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The Gippsland Anglican

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Les Ridge

Abbey Feast fundraiser a gastronomic treat

Bishop Richard with newly commissioned Abbey Director
Dr Cath Connelly and honorary Abbey chaplain Rev'd Jeff Berger

■ Sue Fordham

The annual Abbey feast fundraiser just seems to get better each year.

Although the late August weather was desultory, the atmosphere in the A-frame was anything but.

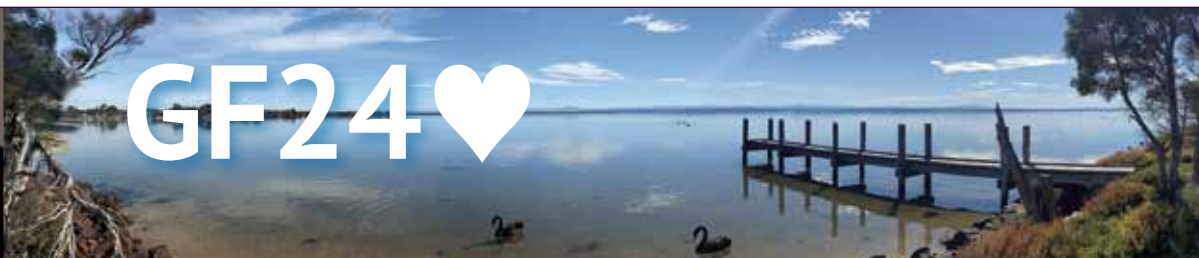
Tables identically decorated with crisp white linens, black serviettes with golden detail, and yellow spring flowers, made for a joyful and eye-catching sight.

The day began with Bishop Richard's commissioning

of Abbey Director Dr Cath Connelly and honorary Abbey chaplain The Rev'd Jeff Berger. Their appointments were met with enthusiastic acclaim by the 90-odd feasters.

And then came the food, lovingly prepared and served by the Mirboo North catering team, led by Lynne Beaty.

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I write this reflection on Holy Cross day, 14 September. The feast of Holy Cross commemorates St Helena's discovery of the true cross in about 326 CE, when excavations were being undertaken at the direction of Bishop Marcarius of Jerusalem in order to try and locate Calvary.

Helena was the mother of Emperor Constantine, who subsequently had the Church of the Holy Sepulchre built over the site – a pilgrimage destination for thousands of Christians each year to the present day. The Church was dedicated on 13 September 335, and on 14 September the cross was brought outside so that clergy and laity could venerate it.

Today, the festival of the Holy Cross unites Christians from many traditions – including Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican – in that same attitude of adoration. Jesuit theologian Petavius built on the distinction made at the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) between veneration and worship (which is to be offered only to God), explaining that devotion expressed before an image or 'type'

passes to the person or 'prototype', such that one who adores the sign honours the person signified.

All good stories are true; some of them actually happened. It has been said that enough pieces of the true cross were distributed in the centuries after Helena's discovery to build Noah's ark! Any 'apocryphal' aspects of this tradition, however, ought not diminish the 'truthfulness', the spiritual value of such a feast day in the life of the Church catholic, or universal.

Good Friday 2024 falls on 29 March, almost six months hence. The Parish of Westernport in this Diocese has created a website, heartofthecross.au, through which it hopes to invite Christians from all around the world to be gathered to the cross on Good Friday next, much as those first pilgrims were so gathered on 14 September 335 CE.

Parish Priest Colin Oakley and Warden Sharron Lane asked me to write a commendation for the initiative, which is reproduced in the box below.

Whatever form your personal devotions

may take – 'personal' but never 'private', for what we choose to venerate always has an outward, even political dimension – the cross of Christ must surely be the constant reference point of our Christian walk; the landmark and 'test' of our discipleship; the homing beacon of our spirituality.

Days in the calendar like Holy Cross and Good Friday bring the cross into particular focus for us, but our whole lives are to be 'cruciform', cross-shaped, after the pattern of Christ whose risen body still bears its marks and who, as the Crucified One, is the heart of the Church's proclamation (1 Cor 22-24).

I encourage you to look at the website our sisters and brothers at Westernport have developed, and to ponder prayerfully what the sign of the cross signifies for you in your daily pilgrimage. What kind of mirror does it hold up to you and to me? And where is its light leading us deeper into life?

Grace and peace,

+RM

Parish of Westernport Good Friday 2024 initiative – Bishop Richard's commendation

The Anglican Parish of Westernport, in Gippsland, Victoria – in the south-east corner of Australia – is calling Christians of all traditions, from all places, to draw near to the cross on Good Friday 2024.

Since Pilate first wrote his inscription above it, the cross has been an ambiguous – even, as its Latin form *crux* suggests, a problematic – sign.

For those who have suffered at the hands of the church, for victims of violence, for political prisoners, for the dispossessed, to name but few, the cross may be a painful reminder of past trauma or abuse.

For Christians, the cross stands as a sign of divine solidarity with those wrongfully made to bear the cost of others' lust for power, those who have innocently endured shame, those who grieve the untimely loss of their beloved; whatever being human asks us to endure, God-in-Christ-crucified bears every burden with us.

Martin Luther reminds us that the cross tests everything. It holds a mirror to our shared brokenness, and shines a lamp on the transformative if costly strength of 'walking in our integrity' (Ps 26:11).

Above all, it reveals that love which reaches from cradle to grave and beyond, such that where life has been lost, there life is to be found.

I echo the Parish of Westernport's invitation to draw near to the foot of the cross – in praise, prayer, repentance and adoration – daily in our Christian walk, and especially on Good Friday next. Because all our theology starts there, we need to 'stand under' the cross in order to begin to 'understand' it.

Across our differences, and in the midst of our shortcomings – individually and institutionally – may we rediscover the depth and breadth of meaning conveyed by this inexhaustibly luminous sign of God's love for the world.



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

■ Pauline Davies

The Drouin Anglican Women's Fellowship, together with the Mothers' Union, combined their efforts to organise an afternoon high tea held at Drouin Anglican Church on Wednesday 9 August. The event was advertised among parishioners, with the inclusion that everyone should dress up for the occasion.

The afternoon was a great success, with 35 people attending. Several tables were set up in the gathering area with matching tablecloths laid out with china cups, saucers and matching plates. Delicate sausage rolls, as well as assorted sandwiches and small cakes, were served, along with tea and coffee.

During the tea, a quiz was handed out to each table, with questions about the history of the church and Gippsland. These raised much discussion, and the answers caused plenty of banter and laughter among the guests. Those on the table that answered the most questions correctly received a box of chocolates to share between them.

Two other prizes, one each for the best-dressed lady and man, were won by Wendy Shiels and The Rev'd Canon Jim Connelly.

The high tea raised \$320, to be donated to not-for-profit organisation The Crossing, which is currently celebrating 31 years of service to the people of Drouin. Just a few doors along from the church, and run by volunteers and members of the Combined Churches of Drouin, The Crossing is a drop-in centre and food bank. It provides a safe



History and high fashion at Drouin high tea

Wendy Shiels and Rev'd Canon Jim Connelly, prize-winners of the 'best dressed' competition

place where everyone is welcome, and offers emergency food to those in need. In addition to these services, The Crossing sells religious books, diaries, calendars, cards and gifts, and offers weekly Bible study classes.

The high tea was very successful – so much so that it would be great to run as an annual event. Everyone enjoyed the company, the laughter and the delightful refreshments served, and we raised funds for a well-deserved cause.

Abbey Feast fundraiser a gastronomic treat

Continued from page 1

To begin, there was creamy cauliflower and blue cheese soup or cream of celery and orange soup. At my table, the consensus was that both soups were nothing less than brilliant.

The main course was either chicken fillets with olives, tomatoes and capers or Atlantic salmon baked in salsa verde. Both were served with seasonal vegetables. Verdict: 'yum!'

And then came the desserts. I had the lemon, lime and coconut pudding, which was delicate, tangy and velvety. The sticky chocolate date pudding with butterscotch sauce must have been wonderful, judging by the expressions on the faces of those tasting it.

The Mirboo North caterers are a seriously professional, quality outfit and provided us all with a feast to remember.



Guests enjoyed a day of dining, fellowship and music at August's Abbey Feast

Cath Connelly treated us to some wonderful harp music, finishing with Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah*, which drew audience participation and hand-stinging applause.

This year's Abbey Feast was a great and memorable day, not least because over \$4000 was raised in support of the ongoing ministry of The Abbey.

■ Pauline Davies

A special announcement was made at the end of the service at Christ Church Drouin on 13 August, when the church wardens presented longstanding parishioner Max Hine with a trophy acknowledging his commitment to the Drouin Anglican Church.

The trophy was inscribed with the following words: "Presented to Max Hine with grateful thanks for all your years of service in so many different ways. The Parish of Drouin. As a result of your ministry, others will give glory to God ... and they will pray for you with deep affection (2 Cor 9:13-14)."

Max and his wife, Ila, commenced their worship at Drouin in 1977, when they were both part of the choir. From then on, Max took responsibility for a number of duties connected with the church, including Rector's Warden, parish councillor, parish verger and the church treasurer for over 20 years. Max was always there when needed, and his list of duties grew over time as he prepared rosters, mowed the church lawns, changed banners in the church and flags on the flagpole outside as and when needed. If anyone wanted support preparing for any occasion, Max was the person to contact for advice and assistance.

Ila was a huge support to Max, helping him when needed, decorating the church with flowers and was also on committees herself. Ila was also thanked and was presented with a gift of flowers for her contribution to church events.

Max and Ila have now retired from their many years of charitable labours, serving the Lord and his Church with grace and goodness. They are now happy to attend church purely as parishioners and keep in contact with everyone. The wardens, together with the congregation, wished them well and hope that having more time together in the future will create more memories for them and for their family.



**Grace and goodness:
Drouin offers grateful
thanks to Max and
Ila Hine**

Our commitment to a safe church

The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland is committed to ensuring our centres of worship and outreach are safe places for all, and it does not tolerate abuse or misconduct by church workers.

If you have any concerns, for yourself or someone you know, please contact our Professional Standards Office for a confidential discussion.

Telephone: (03) 9416 1008 or 1800 135 246

Email: contact@kooyoora.org.au

julie@kooyoora.org.au

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The Gippsland Anglican

Cathedral celebrates creation with creativity

Alan Rowe created several cross-stiches including *Brilliant Butterfly Celebration* (top right). He holds one of Greg Hanlon's stone letter carvings. Dean Keren Terpstra's fabric and thread creation, *Time, and Again*, is also shown

■ Jenny Batten

The local community and St Paul's Cathedral in Sale recently enjoyed an arts festival showcasing local and invited talent in a diverse range of media. The art show – themed 'New Heaven, New Earth' – was held at the Cathedral from 20 August to 1 September. The previous arts festival was in 2021, so it was time for us to celebrate our creative selves.

The participating artists were encouraged to listen for the words "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1-7) and consider what their legacies might be. This was inspired by the legacy of a local artist and art teacher, Mavis Jennings, a member of St Paul's who recently turned 102, and has lived a life filled with creativity.

Submitted artworks included textiles, stitching, painting, collage, photography and some special works of stone letter carving by Greg Hanlon. Curated by Julie Mielke, the works displayed the diversity and beauty of creation. One artist, Alan, shared his love for cross-stitching and how God's creation is revealed.

Another artist, Julie, created an artwork of flowers. She said "Gardening has been a lifelong joy and passion. I love planting Australian natives that have longlasting flowers and are drought tolerant. My garden gives me great pleasure and

I hope to pass this love of growing plants to my grandchildren."

Workshops in contemplative photography were led by Peter Batten, a woodwork workshop was led by Claire Flack and a slow-stitching workshop was led by Jenny Batten and Kate Campbell. Participants had

opportunities to experience creativity, and to enjoy conversation and connection with others. They also discovered something of themselves as they were encouraged to pick up a needle and thread, a camera or a hammer and to have a go at creating something new.



Gwen Dwyer (left) made a tissue box cover with workshop leader Claire Flack



Winter, 2018



Autumn, 2023

The golden elms on the nature strip at Christ Church Drouin in winter 2018 and autumn 2023

Libby Willems

Six trees hold an important story

■ Libby Willems

Remembrance Day in 2018 was no usual day. In that year, the world stopped to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Armistice of The Great War, when peace (of a sort) had been restored.

On that day in Drouin, as happens every year on Remembrance Day and on Anzac Day, a large procession of people walked up from the commemoration at the Drouin War Memorial Park, past Christ Church to the RSL rooms for a restorative cuppa and sausage roll with the Diggers.

The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding, our Rector at the time, started thinking about the importance of this bi-annual micro-pilgrimage from the Memorial Park for the people of Drouin. Having a passion for all things botanical, Dean had already noticed the mature elm trees in the Memorial Park and a cluster of young trees that had been planted when the park was upgraded in recent years. The lawn-covered nature strip in front of Christ Church caught Dean's imagination and perhaps seemed to be a blank canvas just waiting for a vegetative

upgrade. But not just any old thing – what was needed was vegetation with a purpose, a story. Symbolism.

Dean found that around 60,000 Australian lives were lost in The Great War, including 66 men from Drouin. The number six began appearing over and over again. In the 14 years from 1919 to 1933, another 38,000 Australian war veterans lost their lives, most likely due to complications from their experiences in the war. The number 38,000 is not too far from 6000 multiplied by 6. That was it! Six trees were going to help us remember the sacrifices of The Great War.

Golden elms seemed to be the best choice – similar to the elm trees in the park, but different in hue to distinguish them from the others.

Dean liaised with Baw Baw Shire Council's Parks & Gardens Coordinator and gained permission for the trees to be planted in the winter months before the 100th commemoration. The Shire Council purchased the trees and were responsible

for the planting to be sure that the trees would not compromise any underground infrastructure. Dean garnered the help of some younger parishioners to help prepare the nature strip for the planting.

On 11 November 2018, an outdoor service was held at Christ Church Drouin to pray for the fallen service men and women, those that were injured, and those whose loved ones did not return. The six golden elms were dedicated and blessed, that they may always serve as a reminder of The Great War, lest we forget.

Almost five years on, the trees are growing well. Since their planting, Gippsland Anglicans have deepened their commitment to action on climate, with a decision made at Gippsland Synod 2022. These trees now also remind me of our obligation to protect and care for the natural environment.

For information about Drouin's trees, including several walks, visit facebook.com/DrouinsTrees/about.



Giving a gift that lasts

Bequests to Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

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

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

Always consult a solicitor when preparing or amending your will.

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16 Days of Activism to end gender-based violence

■ Anglicare Victoria

Late November sees the start of the 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence to raise awareness and generate action to end violence against women and girls in communities around the world.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is an annual international campaign that kicks off on 25 November, the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, and runs until 10 December, Human Rights Day.

Anglicare Victoria (AV) works with children, young people and families. AV works to prevent harm and empower people to overcome challenges and achieve

their full potential. AV understands family violence and offers safe and confidential help for both the victims and the adults or adolescents who use violence. Expert staff are trained in working with families impacted by family violence, and we provide safe environments for all individuals. Some of these programs available in Gippsland are Financial Counselling, Gippsland Community Legal Services, TRAK Forward and Caring Dads.

Gippsland Community Legal Service (GCLS) provides legal information, advice, referral and representation to disadvantaged and vulnerable individuals, families and groups within the community. GCLS offers



duty lawyer services to those affected by family violence at all courts across Gippsland. GCLS can provide advice and information on a range of legal matters including family violence, family law, tenancy and fines.

The Financial Counselling program provides specialist family violence financial counselling support to victim survivors. A financial counsellor can offer non-judgmental, free and confidential financial information, counselling and advocacy. This service is available to anyone with debt or financial problems that are negatively affecting their financial security, mental or physical health.

TRAK Forward works with adult and children victim-survivors of family violence. TRAK Forward offers a range of both joint and separate therapeutic interventions, using a trauma-informed, phase-based treatment framework to aid families in their recovery journey as recommended by the Family Violence Royal Commission. The Inner Gippsland TRAK Forward program is delivered through a partnership between Anglicare Victoria and The Salvation Army.

Caring Dads is a 17-week family violence group work intervention program for fathers who have neglected, physically or emotionally abused, or exposed their children to family violence. The program recognises the harm that children can experience through exposure to family violence. It aims to increase the safety and wellbeing of children and mothers by helping fathers recognise the impact of their abusive behaviour, stop that behaviour and improve their parenting.

If anyone is experiencing family violence they can contact The Orange Door (orangedoor.vic.gov.au) on 1800 319 354 (inner Gippsland) or 1800 512 358 (outer Gippsland) during business hours, or 1800RESPECT outside of business hours. Anyone in immediate danger should call 000 for emergency assistance. GCLS can be contacted on 1800 004 402 or via gcls.org.au.

For more information about these programs or to arrange guest speakers to any parish events contact Anglicare Victoria (5135 9555, michelle.taranto@anglicarevic.org.au).

A Wellspring Iona Pilgrimage: Healing of the land in Gunaikurnai Country (Gippsland)

Wednesday 18th October
at The Abbey, Gragin (Raymond Island)
9.30am - 3.15pm
Free but bookings essential
BYO Lunch

OPEN INVITATION TO A DAY OF REFLECTION - LISTENING FOR HEALING ON RAYMOND ISLAND

- Join the Pilgrimage group on Raymond Island for one day of reflection
- Morning prayer at 9.30 with the Leader of the Iona Community
- Join a reflective pilgrimage to significant places for First Nations people and later comers on the Island
- Contribute to a Care for Creation Community art work
- Join in conversations between Ruth Harvey Iona Community Leader, First Nations Priest Rev. Kathy Dalton, Abbey director Cath Connelly and Bishop Richard Treloar as they reflect upon:

"What does the interweaving of spirituality and our understanding of the world and our place in it look like from Indigenous and Celtic/Christian perspectives? How does this help us to live authentically in a consumer society which is destroying our planet?"

- End the day with a time of Blessing

For important information including ferry details
and bookings visit
www.wellspring-community.com/new-events-1

A welcome and welcoming spring at The Abbey

A glorious redgum on The Abbey grounds

■ Dr Cath Connelly

October at The Abbey is beautiful! This is my first season of Spring here on the island and I am daily delighted at the bursting forth of life. Baby birds, joeys emerging from their pouches, native flowers on shrubs that last month were only showing leaves. Such abundance of life; such blessings.

It is into this beauty that we welcome members from the

Iona community in Scotland and their Australian First Nations sisters and brothers who journey with them. May they see The Abbey as we do – a place offering deep pathways into being present through hospitality, spirituality and our environment. May each of us who visit this place pause to notice the One who is so present here.

Save the date



OCTOBER

15– 19: Wellspring Iona Pilgrimage – Healing the Land in Gunaikurnai Country

Due to maintenance, the Raymond Island ferry is not available 2–22 October. Those visiting The Abbey can use the water taxi but will not be able to drive onto the Island.

NOVEMBER

3–5: Men's spirituality retreat

8: The Creation Windows through Literature, Art and Music: *The Sea*. Sue Fordham & June Treadwell

10–12: Felt-making retreat

14: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. 'Different Ways of Praying'

17– 19: 'Woman, Why Are You Weeping?' retreat

23: Ecumenical Conversation

25: Spirituality of the Seasons – Cathedral Quiet Day @ The Abbey

DECEMBER

13: *Hush*. A retreat day on the Island. Spirituality of Music

14: Celtic music session

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



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



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.

Developing positive connections for bullying prevention



Laini (Year 2), Ava (Prep) and Paygan-Lily (Year 4) write their thoughts on connections at the St Paul's Traralgon campus

■ Paula Walland

Mindful of educating students about the importance of kindness and identifying the signs of bullying, educators at St Paul's Anglican Grammar School enthusiastically advocated the National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA) to students.

Leading up to the day, the Warragul Junior School Student Representative Council (SRC) made beautiful orange bows

with pins for other students to wear to demonstrate their support for the cause. Each class made friendship paper chains, which the SRC joined together to form a giant paper chain, symbolic of friendships and connections.

At the Traralgon Junior School, students demonstrated their support by adorning themselves with crazy hairstyles and decked themselves out in bold blue

and orange colours. They wrote their commitment pledges to grow connections to prevent bullying and displayed them on the school's front fence to extend positivity into the wider community.

The NDA was a great day for students to delve into learning strategies to prevent bullying and reflect on the wellbeing of others by developing positive connections.

More hospital beds for PNG, thanks to St John's Bairnsdale

■ Lindy Driver

What fabulous people are the parishioners at St John's Bairnsdale.

After only a weeks' notice by email and the pew sheet, \$4200 was raised to buy 42 hospital beds for Popendetta Hospital in Papua New Guinea.

I was truly amazed – although I shouldn't have been! How these people listened to the Spirit of God and gave small and some larger amounts. All called gave as led by the Spirit. How very proud I am of them.

Now I need to raise around \$7000 to send the beds to PNG via container. It would be great if people around the Diocese would assist with it.

Newton College will now have the theological college, and the nursing and teaching college, all within the same



The parishioners of St John's Bairnsdale

compound. This is a massive change for education in the region.

Please pray and give as called.

Donations can be made directly to the Gippsland Diocese for Newton College at gippslandanglicans.org.au/donate.



Lay Readers at the Drouin seminar

Rich and rewarding learning for Lay Readers

■ Jenny Ramage

"Empowering", "encouraging" and "uplifting" were among the words used by participants at this year's seminars for Licensed Lay Readers at Sale Cathedral and Christ Church Drouin.

The compulsory annual seminars are organised by the Lay Reader chaplains, Rev'ds Tony and Jenny Wicking and Rev'd Judith Lake, and are usually attended by Bishop Richard.

This year, The Rev'd Dr Tim Gaden, Chaplain of Gippsland Grammar School, led a workshop on analysis of the lectionary readings to aid in writing sermons, and The Rev'd John Webster overviewed the use of the Prayer Book as a foundation for liturgy.

Participants worked together to plan a service for a specific occasion or congregation. They were asked how they would use the Prayer Book, Scripture, music and other resources to plan the service.

Lay Reader Denise Vranek from Avon parish said "The coordination and preparation for the Lay Readers seminars leads to and results in very worthwhile days of support, problem solving and inspiring spiritual enlightenment. Lay Readers return to their parishes feeling valued, re-enthused, and keen to apply new knowledge and techniques."

"These seminars are a very useful learning experience and an enjoyable opportunity to meet with Lay Readers from other parishes."

Sandy Ridge, Parish of Bass/Phillip Island

"I found the seminar enlightening and uplifting. Many things about preaching which had previously troubled me fell into place with the provision of a few simple tips from Tim Gaden. And group planning for different types of services was also an eye opener and very helpful. All in all a great day!"

Alison Goetz, Parish of Bairnsdale

"Spending valuable time together in the seminar with other Lay Readers and with our church leaders and mentors is strengthening, empowering and valuable for adding to our skill base as well as improving knowledge and giving confidence and validation to our work and purpose in the life of our individual churches and ministry."

Lyndell Parker, Parish of Westernport

"The last Lay Reader day was one of the best I have experienced. We started with a very reflective time of prayer and then Tim Gaden gave an informative talk on how to analyse a section of scripture by looking for the good news and then the bad news and explaining how that is helpful. It proved to be very helpful when we moved into groups to look at different pieces of scripture. I now find myself looking at readings in a different way. We all shared our work and activities within our parishes, which gave encouragement and new ideas for all."

Kath Grandy, Parish of Lakes Entrance

Have your say in TGA!

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

* Please include your name and suburb for publication.



Letters may be edited in the interests of clarity or space.

Rev'd Canon Gradwell Fredericks appointed Rector of Traralgon

The Rev'd Canon Gradwell Fredericks has been appointed Rector of the Parish of Traralgon, on the unanimous recommendation of a very diligent and hard-working Clergy Appointments Advisory Board.

Gradwell and his wife, Tania, come to Gippsland – and Australia – from Cape Town in South Africa, where Gradwell is Rector of the large Parish of All Saints' Belhar, in the Diocese of False Bay. Prior to this Gradwell was Chaplain of St Alban's, an Anglican school in Pretoria.

Gradwell has served as Warden of Vocations and Warden of Ordinands in his diocese, working with those exploring a call to ordained ministry and those preparing for ordination.

Other parish appointments over his almost 20 years in holy orders include the fishing village of Hout Bay and the township parish of Steenberg.

Tania spent eight years working in the medical field as a depot administrator at a pathology company. With her and Gradwell's relocation to Pretoria, she took on a new role, as the boarding house administrator of St Alban's College. After the couple's return to Cape Town, she started her own venture: a beauty and skin care studio, Wonder Well. They have two adult children, Caryn and Paul, and a grandson.

In describing his ministry, Gradwell says:

My ministerial strength is people – meeting them where they are and journeying with them. I believe that each person's journey is unique and sacred and that it is in these spaces that compassionate and empathetic ministry takes place. We are excited at the prospect of relocating to Australia, to Gippsland, and establishing ourselves amongst the people of Traralgon, Glengarry, and Toongabbie.

Gradwell and Tania will arrive in late November, and in the meantime we give thanks for the unstinting care and guidance of Locum Priest Marilyn Obersby, ably and generously assisted by Amy Turner, Clem Watts and

Brenda Burney, and for the faithful baptismal ministry of the parish's lay leaders.

Courtesy Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*



Rev'd Sue Newcombe appointed Honorary Parish Deacon at Lakes Entrance/Metung

The Rev'd Sue Newcombe has responded to a call to serve in the Parish of Lakes Entrance/Metung as Honorary Parish Deacon, alongside Locum Priest Sallyanne Hart.

This is an exciting development for her in the early stages of her diaconal ministry, and will strengthen the ministry team – lay and ordained – at Lakes Entrance and Metung.

Sue has served faithfully and well in her home parish of Trafalgar for a number of years, including as a Lay Reader and or the past eight months as Deacon.

Sue will start in her new role at Lakes Entrance/Metung on 22 October, in a part-time (honorary) capacity.

Having recently completed Exploring

Faith Matters (EFM), Sue brings a great heart for pastoral care, ecumenical partnership and community engagement to this new role, and she and Sallyanne are excited about the prospect of working together.

Please pray for Sue, and David, as they prepare for this move, and for the parishes of Lakes/Metung and Trafalgar, giving thanks for the ministries of The Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding, Ven Sue Jacka and others who have nurtured, encouraged and equipped Sue to take up this ministry.

Courtesy Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*





Mental Health First Aid – a ministry opportunity

■ Dr Gavin Brown

The importance of churches developing improved literacy in mental health has been gaining greater attention in recent times. The need for churches to become more active in the mental health space is paramount given the significant issues of psychologist workforce shortage and the cost of living crisis.

A report commissioned by the Australian Association of Psychologists showed that, at the end of 2022, approximately 40% of psychologists were not accepting new patients and that more than a quarter of clients waited more than two months to see their psychologists. The shortage of psychologists in rural and remote areas is well documented, and current funding and training models are unlikely to be able to address this. It is the reality for a growing number of people that they must forego mental health treatment in favour of meeting daily expenses such as groceries and rent.

To begin to address these challenges, last year during Mental Health Week, NAYBA Australia held its first Church Mental Health Summit. This year, thousands of Christians from around the world will join the Hope Made Strong Church Mental Health Summit for a one-day online conference to become better equipped to care for their congregations and communities.

Mental health promotion messages are common in mainstream media, yet this type of awareness has been much slower to permeate church culture in Australia. Australia's National Church Life Survey has previously indicated that mental health is the second-most common pastoral need encountered by professional and lay

The societal issue of caring for those with poor mental health is unlikely to diminish. Although this is deeply concerning, churches can see this as an opportunity to engage with local communities in a meaningful way.

ministers. Although the prevailing atmosphere is somewhat different, in the USA people are reportedly more likely to first approach a pastor, rather than a psychologist or counsellor, about mental health difficulties. This indicates that churches may have a significant opportunity to influence their communities in this area. However, many pastors and ministers may feel ill-equipped and receive relatively little training to effectively provide help with mental health issues.

One solution is a well-established Australian secular program designed to provide everyday people with basic skills to assist people experiencing mental health difficulties. Mental Health First Aid was developed and first delivered in 2000 and has grown exponentially – it is now taught in 26 countries. The program focuses on a five-step early intervention plan for a range of common mental health problems including depression, anxiety, substance use and suicidal behaviours. The goal of the

program is not for people to become trained counsellors, but to become educated and skilled in conducting a 'mental health first aid conversation'. This may be the initial step for people seeking support from trained health professionals or appropriate agencies.

Mental Health First Aid is a two-day workshop delivered by independent facilitators, with courses frequently run in most major regions of Australia for the general public. Seeing the value of the program, some churches in Victoria have had staff and volunteers become accredited facilitators in order to offer the workshop to their congregations or local communities.

With statistics suggesting that one in five Australians will experience a common mental illness in any given year, it is clear that psychological distress will affect both Christian believers and non-believers. Sadly, in some sectors of the church, mental illness is still subject to stigma and shame, and may be incorrectly seen as a sign of weakness or lack of faith. Such attitudes do not align with the caring mission of Christ and can do significant damage to people both inside and outside the Church.

During the NAYBA Summit, participants heard from the developers of the Sanctuary Mental Health Course, a small-group curriculum that has been developed to raise awareness and start conversations in the church context about mental health. The four-session course covers issues including stigma and recovery and can be led by anyone with an interest in mental health and faith. The societal issue of caring for those with poor mental health is unlikely to diminish. Although this is deeply concerning,

churches can see this as an opportunity to engage with local communities in a meaningful way.

For ministers and pastoral staff interested in learning and thinking more about mental health in the church, the

Hope Made Strong Church Mental Health Summit occurs on 10 October (World Mental Health Day). This free online event features more than 60 presenters speaking on a variety of mental health and care ministry topics.

Dr Gavin Brown is a clinical psychologist and the director of Rapha Health.

Further details are available at churchmentalhealthsummit.com.

Voice Referendum campaigns urged to prioritise social and emotional wellbeing

Black Dog Institute is urging both the Yes and No campaigns to put the mental health of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people first during the Voice Referendum debate.

"We're concerned about the negative impact of the Referendum debate on the mental health of mob," says Dr Clinton Schultz, Gamilaroi/Gomeri man and Director of First Nations Partnership and Strategy at Black Dog Institute. "We are particularly concerned about the potential increase in racism and lateral violence as the debate intensifies."

"We've seen from the same sex marriage vote, the last comparable national vote, that a national debate that targets a specific population increases psychological distress for that community and increases the need for community-specific mental health services during and after the debate period."

Emerging evidence shows the intensity and racial tone of the Voice Referendum debate is already having a negative

impact on the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations communities.

"The upcoming Voice Referendum is a once-in-a-generation opportunity, that we should not shy away from," says Dr Schultz, "But we should be aware of the risks involved in having the debate and be proactive in reducing its potential harms."

Black Dog Institute's First Nations Directorate will be conducting the following activities during the Voice Referendum:

- researching and monitoring the impacts of the Referendum on the social and emotional wellbeing of First Nations peoples
- facilitating yarns in First Nations communities to discuss the social and emotional wellbeing impacts of the Referendum, through Black Dog Institute's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Lived Experience Centre

- advocating for increased funding and services for community-led social and emotional wellbeing support throughout the Uluru Statement from the Heart process.

"Black Dog Institute wholeheartedly supports the aims of the Uluru Statement from the Heart and true empowerment of First Nations people" says Dr Schultz.

"We see our role in this Referendum, not as dictating how someone should vote but working with First Nations organisations to ensure our communities are protected from the potential negative impacts of the debate."

"As such, we will provide impartial advice regarding the mental health impacts of the debate to both sides, standing as an independent, evidence-based voice for mental health and respect during the Referendum process."

Black Dog Institute

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 8: *Staff and volunteers are equipped with the knowledge, skills, awareness to keep children and young people safe through ongoing education and training.*

What is this standard about?

Standard 8 is about:

- giving staff and volunteers confidence to act in relation to child safety
- reinforcing that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

The diocesan Safe Church Policy (available on the website) sets out the training requirements for clergy and laity in the diocese. Records of training are kept and uploaded to Safety Management Online.

Face-to-face training is delivered by the Safe Ministry Authority and has been updated to include information about all Child Safe Standards and parish requirements. A training schedule is published on the diocesan website at the beginning of each year and individual parish arrangements can also be made.

Consider

- offering specialised training for those involved in children's ministry

- ensuring Safe Ministry awareness is on-going and for all members of your parish
- having Safe Ministry as an agenda item at all Parish Council meetings and addressed in parish reports to Bishop-in-Council
- minuting decisions/concerns about Safe Ministry.

What to do now

- Survey a cross-section of staff and volunteers about how confident they feel in some of the areas they have been trained in.

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

TWO NEW ORDINATION CANDIDATES FOR GIPPSLAND



Denise Martin and Damien King

New ordinand Denise Martin (Mirboo North) has recently been joined by fellow Ministry Development Program participant Damien King (Leongatha, Mirboo North and Fulham Correctional Centre Chaplain).

Along with Josh Hasan (Trafalgar parish and Traralgon College Chaplain, introduced last year), Damien and Denise make up the triumvirate of current ordinands.

Denise and Josh share a calling to the permanent diaconate; Damien's vocation is to priesthood. Please pray for Denise, Damien and Josh as they journey towards ordination.

Courtesy Bishop Richard's *Ad Clerum*

DENISE MARTIN

My name is Denise Martin and I worship at the Parish of Mirboo North. I have a background in education, specifically teaching teenagers with special needs. I was a school chaplain at the school for several years until my retirement from the education sector 13 years ago.

I am married, and I have two sons and five grandchildren. My husband and I like to travel and take photographs of our travels. We also like to ride our bikes and walk along rail trails.

I have not always been a believer, but I became a seeker after a personal crisis and was surprised by the Holy Spirit in 1997 when I was baptised in the spirit. I was baptised and confirmed into the church soon afterwards. By 1998 I was Rector's Warden and have held that position for about 18 years over the past 25 years. I have also

been Church Warden a couple of times. I received my Lay Readers' License in 2005 and have participated in church leadership and ministry ever since.

I have helped organise several Alpha programs in Mirboo North and I spent a few years on team for Kairos Outside (a program for women who have a loved one in prison). I have been on the Cursillo team twice and I led a Cursillo about 12 years ago.

Ten years ago, I trained with the Victorian Council of Churches Emergency Ministry. I have attended numerous crisis situations and provided psychological first aid at emergency relief centres, community meetings and have door-knocked on behalf of the local government to gather information and support householders after an emergency. I am currently also a volunteer chaplain for Ambulance Victoria.

I have been a participant in the Ministry Development Program since its inception in

April last year. Under the leadership of The Ven Graham Knott and The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook, I have learned and practised many aspects of church ministry, honing my skills and developing new ones. Our group of six plus our mentors is a now a close-knit group, learning from each other in discussion and supporting each other during challenging times, and when we get into the more challenging topics of ministry. Learning the theory behind the practice gives incredible depth and meaning to many things that we do. I am almost halfway through Exploring Faith Matters (EFM), learning more about the Bible and spiritual reflection.

I feel so blessed that I have had opportunities for personal and spiritual growth, and I just know that it's not over yet.

I look forward to continuing to serve God at St Mary's Mirboo North and to see what else God has in store for me.

DAMIEN KING

Hello, my name is Damien King, and along with my wife Rebecca, and two younger sons, Rory and Tom, I live in Mirboo North, while our eldest son, Aiden, has flown the nest and lives independently.

I am currently placed in a role as Lay Ministry Assistant in a shared capacity between the parishes of Leongatha and Mirboo North. Alongside this role, I am the senior Anglican Chaplain at Fulham Correctional Centre. These roles combine to form a very diverse and dynamic practical ministry setting, complemented by my participation in the Ministry Development Program and online theological studies with St Mark's in Canberra as I work toward a Bachelor's degree in Theology.

Before undertaking the Ministry Assistant position, I worked in the building industry as a joiner, where I had the opportunity to work in many locations, on many projects, and with a wide and diverse range of people, both as co-workers and clients. While not only satisfying my desire to work in the building industry, my years in that industry allowed me to be exposed to so many different personalities and many of the issues that everyday people are facing in an ever-changing world.

The most dynamic shift began for me when, on a Saturday afternoon, while renovating our old house, I stepped off the ladder, put down my tools and called The Ven Graham Knott, expressing a feeling that I may have a calling to serve God and His people. From that moment, a long process

of discernment has taken place, where I have been blessed to receive experience, training and support from Graham and from The Rev'd Belinda Seabrook.

While in the initial year of discernment, I was fortunate to meet Heather Toms, who introduced me to the notion that prison ministry may be a path for me. A year later, I was walking into Fulham Correctional Centre for the first time, and Heather spent the latter part of 2022 transitioning me into the chaplaincy role as she prepared to leave.

I have been truly blessed to have been exposed to the knowledge and passion that both Graham and Belinda have shared in their capacity as mentors, and I look forward to wherever it is that God guides me as I continue to follow the path He has set for my life.



New Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane

Bishop Jeremy Greaves will be installed as the 10th Anglican Archbishop of Brisbane in December at St John's Cathedral, Brisbane

The Anglican Church Southern Queensland has announced the election of Bishop Jeremy Greaves as the 10th Archbishop of Brisbane.

He replaces Archbishop Phillip Aspinall AC, who resigned in February after 21 years in the role.

In making the announcement, Bishop Administrator Cameron Venables said it was with great joy that he shared the decision of the Archbishop Election Committee.

Archbishop-elect Jeremy Greaves will be installed as Archbishop of Brisbane and Metropolitan of the Province of Queensland at St John's Cathedral on Saturday 16 December 2023.

Bishop Jeremy, who has been Bishop for the Northern Region since 2017, has served 10 years as a priest in Queensland, as well as time in the Northern Territory and South Australia. He was ordained in Adelaide and celebrated 25 years of ministry as a priest in February this year. He is a theology graduate of Flinders University.

Bishop Jeremy said he looked forward to continuing the work of reimagining the shape of ministry and mission for this new time.

"People need places to gather in supportive community. When the church gets it right, we are pretty good at that," Bishop Jeremy said.

"The church provides a time and place where people from divergent backgrounds and views can come together. This is so important in our ever polarised and fracturing society."

Chair of the Archbishop Election, Rev'd Canon Dr Marian Free, said Bishop Jeremy's background, outlook and skills would stand him in good stead as Archbishop.

"I am confident that he will make a faithful Archbishop because of his experience here and elsewhere, his commitment to comprehensive Anglicanism, and in particular his pastoral approach to those holding different views."

Bishop Jeremy acknowledged the work of Bishop Administrator Cameron Venables, who has led the diocese over the past year, while at the same time managing his responsibilities as Bishop for the Western Region. Bishop Venables will continue to serve in the role of Bishop Administrator until Bishop Jeremy's installation in December.

Buderim locals Bishop Jeremy and

his wife, Josie, will relocate to Brisbane by the end of the year.

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World Council of Churches celebrates 75 years



World Council of Churches birthday cake celebrating 75 years since the founding of the Council in 1948

The World Council of Churches (WCC) commemorated its 75th anniversary on 25 June with an ecumenical celebration at Saint Pierre Cathedral in Geneva, recalling the founding of the WCC in Amsterdam in August 1948, three years after the end of World War II.

Participants arrived to live music at the ceremony in WCC's main hall. Participants joined in dancing in the hall and sang an old favourite, *We Are Marching in the Light of God*.

Participants received two gifts: the report of the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe, Germany, 2022, which reflects many facets of ecumenical work, and *Your Word Is Truth*, a co-publication with the United Bible Society. The United Bible Society publication illustrates how the diversity of hermeneutics can be a source of Christian unity and a beautiful reflection of the diversity of God's kingdom.

WCC President for North America, Rev'd Dr Angélique Walker-Smith, shared a testimony about her engagement with the WCC and its work on overcoming racism and promoting gender justice. She said the church's partnership with the United Nations is an essential phase of addressing these issues because it is doing some of the reconciliation work.

"So, we have, for example, the seasonal works, working with women, we also have the new space of the Permanent Forum on

People of African Descent. And I think all of us need to look within our church spaces. I'm hearing more conversations, certainly in North America, where I'm at, where there's more a reflection of those groups that have not always been at the centre," she said. "... I think our churches are listening, and I'm hopeful we can go further."

Professor Fernando Enns, a proponent of peace theology, spoke about the WCC's work on "just peace" from Harare in 1998 to Karlsruhe, recounting how he began his work with the WCC in 1996 when he began to represent the Mennonite churches.

"I was taken under the wings of three ecumenical mothers, as I would call them. I also want to call their names because they have been formative. And without these mothers, I would never have been able to do and experience what I did."

These inspiring women were former central committee moderator Dr Agnes Abuom, a Kenyan Anglican who died earlier this year; Professor Janice Love from the Methodist Church in the US; and Bishop Dr Margot Kässmann, a German theologian.

"These are powerful brains, hearts, and spirits. These mothers took me under their wings and taught me how to fly in the ecumenical movement," said Enns.

In a video message to the celebration, Archbishop Angaelos of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK noted that the WCC faces many challenges "that can be difficult sometimes."

"But the rewards, the blessings, the light that we shine into the world, the salt that we can be of the earth, and the example, serving others as our Lord, serve the whole of humankind – all of these things make the World Council of Churches, a wonderful platform for us to come together."

World Council of Churches



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Parliament of the World's Religions hosts Parade of Faiths

Representatives of global Indigenous cultures, walking with the Tai Ji Men Qigong Academy, wave to attendees during the Parade of Faiths

Steve Rohrbach

Chicago, a beacon of cultural diversity and inclusivity, witnessed a remarkable display of harmony and diversity in August as the Parliament of the World's Religions presented the Parade of Faiths. The event was a vibrant celebration of religious and spiritual traditions, promoting interfaith dialogue, understanding and respect among diverse communities.

The Parade of Faiths brought together people from diverse religious backgrounds, cultural heritages and walks of life. It serves as a testament to the Parliament of the World's Religions' commitment to fostering an inclusive society, where different beliefs are celebrated and honoured.

The Parade of Faiths was a public event on the afternoon before the opening of the 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions conference. Chicago holds the distinction of hosting the 1893 World Parliament of Religions, the landmark birthplace of the modern interfaith movement.

Spectators experienced a captivating fusion of sights, sounds and flavours and an array of colourful floats and mesmerising performances. From vibrant cultural displays to music, dance and traditional costumes, the parade showcased the unique customs, rituals and values of each participating faith. Participants included the Sikh Religious Society of Chicago, the Archdiocese of Chicago, the World Council of Muslims for Interfaith Relations, Divine Life Society of South Africa, Tai Ji Men Qigong Academy, Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Zoroastrian Association of Metropolitan Chicago, Children of Abraham Coalition, Greater Chicagoland Pagan Pride and Pagans of Parliament, Urantia, Circle Sanctuary, the United States Raëlian Movement and the Sri Chinmoy Oneness-Home "Peace Run".

"We are thrilled to host the Parade of Faiths and provide a platform for people of all faiths to come together from all over the world in celebration," said Rev'd Stephen

Avino, Executive Director of the Parliament of the World's Religions. "This parade serves as a powerful reminder that, despite our diverse beliefs, we are all united in our shared humanity and the values of love, compassion, and understanding. We look forward to many more!"

parliamentofreligions.org



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Three Great Untruths

– considered through a Christian lens

Chris Linnett

■ Rev'd Daniel Lowe

Social psychologist and author Jonathan Haidt suggests that, in perpetuating what he calls three great untruths hindering healthy discourse and understanding, we are doing ourselves a great harm. These three untruths can be summarised as:

- “What doesn't kill you makes you weaker”
- “Always trust your feelings”
- “Life is a battle between good people and evil people”.

In the August and September issues of TGA, I explored how the first two of these untruths can be seen being played out and what an alternative picture might look like.

Part C – “You be the goodie and I'll be the baddie” (Life is a battle between good and evil)

Which do you prefer: Tim Tam or Mint Slice? Dog or cat? Tea or coffee? Coke or Pepsi?

As fun little icebreakers, these sorts of questions can provoke much animated discussion and even some heated debate. What they rarely do is define our social standing in a group. Sure, it is nice to find people who share our tastes, and it is kind of fun to debate with those who prefer something different to us, but the stakes are

Tribalism can be a good thing. It provides connection, a sense of belonging, a shared purpose. The problem is not tribalism itself but the way our tribes are formed and how they operate.

low. Your beverage of choice is not going to get you outed from a group. What's more, while these choices are being presented in a binary form where you must choose one or the other, we understand that reality isn't so simple. For instance, while I love coffee and can't stand tea, I know plenty of people that happily drink both.

But what happens when we start to apply this sort of binary thinking to more significant issues? Issues that speak to our identity? This is the sort of thinking that Jonathan Haidt and Greg Lukianoff identify in their book *The Coddling of the American Mind* as the third great untruth being perpetuated in our society. In previous articles I have addressed the first two great untruths:

“What doesn't kill you makes you weaker” and “Always trust your feelings”. In this final article I will address the third, and perhaps the most damaging, untruth – that “life is a battle between good people and evil people”.

I remember as a child there was a very simple formula that went with most of our imaginative play. The setting might vary from imaginative space battles to medieval jousting, but the basic template was summed up in the declaration, “You be the ‘goodie’ and I'll be the ‘bad-die’”. Life was divided up into good people and bad people and we had absolute clarity about who was playing which role. And this is perfectly normal behaviour for children. A game of tag gets very confusing when no-one knows who is ‘it’. A ball game falls apart very quickly when players aren't clear which team they are playing for. Separating ourselves into clear groups or tribes becomes both a practical necessity and, increasingly, as we navigate our adolescence, a social necessity. We are drawn to people with shared interests. We identify ourselves with others who share similar ideals, beliefs and values. We join groups to participate in a common activity. We find ourselves in our tribes.

Tribalism can be a good thing. It provides connection, a sense of belonging, a shared purpose. The problem is not tribalism itself but the way our tribes are formed and how they operate. Psychologist Elizabeth A. Segal, writing in *Psychology Today* ('When tribalism goes bad', 30 March 2019) puts it this way:

We are built to be tribal. But sometimes that tribalism goes too far. The worst type of tribalism is groups aligned to destroy other groups, such as through ethnic cleansing and genocide. We have heard the word "tribalism" used a lot today in reference to our politics. Today in our political world, we have "bad tribalism". Bad tribalism is a group identity that fosters the bullying and scapegoating of others not like you. Bad tribalism joins people out of anger, jealousy, and spite, not for collective well-being.

We see bad tribalism at play not just in our politics but in our general discourse, and there is no doubt that social media encourages and perpetuates this kind of thinking and behaviour. The more narrowly we define our tribal identities around specific issues or features, and the more heavily we police those boundaries, the more negative our interactions become. Cancel culture and Twitter mobs are natural outworkings of this. According to them, life is divided up into good people and evil people where good is defined as anyone in total agreement and evil is defined as anyone who disagrees. You may find your-

self in total agreement with your tribe on nine out of ten issues, but should you step out of line on even just that one thing, you could find yourself living out a scene from *Survivor* as the tribe tallies the votes, announces, "The tribe has spoken," and, with a dramatic musical flourish, snuffs out your torch. "It's time to go," they say. And so, the great untruth is perpetuated once again. Good has triumphed and evil (in this case, you, with your wilful rebellion) has been vanquished.

"If only it were so simple!", says Lukianoff in *Coddling of the American Mind*. "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being."

Life is not a battle between good people and evil people. Rather, life is a complex set of interactions between people simultaneously capable of great good and unspeakable evil. Sometimes we will disagree with the best of intentions and other times we will argue with the most selfish of motives.

We need a better model for navigating our disagreements. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Colossian church with this advice: "Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don't miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put

them down, not cut them out." (Colossians 4:6 The Message). The Christian church has not always got it right, but we have a perfect model for engaging with others.

Jesus was aware of the tribal differences that plagued his world. Here's a short list of tribal tensions in the New Testament: Jews versus Romans, Samaritans versus Jews, Jews versus Greeks, Greek Jews versus Hebrew Jews, clean Jews versus unclean Jews, Pharisees versus Sadducees, rich versus poor, men versus women.

Jesus is famous for his cross-tribal love. In every single situation where he is confronted with a tribal barrier, he crosses it. He absolutely refuses to be caught up in his own tribe's tribalism ("Jews are better, purer ..."); nor will he be caught up in other tribal narratives. His love is relentless.

Jesus should be our model, and a model for the way we teach our young people to engage with each other. Rather than drawing lines in the sand, we need to pursue a relentless love:

Be friendly with everyone. Don't be proud and feel that you know more than others. Make friends with ordinary people. Don't mistreat someone who has mistreated you. But try to earn the respect of others, and do your best to live at peace with everyone. (Romans 12:16-18)

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

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"We...make [ministry] significant in our cultural way."
The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy



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

The Revd Kathy Dalton

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Gippsland Anglicans is raising funds to continue its support of Aboriginal Ministry. The Revd Canon Aunty Phyllis Andy (L) and The Revd Kathy Dalton (R), pictured here with The Rt Revd 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.

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How can the law account for the value of natural places?

Stefan Jürgensen

View of the Pilbara region near the mining town of Tom Price

■ Nanda Jarosz

In November 2022, the Australian Government made a commitment to legislate new protections of Indigenous heritage sites. The decision was made in response to recommendations passed down by a joint parliamentary committee investigation into Rio Tinto's destruction of an Aboriginal sacred site at Juukan Gorge in 2020.

The sacred site, located in Western Australia's Pilbara region, was of high cultural and archaeological significance. It contained evidence of continuous human occupation for over 40,000 years.

Incredibly, no laws were broken in the decisions that led to this destruction. The issue we now face is how to make sure nothing like this ever happens again.

How Nature Matters: Culture, Identity, and Environmental Value (Oxford University Press, 2022), a recent book in the field of environmental ethics by Simon P. James, offers some ideas on how to think about nature's value and how it should be protected.

James argues that "nature provides us with more than merely material benefits." It plays a role in how we construct our identity and contributes to our wellbeing. It is also central to the expression of many religions. For these reasons, James claims that "all manner of natural entities, from hedgerows to the changing of the seasons, can be said to have meaning."

For James, when we think about nature in this way, we are thinking about its constitutive value – that is, its value when

Valuing a tree because it allows us to breathe is very different to valuing the site at the Juukan Gorge, because the latter shapes how we understand the history of human life on earth.

seen in a particular context.

In other words, natural places are valuable, or are seen to have constitutive value, because they are part of some larger meaningful whole. For example, a natural place can form part of a person's identity, their moral code, their philosophy of life or their sense of purpose.

Just because something is valuable for one group of people does not necessarily mean that it must be protected at all costs. Interestingly, however, James claims that "appeals to nature's constitutive value lend themselves to being expressed in the language of rights." That is, taking stock of the constitutive value of natural places means recognising rights that are already enshrined in law.

Value structures

James' theory of constitutive value is new, in that it offers an alternative to the most widely understood form of value – instrumental value. He defines instrumental

value as "the value something has as a means to a valuable end."

We often understand things in light of their usefulness to human beings. For example, trees have an instrumental value because they produce oxygen, which is required for life. Trees provide services that directly cause human wellbeing.

Constitutive value cannot be described through such a causal relationship. It is not necessarily the case that something with constitutive value causes a sense of wellbeing or benefit to a person.

Instead, some things have constitutive value because the meaning we ascribe to them is tied to a larger valuable whole. For example, certain places contribute to the construction of cultural heritage. The site at the Juukan Gorge is part of the cultural heritage of the Puutu Kunti Kurrama and Pinikura (PKKP) traditional owners and others.

It is not because the site is useful that its destruction is damaging. Rather, it is the fact that the site is part of a much larger structure of meaning that makes its loss significant. Valuing a tree because it allows us to breathe is very different to valuing the site at the Juukan Gorge, because the latter shapes how we understand the history of human life on earth. The first is an example of an instrumental way of valuing; the latter points to a constitutive value system.

Rights and respect

The question remains: how can the law take into consideration these different forms of valuing?

In an Australian context, environmental law is undergoing review. In response to an independent review of the Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation (EPBC) Act, the federal government has laid out its “commitment to reform Australia’s environmental laws to better protect, restore and manage our unique environment.”

As part of this reform, the government has claimed the “role of First Nations partnerships will be enhanced”. It has vowed to develop “new standalone First Nations cultural heritage protection laws.”

In the words of Minister for the Environment Tanya Plibersek, “we are always a better country, more unified and confident and secure in ourselves, when we give everyone a seat at the table and we listen to all voices.”

In *How Nature Matters*, James argues we need to consider the implications of something having a high constitutive value as a reason for its protection. The problem he identifies is that arguments used by “conservation biologists, ecological economists, and environmental policymakers often rest on appeals to human interests.”

That is, institutionalised ways of arguing for the protection of natural environments are tied to evaluations of the usefulness of the services nature provides to humans. These assessments are then used to make decisions based on what interests are being served by the protection of a natural place.

If these interests can be served through any other means, then that place is seen to be replaceable. It can therefore be used

for other purposes such as development or resource extraction. But for many people, places with constitutive value cannot be replaced without causing damage to a larger meaningful whole.

As James admits, for some people “nature’s value might mostly be instrumental in form,” but for others this is not the case and “they deserve to have their interests represented.” Essentially, he argues society has an obligation to protect certain natural places out of a respect for the role these places play in the construction of identity.

Beliefs and assumptions

In pursuit of an applied approach to philosophy and ethics, James makes use of case studies to draw out the implications of his ideas. He draws on examples from cultural traditions with vastly different approaches to the construction of meaning and value.

In the final chapter of his book, he examines a case that came before the Supreme Court of Canada: an appeal against a decision made by the Minister of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations in 2012 about the protection of a natural environment of high cultural significance.

In the case of *Ktunaxa Nation v. British Columbia*, the appellants argued a proposed development was in breach of the Ktunaxa’s right to the “fundamental freedoms” of “conscience and religion”, as defined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The appeal was unsuccessful on the grounds that the “constitutional right to freedom of religion had not been violated.”

In his analysis of the case, James argues different conceptions of religion played a

questionable role in the verdict:

To be sure, it is commonly assumed that religion is all about what one believes: that if one believes in God, then one is religious; and that if one doesn’t, then one isn’t.

However, he goes on to note,

... there are compelling reasons to think that that belief-centric assumption betrays a distinctively Christian conception of religion, one that is in certain respects at odds with some non-Christian conceptions.

The implication is prejudices may be inherent in laws that are at odds with the diversity of religious frameworks. The notion of a right to freedom of religion might be universal, but the protection of this right betrays distinctly personal assumptions.

There might soon come a time where appeals to the protection of human rights will need to be reframed in a way that takes account of different value systems. As James notes, “appeals to rights, and especially to human rights, have a great deal of force in discussions of policy and practice.” Therefore, any reform to environmental protection laws that claims to “listen to all voices” will need to find ways of attributing equal weight to the value systems of diverse perspectives.

Nature is not just a means to some human end. If the government’s reform of the EPBC Act is to be successful, it must recognise the full scope and diversity of nature’s value. Perhaps *How Nature Matters* can figure in these considerations.

Nanda Jarosz is a research officer at the University of Sydney. First published at theconversation.com.

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Accessible Book Club

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Author Jonathan Cornford
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TOPICS IN OCTOBER:

- **Giving:** from Sunday 1st
- **Savings and investment:** from Sunday 8th
- **Debt:** from Sunday 15th
- **How do these things affect our relations with others, the Earth and God?:** from Sunday 22nd

- an initiative of ACTinG



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Coming Home

Discipleship, Ecology and Everyday Economics

Jonathan Cornford

Morning Star Publishing, 2019

■ Rev'd Dr Dean Spalding

I accepted the offer to review Jonathan Cornford's *Coming Home* with a conviction that I was *not* going to write a hagiography or a wrap of undiluted praise, but from the moment I cracked the cover I had a problem with my prior conviction, in that I was deeply impressed from one end of this succinct (166 pages) book to the other.

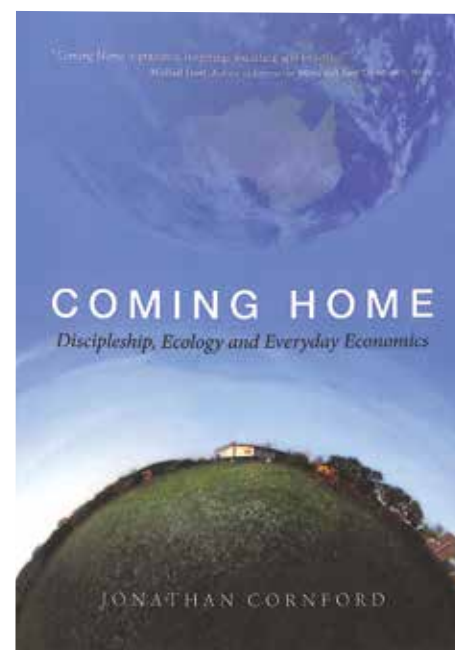
Jonathan Cornford has written a gem for all in the church who wish to find deep and authentic expression of their Christian faith in every area of their lives. This is a timely biblical challenge to lay aside the dualism that sees our lives wrongly divided between sacred and secular – a division that is contributing to the damage being done to our world. *Coming Home* calls Christians to find a genuine integration of faith and the way they live at home – the house rules – or, to render that phrase into Greek, *oikos nomou*, from which we derive our word 'economy' (referenced in the book's subtitle).

I have to admit to a history of interest in writers who seek an integration of faith and all of life. I was always fascinated with the whole-life commitment of Christian groups like the Amish and Mennonites (I went to stay in the home of some Mennonites in the US in 2000). I devoured *The More-with-Less Cookbook* and *Living More With Less* when they were released by the

Mennonite Central Committee. At Bible college, I gravitated towards practical theologians like Denny Weaver, J. H. Yoder and Ched Myers. When I became a teacher, I was impressed by the curriculum of the Parent Controlled Christian Schools movement (now called CEN), which sought to develop a P-12 school curriculum for life that went beyond faith as a veneer or icing on the cake; to let Christian faith intersect and transform every area of life.

Of course, such aspirations can have the potential to be daunting or overwhelming, and here Cornford writes pastorally and encouragingly, explaining that no single person must get this perfect from the outset. But neither should that stop us from facing in the right direction and making a start. These are undertakings for whole communities and cultures, but beautifully Cornford starts with steps we can all commence in our own backyards. Cornford lists a helpful selection of eminently doable suggestions at the end of each of the seven key-area chapters: hospitality; work & leisure; consumption; sustainability; giving; savings & investment; and debt.

As a New Testament biblical scholar, the other thing that I was impressed with was Cornford's inclusion and interpretation of scripture, not as proof-texts, nor ornament, but as deeply-reflected-upon passages with



valid contribution to the challenges we face in the contemporary world. My heart sang when reading, in the last pages of some brief appendices, a grounded, practical theologian's interpretation of Jesus' Parables of the Talents/Minas/Pounds in a way that *makes sense*, and 'sense' in the broader biblical context. Cornford ranges across scriptures and links them in appropriate and helpful ways.

Another way to access Cornford's excellent encouragement is at mannagum.org.au, the online home of a ministry in 'good news economics' that he has co-founded. You can then subscribe to the free Manna Matters newsletter published three times a year.

The Gippsland Anglicans Accessible Book Club continues its discussion of *Coming Home* in October. See page 21 for details.

Coming up

Abbey events – see pages 7 and 8

Church Mental Health Summit 23

10 October, online.

Equipping the local church to support mental health in their communities, congregations and leaders.

Registrations:
churchmentalhealthsummit.com.

**Celebrating Elizabeth Fry,
prison reformer and Quaker**

Wednesday 11 October, 11.45 am.
St Thomas' Bunyip.

The Rev'd Clem Taplin has family connections with this remarkable

woman and will share her insights.
Lunch afterwards.

Bookings: Raelene, 9793 2215.

Flowers of Remembrance for All Souls

Sunday 5 November, 11 am.

St Thomas' Bunyip.

Remember all the souls with flowers in the beauty of St Thomas' Church.

**Rediscovering the Sacramental
Imagination**

In-parish retreat, 15–17 November.

St Thomas' Bunyip.

Contact: Rev'd Ken Parker, 5976 1634.

**St Paul's
SPRING
PLANT
SALE**

**Saturday
14 October 2023
9am – 3pm**

Plants • Gardening books and knick-knacks
Wind chimes • Cakes • Raffle
Local experienced gardeners available on-site

Devonshire Teas
Delbridge Hall
153 Cunninghame Street Sale

Theme of renewal

Today is an everlasting smile, and
Praise brings us hope, and light

takes away our chills and wanes.
In gratitude we give thanks to a world
gone dull to your word.

The mercy is our stillness, and
we singularly bring back community in your life.
Poets apart, touch Yarram with heart.
And its wide seas, and tall trees, and distant spaces,

these all enveloped me, and I make my prayer
in the name of the Holy Trinity, the one strong God.
Touching our hearts and minds.

Lord hear our prayer,
beyond distant tumbrils and
touch us with grace.

This is a world of loving kindness, where we can
embrace and technology doesn't keep us apart.

You were planted long ago in indigenous times, and
made your own hill, and may it be a hill of plenty.

Suffering is still amongst us, but ageing has its
sorrows and toils, and speaks of new faces,

Thick and thin, and adventures in strange
places, and people creep back into our
lives in memories.

Can we share history and the saving story
in Jesus, as a resurrected life,
Lord bring a space and restfulness,
and unite us in blessings,

And may we touch the Saints of old,
Who weave us into one basket of
solid increment and place, to behold the
stars aloft: by day the sun,
and by night the moon.

All bring fraternal greetings, as we touch the
Day lightly with these New Horizons and
the splendour of their arraignment.
Hello birds, sing to us - as we have dullness
no longer, in the unison of mutuality.

Resurrection Lord, rest us in mercy and peace
and seek us for the gracious destiny we have.
Amen.



From the book *Balmain Contemplations*, by Noel Jeffs SSF, 2023. Noel (indiemosh.com.au/author-318) is an Anglican friar originally from Gippsland. He is a sometimes student of Kate Lilley and others for a Master of Creative Writing at Sydney University. He is a disabled person living alone who enjoys conversation and silence and writing. Noel has a master's degree in mental health and has trained as a psychotherapist. He lives in Sydney and joins the Yarram Anglican Church service regularly via Zoom.

The ^{Gippsland} Anglican

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