboriginal communities and for Aboriginal people.

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Vicki Levey, Anglicare Victoria



Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding



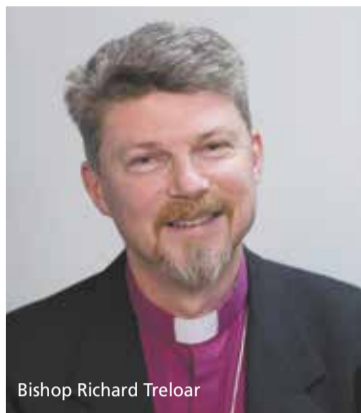
Val Jones, Safe Ministry Authority



Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy

120 years young

Excerpts from the Presidential Address to the First
Session of the 40th Synod. (Text in italics comes
directly from the Diocesan Vision 2021–2024.)



Bishop Richard Treloar

On Sunday 10 July, we mark the 120th anniversary of the Diocese, and this Synod gives thanks for this legacy of which we are stewards. We gain a sense of perspective when we line up those six score years with the tens of thousands of years for which the Gunaikurnai, Boonwurrung, Bidawal, and Ngarigo/Monero peoples have been stewarding the earth and waterways of this region, and whose sovereignty is uncanceled.

Whatever our political stripes, the new federal government's commitment to an Indigenous voice to Parliament is a welcome and overdue response to the 2017 Uluru Statement from the Heart.

Our own commitment to supporting the work of Canon Auntie Phyllis Andy and The Rev'd Kathy Dalton and in their communities has

seen us explore a number of philanthropic opportunities with the help of our new part-time Diocesan Development Officer, Libby Willems. I encourage you to visit the website and read the Aboriginal Ministry page, where you can make a donation or pledge using the Tithely platform that Libby is helping us to trial with three parishes. This communications and direct-giving tool is fit for purpose and extends our storytelling reach into the wider community.

There are now three formats of the Diocesan Vision 2021–2024. If you cast your mind all the way back to Ascension 2021, when we launched the Vision at our Synod Eucharist, you may recall an analogy with the three formats of cricket:

- The T-20 version – Gippsland Anglicans: Committed in Christ, Connecting in Service, Creative in Spirit – fits on our newly minted diocesan pens.
- The ODI or 50 over version, is the now familiar folded brochure, which it is a joy to see on display and referred to around our parishes and ministry centres.

- And the test match version, hot off the press, is a 16-page booklet, which takes you on the journey from which the Vision emerged, and offers some commentary on the brochure with some conversation starters. Copies of this booklet will be sent to every Parish Council and governing body as further grist to your local strategic mills.

As I often say, you are the local experts – clergy and laity together *committed in Christ*, baptised ministers of the Gospel, all. The diocesan Vision is not intended to supplant anything at the local level; it is offered as scaffolding and catalyst for what you are already doing and being and becoming, providing some common language and overarching themes to work with in your context, with your people, as we share in God's mission to the world in Christ.

Partnering with others is essential in fulfilling that mission within and beyond the Diocese, whether it be in our Anglican schools and Anglicare, Bush Church Aid and other agencies, ecumenical partners, other dioceses in Victoria or Rwanda, Bishop Jeffrey's work as diocesan missionary to Newton College in PNG, organisations outside the church, charitable trusts – all this and more sees us *connecting in service*.

As the new booklet reminds us, the Vision is both

a mirror and a lamp: holding up to us a snapshot of who we understand ourselves to be as Gippsland Anglicans, and of what we aspire to as we move through the disruption of COVID towards 2024 and beyond, with an outlook that is *creative in Spirit*.

Even as we slowly emerge from the pandemic we continue to experience great change, in a rapidly evolving Asia-Pacific region, with a global food shortage looming and rising interest rates and cost-of-living pressures starting to bite domestically, and the impacts of climate change on God's good creation.

As Christians, and Anglicans, perhaps we ought to be better equipped to navigate a shifting context than we sometimes appear to be; for the church has its own technical term for change: we call it 'tradition'.

In other contexts you may have heard me repeat Pablo Picasso's saying: "tradition is having a baby; it is not wearing your father's hat."

As an artist, Picasso drew on sources that functioned as authorities for him: Catalan modernism, Cezanne's geometric planes. Yet his role in the emergence of Cubism shows he also understood his task as a steward of that heritage was not to hand on something fixed and inert – something that had passed by him, unchanged – so much as something that was passed on through him, re-shaped by present experience.

(Continued on page 8)

Vision Renewal prayer

*O God, your Son taught us
to pray that your Kingdom
would come, and your
will be done on earth:
kindle in our hearts that
just and gentle rule;*

*stir up in our churches the
courage to proclaim your love;
renew in us the same mind
that was in him,
who emptied himself,
taking the form of a servant.*

*Grant us your vision,
quicken us with your grace,
and call us into your future;
show us your purpose for
this Diocese of Gippsland,
that we may share in your
mission to the world in
Jesus Christ our Lord,
who is alive and reigns
with you in the unity
of Holy Spirit, one God,
now and for ever.*

Amen.



Photo: Christine Morris

The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra during her installation at St Paul's Cathedral Sale

Joyful Eucharist greets new Dean of Sale Cathedral Parish

Cynthia Grove

There is much joy in any Eucharist service but the Synod Service on 17 June brought joy, following grief at the departure last November of The Very Rev'd Susanna Pain and The Rev'd

Dr Nikolai Blaskow and, more recently, the departure of Acting Dean Liam Matthews. In the almost six months that Liam was with the Cathedral, he and Madelaine were much loved and appreciated for their gentleness, wisdom and warmth.

The Synod Eucharist dried our tears, with the installation of The Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra as the new Dean of the Cathedral. It was so wonderful to see once again (since the pandemic started) a full church. To feel again the community of other Christians and to know we are moving

forward and looking anew at our role in the Cathedral and the Diocese of Gippsland was "overwhelming, wonderful, joyful" (as Keren said in her address to us).

There is something very powerful in being part of a ritual that dates back centuries and knowing we are part of a continuous line of believers. We begin the coming years in expectant joy and "at the heart, on the edge" (again from Keren's address) as we develop the character that will shape Keren's ministry with us, as we inhabit the unique role God has called us to at this time and in this place.

'TheSchoir' from Gippsland Grammar, conducted by Dr Kevin Cameron, supported our organist, Anthony Hahn, and Honorary Canon Rev'd David Head led us, as cantor, for the Responsorial Psalm. Members of the church at St Margaret's Eltham, where Keren most recently served, brought greetings as the intangible baton of Keren's ministry passed from St Margaret's to the Cathedral Parish in Sale. The symbols of Keren's

ministry (bible, baptismal ewer, prayer book, ciborium, a small hamper, a musical instrument, a stole, and a copy of *The Gippsland Anglican*) as well as her licence were presented to Keren.

The Right Rev'd Kate Prowd, Bishop of the Oodthenong Episcopate, Diocese of Melbourne, preached – sharing some of her knowledge of Keren and the importance of "inhabiting the role" in every way.

Messages of welcome were offered by the Ven Graham Knott, Vicar General, on behalf of the Diocese, The Very Rev'd Dr Andreas Loewe on behalf of the Australian deans, Pastor Brad Hayman on behalf of Churches Together in Sale, Cr Carmel Ripper on behalf of the Wellington Shire and Lay Canon Kaye Harrington on behalf of the Cathedral Parish.

It was an inspiring service, and we look forward to welcoming Keren more informally at our next parish lunch. Welcome, Keren, and may God bless your ministry to us and ours to you.

Reflection and recollection during Reconciliation Week

Rev'd Edie Ashley

From Nar Nar Goon in the west of the Diocese to Lakes Entrance in the east, 45 of us came together in early June, in the Chapel of St Barnabas at The Abbey Raymond Island, to mark the Week of Reconciliation.

In a gentle and relaxed service, we gathered in prayer, reflecting in song, yarning and story-telling, praying, conversation and reflection.

Bishop Richard reflected on the historical moments that bookmark the Week of Reconciliation.

In the referendum held on 27 May 1967, over 90% of Australians voted to give the Australian Government power to make laws in relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait People and to recognise them in the

Australian Census.

On 3 June 1992 the High Court of Australia delivered the Mabo decision, which acknowledged the traditional rights of Indigenous people to their land and waters, and paved the way for native title in Australia. The Mabo decision also recognised that Indigenous people occupied Australia for tens of thousands of years before the British arrived in 1788 and refuted the fiction of terra nullius – that the land and waters belonged to no one before British occupation.

Bishop Richard reflected on the times during his 'growing up years' when the paths of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people were strictly separate; he drew attention to the Uluru Statement of the Heart, and the current journey of reconciliation that has the



Photo: Ross Jacka

The Rev'd Canon Edie Ashley in conversation with Bishop Richard

potential to bring together Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people in the journey of reconciliation.

Aunty Phyllis Andy shared her story – of her beginnings as a young child at Lake Tyers Aboriginal Mission; of government intervention that deemed her and her family

"too white" to be on the mission and removed them, setting them with other families from the mission on land nearby to fend for themselves. Aunty Phyllis recalled childhood times of scavenging to find the materials to piece together their house, pea picking and

the hard work of her mother with many children to care for while her father was away earning a little money to provide for their needs. She described standing in a shop while all the non-Aboriginal people were served – waiting, waiting, waiting ... and never walking on the same side of the street as white people.

Phyllis recalled times of church – and gatherings; of different clergy over the years who came to minister to the Aboriginal community; and of Bishop John, who came and invited Phyllis and Kathy to take up their call to ministry as leaders within the Aboriginal community, and the wider community and the church.

The Rev'd Kathy Dalton celebrated Eucharist with grace and invitation, we shared bread and wine, and we sang "Bind us together Lord, bind us together with cords that cannot be broken." Aunty Phyllis and Bishop Richard blessed the gathered community and Deacon Bec Hayman sent us on our way in peace – over to the A frame where lunch was shared.

Queen's Platinum Jubilee

Howard Booth
and Tim Green

The congregation of All Saints Poowong celebrated Pentecost Sunday at Loch Public Hall, with a special ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Pentecost hymn, *O Thou Who Camest from Above*, was the opening hymn, followed by a favourite of The Queen's, *Praise My Soul The King of Heaven*. The Rev'd Canon Dr Fran Grimes led the service while the Deputy Mayor of South Gippsland Shire, Cr Nathan Hersey, read from Joshua 1. Prayers

were offered by Gillian Taylor and Janet Staben. Maree Ludenia led the singing of Psalm 121 and June Scott read from John 14.

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebration reflected on a life of service to God and the Commonwealth. The Queen's messages to the Commonwealth on her 21st birthday and on the eve of the Platinum Jubilee were read by Maree Ludenia. Loch Memorial Reserve President, Frank Springer, read from Luke 22. A segment from The Queen's Coronation was portrayed with Maree Ludenia playing the part of The Queen and Canon

Fran playing the part of Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury.

The day coincided with the 70th birthday of Loch resident Dennis Brown, who died recently. He was a Queen's soldier, a Scots Guard who had been involved with security of the Queen. Dennis's widow, Annie Brown, wrote a lovely tribute, which she read during the service.

The service concluded with the singing of the Royal Anthem. Music was provided by Paul Robinson, Phil Beggs, Leona Moore and Howard Booth. Loch Public Hall was decorated in red for Pentecost and the Queen's UK and Australian Royal Standards.



Rev'd Canon Fran Grimes at Loch's Service of Thanksgiving

New Ministry Assistant in South Gippsland

Rev'd Belinda Seabrook

In January this year, Damien King was commissioned in his new role as Ministry Assistant in the parishes of Leongatha and Mirboo North. In 2021, Damien began the discernment process in the Diocese of Gippsland, sensing a deep call to further ministry within the Church. He is also currently studying a Bachelor of Theology at Charles Sturt University in Canberra. With a passion for prayer, working with those on the fringes of society and also men's ministry, Damien brings a big heart to his ministry and a passion to see restoration for those who have been broken by life's journey.

On 22 May, Damien received a licence from Bishop Richard to work as an

Anglican Chaplain within Fulham Prison. Damien's role as Prison Chaplain will complement his current dual parish role of two days per week at St Peter's Leongatha and two days per week at St Mary's Mirboo North. Damien, his wife Rebecca and their family will be relocating from Korumburra to the community of Mirboo North in the very near future. This is a new beginning for all and an exciting adventure ahead.



Bishop Richard presenting Damien King with his licence to work as an Anglican chaplain

On 12 June, St Thomas' Bunyip celebrated Queen Elizabeth's 70-year reign.

Among about 40 locals in attendance were

representatives of the RSL, the Bunyip Social Hub and the Bunyip Guides, complete



The Bunyip Guides badges, showing their achievements in the Guides movement

with their group ensign. Several of these cheerful young people came dressed in splendid uniforms.

At the beginning of the service, we were treated to a rendition of Purcell's *Trumpet Tune and Air*.

During his sermon, The Rev'd Ken Parker made a number of references to significant features of the Queen's reign that promoted the teachings of Jesus.

At the end of the service, we sang the Royal Anthem.

As the congregation filed out of the church, a peel of 70 chimes was rung on the church bell, one for each year of Her Majesty's reign.

Fashion braves the elements in Drouin

Pauline Davies

This year's winter fashion parade, hosted by the Ladies Fellowship at Christ Church Drouin, powered on in May despite an electricity cut.

Delivered by the owner of Kay's Fashions in Melbourne, the clothes are displayed

around the hall before the show, which is held every six months.

Late notice of a full-day power outage did not deter the organisers, who decided that the event would go ahead as planned. They made the most of natural light in the hall, and the four

parishioners modelling the clothes bravely withstood the cold meeting room for outfit changes. The lunch of assorted sandwiches followed by fresh fruit salad and cream was served with fruit punch instead of the usual teas and coffees.

A great afternoon was had by all, raising some funds for the church, socialising and purchasing a few new winter items for the wardrobe.

The next event, featuring forthcoming spring fashions, is planned for October.

Rev'd Belinda Seabrook inducted at Mirboo North

Chris White

Love, joy and excited anticipation filled the air at St Mary's Mirboo North on the evening of 25 May as parishioners, family, clergy and representatives from local churches and organisations gathered to formally welcome the Rev'd Belinda Seabrook as Priest-in-Charge of the parish. This joy was amply conveyed in the wholehearted rendition of the processional hymn, *Praise, My Soul, the King of Heaven*.

It was evident even to non-churchgoers that this occasion was indeed special, with Bishop Richard presiding over the service, and Archdeacon Graham Knott leading and supporting clergy from within the Gippsland Diocese. With the occasion falling on the eve of the Ascension, Bishop Richard's sermon focused on John's Gospel account (15: 15-20, 25-27) of Jesus' promise and reassurance to

his disciples – and to us all – prior to the fulfilment of his earthly ministry. Jesus' Ascension, so closely followed by that promise manifested at Pentecost, was clearly mirrored in the excited anticipation at the promise of a new beginning and reawakening that permeated through the gathering at St Mary's. As the licence was read, there could be no doubt that Rev'd Belinda Seabrook was another great gift from our Lord, bringing to her ministry, to quote Bishop Richard, "a spiritual maturity beyond her years."

With nine months having elapsed between Belinda's appointment to the parish and her formal induction – a period that one speaker referred to as being a "somewhat appropriate gestation period" – it seemed that the congregation appreciated that they were indeed witnessing a moment of birth: the birth of the next stage of Belinda's faithful ministry to God's people, the birth of the

future direction of St Mary's and its parishioners; the birth of a fresh connection with the wider community.

A visionary partnership between St Mary's and St Peter's Leongatha, where Belinda had been involved in ministry for the previous five years, resulted in Belinda being appointed as Priest-in-Charge at St Mary's for

two days per week, with this extended to four days per week over what proved to be that "gestation period." Belinda continues to serve at St Peter's for two days per week as Associate Priest. This has led to the birth of a new connection/partnership between the two parishes, which has been further strengthened by a cooperative initiative to support and develop those seeking vocational ministry within the Anglican Church. It was a delight to have those currently involved in this

program introduced during the service of induction.

With God's goodness and grace so clearly displayed, and with the congregation having pledged to support and uphold Belinda in her ministry as pastor, leader and teacher, the future of the work of God's Kingdom in Mirboo North is also enveloped in excited anticipation. May we treasure and nurture these heavenly gifts and opportunities so that God's Kingdom here and beyond can thrive and flourish under Belinda's godly leadership.



Archdeacon Graham Knott presenting vessels for Holy Communion to Rev'd Belinda Seabrook

A blessed return to fellowship

Kath Grandy

Members of the Parish of Lakes Entrance and Metung took the opportunity of a beautiful autumn day to get together at the Metung Pub for a Parish Lunch. Outreach activities, particularly with

the local schools, were discussed, but mainly it was a time to reconnect after the reduction in fellowship over the past two years. We were particularly fortunate to have the Rev'd Edie Ashley and the Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy join us. A good time was had by all.



(L-R) Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy, Michael Harris and Rev'd Edie Ashley

Confirmation celebrations in Leongatha

Rev'd Belinda Seabrook

There were celebrations once again at St Peter's Leongatha, as Stacey Williamson, Ruth Caughey and Rebecca King gave their 'yes' to Jesus

through the sacrament of Confirmation. Sunday 22 May was a significant moment for all three women, each one responding to a sense of the Holy Spirit calling them deeper into ministry and

life in the Kingdom. Stacey, Ruth and Rebecca are from all different backgrounds and circumstances but they hold a common thread, each one an 'overcomer' with a deep love for God. This sisterhood is present throughout their ministry and friendship.

Bishop Richard spoke of the importance of Christian fellowship, with the encouraging reminder that "Christians are not supposed to go it alone."

This wonderful celebration brought a tangible sense of joy throughout the gathered congregation and the celebrations continued into the afternoon with coffee and cake in the warm autumn sun.



(L-R) Stacey Williamson, Ruth Caughey and Rebecca King with Bishop Richard

Lenten Pilgrimage at The Abbey



Russell Smith and participants during this year's Lenten Pilgrimage at The Abbey

Rev'd Edie Ashley

During this year's Lenten Pilgrimage at The Abbey at Raymond Island in early April, we gathered in the mornings to begin our day with Christ. We gathered in prayer, in rhythm with the sun that rises and the light that shines; with the earth that bears the seed and nurtures the growth. We gathered to reflect on the day before, on the Spirit's gentle call. We gathered in the evenings to lay aside the activity of the day and to relax into the stillness of the night. On each of the three full days of the retreat we walked, with a longer walk on the middle day. At times we chatted, and at times we were silent; at times we were aware of the trees and growth, the birds and the beauty, the lake and water; at times they spoke to us of the deep calling

of God in and on our lives; at times we just admired their beauty in a spirit of gratitude. Each person made their own journey, and for each it was a significant personal experience of God – Creator, Redeemer and life-giving Spirit.

A big thanks to Cath Connelly who gently nurtured us to listen to the Spirit of God speaking through the beauty and the silence of creation, in the company of each other, and who offered the beauty of the harp. Grateful thanks to Russell Smith who without fuss or demand checked the walks we were travelling, to make sure they were safe and accessible and just what we needed for the day. To all who participated – thank you!

The participants in the Lenten Pilgrimage 2022 unanimously called for another pilgrimage, which has been scheduled for 20–26 March 2023 at The Abbey Raymond Island.

(Continued from page 1)

Both Aunty Phyllis and Kathy work sensitively to address a number of challenges faced by Aboriginal people, for example with people of the Stolen Generation who are still finding their identity, and in the education and criminal justice systems (as part of the Koori Court).

To further support people who are leaving the prison system, Cathrine Muston is moving exclusively to the Anglican Criminal Justice Ministry's Get Out for Good program.

The Rev'd Rich Lanham, now in Cathrine's previous role in Anglicare Victoria's Parish Partnerships, is looking forward to developing connections with those who are most in need of support. In presenting her report to Synod, Gippsland's new regional director for Anglicare Victoria, Vicki Levey, said "... every day I am proud of the [Anglicare Victoria] staff and the work they do with families."

One example of this good work can be seen in the valuable collaboration between Anglicare Victoria and The Abbey at Raymond Island, to provide a place of rest and respite for families experiencing vulnerability.

The motion by Abbey Priest The Rev'd Edie Ashley to make climate change a major focus for the Diocese over the coming Synod cycle urged Synod to "add another lens to our call – intentionality," with prayer together, prophetic imagination and "no head in the sand business." This furthers the Synod's commitment to the General Synod *Protection of the Environment Canon 2007*, adopted by Gippsland in 2009. Edie described the custodianship of Australia's First Nations people as having a natural connection to the fifth mark of mission of the Anglican Communion: to "strive to safeguard the integrity of creation, and to sustain and renew the life of the earth." When the earth is vulnerable, so are its people.

Edie Ashley and Jan Down (who seconded the climate change motion) are both active members of Acting on Climate Together in Gippsland (ACTinG, www.gippslandanglicans.org.au/acting), formed in the Diocese earlier this year.

Bishop Richard remarked on a story of discontinuity in Gippsland noted by The Rev'd Jim Connelly in *Round and About in*

Gippsland: "One of the continuing features ... is that things [gold, timber, coal] do not continue." It isn't hard to think of many ways in which such a history might expose the vulnerabilities of rural people, and test their resilience.

Many parts of Gippsland continue to recover and rebuild after recent bushfires and floods. Recovery is not the same for everyone or everything, but there is much to be hopeful about. The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull reported to Synod that working with individuals and communities of East Gippsland as they recover from the 2020/21 bushfires was "a real privilege." In finishing up her role as Missional Deacon for the East – Bushfire Response and Recovery (see page 10), she is "... confident that others continue to be present with those impacted by the fires now and into the future."

Speaking at the Synod dinner, The Rev'd Canon Philip Muston gave his perspective on the challenges ahead for the church in a social climate where the Anglican tradition struggles to find relevance. Phil will soon retire after 42 years of active ministry (more to come

in a future issue of *TGA*). He expressed his confidence in the resilience of the "true believers", saying they "will find a way."

Referring to early results of the latest National Church Life Survey, to which all Gippsland parishes signed up, Bishop Richard reported that within the slightly increased monthly church attendance recorded in 2021 over previous years, the highest demographic was young adults, and that three in ten Australians are more likely to attend church if they think it will be welcoming, inclusive and doing good work in the community. We may find encouragement in this, he said, and "fulfil our shared responsibility as guardians of the faith – not by shielding

it from the culture around us – but by sharing its riches with a genuinely curious society."

Describing the fictional church of St Ireneus five years hence, Jan Down, in seconding the climate action motion, asked Synod to "imagine how good it could be":

There are more people in church ... and more age groups are represented, because people have noticed what the church is doing and they see more integrity. They've ... started to think the church may have something they need themselves – that maybe there is some meaning to life, and some hope, despite all the mess in the world.

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MU AND ME

The joys of fellowship

As Mothers' Union groups across the Diocese begin to meet again, some MU members are offering encouraging stories about why and how they joined.

Here, Maryann Ashton shares the story of Marg Prosser.

I would like to introduce to you one of the oldest members belonging to St Peter's Leongatha Mothers' Union. Margaret Prosser, who we all know as Marg, was born in Korumburra in 1925. Living in Korumburra, Poowong and later in Koonwara, she has lived in South Gippsland all her life.

Marg married Harry after World War II – in June 1946, having had to wait for both her father and brother to return from their postings. She remembers that it was a

beautiful sunny day.

Harry was a farmer and together they had three children: a girl and two boys. Marg now has nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. Her daughter, Bev, told me that her great-grandchildren will always remember her for her wonderful sponges.

Marg joined MU because her own mother belonged. Many women at that time joined either MU or the Country

Woman's Association. It was an activity that was primarily theirs, away from husband, children and home responsibilities.

Marg remembers enjoying the fellowship of others, cleaning the church brass, doing the church flowers, various speakers and various outings to different places.

After Harry passed away, Marg continued to live on her own and continues to worship at St Peter's. She said quietly that it is her



Marg Prosser enjoys fellowship, including a good conversation

faith that has got her through the difficult phases of her life. Marg always attends our midweek service on

Wednesday and then stays on to the community lunch to enjoy the conversation and fellowship with others.

Across the ages

Going blue in support of Huntington's

Paula Walland

Several shades of blue were visible around St Paul's Anglican Grammar School recently during Wear Something Blue – Huntington's Awareness Day.

The junior school council opted to support the day in recognition of a St Paul's family that is living with the impacts of Huntington's disease (HD).

A progressive, genetic neurological condition, HD causes deterioration of

brain cells, resulting in impairment in a person's physical, cognitive and emotional/psychological functioning.

HD is relatively unknown but not rare, and teachers have been educating students about HD throughout the year about its devastating impact, which is

commonly misunderstood.

The whole school decided to "go blue" for the cause to support the awareness of HD, with students and teachers donning their favourite blue outfits.

The council hosted various activities throughout the day, including ball games and a colouring

competition, as well as selling merchandise from Huntington's Victoria.

Representatives from Huntington's Victoria joined students for the afternoon to explain more about HD.

Fundraising and donations raised over \$8000 for the cause as part of a larger community effort.



St Paul's teacher Georgia Collings supporting her student Liam McKay and his family living with HD

Bishop Richard dedicated and blessed a new toilet at St Mary's Buchan in the Parish of Tambo following a parish Eucharist in May. Using appropriate prayers and references to the Patron Saint of Plumbing, St Vincent Ferrer, Bishop Richard conducted the service with good humour, to the delight of the assembled congregation. The installation of the toilet was made possible through a donation from the Parish of Mullum Mullum (Ringwood) in Melbourne as part of its support for the Church in bushfire-affected areas

BRIGHT SPOT



120 years young

(Continued from page 2)

So too Christian tradition is not about simply putting on an old garment, no matter how comfortable it may be, or how sentimental our attachment to it. We all know what happens when we try and pour new wine into old wineskins.

Tradition is not a static body of data; tradition is a living thing, a process that is at once conservative and progressive. Church historian Jaroslav Pelikan puts it well: “tradition is the living faith of the dead; traditionalism is the dead faith of the living.”

As we celebrate 30 years of women’s ordination as priests in our Church, we may also reflect that for three-quarters of our history as a Diocese it would have been unthinkable to induct Keren Terpstra as our Dean at the Synod Eucharist.

Synods are gatherings inherently concerned with tradition. Synods are where church laws – canons – are adopted, and adapted; and even sometimes rescinded.

Synods are forums in which the church’s response to wider cultural movements and scientific insights are prayerfully considered, debated, and enacted.

The recent General Synod was a good example of this, where a significant motion was passed on Climate Change action. In parallel with this, the newly formed diocesan working group ACTinG – Acting on Climate Change Together in Gippsland – invites you to help take up our Vision imperative to *act for the good of earth and all creatures*.

Our own Tracy Lauersen led the Synod in resolving to properly resource ongoing work on Family Violence via the new Families and Culture Commission of General Synod, and in adopting a nationally endorsed template for professional supervision, professional development, and regular ministry reviews for our clergy.

These important resolutions from General Synod will flow through into our Synod, equipping us to *listen to people’s lived*

experience, speak into the big questions of the day, and build communities of care and trust.

As will adopting General Synod legislation that further strengthens our commitment to Safe Ministry, in keeping with the Royal Commission’s recommendations.

And here I would pay the highest possible tribute to Cheryl Russell who, after 18 years of outstanding, selfless and often thankless service as our Director of Professional Standards, recently laid up that weighty responsibility. Cheryl modelled for us a person-centred approach which married culture change with compliance in a rapidly evolving space, and we salute her!

In the media coverage, many of these unifying motions from General Synod were overshadowed by the more contested debates on marriage and human sexuality.

To bless, or not to bless? That seems to be *the* question.

Let me walk you through where we find ourselves as a Church, specifically in relation to the blessing of civil same-sex marriages.

In August 2019, Wangaratta Synod adopted a rite for such a blessing. That resolution was immediately referred to the Appellate Tribunal to adjudicate its validity under the Constitution.

The Tribunal delivered its Opinion in November of 2020, on the eve of our online Synod that year, and some of you may recall a statement I made then calling for prayerful patience while the implications of this were worked through.

Its Determination and Opinion (summary) by a five to one majority was that the “proposed service for the blessing of persons married in accordance with the *Marriage Act* ... is authorised by the *Canon Concerning Services 1992*; and is not inconsistent with the Fundamental Declarations and Ruling Principles of the Constitution of [this] Church.”

The Canon Concerning Services 1992, which Gippsland adopted in the year 2000, states that any minister may use forms of service for which no provision is made in authorised resources,

provided they are reverent and edifying (as determined by the bishop) and not contrary to the doctrine of this Church. (§§5.2, 3)

In finding as it did, the Appellate Tribunal determined that a service for the blessing of civil same-sex marriages is not contrary to the doctrine of this Church as set out in the Fundamental Declarations of the Constitution, taking ‘doctrine’ to mean that which is necessary for salvation.

The Appellate Tribunal also made clear that “General Synod is the place to draw disciplinary or liturgical lines if it is the will of the Church to have uniformity ... in the matter of what may or may not be blessed in worship.” (para. 226)

With that in mind, at our Synod in May last year I echoed the Primate’s call for further restraint, until such time as General Synod could meet, which it had not done since the *Commonwealth Marriage Act* was amended in December 2017.

Which brings us to the events of a month ago, on a rainy Gold Coast, as the 18th Session of General Synod eventually convened.

As reported in the June issue of *TGA*, a statement was brought to Synod by the Diocese of Sydney which included the clause that “any rite or ceremony that purports to bless a same-sex marriage is not in accordance with the teaching of Christ and the faith, ritual, ceremonial and/or discipline of this Church.”

A vote on the statement passed in the Houses of Laity and Clergy; it did not pass in the House of Bishops, which meant the statement was not upheld by General Synod.

Some of the commentary on this vote expressed disappointment in the 12 dissenting bishops – of whom I was one – all 22 voting bishops having made solemn promises to be “guardians of the faith.”

There are, of course, doctrines to which we hold as matters of salvation that are continuous throughout the church’s history. Invoking God’s grace, which is always going ahead of us, on two people married under the law, who seek to live into and out

of that covenant in a way that reflects the good news of God’s presence with us, does not – as I see it – alter our DNA as a Church.

If anything, such a liturgical adaptation to provide for this expression of God’s will for our flourishing is a typically Anglican instinct, one formalised by the *Canon for Services*.

Thus – having called for patience and restraint on this issue since becoming your bishop four years ago – I can advise this Synod that, as per the Opinion of the Appellate Tribunal, and given that General Synod did not declare a view to the contrary, there is no obstacle to clergy of this Diocese proceeding under the *Canon for Services* to bless the marriage of a same-sex couple, provided the liturgy used is reverent and edifying.

Indeed, these criteria would be the only grounds on which I have authority to prevent such a service from taking place, as and when a priest seeking to conduct a blessing consults with me as to the proposed order of service.

That said, there would be no obligation on clergy to perform the blessing of a same-sex marriage, or any civil marriage, if asked. This is entirely a matter of conscience.

The experience of General Synod is a cautionary one. As we saw in the debates over the ordination of women decades ago, a parliamentary approach – with the greatest respect to our politicians past and present – tends to create an adversarial dynamic, and is unavoidably polarising. We lose the middle, the centre; and that feels very un-Anglican.

That is not my sense of our culture as Gippsland Anglicans – *a church as broad as the communities we belong to, receiving diversity as a gift of creation.*

A binary, ‘yes’ or ‘no’ instrument of discernment, which creates winners and losers, is not always the best means of discerning the mind of the church.

For that reason, I have not taken up several offers to bring to this Synod motions affirming the blessing of same-sex marriages, much as I welcome the inclusive intent. I can’t see a debate on that question here helping us to move forward together; on the contrary, it may only serve to divide us.

Rather, let us test the mind of the church in this time and this place by living use of the carefully circumscribed freedoms that our polity affords: to bless, and not to bless.

Among the treasures of Anglicanism I hold dear are its genius for comprehensiveness, its trust in the role of individual conscience, its incarnational spirituality that attends to lived human experience as a means of ongoing revelation – reading the Book of Nature alongside the Book of Scripture, and expecting to learn more of God’s vision for us from both.

Our being committed in Christ as Anglicans thus commits us to *engage with our living tradition*, as Jesus did with his, *studying Scripture with reverence and rigour*.

(Continued on page 9)



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(Continued from page 8)

It has been a great encouragement, therefore, to see three new EFM groups start up around the Diocese, reaching across parish boundaries. Education for Ministry, renamed Exploring Faith Matters, is now being delivered online, making it more accessible, and we have around 25 people enrolled who are looking to *grow in belonging and believing*.

Certainly the Vocations Panel has been busy these last 12 months, as have a number of Clergy Appointment Advisory Boards, with an ordination and five Inductions so far this calendar year, and a number of new licences issued to clergy and laity serving in other capacities, including our wonderful Lay Readers.

We have tried to be creative with some of these appointments, as we have within the Diocesan Staff team: giving more pastoral responsibility to our Regional Deans, and more portfolio work to our Archdeacons – just two of each at present, we note, and on your behalf I acknowledge the dedication and care shown by those four colleagues whose sacrificial service has enabled us to be more flexible in responding to needs and more *generous in the use of our resources*, limited as they are.

Honouring our forebears over 120 years means being responsible custodians of their *spiritual* and temporal legacy, and for too long we have been spending more than we earn. Thanks to

the incredibly hard work of Registry staff and members of the Finance Committee, Bishop-in-Council is drawing us closer to the break-even budget that Synod resolved in 2019 to achieve for the financial year beginning October 2023.

Someone who exemplifies this generosity is David Gittins, and this is the first Synod for many years at which he will not be speaking to the accounts and the budget.

Despite having recently moved to Warrnambool, David has continued to work with Bishop-in-Council, the Executive and Finance Committees, the Diocesan Corporation, the Board of Gippsland Grammar, the Trusts Corporation, and our Retirement Villages Committee of Management, to ensure smooth transitions in each of these areas where his business expertise and pastoral heart have been invaluable.

I highlight the ministries of David and Cheryl, as we will that of Philip Muston at the Synod Dinner as he prepares for retirement – mindful of so many others we could fete – not because they would seek special mention, but because Christians have always grown from lived examples of discipleship.

Since we met in May last year some of those who embodied that for us have gone to glory, and as a Diocese we give thanks for their lives of witness.

As these have been good and faithful stewards of the Gospel, so may we fulfil

our shared responsibility as guardians of the faith – not by shielding it from the culture around us – but by sharing its riches with a genuinely curious society.

The National Church Life Survey, to which I'm pleased to say we had 100% sign-up, has released some early findings that give us hope and confidence in this regard.

According to the 2016 census, just over half of Australians identified as Christian, down from around 90% in 1966. And whilst monthly church attendance has dropped to around one in five from almost half in 1950, church attendance actually went up in 2021, and the highest demographic of monthly church attenders, at one in three, was 18 to 34-year-olds.

Three in ten Australians are likely to go to church, apart from special occasions, if asked by close friends and family, and they are more likely to do so if they think the church will be welcoming, inclusive, and doing good work in the community.

Now this is not some fancy new outreach program! We see this model of evangelism in the opening pages of John's gospel where Nathanael asks Philip "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?", to which Philip replies, "Come and see!"

Passing on a tradition is not like downloading information, any more than being a Christian is about assenting to doctrine. It's about a living relationship with the one who *is* the truth, mediated through

his living body, the church.

And if tradition is more like having a baby than wearing your father's hat, we might look to Blessed Mary, who at the prospect of that birth – costly though it would prove to be – sings for joy of the enduring promise made to father Abraham and his children for ever: a promise fulfilled in this new thing God is doing through her.

As those *Committed in Christ, Connecting in service, and Creative in Spirit*, may we too hold fast to that which is good, and reach out for what God would be doing through us.

A video of Bishop Richard delivering the full Presidential Address (with associated slides) can be viewed at www.gippslandanglicans.org.au.



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, the Director of Professional Standards, for a confidential discussion.

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

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Cathy Turnbull: “pitching in” for bushfire recovery

Jan Down

How do you measure the impact of the East Gippsland bushfires? How can you convey the scale of the devastation?

The Rev'd Cathy Turnbull, who until recently was Missional Deacon for the Eastern Region (Bushfire Response), talks in terms of time and distance. In an address to the Southern Deanery, she explained:

It isn't until you have to drive to and through all these localities that it hits home. I would be driving for more than an hour and not see any bit of forest untouched by the fires, and this was in many different directions. And the fires in most areas had burnt really hot, destroying not only the undergrowth, but burning the crowns of the trees as well.

When the bushfires hit East Gippsland in the summer of 2019/20, it brought back for Cathy the fires of 2009. On Black Saturday, the Kilmore East fire burnt through Kinglake with great loss of life, property and country. Cathy, then attending Christ Church Kilmore, felt compelled to respond to the community's needs on behalf of the church. She worked as a volunteer in bushfire recovery for four years, discovering skills she didn't know she had.

As this work came to an end, Cathy was sensing a call to ordained ministry. But then her husband, Glen, was seriously injured in a car accident, putting that call on hold. As Glen gradually recovered, Cathy was able to begin her studies at Trinity College in Melbourne, leading to her ordination as a Distinctive Deacon in February 2019. Her calling is to the diaconate, with its focus on working with people in the community.

After the East Gippsland fires, Cathy knew immediately the grief and loss that people would be experiencing.

She contacted Bishop Richard Treloar, to see if she could assist in any way. Bishop Richard already knew Cathy from her student placement at Christ Church South Yarra, where he was vicar before coming to Gippsland.

Cathy was in a curacy in Essendon, but was seconded to the Diocese of Gippsland, initially to be Bushfire Recovery Coordinator for two to three days a week, and has ministered among the East Gippsland communities for over two years, being commissioned in early 2021 as Missional Deacon for the Eastern Region.

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Even while the fires were still raging in East Gippsland, the Anglican Diocese recognised that recovery would take years, not months, and would need intentional ministry. People around Australia and beyond gave generously, and a grant from the Provincial Disaster Fund financed Cathy's recovery work for the first 12 months. Then grants from the Anglican Relief and Development Fund Australia, and other philanthropic contributions, took over the support.

Generous giving to the



Cathy Turnbull says she feels joy that some communities are recovering well

Diocese of Gippsland's own Emergency Relief Fund meant Cathy was able to directly assist fire-affected communities, in the form of fuel vouchers or other goods purchased from local businesses, thus supporting the local economy as well

as individuals in the East Gippsland communities.

In finding her way into these small, remote communities, it helped that Cathy had grown up on a farm in the area, from the age of nine. This meant that there were ready-made connections within some of

the communities.

For the first year of her recovery work, Cathy stayed with her father. Then in January 2021 the Diocese rented a one-bedroom cabin for her at Nowa Nowa, so that she had a base from which to work, as she travelled between home, in the Macedon Ranges, and East Gippsland.

Many hours were spent on the road, just to reach these remote settlements. Distance restricted the number of people she could see and meant she had to be selective, concentrating on communities that other agencies were not reaching.

On the other hand, those hours in the car gave her time for thinking, praying and “listening to the landscape”. It often helped her to understand the context of the person she was driving to visit. An hour up a winding road, all burnt out, would show her where they had to live and drive all the time. People whose houses survive bushfire have described it as “living in the ash.”

Five lives were lost in the eastern Victorian fires. Hundreds of houses were destroyed and thousands of kilometres of fences. One of the impacts for farmers has been the hugely increased workload. On top of what is normally a full-time, physically demanding job, they were out replacing fences and replanting. In one place where it was particularly needed, a grant from the Anglican Board of Mission enabled Cathy to supply some fencing materials.



On the road in the early days of the recovery work

CARING FOR THE CARERS

Government assistance has improved in some ways since 2009, Cathy says. In the first six months she felt they were doing things better back then, but “it hasn’t continued well or ended well.” The case management system has worked better this time around. Financial access has still been a huge problem for some.

After the 2009 fires, the top-down approach to recovery changed, with the establishment of Emergency Management Victoria and, through that, the setting up of locally run community recovery committees, led by volunteers from each specific community. These committees would work out what was needed, rather than being told from above.

However, this has created a huge load for the volunteers, and Cathy found a lot of her work was to provide a listening ear for them. Although they needed to debrief, because they were volunteers there was no provision for this.

Clergy in the region have appreciated her presence and Cathy has enormous respect for their tireless work. She says “They just give everything.”

The Rev’d Brian Norris, locum priest at Tambo, said Cathy Turnbull’s ministry in the community has been very important. “Along with visits, she has conducted community gatherings and coordinated the church’s response to this almost forgotten disaster so soon overshadowed by the COVID pandemic.”

THE NATURE OF EAST GIPPSLAND

The loss to the natural world has been enormous. Millions of creatures died, and trees that were hundreds of years old were destroyed. In places, Cathy says, people feel that loss more than the infrastructure. Some people had chosen to live there specifically because of the environment, and “they can’t rebuild the bush.” So they have moved away.

Cathy describes East

Gippsland as a place of “absolute stunning beauty” and admits the damage “has broken my heart in places.” She says East Gippsland is unique – both the people and the place. “It is diverse, but there is a common thread. It’s hard to say what this is, but the natural environment definitely has something to do with it ... [It] defines everything. So much can’t be encroached on by people.” The country is certainly diverse, ranging from mountains and forests to farms, rivers and ocean.

One woman told Cathy how, in the first spring after the fires, she went in search of native orchids, and there were none. But out walking again in the spring of 2021, she found some starting to come back. Recovery takes time.

MEMORIALS AND MORNING TEAS

The fires that started in November 2019 came out of the forest mainly on New Year’s Eve, with much of the destruction happening overnight and into New Year’s Day 2020.

Cathy was told how, when Nowa Nowa was surrounded by fire and smoke for days, the general store became a hub for the local community and emergency services personnel. She got to know

the proprietor, Sandra, who felt that it would be good to have some kind of church presence in the town, which no longer has any churches. So Cathy spent some time there, getting to know people and being available to talk.

Then, towards the end of last year, Sandra unexpectedly died, and the family asked Cathy to conduct her memorial service. Over 200 people attended the outdoor service. Cathy explains that Sandra had been “the go-to person in the town, knew everyone, had worked tirelessly for the community before the fires and continued to do so during and after the fires, and the whole community was grieving her loss.”

Cathy has also held a number of simple Sunday morning services at Nowa Nowa, including a healing service and a community memorial service for All Saints’ Day in the memorial rose garden of the Community Centre.

The Wairewa valley, a farming area producing vegetables, lemons and beef, was badly impacted by the fires. Eleven of the 27 houses were destroyed. Cathy organised monthly morning teas there, so that people could come and have a cuppa and a chat with her and each other.

Morning teas were also held at the Buchan Recreation Reserve Pavillion. Buchan lost many houses, including right in the town. Retired priest Laurie Baker and his wife Heather came to the morning teas and added their support. Laurie had once been parish priest at Bruthen and Buchan, so they knew many of the local people and their presence was greatly appreciated.

At Cann River last year, Cathy held monthly morning teas at the Community Centre, along with Jude Benton, the Anglican priest at Mallacoota (Cooperating Parish of Croajingolong), and one of her lay ministers, Kate. Mallacoota was hit very hard in the fires, losing 123 houses.

IN GOOD HANDS

Sarsfield, Benambra, Club Terrace and Goongerah are some of the other places Cathy has been involved. Her work has meant long hours on the road, listening to stories of trauma and loss, and often working in isolation, yet at the end of more than two years of this work, she seems buoyant. This is a woman of great strength, resourcefulness, compassion and faith.

She has seen God at work in the people who have stepped up to care

for their communities with compassion and care. They might not be churchgoers, but she observes that many have “a spirituality of place or environment” that inspires them.

As her recovery work in East Gippsland concludes, it helps Cathy to know from her previous experience that people will (mostly) recover and rebuild their lives. And also that so many others are there helping – she has had a strong sense of being part of “a whole crowd of people pitching in” and feels the East Gippsland communities are in good hands.

It gives her joy to see some people now recovering well. Like the land, people recover at different rates, so seeing those who are going well gives her hope that others will too.

Cathy still has a connection in East Gippsland, as she is now working one day a week as Chaplain at the Buchan Primary School. She has recently been installed as Deacon-in-Charge at Nar Nar Goon, at the western end of Gippsland, so she will be spending more hours on the road, travelling between home in the Macedon Ranges, East Gippsland and Pakenham.

Jan Down is a Gippsland writer and former TGA editor.



Elizabeth and Brian Blakeman from Wairewa received material to repair fencing after the East Gippsland bushfires, made possible by ABM funding

Gumbuli of Ngukurr: Aboriginal Elder in Arnhem Land

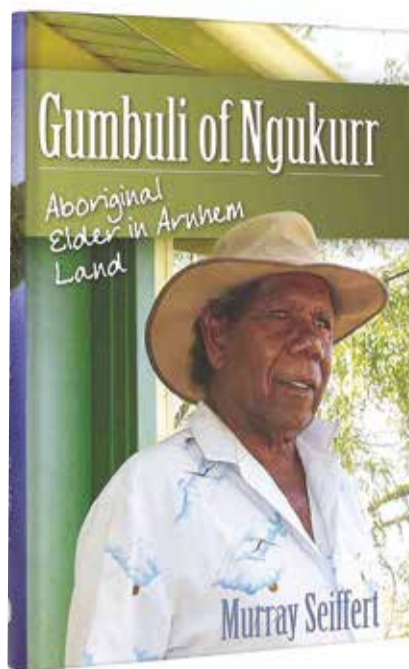
Murray Seiffert
Acorn Press, 2011

Richard Prideaux

The late Dr Murray Seiffert, who died just last year, has written an extraordinary history of an Aboriginal young man from tiny Bickerton Island in Arnhem Land who for over 30 years was the priest and leader of the town of Ngukurr, a community that began as a mission station on the Roper River.

Murray and I were friends and colleagues for over 50 years – sharing time at Ridley College, teaching in north central Victoria, and being fellow worshippers at St James Ivanhoe for 17 years. Murray was an outstanding sportsman, agricultural scientist, teacher, sociologist and theologian. For five years Murray worked with his wife, Marjory, as the Academic Dean of Nungalinya College in Darwin, during which time he had many opportunities to talk with Gumbuli and visit Ngukurr.

Michael Gumbuli Wurramara was only the second Aboriginal man to be ordained priest in the Northern Territory. He was converted by missionaries from the Church Missionary Society working on Groote Island, a large island close to Bickerton Island, east of Darwin. Inevitably, Gumbuli's story can only be told by being combined with the larger story of the planting of the Christian Gospel in Arnhem Land. Gumbuli was born in 1935 and it is not hard to remember that as late as 1930 mass atrocities against Aboriginal people on the Australian mainland were still occurring. There is a Gippsland connection with the founding of the Roper River Mission (later called Ngukurr). The Gippsland Aboriginal community provided a generous financial contribution to the cost of the boats used to transport the team from Groote Island, including Gumbuli, that established the original



mission on the Roper River.

Gumbuli's remarkable 42-year marriage to Dixie Daniels, his quiet but strong leadership style, his courage to face the spiritual dangers of native ceremony, his extraordinary energy to be a priest, town leader, mechanic, cattle station missionary, retreat leader and daily worship leader, and his own personal faith and commitment both to the Bible's truth and to Anglican order, were exceptional. He was well worthy of his Order of Australia in 2010.

There are many critical issues to be examined in this remarkable history, and Gumbuli was in the middle of them. Not least is the creation of the Kriol (formerly Pidgin) Bible. Gumbuli not only spoke good English but was fluent in Kriol, Anindilyakwa and other First Nations languages. His encouragement to create a complete Kriol Bible was essential to its final achievement. Other key issues included the ongoing tension between Christian faith and Aboriginal ceremony/culture (including the sharp differences between Uniting Church and Anglican approaches to

the validity of the serpent creation story), the tragedy of polygamy, the many disputes over alcohol at Ngukurr, the early poverty of government financial support, the difficulty of maintaining good staff, problems with the police, disastrous floods and droughts, and many other challenges.

One remarkable feature of the story of Aboriginal people accepting the gospels is the impact of Festo Kivingeri, exceptional Ugandan evangelist and Christian spokesman during the rule of Idi Amin. He came to the Territory and made a powerful impact, which Gumbuli and others were able to build upon.

Murray Seiffert has managed in this book to make everything interesting; one reason, oddly, is the outstanding documentation. There is barely a sentence recorded that is not footnoted for source. The result is, in my experience, an unparalleled honesty and accuracy in the account of events. Murray's voice does not intrude on this text – we read the very words spoken by government officials, missionaries, nurses, bishops, eye witnesses of events and other key figures.

Who should read this remarkable book? Anyone like me who hasn't been to the Territory beyond Alice Springs and Darwin, and has only a feeble knowledge of the story of the coming of Christianity to Arnhem Land. It will make you cry and also make you thank God for faithful servants.



Dr Cath Connelly to lead Diocesan Retreat

Robert Fordham

The 2022 Diocesan Retreat will be held at The Abbey in October, and both laity and clergy are encouraged to join in this opportunity for spiritual renewal.

The Retreat leader will be Dr Cath Connelly, a highly regarded retreat leader, pilgrimage facilitator and Celtic harpist. She is also Co-Director of the Living Well Centre for Christian spirituality.

The theme of the Retreat will be 'Praying It Forward: Emerging Hope and Our Role as Ancestors of the Future'. Cath says, "throughout this retreat we will look at what it means to be the people of hope and how it is that we might become storytellers of a new future. We will consider the question of what it is that the Divine

wants to be made known though us and how we might participate in this calling." She will also play her harp for those present.

The Retreat will be held on 21–22 October commencing on Friday at 5 pm and concluding on Saturday at 3 pm. Accommodation and all meals will be provided at The Abbey, from dinner on Friday evening to a closing Eucharist on Saturday afternoon. A non-residential option is also available.

Previous diocesan retreats have proved to be a very meaningful experience for all concerned, and all are warmly invited to this time of dedicated reflection and prayer.

For further information and bookings please contact Anna at The Abbey: (03) 5156 6580.

The Abbey Program June – December 2022

For information contact Anna at The Abbey:
(03) 5156 6580.

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10 September 2022

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Diocesan Retreat

21 – 22 October 2022

with retreat leader Dr Cath Connelly

All Saints' celebration

4 November 2022

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Ecumenical Conversation

18 November 2022

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