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The Gippsland Anglican

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St Peter's Mallacoota celebrates 50 years

The gathering after the 50th anniversary Sunday service at St Peter's Mallacoota

■ Rev'd Jude Benton

What an amazing weekend was had in October to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of St Peter's Mallacoota.

It was a gathering of parishioners, op shop volunteers, locals, holidaymakers, past clergy and families, Bush Church Aid (BCA) nomads, as well as dignitaries from all three of our oversight organisations: BCA, the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland and the Uniting Church.

There was much laughter, as old acquaintances were renewed and new friendships formed. Beginning with dinner and music on Saturday night we packed the community club rooms. Local band FarOut performed a specially chosen set of music through the decades, to which there was a lot of toe-tapping and singing along. Dinner was incredible, with spit-roasted lamb and chicken, along with salads and all the trimmings, prepared by a volunteer group of BCA nomads.

We all wanted to avoid speeches or focusing just on the building itself, so instead the information and entertainment were combined. There was a five-round quiz of local trivia, and history from the early years of the parish when based in Cann River, the 1970s and building of St Peter's, 50 years of Mallacoota ministry, and what's happening today. As the evening drew to a close, FarOut performed an acoustic set of songs that got many up dancing.

The last quiz question of the night was "What is one hope or prayer for St Peter's in the next 50 years?" Responses were

then read by the different tables around the room. It was heartening to hear "the church still being here," "the church being bigger, packed, to standing room only" and "still having a lively, engaged minister."

The next morning, about 75 people joined together for worship at St Peter's. Led by me and The Rev'd Peter Harvey (Uniting Church), the service included a slide show of photos telling the story of the past 50 years. BCA National Director, The Rev'd Greg Harris, preached an enthusiastic and challenging sermon, using the same readings from the opening service 50 years ago, and leaving us all to contemplate whether "salvation has come to our house." Bishop Richard then led communion, before blessing a new cabinet, beautifully handcrafted by Bob Steves out of three of the original pews. To conclude the service, Shirley Nation, long-term lay leader and stalwart of the parish, cut the anniversary cake, made and decorated with an image of the church by Kate Cowden.

It was then back to the club rooms for more fellowship, laughter, friendship and food. There were so many positive comments about what people had enjoyed about the chance to come together, to reminisce and also to look forward with hope.

For a church is not a building, it is the people who meet, who worship, who pray and who go out into the world. For 50 years, St Peter's has been a focal point in the Mallacoota community, and so we pray it continues for 50 years more.



"Our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors." So said Jonas Salk (1914–1995), who in 1953 developed the world's first safe and effective polio vaccine.

The not-for-profit Salk Institute he founded 60 years ago seeks, ambitiously, to "unlock the secrets of life itself" with the tools of science, so as to contribute to fields such as cancer research, neuroscience and immunobiology.

In a season of the church year when we are especially mindful of the "great cloud of witnesses" that surrounds as we observe All Saints' and All Souls' days – indeed, that "company of heaven" we worship with at every celebration of the Eucharist – the call to be "good ancestors" resonates.

Leanne and our two children, Rachel and Nicholas, are dual citizens of Australia and the US. They get to go to the short line at the airport, while I languish in the queue for "strangers and aliens"! Leanne hails from the Deep South, which has given us everything from bluegrass to gumbo, to the costly and violent seeds of the civil rights movement, and which – from the pathos of its own stories – has produced some of the finest literature in the Western canon.

One example, 1960s novel *The Ordways* by William Humphrey, traces the history of a pioneering Texan family. Humphrey's novel begins not with an account of great events, like the Alamo, but with a description of "graveyard day": the community's annual cleaning of the graves of its forebears.

The great stone faces of my ancestors – how clearly I see them still! Bearded with moss, freckled with fungus, bathed in tears when the rain fell, inclined this way and that as though in whispered conversation with one

another ... My family album in stone ... With each was associated some story, which, as ... the weeds [were] cleared away, [and] the fallen stone set upright, was once again retold.

Another Texan, Stanley Hauerwas, sees the formation of Christian identity in similar terms. With reference to *The Ordways*, he writes in *Christian Existence Today: Essays on Church, World and Living In Between* (1988):

[We] can no more learn what it means to be a Christian simply by attending to Scripture than we can learn to be Texan by reading the history of Texas. Rather, we learn that story, like the way we learn the story of Texas, by caring for the tombstones of the saints. It is from them as we begin to see what the story of Jesus has done to their ... stories, that we begin to understand what that story requires [of us]. (pp. 39–40)

For Christians then, the motivation to be good ancestors has little to do with our personal legacies, whether they be as widely transformative as that of Jonas Salk, or known only to those near and dear to us. We are called to be the bearers of that story by which others may know what it means to be Christian – a household album in flesh and blood; the biblical narrative of God's love embodied variously in the large and small stories of all the baptised.

Some scientists have argued for the hidden evolutionary benefits of our fascination with leaving a legacy – the idea that our striving to "unlock the secrets of life" in whatever field of human endeavour prolongs and enriches that life.

Theologians like Hauerwas typically cast this same impulse in more overtly vocational language: by making the story of Jesus in the stories of the saints our story, our lives may be more faithful to the God revealed in Scripture and in the Word made flesh.

Yet this too can, and should, have a significant impact on the quality of human life, and on the life we share with all God's creatures.

What does such an understanding of being good ancestors have to say about our responsibility to future generations with respect to addressing climate change, or advocating for affordable housing?

How might aspiring to the blessedness of peacemaking in our own orbits of influence shape the hearts and consciousness of those who come after us, such that prayers for peace (see page 18 and back cover) might also be calls to action?

In the wake of a referendum that has left so many on both 'sides' of the debate – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike – feeling confused, misunderstood and disheartened, will what we do and say to help the saints of tomorrow's church see what the gospel ministry of reconciliation can look like when applied to the as-yet-unhealed wounds of our history?

If, for the sake of posterity and not our own vainglory, our greatest responsibility is to be good ancestors, what legacies – spiritual and temporal, for they cannot be separated in an incarnational tradition – will be most treasured by our biological and baptismal descendants?

And when they in turn tend our tombstones, what stories will they tell of the story of Jesus at work in us?

Grace and peace,

+RHL

■ Joanne Stuchbury

A wonderful day of celebration and fellowship was held by all at St Peter's Leongatha on a mild Wednesday in September. We were blessed to have Bishop Richard attend and preside in the confirmation of four of our parishioners, and celebrate communion with our congregation.

The candidates were from primary-school age to almost retirement age, which demonstrates the great love and mercy of our God, and his faithfulness whatever our age and stage in life.

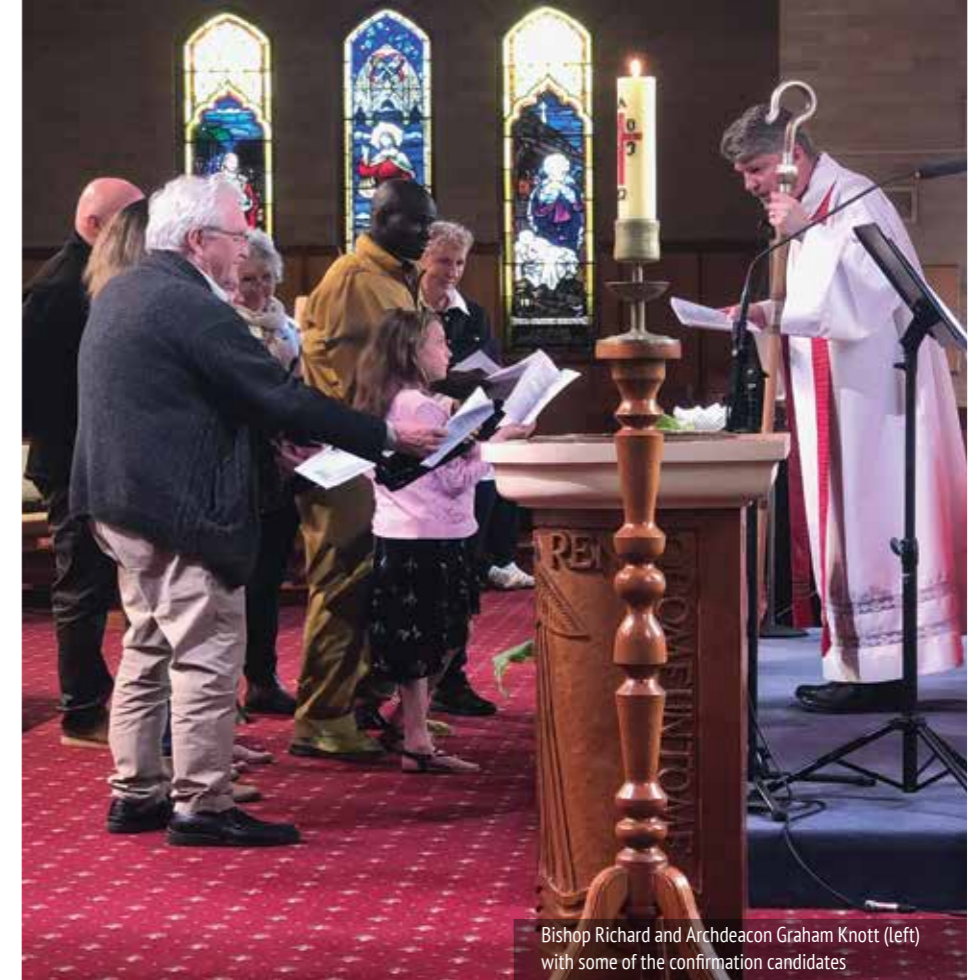
Our Wednesday congregation is an eclectic mix of people and personalities, from those who hunger for more of God and seek His face, and so regularly attend church on Wednesday and Sunday, to those who are more comfortable with a smaller, less formal gathering and service during the week.

As the confirmation was during school holidays, we were blessed to have many children who joined with their family and friends for this celebration. Bishop Richard explained about his mitre (hat), taking it off and showing the red inner. He invited responses from the congregation about the reasons for the red colours and the pointed shape, then explained the sign of the Descent of the Holy Spirit (colour red) at Pentecost in tongues of fire. Bishop Richard, together with the sponsors and the church, prayed for the candidates at the laying on of hands; that the Holy Spirit would descend afresh on each one, filling them with a newness of life and a deeper touch from God.

The celebration continued as we transferred into the adjoining hall to participate in the community lunch that has been held there every Wednesday for the last three years. This is the vision of The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook, supported by Archdeacon Graham Knott. It is a free three-course meal prepared, cooked and catered by the community and congregation of St Peter's. Over time, many new friends and relationships have been made at these meals. On this occasion, the sight of children sitting at their smaller tables, enjoying the homemade sausage rolls and mini hot dogs, brought much joy to us all.

We thank God for the movement, the signs of life and hope within our community. Our Mighty Maker, Redeemer and Friend is our constant source of strength, hope and healing as we journey through our life, on the narrow road. In the midst of the troubles of this life, it is a joy to be able to share life together with one another, as demonstrated at the confirmation and communion led by Bishop Richard.

Four confirmations at St Peter's Leongatha



Bishop Richard and Archdeacon Graham Knott (left) with some of the confirmation candidates

OAM MEDAL FOR REV'D KEN PARKER

The Rev'd Ken Parker received his Order of Australia medal and honours certificate at an investiture ceremony hosted at Government House in September.

Priest of over 50 years, Priest-in-Charge of St Thomas' Bunyip and former Locum in Drouin, Sale and Bunyip, Ken received his honour for services to the Anglican Church of Australia.



Tim Green



We are Gippstand 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.

Clifton Waters Village marks 70 years



The celebratory cake provided by Ashley House to mark 70 years of Clifton Waters Village

“From little things, big things grow”, not least in the case of Clifton Waters Village at Wy Yung.

The concept of a village for active aged people was proposed by Canon G.F.D. Smith after an address by Rev'd Tucker of the Brotherhood of St Laurence in May 1953. This was supported by members of St John's Church of England, with the first cottage being completed and inhabited in 1954. Seventy years on, much has happened

and changed. From humble beginnings, a community of 85 are now residents of the Village.

On Saturday 14 October, residents, invited guests and visitors gathered in the Village Hall to celebrate the Village's 70 years. Bishop Richard launched *The Village on the Hill*, a book on the Village's history, written by resident Linda Davies. During his address, Bishop Richard said that the book was as much a pictorial history as

a written one, giving an insight to life of the Village over the 70 years, and he commended Linda's work.

In her reply after the Bishop's address, Linda expressed her gratitude for the work commenced by a previous resident, Margaret Thompson, whose research she was able to continue. She said it was a privilege to have been encouraged by people along the journey.

Bishop Richard, Richard Connelly and Kevin Broughton from the Registry team, Chris Beckman (from Ashley House), past administrator Don Hannington and wife Margaret, Archdeacon Ted Gibson and wife Annabel, previous Board members Peter Sullivan and Don Wordsworth, current Village administrator Michelle McLean, and residents and members of St John's Bairnsdale, enjoyed the lovely afternoon tea provided by the Village Residents Committee, including a celebratory cake organised by Ashley House.

Past administrator Geoff Cuckson described the Village as “only one of its kind in Australia.” The Village would appear to be the forerunner of the many retirement villages today.

Copies of *The Village on the Hill* will be available in Bairnsdale at The Book Orchard, Bairnsdale Newsagents on Main Street, East Gippsland Historical Society and Museum, the East Gippsland Family History Group, St John's Anglican Church and in Wy Yung at Clifton Waters Village.



Orbost food pantry's new location

Bevil Lunson, coordinator of the Orbost Food Pantry

One of Orbost's most vital services – the Orbost Food Pantry – has moved.

The Orbost Food Pantry originally started out in two smaller rooms at St James' Anglican Church before relocating to the Theatre Arcade in Nicholson Street where it has held residence since 2015; however, it found a new home recently.

At the rear of 110 Nicholson Street

(Wyndham Real Estate), members of the community in need are welcome to come into the Orbost Food Pantry between 10 am and 4 pm, Monday to Friday to collect pantry staples, fresh fruit and vegetables and ready-made meals.

The service feeds approximately 250 families per week, which is a substantial increase in recent years as the

cost-of-living pressures really start to hit home for many, including people who may have never needed to rely on the service in the past. Referrals are often made through Orbost Regional Health, Moogji Aboriginal Council or St Vincent de Paul.

“We had quite a crew of people with trailers, vans and vehicles who helped to move us on Saturday. It's quite a job with the shelving all needing to be moved as well as fridges and the food itself but we got there in the end,” coordinator Bevil Lunson said.

As you enter the space, you walk through a private courtyard with picnic tables scattered around and Bevil speaks of hosting BBQ lunches as well as offering people a place to share in a cuppa and form a connection with others through conversation. Inside, a pie warmer is ready to be turned on and people will be able to get a hot pie or sausage roll whilst they pop in to get their supplies.

Bevil started the Orbost Food Pantry through St James' Anglican Church in 2009 following his involvement in similar organisations in Melbourne and realising that there was a need in Orbost for such a service and he was able to fill that need. The organisation is only funded through grants and donations that come from generous individuals and organisations and the majority of the food is sourced through Foodbank Victoria, with some other items purchased or donated locally.

Courtesy *Snowy River Mail*

Gathering stories of locum ministry

■ Rev'd John Webster

Earlier this year, Synod passed a motion asking Bishop-in-Council to “investigate challenges faced by locums, and develop practical ways of supporting them as they carry out these ministries.” In response, a working group has been tasked to undertake this investigation.

In discussion, a range of aspects have come to light, many of which are particularly relevant to a rural diocese.

There is a need to:

- assist clergy when they make the transition from incumbent to retired PTO-holder
- ensure that each of the different kinds of locum ministry have clearly set expectations – for the locum, for incumbents, and for the parish

- have clarity around the appointment of locums
- ensure locums are adequately compensated, and cared for, so that their ministry in retirement continues to be a blessing to themselves as well as to the diocese.

Our diocesan Leaving Well Policy is being reviewed, not only in the light of any parish's need for the incumbent or locum to move on appropriately when their ministry there ends, but also to properly address our valued locums' own pastoral needs each time they transition. So this investigation will feed into that review.

We are asking for feedback, particularly from retired clergy, from those appointed as locums, from parish councils, as well as providing more general opportunity for people to share their experiences of locum

ministry. An online survey has been developed, and can be accessed at surveylegend.com/s/58ur. Parish councils will be invited to respond to an email.

Alternatively, you can contact members of the working group directly: The Rev'd Sallyanne Hart, Rev'd Brenda Burney, Rev'd John Webster, Rev'd Liam Matthews and Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra.

While it is obviously important for us to identify and address aspects that could be working better, we do not want to lose sight of the significant ministry undertaken among our worshipping communities by retired clergy. Our diocese would not have the vitality it enjoys if it weren't for the ongoing contribution of those who serve as locums – whether ‘filling in’ when the incumbent is away, or serving a parish long-term.

The Anglican and Roman Catholic Bishops in our region of Gippsland will again co-host an ecumenical conversation in November in preparation for the season of Advent.

This will be the sixth Conversation convened jointly by the two dioceses reflecting the ongoing interest and support of clergy and lay people from both traditions for this ecumenical initiative.

The two bishops are inviting parishioners from each diocese to join with them in an Advent Conversation based this year on a seasonal study of the Psalms and Canticles from our common lectionary, alongside some of the great Advent themes.

Once again we are fortunate that the Conversation will be led by eminent scholars from both traditions – Dr Ross Fishburn and Dr Mary Reaburn, NDS – from the Yarra Theological Union,

INVITATION TO AN ADVENT CONVERSATION



Msgr Greg Bennett

a college of the University of Divinity, in conjunction with the bishops.

The Advent Conversation will be held at The Abbey on Thursday 23 November commencing at 10 am (coffee and tea available on arrival from 9.30 am) and concluding with



Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar

a short service of ecumenical worship at 3.15 pm.

For further information and bookings, which are essential for catering purposes and any accommodation needs, contact Anna at The Abbey on 5156 6580, info@theabbey.org.au.

Happy half-birthday to Gippsland Anglicans On Air!

■ Libby Willems

Early in 2023, a happy announcement was shared with Gippsland Anglicans that a new channel of communication was due in March. A bouncing bundle of joy was delivered to proud parents, Gippsland Anglicans and Life FM Gippsland, and we named it Gippsland Anglicans On Air (GAOA).

GAOA is a weekly 30-minute radio program on Life FM Gippsland. It expands the number of ways our diocese connects with our community. Six months in, I pause to look at the ups (and downs!) of starting this new initiative and celebrate what has been achieved.

GAOA grew out of a conversation with Life FM late in 2022, when we met to look for opportunities to work together. Life FM Gippsland is a local Christian radio station that is celebrating 20 years of broadcasting. Its vision is to resource, build up and support the Christian community throughout Gippsland. Their commitment to positive, uplifting and family-friendly programs is refreshing in this complex modern world of media and entertainment.

Discussions centred around the development of our much-loved magazine, *The Gippsland Anglican*, led us to an idea that a complementary radio program could enhance the print-form media and help us find new ways to connect with our wider community. The idea was worth trialling, and the concept of GAOA was born.

Episodes of GAOA are diverse – sometimes an episode is an interview or conversation with local Anglicans; other times it is a reading of articles from the archives of *TGA*. Recently, we delivered a special series for Season of Creation with an Accessible Book Club, where chapters of a book were read over the airwaves, and then people were invited to connect in an online catch-up to discuss it, allowing people from right across the region to meet and share.

Thanks to the expertise of Life FM Station Manager, David Braithwaite, our episodes sound very professional, with a musical introduction and seamless editing of any coughs or stumbles. "It's been great being able to help highlight the people in the diocese and the issues which matter to them. It's shown that the Christian life isn't restricted to attending church on a Sunday," said David.

"Life FM's vision is to deliver hope of a better life and future to every home in Gippsland, something that's needed, especially after a few tough years for many people," said David Braithwaite. "Life FM is an extension of what local churches are doing, spreading the life changing message of Jesus and the Gospel."

It's been mostly fun, and sometimes a bit stressful making the episodes week to week. Being a seasoned musical performer, I'd overlooked the reality that many people can be shy of microphones and the sound of their recorded voice. Sometimes, people did not think that their experiences and stories would be interesting enough for radio (spoiler alert – they were very interesting indeed!). So it is with enormous gratitude that I thank all the contributors to the episodes for being brave to try new things and to share stories of challenges and God's graces.

Radio is such personable media format. It is *made* for listening. Radio complements a drive in the car, a walk through the park, or doing gardening or housework. A 30-minute episode also fits just nicely with an extended tea break, where you can quietly digest the warm brew in your hand along with the intellectual fodder of the episode.

"Life FM broadcasts positive content ranging from one-minute 'God spots' to messages and interview programs involving prominent community members," says David. "Life FM also plays a mix of Christian and non-Christian music, which is carefully selected to ensure listeners are encouraged and uplifted. Each weekday morn-

ing, Gippsland Perspective highlights local news, weather and events to provide the best start to your day."

Life FM welcomes financial support through membership (\$10 per year), donations and advertising, and volunteers are needed to help with a range of tasks such as recording announcements, administrative work, promoting the station around the region and helping at events. More information is available at lifefm.com.au

On behalf of all Gippsland Anglicans, I congratulate Life FM Gippsland on its milestone of 20 years broadcasting, and invite you to tune your radio to 103.9 FM to enjoy the life-giving music and stories in our region.

Episodes of GAOA are broadcast on Life FM Gippsland (103.9 FM) on Sunday mornings at 6.30 am, with repeats at 7.30 pm on Wednesday evenings. All episodes are available on Life FM's podcast; visit lifefm.com.au for details.



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MEET SOME GIPPSLAND ANGLICANS ON AIR PRESENTERS

"I thought it [was] excellent to be asked how I enjoyed contributing my brass band experiences to the church ... from small church groups to larger Salvation Army bands. I found out that the presenter and I shared a common interest in the same brass band organisation."

Alice Weatherall (Music Ministry, ep 4)



"I read out the 'Giving' chapter of Jonathan Cornford's brilliant little *Coming Home* book. I was impressed by the diversity of achievable and practical suggestions at the end of the chapter."

Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding (Accessible Book Club, ep 23)



"It is so great to see the engagement with the book *Coming Home* – I really appreciate what Gippsland Anglicans are doing."

Jonathan Cornford (Securing Food in a Changing Climate, eps 14, 15; Accessible Book Club, ep 18)



"The conversation about the episode [on Sustainability] was most interesting, as many of the participants were already doing some of the things Jonathan Cornford was suggesting in *Coming Home*. Basically, he was urging a reduction in consumption, with clear biblical support for that view."

Ann Miller (Accessible Book Club, ep 22)



"For me, the most arresting comment in our [Accessible Book Club] discussion [on Savings and Investment] was 'I'll never preach the same way on the Stewardship Parables again!' This was in response to Jonathan Cornford's interpretation of the stories (in Luke and Matthew), which turns the mainstream exegesis on its head."

Jan Down (Accessible Book Club, ep 24)



"Life FM is celebrating 20 years on air, and we couldn't have done it without the support of listeners. We'd like to thank everyone who has supported us over the past two decades."

David Braithwaite, Life FM Station Manager



"Our episode was about what it means to be Anglican. Bishop Richard and I reflected on identity. What's memorable to me is listening to one of our joint favourite pieces of music!"

Very Rev'd Keren Terpstra (What Does It Mean to Be Anglican?, ep 1)





Listening to First Nations and Celtic Voices

■ Dr Cath Connelly

It is a privilege to sit at the feet of both The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy and Ruth Harvey from the Iona community as they break open a conversation about the core of a First Nations spirituality with that of a Celtic spirituality. During October, The Abbey hosted a most important gathering: Care for Creation: Listening to First Nations and Celtic Voices.

Ruth Harvey, leader of the Iona

community, heads a team of people travelling to each Australian state to engage in listening deeply to the voices of First Nations people. The Abbey has been host to the Victorian section of this pilgrimage. What we heard from Ruth is the importance of stepping away from a purely romantic notion of Celtic Christianity, embracing instead the Celtic emphasis of an incarnational understanding of

Christ and the required response of social justice and care for creation.

Aunty Phyllis brought the rawness of the difficulties of her ministry, finding solace in being grounded in the assurance that connection to Country can hold her in this place. The event is an initiative of Wellspring Community.

We are blessed that The Abbey was host for this conversation.

Save the date



NOVEMBER

- 8: The Creation Windows through Literature, Art and Music: *The Sea*. Sue Fordham & June Treadwell
- 9: Celtic music session
- 14: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Different Ways of Praying. Facilitator: Michael Fox
- 23: Ecumenical Conversation
- 25: Spirituality of the Seasons: Cathedral Quiet Day

DECEMBER

- 13: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Spirituality of Music
- 14: Celtic music session

Metung Pen Pals project makes creative connections



■ Sandra Leggat

Shortly after activities resumed following the pandemic, Michael Harris, one of the St John's Metung parishioners, arranged a new initiative with Jacinta Bennett, the prep/years 1 and 2 teacher at the local Metung Primary School. Michael and Jacinta arranged for volunteer members of the Lakes Entrance and Metung parish to become pen pals with the young students. All the volunteers completed the diocesan Safe Ministry requirements.

The program has flourished, with handwritten letters being shared a couple of times each term. As the students were

learning to write and to think about content for a letter, they were provided with forms to help their thinking. Church members were provided with a list of helpful tips and ideas for the content of their letters. These included both providing some information about themselves and their families, as well as asking questions for the students to answer in their next letter. The letters are dropped off at the school or mailed so that the communication can continue when parishioners are away. At the end of term three, the students, their principal and teachers walked from

from their school to the church and had an afternoon to meet their pen pals in person. Together we read some books and talked about things that interested us, to get to know our pen pals better. This was followed by rousing songs, a spring craft and a well-received afternoon tea. We were pleased our locum priest, Sallyanne Hart, was able to participate in the singing and dancing on the day. We are planning to have a regular pen pal event each term. The program is well situated to support the

primary school with their motto that 'It takes a village to raise a child.' Participants have seen both the writing and the content of the letters improve and are grateful to share in some of the important events in their pen pal's life. In addition, the program is an opportunity for parishioners who may not have as many social connections to forge links with young people. Many thanks to all who give their time and love to enable this creative program, which clearly meets the needs of our communities.



St Paul's prefects fundraise for World's Greatest Shave

The Year 12 Prefects (back rows) and the five students who had their heads shaved at the assembly: Noah Smith, Pablo Neofitou, Jackson Wakefield, Eamon Simcocks and Asher Norlyng

■ Paula Walland

Students were surprised and amused when Year 12 prefects at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School took charge and commandeered an assembly recently – but it was all in good fun of course and a part of the annual Prefect Assembly antics.

The assembly was hilarious, centred around a humorous storyline involving bald teachers aspiring to make all students bald – just like them!

In a series of competitions, the prefects battled against the "follicly challenged" teaching staff to save the school from total hair loss. As the teachers emerged victorious, the tale concluded with five students

volunteering to take the plunge and have their hair shaved/cut to raise money for the Leukemia Foundation's World's Greatest Shave, which assists Australian families dealing with blood cancer.

Laura Butterworth, Head of Warragul Secondary School, commended the students for their dedication in organising the assembly and their forethought in connecting it to a community endeavour.

"Congratulations to our prefects for

a thoughtful, funny and engaging assembly that also raised awareness of an important cause," she said. "And a special thank you to Jackson, Asher, Pablo, Eamon and Noah who bravely cut their hair or shaved their heads in order to encourage our community to donate to the World's Greatest Shave."



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'Human tiger' Brenda Burney (far left) and 'monk' Marilyn Obersby (far right) with the blessed pets and their owners

Blessing of the pets at St James' Traralgon

■ Glenda Edebohl

Sunday 8 October, the first Sunday after the Feast Day of St Francis, saw a range of pets attending the 11 am service at St James' Traralgon. There were dogs, cats and guinea

pigs as well as a 'human tiger' otherwise known as The Rev'd Brenda Burney. The Rev'd Marilyn Obersby blessed the pets individually, suitably attired as one of

St Francis' monks. The animals were all very well behaved and enjoyed a treat following their blessings. The service was followed by morning tea, and a great time was had by all.

Nuer celebration at St Mary's Morwell

■ Ven Sue Jacka

St Mary's Morwell is pleased to have been able to offer hospitality to our Nuer friends of the Church of the Nazarene. Their numbers have dwindled in Gippsland as many have moved to Melbourne to take up work there. However, their fortnightly services in Morwell are vibrant, with lots of traditional music and many young families. The Rev'd Stephen Reik, their pastor, travels to Melbourne to take a service there on alternate Sundays, as well as working a regular day job.

On 16 August, this Sudanese congregation held a fundraising community day. Members of St Mary's Morwell were invited to enjoy their music (some were well-known hymn tunes, which meant others could sing along) and hear some encouraging testimonies about God's call on people's lives and faithfulness through their difficult years in refugee camps before being accepted to come to Australia.

Most of them have had to start over again, learning a new language – sometimes their fourth or fifth language – and having to retrain because qualifications earned overseas are not recognised here.

One feature of Nuer services is the use of traditional drums and vocal harmonies. There are now more drums because those used previously by the Dinka congregation at St Luke's in Moe (which has also moved to Melbourne) have been donated to them. It was lovely to see that, despite the tribal differences in decoration and tone, the Nuer congregation are very happy to combine these drums with their own.

The women cooked a fabulous traditional evening meal, which was enjoyed by all. If you would like to support the Sudanese congregation you can give online to Morwell Sudanese Church of the Nazarene (BSB 063522 Acc 10380477). All donations will be gratefully received.



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Renewing relationships with God Gippsland Diocese Clergy Retreat 2023

■ Rev'd Lyn Williams

"Once upon a time a college of clergy ventured into the forest, surrounding themselves with the beauty of creation, embracing a spiritual journey of renewal and refreshment in time with God. Such was the value of this venture that they vowed to do it again. And it was so."

Following in these footsteps, clergy from across Gippsland recently gathered in Millgrove for our annual pilgrimage to Pallotti College, nestled in the beautiful foothills of the Great Dividing Range.

Our retreat leader, The Rev'd Grant Bullen, offered the gentle leading of clergy over three days in silence as we were challenged anew to prayerfully and intentionally make time with God and to recognise the things in our daily lives that restrict us in our relationship with the Divine.

In creating the opportunity for renewal in our relationship with God, Grant asked the clergy to explore the things that may inhibit growing into the fullness of what can be, to be mindful of guarded motivations and to know how to live the new life in Christ. To put this more succinctly, "What does it mean to suffer death and rise to new life as people of faith, in this world, now?"

The text offered to accompany this journey was from Luke 10.38-42 and John 11.1-45, with the story of Mary, Martha and Lazarus, to tease out the dichotomy of Mary and Martha's roles in the Gospel story. Grant explored their roles from some different perspectives, offering fresh insights: Martha, busy in the kitchen, considered steady, stable and grounded; Mary, steps into the room with Jesus, sees and hears the new life and how to live it. Clergy were also invited to make a new resolution from this retreat.

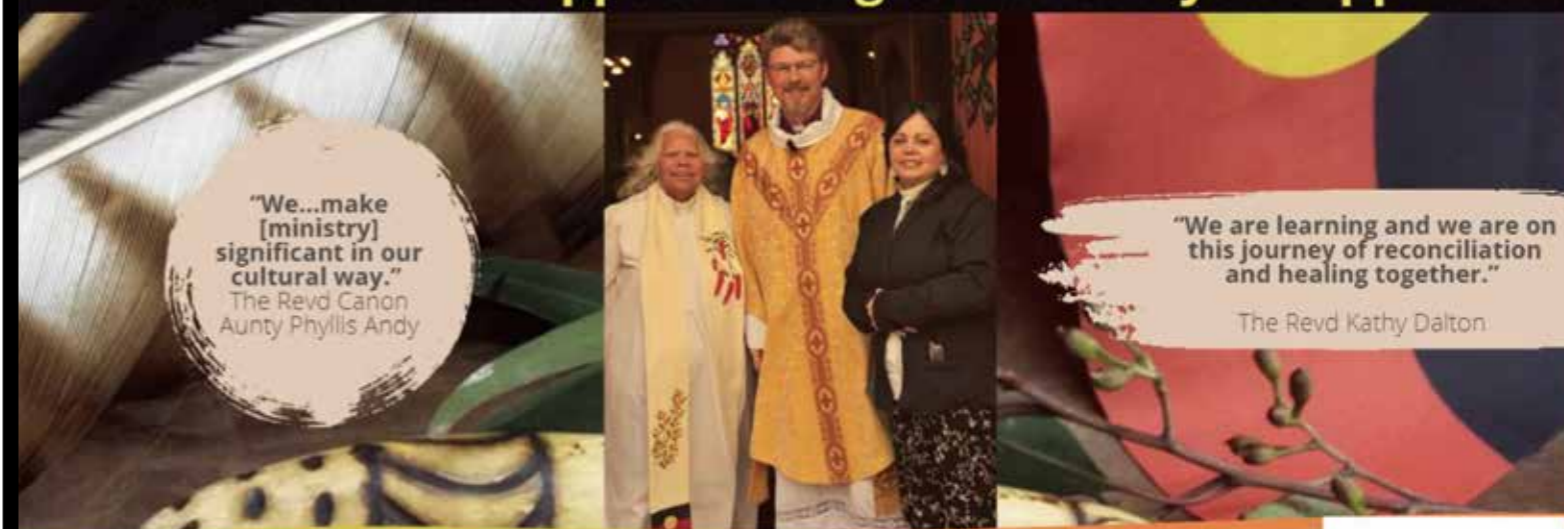
Also notable was the pouring rain during the early days of the retreat; it could be that God was saying, "I really want you to sit with the stillness of silence and time. No, you can't talk. No, you can't go for a walk. There are less distractions for you. Sit in the stillness and in silence and allow me to speak to you through prayer. Be open and attentive to my presence."



The Rev'd Grant Bullen leading this year's retreat

Our retreat concluded with a social gathering of clergy on Wednesday evening followed by a Eucharist on Thursday morning. The college of clergy, refreshed in their spiritual journey with God, ventured off into the hills, homeward-bound.

Please donate to support Aboriginal Ministry in Gippsland



"We are learning and we are on this journey of reconciliation and healing together."

The Rev'd Kathy Dalton



Your donation to Aboriginal ministry is vital.

Gippsland Anglicans is raising funds to continue its support of Aboriginal Ministry. The Rev'd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy (L) and The Rev'd Kathy Dalton (R), pictured here with The Rt Rev'd Dr Richard Treloar, Bishop of Gippsland, work together to support the spiritual needs of Aboriginal people across the vast area of Gippsland. They are regularly called to other places and interstate to provide culturally appropriate support and care.

Please scan the QR code or visit www.gippslandanglicans.org.au for options.



Implementing the Victorian Child Safety Standards

Visit gippslandanglicans.org.au/resources/safe-ministry

This year, TGA is highlighting the 11 Child Safe Standards to help us think, talk about and improve the way we do things in our ministries.

This month we take a look at Standard 9: *Physical and online environments promote safety and wellbeing while minimising the opportunity for children and young people to be harmed.*

What is this standard about?

- Standard 9 is about:
- new requirements – an obligation that our online environment promotes safety and wellbeing.
 - recognising risks and ensuring they are mitigated.
 - engaging third-party contractors.

Risk identification and analysis

- Consider:
- situational risk – what activities are children involved in and where might harm or abuse occur?
 - vulnerability risk – what are the circumstances or characteristics of children in your parish that might make them more vulnerable to harm or abuse?
 - propensity risk – what is the profile of the adults who engage with children in your parish?
 - institutional risk – how do the characteristics of your parish, such as its structures, attitudes, practices, affect the risk of child abuse and harm?

The online environment

The online environment poses serious risks for children and young people. Your parish may not have an online presence; however, you can still contribute to ongoing education and discussion on the inherent dangers of online use.

Download the Electronic Communication Guidelines from the diocesan website.



HOW CAN YOU MANAGE RISKS IN ONLINE ENVIRONMENTS?	
Areas to consider	Examples of management strategies
Examine any opportunities for adults to have unwanted contact with children via online technologies and phones.	Advise children not to engage with people in the parish and unknown adults or private online environments (e.g. direct messaging). Be clear how your social media texting, video and other technologies should and should not be used.
Establish appropriate oversight practices and safeguards for any contact with children using online technologies and phones.	Provide clear guidelines for parish members. Limit one-on-one services to situations where a parent/guardian can be in the room or where parental consent is given.
Assess whether online platforms used to deliver services are secure and appropriately protect children.	The eSafety Commissioner's Tips for Online Collaboration tools can help you work through the risks associated with online platforms and technologies.
Consider if children's images should be shared online.	Obtain consent from children and parents or carers for any use of their images or personal information online. Note: A separate consent form is required for each time an image is used.

Engaging with third parties

- Ensure third-party contractors meet expected child safety and wellbeing standards.

What to do now

- Review your online presence.
- Walk around your physical environment while programs are running. How can you further minimise risks?
- Research how to ensure online safety.

- Assess the online interaction adults in your parish may have with children.
- Ensure people working in children's ministry never befriend children online.

The eSafety Commissioner provides a range of practical resources to assist parents and children to stay safe online.

Adapted from *A Parish Guide to Implementation of the Victorian 11 Child Safe Standards.*



Land of the unexpected, God of the unexpected

Part 1: From “look see” to our PNG mission

Jennifer Boer

For many years, tourism brochures described Papua New Guinea as “the land of the unexpected.” When we arrived in PNG in 2010, we quickly discovered that this was very apt. We would often smile and say, “only in PNG!” Combine that with the God of the unexpected, and you are in for a pretty wild ride!

My husband, Geoff, and I started our mission journey in PNG in 2009 when we were invited to visit short term for a “look see” visit. This was the culmination of some years of preparation and soul-searching. We thought it was amazing how everything Geoff had done previously in his work life uniquely equipped him for the role of PNG finance manager for MAF (Mission Aviation Fellowship) Australia. This, we expected, would be the final role of his professional life. However, as we talked to other missionaries, we discovered that this is often how God works – He never wastes an experience, He is constantly guiding and preparing us to fulfill His plans. So, we said yes to MAF in 2009, returned to Australia to pack, farewelled our three nearly adult children and commenced our PNG adventure.

We arrived at Mt Hagen, in the Papua New Guinean highlands, in 2010. Geoff was to manage financial reporting and financial care for a multinational team of pilots, engineers and support staff.

Over time, both compassion and perception meant that this role would expand out of the finance bubble. His business skills meant that he saw the need to gather data that would allow him to analyse the respective efficiencies of the five different type of aircraft that MAF PNG used at that time. Five plane types were a skills and financial drain, and not viable in the long

term. Geoff discovered the relevant crucial variables and ways to collect data on them. In time this led to a body of data that, when presented to leadership, made the decision about the future fleet restructure abundantly clear. MAF PNG now has a growing fleet of the Cessna Caravan – the plane Geoff identified as most appropriate to the program's needs.

I expected to spend my time in PNG, the decade of my 60s, being a support to Geoff, cooking for transiting pilots and perhaps indulging my love of oil painting. I didn't expect to use my skills as a speech pathologist, as there is no training and no employment for speech pathologists in PNG. However, the God of the unexpected had other ideas!

In my very first week in PNG, I was invited by an American MAF wife, a

physiotherapist, to visit the physiotherapy department of the nearby provincial hospital. I was surprised that there was physiotherapy training in PNG. I had heard that, following the eruption of Mt Tavurvur in 1994, the number of terrible injuries prompted the Divine Word brothers, who had set up a university in Madang, to commence a physiotherapy training course. Sixteen years later, there were teams of physios in every major PNG hospital.

When the physiotherapists met me, they asked “What is a speech therapist? What do you do?” When I explained the skill set and caseloads, they responded, “Oh! We have lots of patients like that! We need you! Come and work with us!” My protests about lack of position, resources and funding were pushed aside, as was some of the physio gym equipment in their treatment room. A curtain was erected, as was a sign that said Speech Therapy Corner, and that was my base for the next eight years.

There are 838 *tokples* (vernacular languages) in PNG, and several lingua franca allowing connection between disparate groups. Of these ‘contact languages’ the one used in the highlands, and the largest, is Tok Pisin, a language that has developed from the pidgin used by visiting sailors, taken into the plantations and villages and in time developed to become a uniquely PNG language. The language-use patterns or sociolinguistics of PNG are very complex.

All these thoughts preoccupied me as I sought to develop assessment and treatment materials for my speech therapy work in PNG. In time I was to undertake further study online in applied linguistics, which then morphed into a research project studying speech acquisition in Tok Pisin-speaking children.

Part 2 will be published in the December issue of TGA.





Local *Senisim Pasin* Campaign Coordinator Yanamlyn Yana said: "There is an understanding that gender-based violence is normal. There are a lot of polygamous marriages, which specifically contribute to domestic violence. Our campaign focuses on addressing values such as respect, dignity and helping people recognise that human life is God given and we don't have the right to take that away."

■ MAF Australia

A group of NGOs are uniting to end violence against women in some of the most isolated parts of Papua New Guinea (PNG), where it's believed a woman is physically assaulted every 30 seconds (unitedforequalitypng.com).

On 12 January 2023, the Prime Ministers of Australia and PNG issued a joint statement following a leaders' dialogue in Port Moresby, recognising the critical importance of gender equality in a country where 1.5 million women are violated every year (unitedforequalitypng.com). Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese announced Australia would continue to support women's empowerment efforts in PNG with a new five-year investment to combat gender-based violence.

In a bid to reduce the horrifyingly high numbers of women and girls being tortured or killed in PNG – most of them at the hands of a close relative – a new initiative named *Senisim Pasin* (Tok Pisin for *Change Your Ways*) was launched by the PNG Tribal Foundation last year, which so far has reached over 250,000 people with a message of peace and equality.

Senisim Pasin sessions comprise sports, interviews, community discussion and a public screening of an anti-violence documentary, produced by local filmmakers

to challenge attitudes towards women and girls. The campaign aims to inspire participants to commit to lasting change by signing a public declaration and holding one another accountable.

However, due to PNG's poor transport infrastructure, with only 3000 kilometres of paved roads across the entire country, compared to more than 800,000 kilometres in Australia (CIA World Factbook), many of the remotest communities have been out of reach to the *Senisim Pasin* initiative until now. Local *Senisim Pasin* Campaign Coordinator Yanamlyn Yana has been concerned that these communities – who are often missed out – can be especially vulnerable to violence.

"We look for partnerships that have a strategic and lasting impact on people's lives – and together we want to reach as many small communities as possible, because it's the small communities who miss out. MAF is doing incredible work serving lots of communities, and we are glad to partner with them so many people who need to be educated about gender-based violence and sorcery can be reached."

Humanitarian airline Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF) became an official *Senisim Pasin* partner at the end of 2022, signing up to deliver teams from the PNG Tribal Foundation and hunger charity

Bread for the World to isolated communities only accessible by aircraft to deliver anti-violence education. It is the first time this high-tech initiative has been able to reach very rural areas.

Yanamlyn explained the significance a public declaration can have for future generations: "During the pledge signing in front of their community, many men said, 'We don't want to fight anymore. We want to sign up for peace!' They are taking a stand against violence and so the entire community will hold each other accountable. We hope they will create the community they will want to live and prosper in – one that will be a safer place for their children and future generations."

Another *Senisim Pasin* landing site was the village of Malaumanda, where MAF evacuated a young rape survivor. As Prime Ministers' discussions were taking place in the capital in January, the charity reported a medical emergency flight to rescue a 10-year-old girl, who had been raped by two members of her extended family.

Too afraid to tell anyone about her ordeal, the girl spent three months vomiting, suffering a fever, poor appetite and fatigue before she finally collapsed. The 30-minute flight spared days of trekking through the bush to access medical treatment that saved her life.



The first landing of the campaign took place in November 2022 and transported eight campaigners to Pyarulama – an isolated village only accessible by foot or aircraft. At least 250 people, including young boys, attended the workshops and 43 people signed the declaration to change.

MAF Pilot Bridget Ingham, who attended the medevac, said: "The reality sunk in as the girl was carried and laid on the stretcher next to our aircraft – eyes full of emptiness looking back at me. I didn't have the words to say how heartbroken I was for her. All I could do was to hope she knew."

Bridget is among the few female bush pilots to brave the challenging flying conditions in PNG – in an industry where 91% of pilots worldwide are men (pilotinstitute.com/women-aviation-statistics).

MAF says that a large proportion of the 500+ medical emergency flights in PNG are to rescue women and girls who have been subjected to gender-based violence, which is embedded in PNG society.

Local man Joshua Wari, who works in MAF's Ground Operations team, said: "The culture of the male figure – of being dominant in the community – is there because the man feels superior. He wants to dominate everything and unfortunately the wife submits to that. This is a challenge we have to fight, and it may take some time."

MAF PNG Country Director Todd Aebischer – who leads the air service which has been flying to the most inaccessible

parts of PNG for almost 75 years – said: "I am overjoyed to see how this [partnership] could potentially impact communities. MAF goes where others don't go – and now we can do something preventative instead of just responding to emergencies. With this [anti-violence] film, we can actually give communities an

alternative way to deal with disagreements.

Yanamlyn Yana concludes, "It is my hope that one day we can create a Garden of Eden for all the women of Papua New Guinea."

Courtesy MAF Australia © 2023

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

Anglican Mothers' Union Australia (AMUA) members in Gippsland are being encouraged to work with their Rector and community this year to raise awareness of the 16 Days of Activism against Gender Violence. Secretary/Treasurer of Gippsland AMUA Jan Misiurka says that wearing an orange or purple ribbon under their MU badge can be an opportunity for members to share with others about the 16 Days of Activism beginning on 25 November.

To find out more about the 16 Days of Activism, see page 7 of the October issue and visit unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite and <https://16daysgippsland.com.au/2023>





UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous shakes hands with President of the International Olympic Committee Thomas Bach following the signing of a memorandum of understanding at UN Women Headquarters in New York.

IOC and UN Women advancing gender equality through sport

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has renewed its partnership with UN Women, underlining each organisation's commitment to using sport to promote gender equality and to empower women and girls.

The new memorandum of understanding (MoU), which was signed by IOC President Thomas Bach and UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous during a meeting in New York, extends a partnership that began in 2012 and was extended for the first time in 2017. It will see the two organisations continuing to work together to maximise the value of sport in shaping social norms and reaching sustainable development outcomes that impact women's and girls' lives daily.

"Sport has the potential to transform lives, and the extension of our partnership with UN Women will help us to ensure that all women and girls have the opportunity to benefit from this unique power of sport", said President Bach. "With this new MoU, we will enhance our ongoing initiatives to encourage sports participation among girls and advance towards gender equality."

UN Women Executive Director Sima Bahous added, "Sport is an unrivalled asset to help us to end all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls and to ensure women's full and equal partici-

pation in leadership and decision-making. There can be no higher goal, and no greater win for us all, and we are honoured to be renewing our partnership with the IOC to work towards this target together."

Through the new agreement, the IOC and UN Women will focus on promoting gender-responsive policies, governance, and investment; promoting safe and equal opportunities for women and girls to benefit from sport, physical activity and physical education, and preventing gender-based violence; and strengthening advocacy, communication, collaborative insight generation and knowledge-sharing.

In addition, the IOC and UN Women will continue to build on the One Win Leads to Another (OWLA) program, launched by the two organisations as a legacy program from the Olympic Games Rio 2016, using sport as a tool to prevent violence against girls and women in Brazil.

Replicated in Argentina as a legacy of the Youth Olympic Games Buenos Aires 2018, the program is now being extended through the joint Gender Equality Bridging Project across Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia-Pacific. The project is aimed at supporting sport and community development organisations, and also policymakers, in using sport as a tool to advance gender equality and prevent gender-based violence.

The renewal of the MoU with UN Women highlights the continuous action taken by the IOC, as the leader of the Olympic Movement, to advance gender equality.

Significant progress has already been made on the field of play, with the Olympic Games Paris 2024 set to break further new ground as the first Games to achieve full gender parity, with the IOC allocating exactly the same number of quota places to female and male athletes.

Advances have also been made off the field of play, with the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020 reforms helping to increase female representation in IOC commissions from 20 per cent in 2013 to 50 per cent in 2022. Similarly, thanks to these reforms, around 40 per cent of the IOC members are now women. This is up from 21 per cent from before Olympic Agenda 2020.

The IOC is also working with its stakeholders to leverage the progress on the field of play to advance gender equality elsewhere. This includes launching targeted initiatives to increase the number of women represented in key leadership roles, and supporting stakeholders in adopting gender-equal and inclusive portrayal practices.

UN Women has been a vital partner for the IOC in developing and implementing its policies and activities aimed at creating positive social change and promoting gender empowerment through sport.

The IOC first signed an MoU with UN Women in 2012, providing a concrete example of how sport can help break down barriers and challenge gender norms, not only on the field of play, but also in the workplace, at home, in schools and in other areas of society.

In 2017, after five years of successful collaboration on women and sport, the IOC and UN Women renewed their commitment through a second MoU, which set out a vision to empower women and girls through sport while also increasing women's leadership and gender equality in the sports world.

The two organisations joined forces again in 2020, with the IOC taking a leadership role in the UN Women Sports for Generation Equality Initiative, encouraging members of the sports movement to join in order to accelerate progress on a set of common principles and aligned objectives to harness the power of sport in making gender equality a reality within and through sport.

UN Women

"Zan – Zendegi – Azadi". "Woman – Life – Freedom" Nobel Peace Prize to Iranian activist

The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2023 to Narges Mohammadi for her fight against the oppression of women in Iran and her fight to promote human rights and freedom for all. Her brave struggle has come with tremendous personal costs. Altogether, the regime has arrested her 13 times, convicted her five times, and sentenced her to a total of 31 years in prison and 154 lashes. Ms Mohammadi is still in prison.

In September 2022 a young Kurdish woman, Mahsa Jina Amini, was killed while in the custody of the Iranian morality police. Her killing triggered the largest political demonstrations against Iran's theocratic regime since it came to power in 1979. Under the slogan "Woman – Life – Freedom", hundreds of thousands of Iranians took part in peaceful protests against the authorities' brutality and oppression of women. The regime cracked down hard on the protests: more than 500 demonstrators were killed. Thousands were injured, including many who were blinded by rubber bullets fired by the police. At least 20,000 people were arrested and held in regime custody.

The motto adopted by the demonstrators suitably expresses the dedication and work of Narges Mohammadi.

In the 1990s, as a young physics student, Narges Mohammadi was already distinguishing herself as an advocate for equality and women's rights. After concluding her studies, she worked as an engineer as well as a columnist in various reform-minded newspapers. In 2003 she became involved with the Defenders of Human Rights Center in Tehran, an organisation founded by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Shirin Ebadi. In 2011, Ms Mohammadi was arrested for the first time and sentenced to many years of imprisonment for her efforts to assist incarcerated activists and their families.

Two years later, after her release on bail, Ms Mohammadi immersed herself in a campaign against use of the death penalty. Iran has long been among the countries that execute the highest proportion of their inhabitants annually. Just since January 2022, more than 860 prisoners have been punished by death in Iran.

Her activism against the death penalty led to the re-arrest of Ms Mohammadi in 2015, and to a sentence of additional years behind walls. Upon her return to prison, she began opposing the regime's systematic use of torture and sexualised violence against political prisoners, especially women, that is practised in Iranian prisons.

Last year's wave of protests became known to the political prisoners held inside

the notorious Evin prison in Tehran. Once again, Ms Mohammadi assumed leadership. From prison she expressed support for the demonstrators and organised solidarity actions among the other inmates. The prison authorities responded by imposing even stricter conditions. Ms Mohammadi was prohibited from receiving calls and visitors. She nevertheless managed to smuggle out an article, which the *New York Times* published on the one-year anniversary of Mahsa Jina Amini's killing. The message was, "The more of us they lock up, the stronger we become." From captivity, Ms Mohammadi has helped to ensure that the protests have not ebbed out.

Narges Mohammadi is a woman, a human rights advocate, and a freedom fighter. In awarding her this year's Nobel Peace Prize, the Norwegian Nobel Committee wishes to honour her courageous fight for human rights, freedom and democracy in Iran. This year's Peace Prize also recognises the hundreds of thousands of people who, in the preceding year, have demonstrated against the theocratic regime's policies of discrimination and oppression targeting women. Only by embracing equal rights for all can the world achieve the fraternity between nations that Alfred Nobel sought to promote. The award to Narges Mohammadi follows a long tradition in which the Norwegian Nobel Committee has awarded the Peace Prize to those working to advance social justice, human rights and democracy. These are important preconditions for lasting peace.

nobelprize.org



Narges Mohammadi

Woman

She fights for women against systematic discrimination and oppression.

Life

She supports women's struggle for the right to live full and dignified lives. This struggle across Iran has been met with persecution, imprisonment, torture and even death.

Freedom

She fights for freedom of expression and the right of independence, and against rules requiring women to remain out of sight and to cover their bodies. The freedom demands expressed by demonstrators apply not only to women, but to the entire population.

Service of Lament for Palestine and Israel

Hosted by the Sabeel Ecumenical Liberation Theology Center in Jerusalem, A Service of Lament for Palestine and Israel was held on 12 October.

Dr Munib Younan, a past Lutheran bishop of the Holy Land, opened the service, calling for an end to hate and violence at last. "In the midst of the ongoing violence and war, I want to assure everyone that we solidly believe in the sanctity of life," he said. "Our country is stricken today by the sin of violence, the sin of hatred."

Younan reflected that those praying were meeting with bleeding hearts and cries in the face of an unjust world.

"Enough hatred, enough dehumanization, enough violence, enough incitement," he said. "We will never allow hatred to consume us."

Younan called for an end to the occupation. "It's time to end violence," he said.

Catholic Patriarch Emeritus Michel Sabbah offered a reflection on the terrible destruction of the war, including the death and the forced immigration of thousands. "Lord, we have no peace," he said. "We put before you the suffering of all, Israeli and Palestinian."

Sabbah and the hundreds following the service mourned together. "We do not know how this war will end," he said. "In the mind of the powerful, the oppressed should keep silent, not even say, 'I am oppressed.'"

Sabbah added that he believes that all Israelites and Palestinians are children of God. "I believe we cannot remain in the same situation as before: strong and weak, oppressors and oppressed," he said. "We pray for the strong and for the weak."

The way of non-violence respects and protects the humanity and the human dignity of other people, said Ateek. "It even protects the dignity of our enemies," he said.

He also prayed for peace. "Lord, change the hearts and minds of all, and make this land again a land of redemption for all who live their daily lives," he said.

Rev'd Dr Naim Ateek prayed for God to look with compassion on the whole human family. "My friends, do you remember 1987, those of us who are older?" he asked. " Hamas started in Gaza."

At that time, Sabeel chose the way of non-violence, and Hamas chose the way of the armed struggle.

"As Christians, we chose the way of nonviolence because we believe it is the way of Jesus," he said. "He told us to love our neighbor as we love ourselves."

Jesus taught us also to love our enemies, which is very difficult to do, added Ateek. "But we believe what Jesus

said, and it is a challenge and continues to be a challenge to us."

The way of non-violence respects and protects the humanity and the human dignity of other people, said Ateek. "It even protects the dignity of our enemies," he said. "In spite of all the killings, we still believe that we can live with our Israeli brothers and sisters, but Israel has to recognize the legitimate rights of our Palestinian people."

We can live in a two-state solution that will eventually lead to a one-state solution, Ateek urged. "We would like to see the achievement of a just peace," he said.

As he urged people to continue to work and pray for the triumph of peace and justice, participants followed by holding candles and observing a moment of silence for all those suffering in the war.

World Council of Churches



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Becoming a believer through the Bible

■ Ray Hodges

I was baptised in the Anglican Church as a toddler, and sometimes attended Sunday school, but I didn't get confirmed as a teenager – this was a time when every-day jobs on our dairy farm limited church attendance. Neighbours and high school friends did regularly attend, but my getting educated as far as possible consumed our time and aspirations.

On becoming successful in research, a time of unrequited love, though short-lived, prompted my reassessment of life priorities.

During the last year of my PhD, a colleague helped by introducing me to classical music – and when first hearing Beethoven's ninth symphony, the transition from the fourth to the final movement touched my heart. This interplay between harmony and discord led onto the choral part bursting forth with *Ode to Joy*.

About the same time, I met a student who displayed a natural joy in all her actions, so I was curious to find the key. It became clear she was living a devoted Christian life, but when querying her commitment, she cut me short: "we cannot possibly discuss the Bible, you haven't ever read it!" To my logical science-oriented mind, I had to admit "how true."

Next year, on passing my PhD oral, I was granted an ideal fellowship position in England. Still being single, during the month-long voyage I started my private study of the Bible. Using a Gideon's King James edition, I resolved to read some of that old English text each day until something made sense. Sometimes this took only a verse, but usually more – sometimes chapters. That routine persisted and for the first English summer holidays I planned a trip to Scotland with friends.

My research supervisor was adamant that before the trip I should read Tim Dinsdale's 1961 book *The Loch Ness Monster*. This book systematically and objectively looks at witnesses' stories and photos. During our trip, we drove the length of the loch. I put my hand in the black water;

visibility was less than 15 centimetres. This loch is narrow – 200 metres deep and 30 kilometres long – making detection of suspected creatures challenging. Our time was limited, and I recall thinking, "I have read about the rare sightings, but if I don't see the monster in the next 10 minutes, we need to move on."

Later that day, my daily reading in the Bible happened to be John's account of doubting Thomas, when the resurrected Jesus says, "You believe because you have seen, blessed are those who believe but have not seen."

The parallel of being at Loch Ness struck home. Should I believe the written account of witnesses, not having seen the monster myself in my short time there? Even if not, having now read that Gideon's Bible a number of times, and realising that many social and meaning-of-life questions were already covered there, it took only a small step to become a believer. What I had read and understood was true enough, and even though so much was still not clear, I just accepted this by faith.

What next? Well, being long absent from church, I went to a recommended local Anglican church and joined their adult confirmation class at the age of 28. Not having had my arm twisted to become a Christian, my faith isn't troubled by doubts. Our local church is appropriately named St Thomas.

Ray Hodges is a retired scientist who attends St Thomas' Bunyip.

The Gippsland Anglican

Q: Do you have a faith journey you'd like to share?



A: We'd love to hear from you!

Contact
editor@gippslandanglicans.org.au
or 0407 614 661

Tortoises, bears and fathers

■ The Rev'd Daniel Lowe

One of the most familiar voices of my childhood is that of David Attenborough. I remember being captivated by *Life on Earth*, the natural history television documentary series that really launched him into the public eye. While I did not go on to pursue a career in the sciences, I have retained a love and fascination for the natural world and the wonders of God's creation.

This year at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School we had lots of fun in our junior school chapels at the Warragul campus exploring some intriguing animal facts and asking what they might teach us about God and about life. We looked at such things as chameleon tongues and husky metabolism – and a couple of heavyweights: the brown bear and the giant tortoise. They have very little in common beyond their impressive weigh-ins (up to 300 kg), but they can offer important reminders when it comes to dealing with 'heavy' things in life.

It is hard to get through life without experiencing the pain of grief, the anxiety of the unknown or the wounds of failure. Sadly, many young people are already carrying the weight of these realities.

Things like sadness, loss and fear can feel like heavy burdens at times, and many of us carry these weights through life as invisible loads that weigh us down. Sometimes we carry these loads in secret and other times we display them for all to see, but the reality is that we all carry some sort of baggage. It is hard to get through life without experiencing the pain of grief, the anxiety of

the unknown or the wounds of failure. Sadly, many young people are already carrying the weight of these realities.

So, what does this have to do with tortoises and bears? To put it simply, heavy things in life require time like the tortoise and courage like the bear.

A giant tortoise can live to be well over 100 years old, and it doesn't do anything in a hurry. Its average walking speed is around 300 metres per hour and it sleeps for around 16 hours a day. There is no rushing. The same is true of us when we are dealing with life's heavy burdens. There is no rushing it. In a culture that loves instant results and quick fixes, this is not an easy reality to come to grips with. Young people need to learn (and many older ones need reminding) that feeling sad or worried at times is normal; it isn't necessarily a bad thing. Sometimes we have to accept that the feeling is not going to go away quickly, and we need to just sit with it.

At the same time, we cannot let the burdens of worry or grief stop us from living life. And this is where the brown bear comes in. There are few things more courageous than a brown bear defending its cubs. It will take on anything! In the same way, it can take courage for us to face the realities of grief and loss; courage to acknowledge our fears and worries; courage to press on in the face of these hardships. At the same time as helping young people to accept the pain of loss and the fear of the unknown, adults need to equip them with the courage to face them. This may be one of the biggest challenges of parenthood – to show genuine compassion for your child's struggles while resisting the desire to rescue them from a burden that is theirs to carry.

A beautiful picture of this can be found in the story of Derek Redmond. Derek was a British sprinter who specialised in the 400-metre race. In the

1992 Barcelona Olympics, he achieved the fastest time of the first round and won his quarter final. In the semi-final, Redmond also started well, but as he hit the back straight, about 250 metres from the finish, his hamstring suddenly tore. Redmond hobbled before stopping and falling to the ground in pain. Stretchers were brought over to him, but Redmond decided he wanted to finish the race. After hobbling along the track, he was quickly joined on the track by his father, Jim Redmond. In an act of brave defiance, Jim and Derek completed the lap of the track together, with Derek leaning on his father's shoulder to help him.

Life's heavy burdens require time and courage, but the best news is that we don't have to carry them alone. The image of Derek's father supporting him as they hobbled to the finish line is for me a picture of God's desire to walk with us through the toughest moments

in life. And it is in this knowledge that we find the courage to carry on. In the words of the Psalmist:

God is our shelter and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not be afraid, even if the earth is shaken and mountains fall into the ocean depths;

even if the seas roar and rage, and the hills are shaken by the violence.

The Lord Almighty is with us.

(Psalm 46:1-4 and verse 7)

May we each know the comfort of God's presence as we journey together through the travails of life.

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



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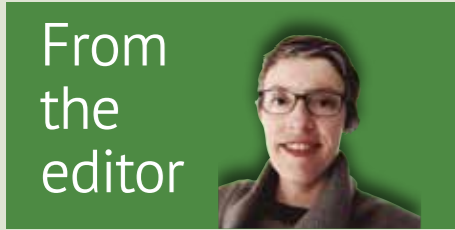
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I don't know about you, but sometimes – and particularly recently – I need to take a break from the news. It's often bad news, featuring violence, inequity, destruction, division ... the list goes on. The constant exposure to these stories compounds over time, as do thoughts of the inevitable miseries, and eventually I just feel powerless and sad.

“Even though looking at what's wrong and who's accountable is crucial for a well-run democracy, ... our [ABC] journalists are also taking a constructive look at stories – what might be going right, how communities and groups are responding to problems to craft solutions.” This is how ABC journalist Sabra Lane describes *The Bright Side*, her regular newsletter about good things happening in Australia and further afield.

Sabra's newsletters have featured stories of success, ingenious solutions, individuals overcoming adversity and communities coming together. She has fallen silent in recent weeks; I do hope I will see her newsletter again sometime.

TGA, an antidote for bad news

So as well as taking the occasional break from the news, I remind myself that if so many good stories can come out of one diocese, then the world must be buzzing with the makings of many more.

As the year draws to a close, I've been reflecting on my four years as TGA editor and realising that a good many of the positive stories I read are the ones that I publish. In this issue alone you can read about students fundraising in the World's Greatest Shave (p. 9) and being pen pals with parish members (p. 8), the rich collaborations between the Gippsland Diocese and Life FM to produce six months of Gippsland Anglicans on Air (p. 6), and the good work and big adventures of Jennifer and Geoff Boer during their time as missionaries in Papua New Guinea (p. 13).

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Rembrandt's Eyes

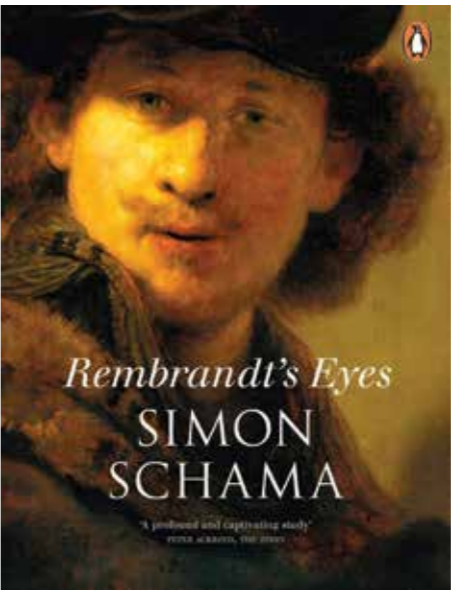
Simon Schama
Penguin, 2000

■ Richard Prideaux

Simon Schama is an amazing polymath and historian of art and European culture. Born in Britain of Jewish parents, Schama has particular expertise in the history of the Jews, and very few rival his detailed knowledge of Dutch, French, British and American history. He is extraordinarily erudite, and his detailed wisdom and research have at least one commentator calling him a walking thesaurus.

Rembrandt's Eyes is a lavishly produced and exceptionally detailed account of the lives of two artists: Rubens and Rembrandt. It is a massive read of well over 700 pages, with beautifully reproduced reproductions of all the major works of these two exceptional artists. The title refers to the exceptional and extraordinary care taken by Rembrandt with the eyes of the figures in his paintings.

Alongside the artists' stories is one of the traumatic and tragic outworking of



the 30-year warfare in the 17th century between Catholic Spain and Protestant Netherlands, with other European nations including Britain playing intermittent roles on both sides – depending on where national gains could be made.

The constant destructive horror of Protestant–Catholic warfare in 17th-century Europe makes for profoundly disturbing reading, as does the desperate

search of European Jews for safe haven, a state that was rarely long-lasting. It is difficult to read of Catholic–Protestant division on the one hand and of equally bitter and hard-fought divisions between Protestant denominations of various traditions and leaders on the other – especially the punishments handed out to losers on both sides.

The lives of Rubens and Rembrandt also make for thought-provoking reading – their exceptional and brilliant successes and the difficult and demanding requirements of their masters. Rubens' life ended in considerable power and wealth while Rembrandt died in poverty – although history will record him as perhaps the finest artist of them all.

I was profoundly moved by Schama's analysis of this tragic time in Christian internecine theological development; equally, I was stunned by the complexity and demanding nature of the artistic enterprise. The exceptional gifts that artists bring to our senses and our world have the capacity to change the way we look at things, and there is no doubt in my mind that the study of art can richly deepen our understanding of Christian faith.

Coming up

Abbey events – see pages 5 and 8

Rediscovering the Sacramental Imagination

In-parish retreat,
15–17 November.
St Thomas' Bunyip.
Contact: Rev'd Ken Parker
5976 1634.

Advent Conversation

23 November, 10 am.
The Abbey Raymond Island.
See page 5 for details.

16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence

25 November – 10 December.
unwomen.org/en/what-we-do/ending-violence-against-women/unite.

Nine lessons and carols service

17 December, 5 pm.
In the garden at St Thomas' Bunyip.

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Prayers for peace

A recent Service of Peace at Nar Nar Goon focused on the reading from Philippians 4.7:

**“The peace of God which surpasses all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”**

Lighting a tray of candles, we prayed for peace in the world, in the Middle East, in the hearts of all those feeling bruised and grieving over the result of the Referendum, in our communities and families and in our own hearts.

We discussed how world peace begins with us receiving and sharing the peace of God
in our own hearts and then sharing that peace with the circle of people we come into contact with.

By doing so we create a ripple effect – for Peace, like Love and Joy, is contagious and something we all desire.

Rev'd Cathy Turnbull

The Gippsland Anglican

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